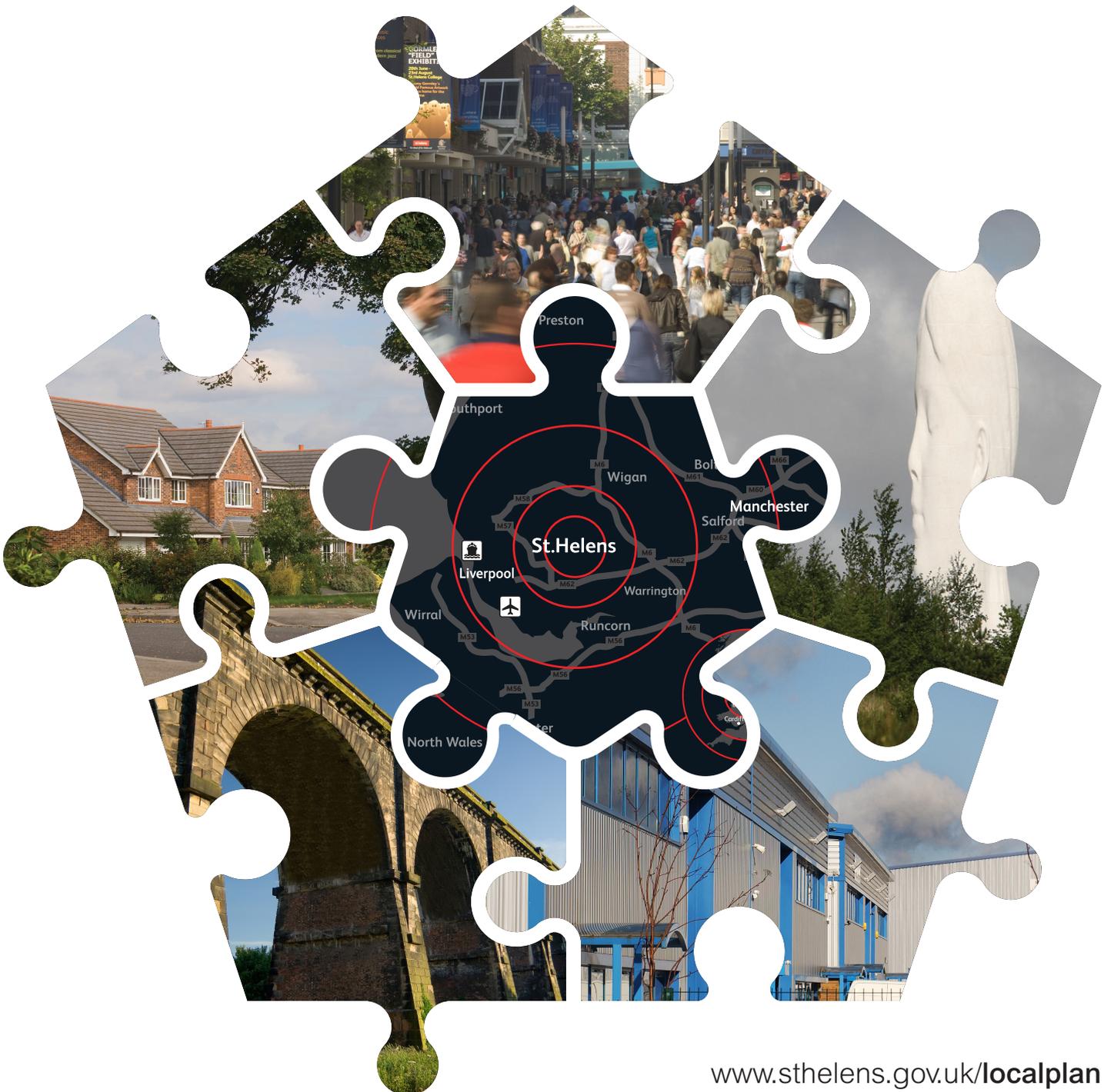




St. Helens
Council

St. Helens Local Plan 2018-2033 Preferred Options December 2016



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1. Introduction

What this consultation is about

- 1.1 The Council declared its intention to prepare a new Local Plan for St. Helens in its Local Development Scheme (LDS) of November 2015¹. To ensure the Plan is prepared on a sound footing, the Council is undertaking a number of consultations through the Local Plan making process. The Local Plan Scoping Consultation in January 2016 was the first consultation stage. The responses received on the Scoping consultation have been taken into consideration in the preparation of the Preferred Options document, which is the subject of the current consultation.
- 1.2 The Council is committed to constructive engagement with local residents, businesses and other stakeholders on how best to address the socio-economic, environmental and other challenges facing St. Helens. Your comments are encouraged.
- 1.3 This consultation document is seeking views on several aspects of the preparation of the St. Helens Local Plan. The new Local Plan will set out where different types of development will or will not be acceptable in principle and general policies for assessing most planning applications. For example, it will identify sites for new homes, employment (housing and employment “allocations”), and sites of local wildlife interest to be preserved. Together with the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan and the Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan, it will form the St. Helens Development Plan, which will inform decisions on planning applications. It will replace the St. Helens Local Plan Core Strategy, adopted in October 2012 and the Saved Policies of the 1998 St. Helens Unitary Development Plan.
- 1.4 The new Local Plan will apply to the whole of St. Helens and key subject matter will include:
 - the vision and objectives for development in the Borough up to 2033;
 - the overall spatial strategy including the amount, form and distribution of development;
 - strategic policies guiding the amount, form and location of new development;
 - site allocations for new development including (amongst other topics), housing, employment, retail, and leisure, identifying key areas for protection, setting out changes to the Green Belt and designating areas where particular policies apply; and
 - detailed policies to be applied when considering applications for development.

¹ The Local Development Scheme explains the content of the Plan in more detail and is available to view here: <http://www.sthelens.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-development-scheme/>

- 1.5 The Preferred Options document sets out the Council's current preferences in relation to the topics listed above. The preferred policy options are based on the best available evidence to date and could be refined in light of any new relevant evidence that may come to light through this consultation process and further work by the Council.
- 1.6 The need to prepare a new Local Plan has arisen mainly due to a large increase in the demand for employment land and lack of sufficient deliverable sites to meet the Borough's housing needs following the success of the Borough in recycling previously developed land ("brownfield"). The Core Strategy acknowledged that Green Belt land was likely to be needed to meet housing land need by 2022, and the Council now thinks it is needed to meet employment land needs as well.

Other documents being consulted on

- 1.7 At the same time, the Council is also consulting on the following documents:
- Sustainability Appraisal – Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is the appraisal of the economic, environmental and social effects of a Local Plan from the outset of the preparation process to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development. SA is required by national and European Laws;
 - Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) for any proposed plan or project which may have a significant effect on one or more European Sites - Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). The purpose of the HRA is to determine whether or not significant effects are likely and to suggest ways in which they could be avoided; and
 - St. Helens Green Belt Review – The Green Belt Review forms part of the evidence base for the preparation of the new Local Plan and sets out a comprehensive review of all of the Green Belt in St. Helens as well taking into consideration adjoining Green Belt parcels outside the Borough. It then also assesses the suitability of the sites which has been promoted for development in the Green Belt.
- 1.8 All the above documents can be found by visiting the following webpage: <http://www.sthelens.gov.uk/localplan>

Who this consultation is aimed at

- 1.9 This consultation is aimed at local residents, businesses, and any other interested parties.

How you can make comments and when the consultation ends

- 1.10 Please use the Consultation Response form to send comments to the Development Plans team by post, by email or by hand by 12:00 noon Monday 30th January 2017. It is available here: <http://www.sthelens.gov.uk/localplan>

What Next?

- 1.11 Following consideration of all the comments received on this Preferred Options document the Council will publish a Draft Local Plan for consultation in summer 2017 and following that submit the Plan to the Secretary of State for examination in late 2017.



Figure 1.1: Stages in the Local Plan Preparation Process

2. St. Helens Borough Profile

Place

- 2.1 Located midway between Liverpool and Manchester, St. Helens enjoys a strategic position at the heart of the North West. An extensive road, bus and rail network provides excellent accessibility for people travelling to and from St. Helens.
- 2.2 The Borough's history is inextricably linked with the industrial revolution, coal mining and a world famous glass industry, which employed many of the local residents. From the late 1970's onwards these industries began to decline in importance, with a corresponding reduction in jobs and business opportunities. The legacy of heavy industry and the fundamental shift in employment patterns has been at the heart of many of the challenges facing the Borough since this time.
- 2.3 However, through the creation of strong public and private sector partnerships St. Helens has undergone considerable positive change, with successful efforts to regenerate the economy, infrastructure and environment. In recent years we have seen the transformation of the Borough with the completion of the new Saints stadium 'Langtree Park', renewed transport facilities such as Central Station, the development of new business premises, the new Town Centre College Campus, improvements to our parks and open spaces, and significant levels of new housing.

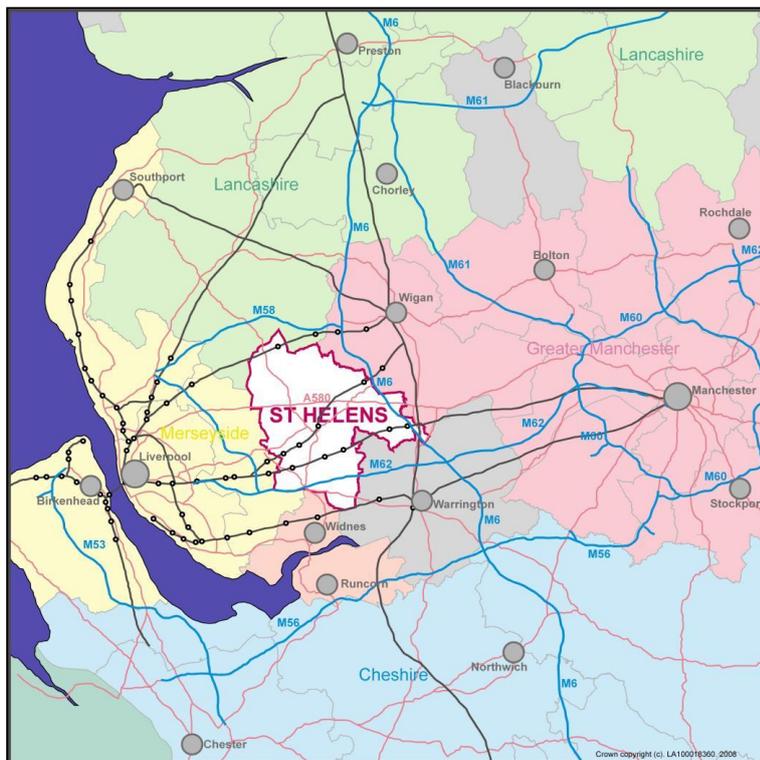


Figure 2.1 St. Helens in the Sub region

Environment

- 2.4 St. Helens Borough covers an area of 136 square kilometres, of which 65% is made up of Green Belt land. A further 7% of the Borough's total land area is made up of open green spaces within the existing urban areas, which include 16 parks and gardens.

Social

- 2.5 The resident population of St. Helens is 177,612 (2015 ONS Mid-year Estimate), with the population expected to grow steadily over the next 10-20 years albeit at a slower rate than the North West and England. Through the 1980's, 1990's and the early years of the 2000's, St. Helens had a consistently declining population, reducing from 190,800 persons in 1981 to 180,100 in 1991 to 176,800 in 2001. However, since 2007, the local population has increased at a modest average population growth rate of 0.2 percent per annum.
- 2.6 St. Helens has an aging population structure similar to England, but with a higher proportion of people aged 65 years and over and proportionally fewer people of working age (16-64 years). Over the next 25 years, the number of residents in their 80s is expected to almost double, from 6,700 in 2012 to 12,800 in 2037. The number of residents in their 90s is expected to almost triple from 3,600 to 9,700.
- 2.7 St. Helens is ethnically less diverse than many areas, with 96.6% of the population (Census, 2011) identifying themselves as white, compared to 79.8% nationally and 87.1% in the North West.
- 2.8 Life expectancy at birth for males is 77.1 years and for females 81.5 years. Life expectancy rates in St. Helens are considerably below the national averages, 79.5 years (males) and 83.2 years (females) (ONS Life Expectancy Data 2012-2014).
- 2.9 The two main causes of death in St. Helens are cancers (28%) and cardiovascular diseases (CVD) (25%) including heart diseases and strokes. The three-year CVD early mortality rate has almost halved from 169.5 per 100,000 people in 2001-03 to just 90 per 100,000 in 2010-12. The rate of early deaths due to cancer in St. Helens has fallen in recent years and is now statistically similar to England. However, early mortality rates due to respiratory disease are significantly worse than the England average, and alcohol misuse remains a problem locally.
- 2.10 The prevalence of children who are overweight (including obese) in Reception Year and Year 6 is 25.2% and 33.9% respectively, which is higher than the national averages (21.9% Reception Year, 33.2% Year 6) (The National Child Measurement Programme 2015).
- 2.11 Overall St. Helens is now ranked as the 36th most deprived local authority in England out of 326 (Index of Multiple deprivation 2015). Its relative position has deteriorated since the 2010 Index of Deprivation where St. Helens was ranked

as the 51st most deprived area. Relative deprivation within the Borough continues to grow, with some areas getting more deprived relative to others. There are now a total of 28 LSOAs within the Borough that fall within the 10% most deprived LSOAs nationally, compared to 24 in 2010. A total of 47 LSOAs within the Borough fall within the 20% most deprived nationally, compared to 43 in 2010.

- 2.12 Crime rates in St. Helens have reduced in recent years and are performing relatively well compared to neighbouring authorities and those in its most similar family group.

Economy

- 2.13 At 75% the economic activity rate in the Borough exceeds the regional average (74.7%), however it is lower than the national average (77.6%). The employment rate (67.2%) in the Borough is below both regional (69.8%) and national averages (72.9%).
- 2.14 The unemployment rate (8.9%) in the Borough is significantly higher than regional (6.0%) and national averages (5.6%). In 2014 7.3% of the economically active population in St. Helens were self-employed, compared with 8.7% regionally and 10.3% nationally.

St. Helens' Labour Market Indicators

Labour Market Indicators	St. Helens (%)	North West (%)	England (%)
Economic activity	75.0	74.7	77.6
Employment	67.2	69.8	72.9
Self-employed	7.3	8.7	10.3
Unemployment	8.9	6.0	5.6
Economically inactive	25.0	25.3	22.4

Source: NOMIS (ONS) – rate as % of population aged 16-64 years. Period: Apr '14 – Mar '15

- 2.15 The median gross weekly full-time pay for working residents of St. Helens was £474 in 2014, compared with £485 for the North West region and £521 for Great Britain. The median gross weekly full-time pay for workers working in St. Helens was £438 and also lower than the comparable medians for North West (£483) and Great Britain (£520).
- 2.16 The National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level attained by the working age population of St. Helens is slightly below regional and national averages. At 26.6%, the proportion of working age residents qualified to NVQ Level 4 and above (equivalent to degree level) is considerably below the regional averages (30.9%). The proportion of residents without any qualification is also lower than the regional and national levels – 11.6% compared to 10.6% and 8.6%.
- 2.17 At 26.7% the number of residents in St. Helens without access to private transport (car or van) is lower than the regional average of 28% but higher than the national average of 25.8%.

Housing

- 2.18 Affordability of market housing for sale is an issue in the Borough with lower quartile house prices over four times greater than the lower quartile household income in the Borough. According to the 2011 Census, 30% of the Borough's housing stock is terraced, 46% semi-detached, 14% detached and 9% is flats. At 46% St. Helens has a significantly higher number of semi-detached properties than the regional (36%) and national averages (31%), but at 14% it has a lower number of detached properties than the regional (18%) and national averages (23%). The proportion of owner occupation in St. Helens (67.8%) is higher than regional averages (65%).

3. St. Helens in 2033

Spatial Vision

- 3.1 The new Local Plan will contain a vision which will set out how the Borough and the places within it should develop. It should be locally distinctive, realistic and in the best interests of local people, businesses and the environment.
- 3.2 The Preferred Options Spatial Vision for the Local Plan is:

By 2033, through continued urban regeneration as well as sustainable expansion, St. Helens is an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest in, with healthy, safe and inclusive communities and a quality and accessible built and natural environment.

High quality employment land has been provided to meet modern employment needs, making best use of St. Helens excellent transport links and location between the two biggest economies in the North West. Established employment areas continue to provide affordable employment space meeting a wide range of needs.

The vibrant and accessible town centres of St. Helens and Earlestown, together with a range of local centres, meet the shopping and leisure needs of residents, workers and visitors, reducing the need to travel far.

A range of good quality new housing, both market and affordable, has been provided in and around built up areas, to meet a range of needs, broaden the housing stock and make the Borough a residential destination of choice.

The Borough's housing is well connected to employment sites, local facilities, attractions and green spaces, in a manner which encourages active travel and travel by public transport. Health is further improved by encouraging active live styles with appropriate and sustainable sports and leisure facilities and attractive and safe open spaces and greenways.

Cultural and visitor attractions such as the Dream, Bold Forest Park, the museums and Haydock Racecourse offer a range of indoor and outdoor activities for residents and visitors, and historic assets are recognised, well used and valued.

Strategic Aims and Objectives

- 3.3 Objectives are used as a basis to measure the success of a Local Plan in achieving the Vision. The strategic aims and objectives are outlined as:

- **Strategic Aim 1: Regenerating and Growing St. Helens**
 - Strategic Objective 1.1: To secure the regeneration of the Borough by: steady, sustainable population growth; reducing deprivation through

directing development and investment where it is most needed; and by giving priority to development of derelict and vacant sites.

- **Strategic Aim 2: Ensuring Quality Development in St. Helens**
 - Strategic Objective 2.1: To ensure that new development is of a high quality.
 - Strategic Objective 2.2: To mitigate the effects of, and minimise the impact of, development on climate change.
 - Strategic Objective 2.3: To contribute to the development of stronger, healthier and safer communities within St. Helens.

- **Strategic Aim 3: Creating an Accessible St. Helens**
 - Strategic Objective 3.1: To improve access for all by facilitating sustainable transport choices, development in accessible locations, an integrated public transport network, and targeted improvements to the transport.

- **Strategic Aim 4 Providing Quality Housing in St. Helens**
 - Strategic Objective 4.1: To ensure a sufficient number of new and improved dwellings to meet local needs and delivering sustainable communities.

- **Strategic Aim 5: Ensuring a Strong and Sustainable St. Helens Economy**
 - Strategic Objective 5.1: To provide and protect sufficient land and premises to meet local employment needs and support the implementation of the City Growth Strategy and the Liverpool City Region Growth Strategy and Strategic Economic Plan.
 - Strategic Objective 5.2: To support the development of the tourism, leisure and rural economy.
 - Strategic Objective 5.3: To enhance the vitality and viability of St. Helens and Earlestown Town Centres, District and Local Centres and safeguard and enhance St. Helens Town Centre's role as a sub-regional shopping centre, by securing major town centre developments.
 - Strategic Objective 5.4: To facilitate the development of a Rail Freight Interchange which utilise the Borough's strategic location in relation to the rail network.

- **Strategic Aim 6: Safeguarding and Enhancing Quality of Life in St. Helens**
 - Strategic Objective 6.1: To ensure the provision of community facilities, including health, education, leisure and culture and encourage their integration to increase convenience and reduce the need to travel.
 - Strategic Objective 6.2: To safeguard the quality of the environment, protecting and enhancing local character and distinctiveness, together with biodiversity and geodiversity.

- Strategic Objective 6.3: To protect and enhance the multi-functional network of green spaces throughout the Borough and, in partnership, promote positive use and management whilst improving their biodiversity and increasing tree and woodland planting.
- **Strategic Aim 7: Meeting St. Helens' Resource and Infrastructure Needs**
 - Strategic Objective 7.1: To ensure that St. Helens' infrastructure needs for the future are fully met and that valuable resources within the Borough are safeguarded or used in a sustainable manner.

4. Strategic Policies

Policy LPA01: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy LPA01: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

1. In line with national planning guidance, there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Council will work proactively with applicants to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the Borough.
2. In particular, development proposals should:
 - I. Create sustainable communities with a strong sense of place that are safe and have easy access to a range of high quality services;
 - II. Promote healthy communities through improved access and opportunities for formal and informal recreation through use of green infrastructure, improved cycling and walking routes; and minimisation of carbon and particular emissions;
 - III. Be climate change resilient, in particular reducing the risk from all types of flooding and improving water quality; and
 - IV. Ensure that all land is used efficiently within the context of its surroundings and respect and enhance the quality of the urban, rural, natural and historic environments.
3. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:
 - I. Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
 - II. Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

Reasoned Justification

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is to be seen as a 'golden thread' that runs through plan-making and decision taking. Policy LPA01 sets out this presumption and all development within St. Helens will be considered against this policy, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Alternative Options

- 4.2 Achieving sustainable development is a requirement of the NPPF. The Planning Inspectorate recommend that the model policy above be integrated into all Local Plans to promote proactive and sustainable development. There is no reasonable alternative.

Strategic Aims Met	All
Strategic Objectives Met	All
Key Delivery Items	Delivering the spatial strategy of this Plan Determination of planning applications in line with planning policies

Policy LPA02: Spatial Strategy

Policy LPA02: Spatial Strategy

1. The regeneration and growth of St. Helens through to 2033 and beyond to meet the changing needs of the Borough will be delivered through distributing development across the Borough to sustainable locations to address the needs of all Key Settlements, supporting regeneration activity within the Key Settlements and rural economic diversification in the Green Belt. The Key Settlements are: St. Helens Core Area; Blackbrook and Haydock; Newton-le-Willows and Earlestown; Rainford; Billinge; Garswood; and Rainhill.
2. Development will be directed to locations appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and that are sustainable or that will be made sustainable in terms of a choice of means of transport and access to key services.
3. The reuse of previously developed land in sustainable locations will remain a key priority for the Borough, and it will make a significant contribution to the housing land supply in particular, with the majority of housing through the plan period being provided on previously developed land in sustainable locations within the Key Settlements. The use of previously developed land will be encouraged through:
 - a) setting lower and more appropriate thresholds for developer contributions within existing urban areas to reflect viability constraints associated with regenerating sites;
 - b) keeping an up to date Brownfield Register of suitable development sites.
4. This Plan removes land from the Green Belt and allocates it for housing and employment development to enable the housing target and employment land targets to be met in full over the plan period (2018/19 to 2032/33 inclusive). Land is also removed from the Green Belt and Safeguarded to meet housing and employment development needs for the following 15 years (2033/34 to 2047/48). Development will be required to make best use of land, provide the necessary infrastructure and services and integrate with the surrounding area whilst respecting the character of the area. Criteria for the development of Strategic Development Sites are set out in Policies LPA04.1 and LPA05.1. The detailed Green Belt boundary is shown on the Policies Map, together with the sites that have been removed from the Green Belt. Within the Green Belt national planning policy will be applied.

Continued on next page...

5. Employment development (excluding town centre uses) will be largely focussed on large sites capable of accommodating large employment opportunities in close proximity to the strategic road network of the M6 and M62 and better road, public transport and active travel links will be provided between residential areas in the Key Settlements, in particular areas of deprivation, and these areas of employment growth. Existing employment areas will be retained to maintain a distribution of employment opportunity across the borough.
6. Parkside West and Parkside East are transformational employment opportunity sites that will make a major contribution to the economic development of St. Helens, the Liverpool City Region and beyond, and development that prejudices their delivery will not be allowed.
7. St. Helens Town Centre will continue to perform as the Borough's principal town centre and its market share will be maintained and enhanced by being the focus for new comparison retail and leisure development opportunities in the Borough. Earlestown will serve as a town centre, building on its strength as a market town to meet the needs of new development in and around Newton-le-Willows. The district and local centres are identified in policy LPC04.
8. The quality of life, health and wellbeing of St. Helens residents, workers and visitors and the quality of the natural environment will be protected and enhanced. This will be achieved through maintaining, enhancing, connecting and expanding the ecological network, open space and recreation sites and greenway network, utilising new development to facilitate this; improving the quality of open space within and around new development; requiring development to reduce its contribution to Climate Change and to adapt to its impacts; continued landscape reclamation and improvement projects such as the Bold Forest Park and Sankey Valley Park; and promoting development that support healthy lifestyles.
9. Existing active travel, public transport and road transport infrastructure will be protected through preventing development that would cause significant adverse impacts. Land required for proposed transport improvements in existing or emerging transport plans will be safeguarded, such as the re-opening of the St. Helens Central to St. Helens Junction line, a link from Rainford to Skelmersdale, a new station at Carr Mill, and improvements to public transport interchanges and park and ride facilities. Identified schemes are shown on the Policies Map.
10. Regeneration within the urban key settlements will be supported through preventing development which would adversely impact regeneration proposals, encouraging the re-use of brownfield land, requiring good quality new development, directing retail development to existing centres and improving transport linkages between areas of deprivation and new employment opportunities.

Reasoned Justification

- 4.3 This is the key strategic policy for the Local Plan and will be used to shape the Borough's development. It sets out how development will be distributed across the Borough through the plan period of 2018/19 to 2032/33. It gives an indication of the planned level of development of residential and employment to be split between the Key Settlements of the Borough (and the sites around them to be released from the Green Belt). It also identifies the key planning strategy of the Plan to enable this to happen such as the allocation of sites, removal of land from the Green Belt and allocation for development, and key development management approaches.
- 4.4 The Local Plan aims to meet the needs of the St. Helens residents, community groups, businesses, workers and visitors whilst minimising adverse impacts and wherever possible enhancing the natural environment. The spatial strategy builds on the approach set out in the St. Helens Local Plan Core Strategy (2012) and the St. Helens Unitary Development Plan (1998) of meeting identified development needs in full and encouraging regeneration.

Spatial Areas and Key Settlements

- 4.5 There are several distinct spatial areas within the Borough of St. Helens, which comprise of one or more Key Settlements:

St. Helens Core Area – centred around the Principal Town Centre of St. Helens and including the surrounding built up area from Moss Bank in the North, Clock Face to the South, Eccleston to the West and Parr and Sutton to the East, it forms the largest Key Settlement of the Borough. It includes St. Helens Central Spatial Area – an area immediately surrounding St. Helens Town Centre, including industrial and business areas, including the Ravenhead and St. Helens out of centre retail parks.

Blackbrook and Haydock – located to the east of St. Helens Core Area, this Key Settlement contains the significant Haydock Industrial Estate and the local centre of Clipsley Lane.

Newton-le-Willows and Earlestown – the largest distinct Key Settlement after the Core Area, it contains the Town Centre of Earlestown, known for its markets, and the Local Centre of Newton.

Rainford – the largest village in the north of the Borough, this Key Settlement contains a local shopping centre and also acts as a service centre for the distinct settlement of Rainford Junction to the north (where there is a train station with links to Wigan and Liverpool).

Billinge – a village in the north of the borough with a distinct shopping centre and is a Key Settlement.

Garswood – a village in the north of the Borough that has shops and services but no distinct central shopping / service centre, and is a Key Settlement.

Rainhill – a village in the south of the Borough with a local centre, it is a Key Settlement.

Other distinct settlements

The following are not Key Settlements, but still have sizeable populations and some opportunities for development, and require sustainable transport links to the Key Settlements and employment sites to be maintained and enhanced:

Rainford Junction – a satellite settlement that is physically separate from Rainford but functionally reliant on Rainford for day-to-day services.

Crank – a small village/hamlet to the north of the Borough, with a tight urban form of development that is not typical of the St. Helens Green Belt, hence it is excluded from the Green Belt.

Bold Heath – a small village/hamlet in the south of the Borough, it has an open low density character and so it is washed over by the Green Belt.

Kings Moss – a small village/hamlet to the north of the Borough which has weak boundaries around it and is washed over by the Green Belt.

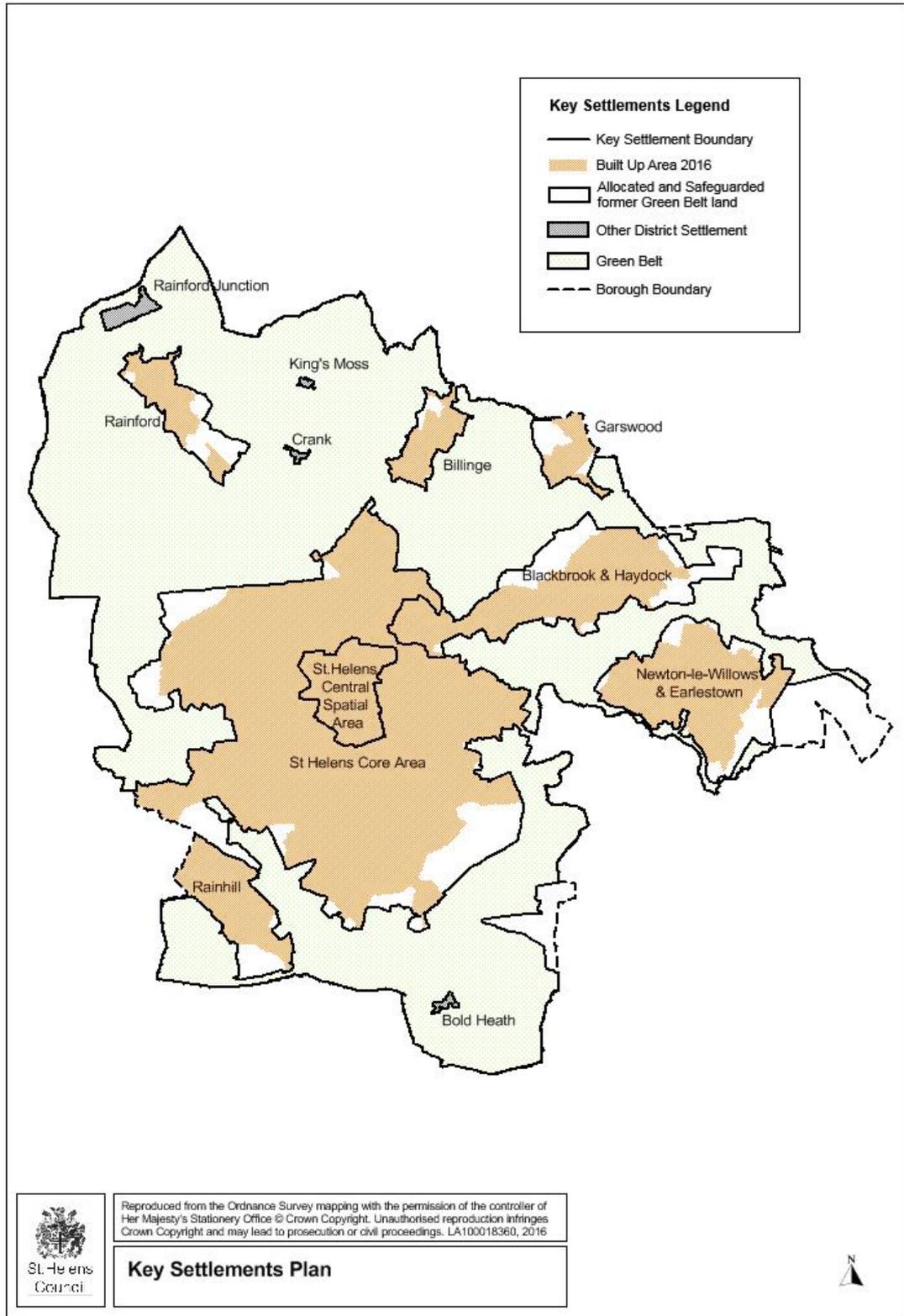


Figure 4.1 – Diagram of Key Settlement Areas

Economic growth

4.6 The Borough has economic activity rates, employment rates, skills levels and average wages below national averages. This Plan aims to enable a significantly higher level of economic and employment growth within the

Borough than achieved since the start of the recession in 2008 by providing a large amount of employment land on a variety of sites to meet the needs of modern businesses. This will encourage developer investment, allow businesses to expand, attract inward investment by employers, retain and create jobs directly and indirectly, increase job opportunities and employment rates, enable St. Helens residents to work closer to home and so reduce out-commuting, reduce the number of people having to move away to find work and support the delivery of SuperPort, a transformational project, and the Liverpool City Region Local Economic Partnership's economic strategy.

- 4.7 Taking into account recent land development rates being below long term trends, developer feedback and research, it has become clear to the Council that the existing available employment land and premises in St. Helens is not sufficient in terms of amount, site size, site location and site characteristics to meet market requirements, leading to missed investment and job opportunities. Also, a significant proportion of St. Helens residents work outside of the Borough. The only realistic option for the provision of adequate sites in St. Helens is sites that are in the Green Belt. The Council also wants to utilise the unique locational advantages of Parkside West and East, with the potential for a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange, to enable significant employment opportunities for the Borough. This site, especially in combination with other large sites in the Borough, has the potential to be transformational by making St. Helens a location of choice for large scale logistics and large scale employment development, and complementing SuperPort.
- 4.8 The Preferred and Alternative Options for the employment land target is explained in policy LPA04.

Housing

- 4.9 The Plan aims to meet the identified housing need and potential extra housing need resulting from economic growth. It aims to deliver housing development in sustainable locations in or on the edge of the Key Settlements which have, or will have provided, sustainable transport links to services and employment, and has, or will have provided, the necessary infrastructure. Previously Developed Land ("PDL", also known as "brownfield" land) in urban areas tends to already be in sustainable locations well served by existing infrastructure and services. Brownfield land will play a major role in meeting housing need over the plan period, but the 2016 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAA) has found that there is inadequate available brownfield and greenfield land (not previously developed land) in the urban areas to meet housing needs.
- 4.10 The Preferred and Alternative Options for the housing target is explained in policy LPA05.

Preferred Spatial Strategy for meeting development needs

- 4.11 The preferred spatial strategy set out in policy LPA02 is for the housing and employment targets set out in policies LPA04 and LPA05 respectively to be met in full within the Borough. This will be achieved through the development of

suitable and available brownfield and greenfield sites in the urban area and, as there is not enough of these sites to meet needs, greenfield sites on the edge of the urban area that will be removed from the Green Belt through the process of adopting this Plan. Land will also be removed from the Green Belt and safeguarded from development to meet development need beyond the plan period, ensuring that changes to the Green Belt endure beyond the plan period.

- 4.12 The sites being removed from the Green Belt have been selected following a comprehensive Green Belt Assessment to identify land that can be removed from the Green Belt without harming the overall function of the Green Belt. The sites allocated for development have sustainable access to facilities, capable of satisfactory infrastructure provision, suitability for development, economic viability, and acceptable impact on the environment. The Council considers that exceptional circumstances exist for targeted release of Green Belt land in order to meet identified needs.
- 4.13 Housing land will be provided in each Key Settlement, making the full use of suitable available brownfield land identified in the 2016 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), with additional supply provided by greenfield sites released from the Green Belt and allocated for development. This Plan aims to provide housing land in or adjacent to every Key Settlement, taking account of environmental constraints and the need to maintain an effective Green Belt, the settlement size, projected future population growth, past under-delivery of housing in relation to settlement size and availability of services.
- 4.14 Provision of land to meet the identified need for B1, B2 and B8 Use Class development will be primarily focussed on large previously undeveloped sites capable of accommodating large employment opportunities in close proximity to the strategic road network of the M6 and M62 in order to meet demand. Due to their peripheral location, improved road, public transport and active travel links will be required between these sites and residential areas in the Key Settlements, in particular areas of deprivation. The considerable existing employment areas will be retained and protected through policy LPA04 to maintain a distribution of accessible employment sites across the Borough.
- 4.15 The interconnected sites of Parkside West and East benefit from a location at the heart of the north-west motorway network and access to the national rail freight network, presenting an opportunity to provide an employment development that will act as a link to the Southern English ports and Europe, as well as being part of SuperPort and Liverpool 2. Policies LPA04, LPA04.1 and LPA10 set out the proposed development of the sites, with improved transport linkages to the rest of the Borough and surrounding boroughs essential to facilitate sustainable access for the workforce.
- 4.16 A key element of the spatial strategy of the plan is to support the existing town, district and local centres within the hierarchy of centres by preventing inappropriate new town centre development outside of these centres that may harm their vitality and viability. Development will be required to locate to centres appropriate for the type and scale of development, building on existing public transport and active travel provision and facilitating linked trips. The

majority of new comparison retail and intensive development will therefore be expected to locate to St. Helens town centre.

- 4.17 Within and outside the Key Settlements open space and greenways provide spaces for nature, opportunities for recreation, exercise and relaxation, ecological linkages and active travel routes. Open spaces and landscaping within sites also provide opportunities for adapting to Climate Change through flood water storage. The likelihood of new open spaces, flood water storage sites and greenways linkages to be created independently are limited due to funding limitations for acquiring and maintaining sites, however the development of sites, in particular sites released from the Green Belt, present opportunities for new provision.
- 4.18 The existing transport infrastructure needs to be protected and enhanced to ensure efficient travel within the Borough and wider sub-region. It is important to ensure that development does not prevent the implementation of existing and emerging transport schemes, and a precautionary approach will be taken to safeguarding land, especially when it forms the most logical route or location for a scheme, such as the St. Helens Central to St. Helens Junction link line and a link from Rainford Junction to Skelmersdale. Enhancing linkages between areas of deprivation and employment opportunities, especially active travel routes, will play a vital role in the implementation of the Plan.
- 4.19 There are no specific public sector funded regeneration schemes active in St. Helens at present due to Government funding cuts, but opportunities to enhance St. Helens Town Centre are being explored, Helena Housing continues to enhance and redevelop its housing stock and site specific redevelopment will be encouraged to address the needs of the community.

Green Belt Release

- 4.20 The Green Belt in the Borough of St. Helens covers most of the countryside around the main towns and villages, covering individual buildings and even small settlements such as Kings Moss and Bold Heath. The Green Belt has several purposes, including helping urban land be regenerated by encouraging the recycling of land and to stop the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas. Any decision to remove land from the Green Belt and allocate it for development has to be strongly justified.
- 4.21 All the authorities surrounding St. Helens, including Halton, Knowsley, West Lancashire, Wigan and Warrington, have recently amended or are in the process of amending their Green Belt to accommodate development. In Merseyside, St. Helens has by far the greatest proportion of Green Belt. 65% of the total land area in the Borough is made up of Green Belt land, totalling 8844 hectares. Sefton has the second highest proportion at 52%.
- 4.22 The Core Strategy contained a brownfield land focused spatial strategy, with 80% of new housing expected to be delivered on brownfield land. The Core Strategy only allows for land to be released from the Green Belt in years 11-15 of the Plan period (post 2022) for housing use only. The Core Strategy did not

envisage a need to release Green Belt land for employment uses, and it only allows for a strategic review of the Green Belt following sub-regional Green Belt work, this position was reflective of Regional Spatial Strategy policy at the time. A sub-regional Green Belt Review has not taken place and instead Halton, Knowsley and Sefton have undertaken their own local Green Belt review. The Greater Manchester Authorities and Warrington Council are currently also undertaking Green Belt reviews.

- 4.23 All sites in the urban area that the Council had previously reviewed for housing potential have been assessed and the results of the assessment is published in a new Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment(SHLAA)2016. Several sites that were expected to come forward by now have not done so, or at least not as quickly as expected. Since the adoption of the Core Strategy national planning policy and guidance have placed increased importance on demonstrating immediate viability of land supply, and this means that the amount of deliverable brownfield housing land in the Borough is lower than originally envisaged.
- 4.24 There had been a slow take-up of employment land within St. Helens since the adoption of the Core Strategy, with the Borough experiencing a net loss of 0.64ha since 2012. In light of this low take-up, in 2014 the Council commissioned consultants AECOM and DTZ to provide an expert view of market demand for employment land in St. Helens.
- 4.25 The AECOM Local Plan Economic Evidence Base Paper (2015) concludes that large scale logistics is the most active market in the region and a particular opportunity for St. Helens. However, none of the sites identified in the evidence base that supported the Core Strategy as suitable for large scale distribution and manufacturing uses, satisfy the criteria now suggested as being preferred by the market for large scale uses. Consequently, there is currently zero provision of suitable land for large scale distribution uses within the Borough's identified employment land supply. This shortage of available land to build large distribution facilities has meant that in recent years, when demand for such premises has been high, occupiers have had to locate elsewhere. That demand explains why, since the publication of the Economic Evidence Paper and Employment Land Needs Study (ELNS) 2015, a number of developers have opted to put in planning applications for employment development on Green Belt sites in advance of the new Local Plan.
- 4.26 Given the need to accommodate an increased amount of housing land in the Green Belt and sooner than the Core Strategy envisages, and given the need to provide an expanded portfolio of employment sites to meet all of market needs and to make up for the loss of employment land, Green Belt release is now needed to meet both housing and employment needs.
- 4.27 Government advice is that any changes in the Green Belt should be a once in a generation occurrence. The Green Belt in St. Helens has not been substantially altered since the Merseyside Green Belt Local Plan first established it in 1983. The Council believes that a comprehensive review should be undertaken and sufficient land be allocated to meet the development needs for the next 30

years, equivalent to two typical 15 year plan periods, in order to meet foreseeable development needs and economic growth, and to establish robust a Green Belt boundary that will endure beyond the 15 year plan period.

Safeguarded land distribution

- 4.28 The Safeguarded housing land has been identified as the land which, like the allocated sites, is suitable for release from the Green Belt but which score less in terms of deliverability and / or where plans for bringing them forward is less advanced than similar allocated sites. The safeguarded employment land are the sites which require other allocated land to be developed first or require access through other land not in the land owners control, but they are considered still developable in the longer term.

Alternative Options

- 4.29 *Alternative Option 1:* Do not release any land from the Green Belt to meet the housing and employment needs of the Borough for the Plan period or for Safeguarded land for the period following it. Development will be restricted to brownfield and greenfield in the urban area only, including making the best use of urban sites and considering re-allocating land from other uses. Neighbouring authorities will be asked to make up shortfalls, including the provision of affordable housing.
- 4.30 *Reason for Rejection:* With 65% of the Borough being Green Belt and green spaces in the urban areas taking up another 7% of the Borough, that only leaves 28% of the Borough which is not protected as either Green Belt or urban green space.
- 4.31 The Employment Land Needs Study (2015) and the 2016 SHLAA have already identified that there is insufficient brownfield and greenfield land in the urban area to meet all of the suggested housing and employment land need for the plan period, let alone the period beyond it. Options for maximising the development potential of brownfield and greenfield land in the urban areas has been considered as follows.
- 4.32 Redevelopment of existing vacant employment premises and sites – the majority of vacant employment premises are in existing employment areas in St. Helens and are of a small size compared to market demand, so would only provide small units, and are located away from major roads, especially the motorway network. The redevelopment of whole employment areas to provide modern larger units would be complex and costly, with many existing employment areas in a mix of ownerships making this very difficult. Whilst limited redevelopment may occur, it is unlikely to be able to make much of a contribution.
- 4.33 Higher densities on housing sites – since 2012, there have been fewer new build apartment schemes (higher density) as they have proved less attractive for house buyers as their values fell most during the economic downturn. The 2016 SHLAA set appropriate suggested densities for sites, taking into account

their location and surrounding development, and densities did not increase significantly from the 2012 SHLAA. It is not considered realistic that higher densities will be achievable to the extent that they will address the housing shortfall.

- 4.34 Reconsideration of previously developed land that had previously been considered unsuitable in the past Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAA) – the 2016 SHLAA re-considered these sites and they were still not deliverable.

Land currently in other use, including surplus open spaces

- 4.35 For Housing, the 2016 SHLAA has considered and identified land in other uses which has the potential for housing, and the windfall allowance built into the SHLAA takes account of movements from other uses based on historic trends. For employment needs, land in most other uses such as retail, housing, offices and leisure, attract higher land values so a change to employment use of the scale required to meet the identified employment land need is very unlikely.
- 4.36 Surplus open space is one possible option to meeting housing and employment needs, however the St. Helens Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment (OSSRA) analysed the amount of open space available within St. Helens and did not find a surplus of open space in the urban area when judged against the recommended standards from the 2006 St. Helens Open Space Study. The only typology with a significant “surplus” when judged against the recommended standard was natural and Semi-natural Open Space, however this included Green Belt land, and when Green Belt land was excluded, there is no surplus. This land also has a valuable potential role in ecological off-setting of the loss of greenfield land for development.
- 4.37 Focusing development on brownfield and greenfield land in urban areas will lead to those areas with little available land, such as the outlying Key Settlement areas of Rainford, Billinge, Garswood and Rainhill, disproportionately not having their needs met.
- 4.38 In addition, a reliance on brownfield land is likely to make the delivery of Affordable Housing more difficult. The draft St. Helens Local Plan Economic Viability Assessment has revealed that the core areas of the Borough, where many of the available brownfield sites are located, have marginal viability, especially when Affordable Housing is required. This means that the amount of additional affordable housing that can be provided would be low if only brownfield sites were used.
- 4.39 Meeting additional housing and /or employment needs in neighbouring areas is not likely to be possible. All of St. Helens neighbouring authorities (Halton, Knowsley, Warrington and West Lancashire and Wigan) have conducted or are in the process of conducting Green Belt reviews to meet their own housing and employment needs, so no release of Green Belt in St. Helens would simply result in loss of Green Belt elsewhere, and further away from where the need is, which is not more sustainable.

- 4.40 Even if a neighbour agreed to meet housing needs, this will mean that residents and future employees will have to move out for homes, disrupting communities. There is also no guarantee that Affordable and Special needs housing will be secured, nor that it will be available to residents of St. Helens. Employment provision outside of the Borough will mean that St. Helens residents will continue to have to travel out of the Borough for existing jobs and new jobs, maintaining and exacerbating unsustainable patterns of travel, and the opportunities will be further from St. Helens deprived areas, making it more difficult for people to access employment.
- 4.41 For the above reasons, the meeting of St. Helens housing and employment needs outside of the Borough has been discounted.
- 4.42 Overall, Alternative Option 1 has a significant risk of not meeting identified needs for market and affordable housing and employment land, leading to:
- a lack of market and affordable housing, leading to residents having to move out of the Borough to meet their housing needs, harming communities;
 - employment land needs will not be met, leading to fewer employment opportunities and worse economic conditions.
- 4.43 *Alternative Option 2:* Use brownfield and greenfield land in the urban areas, plus Green Belt release of sites that have the least impact on the Green Belt, rather than attempting to ensure a spread of housing sites around the settlements and locating employment sites close to where locational requirements and market demand is, to meet the shortfall over the Plan Period, and provision of Safeguarded Land.
- 4.44 Reason for Rejection: There is also no guarantee that it will be possible to confidently rank sites according to impact on the Green Belt. Furthermore, such a ranking may not ensure that there would be a distribution of housing sites to meet needs in all settlements across the Borough, employment sites is unlikely to meet locational requirements and market demand. This could lead to unsustainable housing development patterns and reduced ability of the Borough to meet employment land need.
- 4.45 *Alternative Option 3:* Reduce the proportion of Brownfield land and increase the amount of Green Belt land for housing and employment use. For housing, the focus will be on areas of higher housing value, to increase the likely amount of Affordable Housing being secured due to higher viability of greenfield sites on the edge of the urban area and in areas that are more attractive to housebuilders. For employment land, focus on areas close to motorway junctions.
- 4.46 *Reason for rejection:* This approach could lead to less brownfield land being developed as housebuilders favour greenfield sites due to ease of development and higher development values. This would have an adverse impact on development on brownfield land in the core area and in neighbouring authorities.

- 4.47 *Alternative Option 4:* As with the Preferred Option for meeting need on brownfield urban land and Green Belt land, but with the land at Bold Forest Garden Suburb (HS03) being allocated for the period 2018-2033 reducing the potential disruption to existing residential areas and services from releasing and developing 16 sites from the Green Belt. HS03 would meet all need in the St. Helens Core Area and other sites in Rainford, Billinge, Garswood and Newton-le-Willows would meet those settlements needs.
- 4.48 *Reason for rejection:* The delivery of housing in the St. Helens Core Area would be reliant on one large site – any issues affecting the site may affect housing delivery across the Core Area. Other sites have more advanced plans and development agreements. There would be a concentration of housebuilding in the south of the St. Helens Core Area, which may affect local infrastructure and not make use of spare capacity elsewhere.
- 4.49 *Alternative Option 5:* Distribute the Safeguarded Housing sites so that each settlement has safeguarded sites and that the amount of safeguarded land is proportionate to the settlement population.
- 4.50 *Reason for rejection:* The Green Belt assessment did not identify enough land as being suitable for release from the Green Belt to enable a distribution. There is insufficient data on housing needs per settlement to justify releasing sites from the Green Belt around each settlement to meet these needs rather than being primarily led by suitability for release from the Green Belt.
- 4.51 *Alternative Option 6:* Similar to Alternative Option 4, allocate one major Safeguarded site to meet all safeguarded land needs in order to reduce potential disruption to existing residential areas and services from releasing and developing 16 sites from the Green Belt.
- 4.52 *Reason for rejection:* This would lead to a concentration of housing that would be very unlikely to meet the needs of each Key Settlement area.
- 4.53 *Alternative Option 7:* Focus all Green Belt release for residential development towards the areas of the borough where employment development is concentrated (i.e. the east of the borough around Haydock and Newton-le-Willows) to link new residential opportunities to new employment opportunities.
- 4.54 *Reason for rejection:* There is unlikely to be enough suitable Green belt land in the Haydock and Newton-le-Willows areas to meet both employment and housing needs, leading to less suitable land (in Green Belt release terms) being released, potentially leading to merging of settlements. This may also lead to harmful impacts on local shared infrastructure (i.e. roads). If land was restricted to that with the least Green Belt impact (as is currently the case), then there would not be enough land to meet the employment and housing targets.

Strategic Aims Met	All
Strategic Objectives Met	All
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Plan Implementation of Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan

Policy LPA03: Development Principles

Policy LPA03: Development Principles

New development in St. Helens will be expected to support the following development principles:

1. Meet the challenges of population growth by:
 - a) Providing for a mix of types and tenures of quality homes to meet the needs and aspirations of all existing and future residents in sustainable locations;
 - b) Maintaining and where possible enhancing accessibility to a good range of services and facilities; and
 - c) Providing and contributing to assessed infrastructure and service requirements where appropriate.
2. Improve the economic well-being of the Borough's residents by:
 - a) Contributing to the creation and retention of a range of employment and training opportunities which are accessible to St. Helens residents, particularly local unemployed and disadvantaged people;
 - b) Contributing to the reduction of socio-economic inequality including health inequalities within St. Helens, and between St. Helens and other parts of the UK; and
 - c) Contributing to and complimenting the regeneration of the Borough.
3. Contribute to inclusive communities by seeking to address the requirements of:
 - a) An ageing population, particularly in terms of housing, health and wellbeing;
 - b) Children, young people and families;
 - c) People with special needs, including those with a disability; and
 - d) The specific identified needs of minority groups in the Borough, including Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
4. Contribute to a high quality built and natural environment by:
 - a) Securing high quality design in all development and a high standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings by taking into account relevant design requirements and best practice;
 - b) Taking account of the Borough's landscape character, townscape, roles and setting of different areas in St. Helens in the location and design of new development;

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- c) Protecting, conserving, and/or enhancing the Borough's natural, built and historic environments;
- d) Protecting and enhancing the quality of the Borough's natural resources including water, air, land and biodiversity; and
- e) Making effective use of land (including the remediation of contaminated land), buildings and existing infrastructure.

5. Minimise the need to travel and maximise the use of sustainable transport by:

- a) Guiding development to sustainable and accessible locations or locations that can be made sustainable and accessible;
- b) Encouraging a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport for people, goods and freight and encouraging the use of lower carbon transport;
- c) Encouraging safe and sustainable access for all, particularly by promoting the use of public transport, walking and cycling between homes and employment; and
- d) Supporting the provision and retention of shared space, community facilities and other local services (such as local shops, health facilities, education provision, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship).

6. Lower St. Helens' carbon footprint and adapt to the effects of climate change by:

- a) Contributing to reductions in carbon dioxide emissions from all sources;
- b) Meeting appropriate standards for sustainability and energy efficiency and promoting the use of renewable energy and sustainable construction;
- c) Assessing and addressing the impact of climate change through mitigation and/or adaptation measures;
- d) Using water, energy, minerals and waste resources in an efficient and effective way; and
- e) Ensuring that all new development addresses flood risk mitigation/adaptation.

Reasoned Justification

4.55 This Policy sets out the development principles which underpin this Local Plan. They represent a sustainable and balanced approach to the provision of new development and respond to:

- The Strategic Aims and Objectives identified in chapter 3 of this Plan;

- The Borough’s key sustainability issues outlined in chapter 2 of this Plan and the St. Helens Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2015); and
- The requirements of national planning policy and guidance.

4.56 The principles provide the basis for more detailed policies which follow in this Plan.

Alternative Options

4.57 *Alternative Option 1:* Have a more prescriptive development principles policy.

4.58 *Reason for Rejection:* A more prescriptive policy would result in repetition and overlap with other Local Plan policies. It is considered that the preferred option provides an overarching set of development principles without repeating the detailed requirements of more specific policies in the Plan.

4.59 *Alternative Option 2:* The selection of alternative development principles.

4.60 *Reason for Rejection:* The development principles are based on the Council’s priorities for the Borough (as detailed in the Strategic Aims and Objectives of the Plan) and local sustainability issues, and are therefore considered to be the most suitable development principles.

Strategic Aims Met	All
Strategic Objectives Met	All
Key Delivery Items	Delivery of the Spatial Strategy in this Plan Bold Forest Park AAP Infrastructure Delivery Plan Determination of planning applications in line with planning policies including SPDs

Policy LPA04: A Strong and Sustainable Economy

Policy LPA04: A Strong and Sustainable Economy

The Council will facilitate the provision of new jobs by ensuring a flexible supply of new high quality employment floorspace, utilising existing employment areas and St. Helens' strategic location for logistics development. This will be achieved by:

1. Catering for New B Class Employment

The Council will allocate a minimum of 306 ha of employment land up to 2038. The following sites as shown on the Policies Map are allocated for development:

Policies Map Site Reference Number	Site Name	Indicative Site Area (Hectares)	Appropriate Use(s)
EA1	Omega South Western Extension, Phase 1, Land north of Finches Plantation, Bold	31.2	B2, B8
EA2	Florida Farm North, Slag Lane, Haydock	35.17	B2, B8
EA3	Land North of Penny Lane, Haydock	11.05	B2, B8
EA4	Land North East of Junction 23 M6, south of Haydock Racecourse, Haydock	42.31	B2, B8
EA5	Land South of Penny Lane, Haydock	2.16	B2, B8
EA6	Land to the West of Haydock Industrial Estate, Haydock	7.75	B2, B8
EA7	Land west of Millfield Lane, south of Liverpool Road and north of Clipsley Brook, Haydock	20.58	B2, B8
EA8	Parkside East, Newton-le-Willows	64.55**	SRFI
EA9	Parkside West, Newton-le-Willows	79.57*	B2, B8
EA10	Land to the West of Sandwash Close, Rainford	6.96	B2, B8
EA11	Land at Lea Green Farm West, Thatto Heath	3.84	B1, B2, B8
EA12	Gerards Park, Phases 2 and 3, College Street, St. Helens Town Centre	0.95	B1, B2, B8
Total		306.09	

*79.57ha of land is allocated for employment use at the Parkside West site; approximately a further 5.58ha will be required on the site to facilitate rail access to/from the north to the land allocated on the east of the M6 for a SRFI. Approximately 12.1 ha of the Parkside West site consists of spoil heap and is therefore not considered developable and has not been counted in the employment site area.

**64.55ha of land is allocated for SRFI use at the Parkside East site; it is estimated that a further 60ha will be required on the site to deliver the necessary SRFI rail and road infrastructure and landscaping.

2. Protecting Existing Employment Areas

Sites and premises last used for employment and sui generis use including the business and industrial areas listed in Appendix 4 will be protected for B1, B2, B8 and closely related sui generis uses. Alternative uses will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that land or premises are no longer suitable or economically viable for B1, B2 or B8 use in accordance with the requirements of the Local Economy SPD, or where the community benefits of the development outweigh the potential of the site in its current form for further employment use.

3. Supporting the reuse, reconfiguration or redevelopment of sites and premises last used for B1, B2 or B8 purposes for B1, B2 or B8 uses.
4. The allocation of 130ha of land at Parkside East and West for the development of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange, in line with Policy LPA10.
5. Promoting a more intensive use of existing sites through the recycling, refurbishment and regeneration of existing older or vacant stock.
6. Supporting appropriate proposals to help diversify the rural economy. The Council will support proposals for the reuse of suitable buildings in rural areas for appropriate employment uses by favourably considering planning applications proposing suitable rural economic development.
7. Supporting the protection, creation, enhancement and expansion of tourism resources and facilities, by favourably considering proposals which are appropriate to the local context and will:
 - i. Increase the range and quality of the accommodation offer in the Borough: or
 - ii. Enhance an existing tourist or visitor attraction; or
 - iii. Attract investment to the Borough and create or safeguard jobs; or
 - iv. Enable the economic or physical regeneration of a site or area; or
 - v. Improve the quality and diversity of the Borough's visitor offer; or
 - vi. Help to maintain existing natural, historical or cultural assets.
8. Supporting the creation of and expansion of small businesses;

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9. Supporting the use of local suppliers of goods and services and the creation of apprenticeships and training opportunities for local people in accordance with the requirements of the Local Economy SPD;
10. Continuing to work with the St. Helens Chamber of Commerce and the local business community to promote growth and ensure infrastructure is provided to support business needs;
11. Maximising the economic opportunities presented by the Borough's location on the North West's strategic transport corridors; and
12. Continuing to work with Liverpool City Region partners to help deliver the City Region's economic growth, job creation and skills development aspirations and to maximise the economic opportunities presented by devolution.

Reasoned Justification

- 4.61 The Council is committed to the growth of the local economy and recognises in its City Growth Strategy (2008-18) the need to work in partnership with local communities and local business to deliver economic growth. A key objective of the Strategy is to grow, strengthen and diversify the business base and it is important that the Local Plan and the City Growth Strategy (and any future economic strategies) complement one another if the above objective is to be successfully achieved.
- 4.62 A key aim of the St. Helens Plan 2015-2018 is to establish St. Helens as a modern, economically diverse town with good business and employment opportunities. Key priorities include strengthening the local economy promoting business growth, retention and investment, and increasing employment and reducing numbers of people not in work.
- 4.63 The provision of new well-located employment land and floorspace is essential to the Borough's future economic prosperity and achieving the aims and objectives of the St. Helens Plan and the St. Helens City Growth Strategy. The Local Plan seeks to ensure that there is sufficient employment land allocated to meet anticipated development needs within the B1 (business), B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution) use classes during the Plan period. National planning policy requires the Council to plan for and accommodate all foreseeable types of economic growth, therefore it is necessary to provide a range of locations, types and sizes of employment sites to meet the needs of specific sectors of the business community and to protect existing areas where employment continues to be the most appropriate use.

Liverpool City Region

- 4.64 The St. Helens economy is inextricably linked to that of the wider Liverpool City Region. St. Helens is a member of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Council will continue to work alongside its City Region partners to take full advantage of opportunities presented by the continued growth of the City Region and to help deliver the economic growth, job creation,

and skills development aspirations outlined in the Liverpool City Region Growth Strategy (2016) and Strategic Economic Plan (2016).

Employment Land Supply

- 4.65 The St. Helens Employment Land and Premises Study (May 2011) and the Review of Employment Land in St. Helens to 2027 (August 2011) both informed the employment land supply position identified in the St. Helens Core Strategy (2012). The Core Strategy identified a supply of 86.12ha of immediately deliverable and potentially deliverable employment land.
- 4.66 Since the adoption of the Core Strategy (2012) there has been a slow take-up of employment land within St. Helens with only 2.37ha developed from 2012 to 2016, with take-up being significantly below the long term average annual take-up of 5.79 hectares per year (1997-2012). Employment sites have faced increased pressure from higher value uses such as residential and retail and consequently the Borough has experienced a net loss of 34.93ha of employment land since 2012.
- 4.67 The Allocations Local Plan Economic Evidence Base Paper (2015) prepared by consultants AECOM and DTZ provides an expert view of market demand for employment land in St. Helens. The Paper demonstrates strong recent demand for modern large scale logistics development in the North West, particularly over 100,000 square feet. SuperPort² is identified as a project that will increase the demand for large logistics and manufacturing space in the Borough. The Paper concludes that large scale logistics is the most active market in the region and a particular opportunity for St. Helens given its location straddling the M6.
- 4.68 The Paper identifies a number of key locational and site specific criteria for large scale distribution (300,000 square feet) uses including a minimum site size of 5ha and a drive time to motorway junctions of 10 minutes or less. The Paper concludes that none of the sites identified in the Core Strategy employment land supply are suitable for large scale distribution use and therefore there is currently an imbalance between demand and supply for large scale distribution sites in the Borough. This shortage of available land has meant that in recent years, when demand for large scale distribution premises has been high, occupiers have had to locate elsewhere.
- 4.69 National planning policy expects the Local Plan to fully meet objectively assessed needs for economic development in the Borough, taking account of market intelligence, market signals and the locational requirements of particular types of business. The Council have recently carried out an assessment of objectively assessed needs for employment land in an Employment Land Needs Study 2015 (ELNS).

² SuperPort is the enhancement of sea and air ports and freight facilities along the River Mersey and Manchester Ship Canal. A key part is the new Liverpool 2 deep water container port at Seaforth.

4.70 Similar to the Allocations Local Plan Economic Evidence Base Paper (2015) the ELNS also found that St. Helens' location on the M6 and M62 motorways means that it is ideally positioned to provide a critical role in the North West large-scale logistics and distribution sector. The ELNS indicates whilst traditionally St. Helens has been a manufacturing centre, with the largest consumers of land being B2 (general industrial) operations, it is likely that the mix of uses will change during the Plan period, with a strong shift to B8 (storage and distribution) uses.

Employment Land Requirement

4.71 The ELNS identified an employment land objectively assessed need of 174ha for St. Helens from 2012³ to 2037 which included a 5 year buffer for margin of choice and flexibility. The ELNS also considered the potential of SuperPort and a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) at the former Parkside Colliery increasing demand for employment land in St. Helens, particularly in the large-scale logistics sector. Accounting for the potential uplift in employment land demand due to these major projects, the ELNS concludes that St. Helens has an overall employment land OAN of 214 ha up to 2037 when SuperPort and multiplier effects of Parkside SRFI are taken into account.

4.72 The ELNS indicates that employment land needs of the Plan period would be a mix of B1, B2 and B8 uses and provided an indicative breakdown of employment land needs by type based on the sectoral forecasts from both Cambridge Econometrics and Oxford Economics and the market drivers underpinning local employment land demand.

Employment Type	Hectares
B1(a) Office	10-15
B1(b) Research and development	1-4
B1(c) Light Industry	15-20
B2 General industrial	50-65
B8 Storage and Distribution	100-130
Total employment needs	177-214

Table 4.1: St. Helens Estimated Employment Land Needs 2012-2037

4.73 Based on the objective assessed needs identified in the ELNS up to 2037, the objective assessed needs requirement for 2012-2033 has been calculated as a minimum of 190.8ha as shown in Table 4.2 below.

³ The ELNS has a forecasting base date of 2012, as this was considered the most appropriate date to start the forecasting from as this is when the Core Strategy was adopted. The level of employment land take-up from 2012 has been influenced by the Core Strategy policies and thus it was considered that to include post 2012 take-up rates in an historic baseline take-up scenario could potentially distort the actual historic baseline position.

Local Plan Objectively Assessed Needs Requirement 2012-2033	Hectares
Baseline OAN 2012 to 2033 (based on ELNS Period 1997-2012, 5.8ha per annum growth scenario)	121.8
5 year Buffer 2033-2038	29
Allowance for SuperPort and Parkside SRFI	40
Total	190.8

Table 4.2: Employment Land Objectively Assessed Need for 2012-2033

- 4.74 The baseline OAN for the Plan period (121.8 ha) has been calculated by projecting forward the ELNS 5.8ha per annum growth scenario for the Period 1997-2012, from the ELNS base date of 2012 to the end date of the Plan 2033. The full OAN has then been established by adding a 5 year buffer to the baseline OAN and the recommended allowance for SuperPort and Parkside SRFI of 40ha from the ELNS.
- 4.75 The residual requirement for employment land has then been calculated by allowing for take-up and losses of employment land since 2012 against the OAN (190.8ha) as shown in Table 4.3 below. Once an allowance of -32.56ha for take up and losses has been applied (2.37ha of take-up and 34.96ha of losses) the residual requirement for the Plan is 223.4ha.

Local Plan Employment Land Residual Requirement	Hectares
Local Plan OAN 2012-2033 including 5 year buffer and allowance for Parkside SRFI and SuperPort	190.8
Take up and losses since 2012	-32.6
Existing Supply of Deliverable Employment Land	0.00
Total Residual Requirement	223.4

Table 4.3: Residual Employment Land Requirement 2012-2038

- 4.76 A Liverpool City Region Strategic Housing and Employment Land Assessment (SHELMA) is currently being undertaken which will identify an employment land objective assessed needs for each Liverpool City Region authority for B1, B2 and for B8 development (under 100,000 sq ft). The SHELMA will also consider the objective assessed needs for large scale B8 warehousing and distribution (over 100,000 sq ft) for the Liverpool City Region. Due to the timing of the Study, the Preferred Options Local Plan cannot yet have full regard to the implications of the SHELMA.
- 4.77 Responses to the Local Plan Scoping Consultation (2016) suggested that further consideration should be given to the role St. Helens can play in accommodating SuperPort related demand for logistics land and that St. Helens should be planning positively to accommodate at least 70 ha of land for logistics over and above baseline levels of demand.

- 4.78 Taking the Council's economic growth ambitions, the position of the SHELMA and the comments received from consultees during the Local Plan Scoping Consultation (2016) into consideration, it is considered that the employment land requirement for the Plan (306ha) has been set at a level that allows for enough flexibility to respond to any requirement to meet B8 strategic land needs resulting from the SHELMA over and above that identified in the ELNS (clearly this position will need to be reviewed following the publication of the SHELMA), and the comments received in relation to the positive role St. Helens can play in meeting the needs of the general logistics and distribution sector.

Employment Land Allocations

- 4.79 To strengthen the local economy, St. Helens needs to build on those sectors where the Borough enjoys a competitive advantage. As identified above one such sector is logistics and distribution, where St. Helens' location, astride the M6 and M62 motorways makes it particularly attractive for development. To meet market needs for the large scale distribution sector (300,000 square feet) requires the delivery of sites of 5ha or above and this has been reflected in the size of sites selected for release from the Green Belt and allocation for employment use in this Plan. However it is important to note that smaller existing urban employment areas will still have an important role to play in accommodating smaller scale employment development during the Plan period and as such this policy seeks to protect the Borough's existing business and industrial areas.
- 4.80 As outlined above the Core Strategy identified an employment land supply of 86.12ha. The Allocations Local Plan Economic Evidence Base Paper (2015) has indicated that none of the sites identified in the Core Strategy employment land supply are suitable for large scale logistics and distribution use. The Council has assessed the suitability of the identified Core Strategy supply for non-large scale B8 uses and it is considered that the majority of the sites are not presently viable for speculative employment development without gap funding. The costs associated with dealing with abnormalities such as contamination, site specific constraints or infrastructure requirements means that these sites are of a poor quality in terms of their attractiveness to the market, and ultimately the cost of providing employment floorspace is greater than its subsequent market value. Three sites from the identified Core Strategy supply are considered to be deliverable over the Plan period and these have been allocated for employment development in this policy: Gerards Park, Land to the West of Sandwash Close, Rainford and Land at Lea Green Farm West. It is not considered appropriate to allocate the remaining sites identified in the Core Strategy supply having regard to site constraints and viability considerations, particularly given the reduced availability of funding support. However the Council will continue support proposals for employment uses on these sites if viable proposals come forward.
- 4.81 The ELNS identified 14,474 sqm of marketed offices (46 premises) in St. Helens with the largest nodes for available office space in central St. Helens and Newton-le-Willows, heavily influenced by the availability in Woodlands

Park. The ELNS identified an office vacancy rate of 9.8% and suggested that this is sufficient capacity to absorb further growth in the near term. The ELNS concludes that there is likely to be more demand for the B1 uses in business park locations rather than town centre locations in St. Helens. The ELNS indicates that while office growth would play a role in the continued operation of the town centre, the market in St. Helens and surrounding areas such as Warrington has shown a preference for the business park model of providing office space. The ELNS recommends that opportunities for town centre redevelopment of older stock should be encouraged, however it should be realised that this will be a very long, incremental process.

- 4.82 Given the current office vacancy rate coupled with the lack of previous demand for office space in St. Helens, with larger office occupiers favouring the regional centres of Liverpool and Manchester and the secondary location of Warrington, a 4.79ha allocation for B1a office use is considered appropriate.

Alternative Uses on Employment Sites

- 4.83 During the Local Plan period some older employment areas may no longer be fit for purpose or their economic role may change. Alternative uses on existing or former employment sites may be acceptable where a future employment use is unacceptable on environmental grounds, or where the site is not well located in relation to the transport network or surrounding land uses, or where the community benefits of the development outweigh the potential of the site in its present form for further employment use. The community benefits of a scheme could be wide-ranging and it is the responsibility of the applicant to clearly set out these benefits to support their proposal. The Council will determine the significance of community benefits of proposals on a case by case basis.
- 4.84 Alternative uses may also be appropriate where there is no current or likely future market demand for the site and reuse for employment purposes is not viable currently or in the long term. The Local Economy Supplementary Planning Document (2013) outlines the evidence applicants will be required to provide in relation to the marketing and viability of employment sites before their loss for other uses is considered.

Use of Local Suppliers and Training and Education

- 4.85 The overall objective of the St. Helens City Growth Strategy is to increase economic activity. One way in which the Council considers that it can implement the St. Helens City Growth Strategy is through helping applicants and the end users of development schemes. It considers that a key way of achieving this is by directing selected applicants and end users to local recruitment services, local apprentices and sources of information on local suppliers of goods and services for advice and to explore the possibility of utilising their services. Further guidance in relation to the requirement for applicants to contribute to the provision of training and local employment opportunities and to utilise local goods and services is outlined in the Local Economy SPD (2013).

Alternative Options

- 4.86 *Alternative Option 1:* Use economic forecasts to determine the objectively assessed employment land needs.
- 4.87 *Reason for Rejection:* When calculating the Borough's objectively assessed employment land needs for 2012-2037 the ELNS tested an economic forecast based methodology. The ELNS reviewed economic forecasts from Cambridge Econometrics and Oxford Economics and these predicted an employment land demand for growth sectors in St. Helens from 2012-2037 of 18.2ha to 30.8ha, and 21.8ha to 37ha after a 5 year buffer was applied. The ELNS tested the reasonability of using economic forecasts by comparing historic forecasts to actual employment land take up data in the Borough. The ELNS indicates that the actual gain of employment land in St. Helens has been significantly higher than previous economic forecasts. Therefore the land take-up methodology is considered the most likely predictor of future land take-up and has been used in the ELNS to establish baseline objectively assessed employment land needs.
- 4.88 *Alternative Option 2:* Provide less employment land than identified objectively assessed needs.
- 4.89 *Reason for Rejection:* This option would not be compliant with the NPPF which requires each authority to meet its own 'objectively assessed' development needs with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change. It would not proactively encourage sustainable growth and inward investment to the Borough and therefore economic demand and creation of new jobs would not be realised in St. Helens. This would result in slower growth in the Borough's economy.
- 4.90 *Alternative Option 3:* Provide significantly more employment land than the identified employment land requirement.
- 4.91 *Reason for Rejection:* A significant oversupply of employment land could result in pressure for more housing, create labour supply difficulties and could therefore result in unsustainable commuting. It could also result in a large oversupply of development land, with many of the allocated sites remaining vacant. A significant oversupply of development land in St. Helens could also undermine the delivery of employment land in neighbouring authorities. It is considered that the Preferred Option provides a reasonable amount of employment land, above the identified objectively assessed needs, thereby offering flexibility without triggering the sustainability issues a significant amount of oversupply could generate.
- 4.92 *Alternative Option 4:* Relaxation of policy protecting existing employment land.
- 4.93 *Reason for Rejection:* Whilst the NPPF does recognise that some employment allocations may need to change over time, this option could result in piecemeal change across the Borough's existing business and industrial areas with successful employment areas being undermined by higher value uses driving

out employment uses. This would be harmful to the local economy and limit the opportunity for existing business to confidently invest in the area.

Strategic Aims Met	SA 1, SA 5
Strategic Objectives Met	SO 1.1 SO 5.1, SO 5.2, SO 5.3
Key Delivery Items	Development of at least 306ha of new employment land by 2038 Development of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange at Parkside

Policy LPA04.1: Strategic Employment Sites

Policy LPA04.1: Strategic Employment Sites

1. The following sites have been allocated as Strategic Employment Development Sites as shown on the Policies Map:

- EA1: Omega South Western Extension, Phase 1, Land north of Finches Plantation, Bold;
- EA2: Land at Florida Farm North, Slag Lane, Haydock;
- EA4: Land north east of Junction M6 J23, south of Haydock Racecourse, Haydock;
- EA7: Land west of Millfield Lane, south of Liverpool Road and north of Clipsley Brook, Haydock;
- EA8: Parkside East, Newton-le-Willows; and
- EA9: Parkside West, Newton-le-Willows.

2. All strategic development sites will be required to deliver:

- A masterplan of the site, including phasing, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority;
- All sites should be outward facing with high quality soft landscaping which creates a strong sense of place and represents St. Helens well;
- A robust and implementable Travel Plan for the entire site to address the provision of, and promote access to, frequent public transport services, pedestrian and cycling links;
- Measures to address the potential flood risk and surface water drainage issues on the site and assist in reducing flood risk downstream to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency, United Utilities and the Lead Local Flood Authority;
- Highly energy efficient developments which where viable, provide a minimum of 10% of the development's energy requirements through the on-site generation of renewable or low carbon energy, or district energy network; and
- Training schemes to increase the opportunity for St. Helens residents to obtain employment at the site particularly local unemployed and disadvantaged people.

3. Furthermore these strategic sites would have to comply with the relevant policies of the Local Plan, for example in relation to design, highway safety, ecology and heritage.

4. Financial contributions or the provision of on-site infrastructure may be required towards highways and improving public transport services and facilities; this will be subject to further assessment before the Publication Stage of the Local Plan.

5. Where a Strategic Development Site will be developed out by more than one developer, developers will be expected to work together to establish how the site's infrastructure will be delivered as a whole and to ensure it is delivered in a timely manner. Developers will be expected to produce evidence of collaborative working and demonstrate how their particular scheme will deliver the Council's policy for the site and contribute towards the masterplan of the site.

High Level Site Specific Requirements

EA1: Omega South Western Extension, Phase 1, Land north of Finches Plantation, Bold

- Appropriate highway access via the existing Omega South development, with a suitable internal road network;
- Any enhancement work required to M62 Junction 8 to mitigate the impacts from the proposed development;
- Maximise the potential for St. Helens residents to access the site through the consideration of improved bus services and pedestrian and cycle links from St. Helens to the site; and
- Design and layout should seek to connect well to the existing Omega development and allow for connections to future phases of development.

EA2: Land at Florida Farm North, Slag Lane, Haydock

- Appropriate highway access via an upgraded junction at East Lancashire Road A580 / Haydock Lane, with a suitable internal road network;
- Any enhancement work required to M6 Junction 23 to mitigate the impacts from the proposed development,
- Design and layout should seek to connect well to Haydock Industrial Estate and to allocated sites EA6 and EA7; and
- 25 metre easement required from Clipsley Brook where possible and where this is not feasible suitable, ecologically friendly, engineering solutions should be provided. The development should incorporate measures to “slow the flow” to reduce the risk of flooding downstream and enhance biodiversity.

EA4: Land north east of Junction M6 J23, south of Haydock Racecourse, Haydock

- Appropriate highway access with a suitable internal road network;
- Any enhancement work required to M6 Junction 23 to mitigate the impacts from the proposed development, and/ or safeguard sufficient land for future enhancement works which may be required to Junction 23; and
- Design and layout should seek to mitigate and minimise impacts, including traffic flow, on Haydock Racecourse to the north of the site.

EA7: Land west of Millfield Lane, south of Liverpool Road and north of Clipsley Brook, Haydock

- Appropriate highway access via Haydock Lane, or justified suitable alternative, with a suitable internal road network;
- Any enhancement work required to M6 Junction 23 to mitigate the impacts from the proposed development;

Continued on next page...

- Design and layout should seek to connect well to Haydock Industrial Estate and to allocated sites EA2 and EA6; and
- 25 metre easement required from Clipsley Brook where possible and where this is not feasible suitable, ecologically friendly, engineering solutions should be provided. The development should incorporate measures to “slow the flow” to reduce the risk of flooding downstream and enhance biodiversity.

EA8: Parkside East, Newton-le-Willows

- See Policy LPA10

EA9: Parkside West, Newton-le-Willows

- Appropriate highway access via the existing A49 Newton Road access for an initial phase of development and in later phases via a new link road from the east of the M6, with a suitable internal road network. The amount of development achievable will be determined following a comprehensive transport assessment which should be produced in liaison with St. Helens and Warrington Borough Councils;
- Once the identified capacity of the A49 has been reached any new development will be accessed via a new link road from the east of the M6 at which point the A49 will be closed to Heavy Goods Vehicles to and from the site;
- The preference would be for all HGV traffic to and from the site to be directed south on the A49, unless it can be demonstrated that it would not have any significant adverse impact on traffic movement, residential amenity or air quality;
- Any enhancement work required to M6 Junction 22 to mitigate the impacts from the proposed development;
- Necessary upgrading to the A49 Newton Road and surrounding junctions; and
- Design and layout should seek to mitigate and minimise impacts on residential development located to the west of the site; and
- As shown on the Policies Map and indicatively on Figure 4.1 below 5.58 ha of land is allocated at Parkside West for SRFI. This land is required to facilitate rail access to/from the north to the land allocated at Parkside East for a SRFI (EA8). Planning permission will not be granted for any other use of this land which would prejudice its use for SRFI.

Reasoned Justification

- 4.94 These sites are considered to be strategic as given their scale they will play a significant role in the delivery of the overall strategy of the Plan. It is anticipated that during the Plan period these sites will deliver the bulk of employment land required to meet need. None strategic sites identified within Policy LPA04 for allocation are sites which are not considered large enough to warrant a strategic allocation. Whilst such sites are anticipated to yield less employment floorspace compared to strategic sites, their allocation will serve to support the overall delivery of employment land and they will be a key part of the supply balancing out the phased delivery that typically results from the build out of large strategic employment sites.

Policy LPA05: Meeting St. Helens Housing Needs

Policy LPA05: Meeting St. Helens' Housing Need

1. During the 19 year period from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2033 a minimum of 10,830 net additional dwellings will be provided in the Borough of St. Helens, equating to an indicative annual average of 570 dwellings.
2. The housing requirement will be met from the following sources:
 - (i) Housing allocations shown on the Policies Map and listed in table 4.4 accompanying this policy;
 - (ii) Sites with planning permission for housing development;
 - (iii) Sites without planning permission identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA); and
 - (iv) "Windfall" housing gains, including development on small sites not identified in the SHLAA, sub-division of dwellings, conversions and changes of use.
3. For the avoidance of doubt, the housing sites allocated in this plan are not granted Permission in Principle, as there is currently insufficient detail about how Permission in Principle will operate.
4. The development of allocated and non-allocated housing sites may be phased at planning application stage if evidence emerges that infrastructure needs to be improved to cope with the development. This needs to occur before construction occurs or before a certain number of dwellings are completed. In such cases, when granting planning permission for housing sites the commencement of construction of the dwellings in the initial or subsequent phases may be restricted until the infrastructure issues are resolved.
5. The efficient use of land will be encouraged by requiring new development to achieve a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) in urban areas, between 30 to 40 dph in and adjacent to district and local centres and sustainable locations well served by frequent bus or train services, and densities of between 40 and 50 (dph) or above within St. Helens Town Centre and Earlestown Town Centre and within the edge of these Town Centres. Densities below 30 dph may be appropriate in areas characterised by lower densities, including certain low density suburban areas identified as Residential Character Areas, in the Green Belt and former Green Belt land now allocated for development.
6. The delivery of housing will be monitored to ensure that adequate supply is coming forward in a timely manner and maintaining a five year supply of housing land. Where housing delivery is significantly below the anticipated level for a significant period of time, reasons for under-delivery will be investigated and if delivery is due to a significant lack of land supply, a partial or full plan review will be considered to allocate Safeguarded sites for housing development.

Table 4.4 – Housing Allocations

Allocation reference	Site Name	Area	NDA	Minimum Density	Estimated delivery 2018-33	Estimated delivery 2034-48
HA1	Land adjoining Ash Grove Farm, Beacon Road, Billinge	8.70	75%	25	163	0
HA2	Land South of Billinge Road, east of Garswood Road and west of Smock Lane, Garswood	9.58	75%	25	179	0
HA3	Land at Florida Farm (south of A580), Slag Lane, Blackbrook	22.29	75%	30	502	0
HA4	Land East of Chapel Lane and south of Walkers Lane, Sutton Manor	4.25	75%	30	95	0
HA5	Land South of Gartons Lane and former St. Theresa's Social Club, Gartons Lane, Bold	19.80	75%	30	446	0
HA6	Land south of Reginald Road / Bold Road - Northern Section (Phase 1), Bold	10.50	75%	25	197	0
HA7	Land between Vista Road and Ashton Road, Newton -le-Willows	17.00	75%	30	350	0
HA8	Eccleston Park Golf Club, Rainhill Road, Eccleston	49.67	65%	30	585	383
HA9	Higher Barrowfield Farm, Houghton's Lane, Eccleston	0.78	75%	25	8	0
HA10	Land south west of M6 J23 between Vista Road and Lodge Lane, Haydock	28.46	75%	25	520	0
HA11	Land at Moss Bank Farm, Moss Bank Road, Moss Bank	2.68	75%	25	50	0
HA12	Former Newton Community Hospital (Simms Ward), Bradlegh Road, Newton-le-Willows	2.01	75%	25	20	0
HA13	Former Red Bank Community Home, Winwick Road, Newton-le-Willows	8.03	75%	25	150	0
HA14	Land south east of Lords Fold, Rainford	2.45	75%	30	55	0
HA15	Land South of Higher Lane and east of Rookery Lane, Rainford	11.62	60%	25	174	0
HA16	Land south of A580 between Houghtons Lane and Crantock Grove, Windle	54.27	60%	30	585	392
Totals					4093	775

Notes:

*Area (Hectares) – Council officer view, this may differ from area suggested by site promoters.
NDA – Net Developable Area: typically 75%, reduced if obvious abnormal constraints that reduce the available developable area.*

Density (dwellings per hectare) – the minimum density required, including open space and estate roads. Additional 25% is for other infrastructure, including landscape buffer to countryside and non-estate roads. 30dph is assumed when a site has an urban setting, with 25 dph on edge of urban locations, but 30dph should be aimed for on sites released from the Green Belt wherever this can be achieved without compromising the landscape character to maximise the economic use of land.

Estimated delivery – based on SHLAA assumption of 45 units per site per year. Some sites may be able to deliver higher amounts with multiple housebuilders and/or multiple sales outlets. Sites that are expected to deliver units in the next plan period will not have an area “safeguarded”, but will be fully removed from the Green Belt for the 2018-33 period.

Reasoned Justification

Evidence of FOAHN

- 4.96 The Mid-Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (MM SHMA, January 2016) was commissioned to determine market, affordable and specialist housing needs in the Mid-Mersey Housing Market Area for the period 2014 to 2037 by Halton, St. Helens and Warrington Councils. The SHMA found that Halton, St. Helens and Warrington comprise one Housing Market Area, however there are also significant housing market and migration linkages between St. Helens and Knowsley and Wigan.
- 4.97 The SHMA took the Government’s official population and household projections as the starting point for considering future housing need. Unattributable Population Change (UPC), a statistical anomaly resulting from the 2011 Census that led to a lower than expected population in St. Helens, was then taken into account, leading to a downward revision of population and household growth. This suggested a figure below recent and long term housing delivery trends.
- 4.98 The SHMA then considered forecast economic growth from both Cambridge Econometrics and Oxford Economics, with the first being favoured as the profile of the workforce was a better fit with existing and projected workforce. This led to an uplift in the housing need to 445 dwellings per annum, and this was considered a more appropriate level of housing need by the authors of the report. An uplift to improve affordability and so allow more households to form was then considered. The SHMA found that housing was relatively affordable in St. Helens compared to other areas in north west and the country, and so an increase of only 1.2% was recommended, increasing the Full Objectively Assessed Need (FOAHN) to 451 dwellings per year.

Liverpool City Region SHELMA

- 4.99 The Liverpool City Region (LCR) authorities of Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St. Helens and Wirral, and the associate member West Lancashire, are currently working together on a new Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA). This study will identify the Housing Market Areas and Functional Economic Market Areas in the LCR, and then identify the market housing need (FOAHN) and employment land requirements for the LCR and individual authorities within it in a consistent manner. The findings of the SHELMA are due in to be published in the first half of 2017 and will inform a

planned Liverpool City Region strategic planning document that will eventually guide the Local Plans of the authorities. This Plan will take account of the SHELMA's findings where relevant.

The housing requirement

- 4.100 The housing requirement runs from 1st April 2014 as this was the base date of the St. Helens Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), and continues for the entire Local Plan period of 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2033 (15 years). The target takes account of over or under supply ("backlog") since 2014 and estimated completions up to the start date of the Plan (1/4/2018), and adjusts the land requirement accordingly.
- 4.101 The annual average net housing requirement of 570 dwellings per year set out in part 1 of this Policy fully meets the Full Objectively Assessed Housing Need (FOAHN) of 451 established in the 2016 Mid Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). Furthermore, it incorporates an uplift of just over 20% from the FOAHN (an increase to 541 per year) to take account of:
- the Borough's ambitions to continue stabilising and increasing the population,
 - allow for more housing choice and competition so more households can afford to form, allow for significant economic growth and
 - to reflect the high levels of housebuilding achieved in years before and after the 2008-2009 recession.
- 4.102 The housing requirement is a net housing need arising from population and economic factors, and account still needs to be taken of the likely impact of demolitions, conversions and changes to and from residential use. The loss of dwellings to demolitions and changes of use has averaged 26 dwellings per year over the ten year period 2006/07 to 2015/16, discount an abnormally high year (201 in 2008/09 resulting from housing clearances) and an abnormally low year (2 in 2009/10). The Council considers this to be a suitable indicator of future losses, and so in addition to the 20% uplift, a further requirement of 29 per annum is added to accommodate the demolitions and round the figure up to 570 dwellings per annum.
- 4.103 The Preferred Housing requirement of 570 dwellings per annum is the same as the annual average net housing target of 570 set in the St. Helens Local Plan Core Strategy (2012). The Core Strategy target was set by the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West and was a target for growth that was above housing need estimates. A growth approach in Local Plan is still considered appropriate to help meet St. Helens development needs and economic growth plans and it is considered realistic as this target has been met in years including 2013/14 and 2015/16.

Housing land supply

- 4.104 The St. Helens Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2016) identified and assessed potential housing land supply and planning permissions

on sites over 0.25 hectares. It provides estimated housing delivery for fifteen years from its base date of 1st April 2016 broken down as follows:

Supply		Number of dwellings
Deliverable 0-5 years	Large sites - planning permission not started	530
	Large sites - planning permission under construction	689
	Large sites - SHLAA sites	597
	Small sites (under 0.25ha) allowance (91p.a. x 5)	455
	Sub total	2271
Developable 6-10 years	Large sites - planning permission not started	435
	Large sites - planning permission under construction	100
	Large sites - SHLAA sites	1719
	Small sites - allowance (91 x 5)	455
	Sub total	2709
Developable 11-15 years	Large sites - planning permission not started	43
	Large sites - planning permission under construction	114
	Large sites - historically implemented but stalled	343
	Large sites - SHLAA sites	704
	Small sites - allowance (91 x 5)	455
	Sub total	1659
TOTAL		6639

Table 4.5: Deliverable and developable housing land supply 2016 – 2031

Determining the amount of housing land required

- 4.105 Although there has been a slight over-provision of 67 units against the 570 target since 2014, as there are two housing monitoring years until the adoption of the plan and the over or under-provision of housing may change, the housing target has not been adjusted down but instead the amount of land required from the Green Belt has been adjusted. Also, the additional 20% buffer is likely to compensate for any shortfall. The table above shows that there is a need for land to provide additional dwelling capacity to the capacity identified in the SHLAA, and this is considered further in policy LPA02, Spatial Strategy, which identifies that the preferred option for meeting this need is to release land from the Green Belt to meet housing (and employment) development need. The Preferred sites for release to meeting the housing target are set out above and sites to meet the employment target are set out in policy LPC05.
- 4.106 The need for housing land in addition to the existing supply identified in the SHLAA has been determined as follows:

		Units
A	St. Helens Housing requirement (1/4/2014 to 31/3/2033)	10,830
B	Annual average net additional housing requirement	570
C	Cumulative over- or under-supply from 1/4/14 to 31/3/16	67
D	Projected over- or under-supply from 1/4/16 to Local Plan start date of 1/4/2018	0
E	15 year Housing Requirement over Local Plan period from 1/4/2018 to 31/3/2033	8,550
F	15 year need during Plan period from 1/4/2018 (allowing for over/under-supply)	8,483
G	15 year need following Plan period from 1/4/2033 to 31/3/2048	8,550
H	SHLAA Identified supply on 1/4/16 from 0-5 yr Deliverable (1/4/16 to 30/3/21)	2,271
i	SHLAA Identified supply on 1/4/16 from 6-10yr Developable (1/4/21 to 30/3/26)	2,709
j	SHLAA Identified supply on 1/4/16 from 11-15yr Developable (1/4/26 to 30/3/31)	1,659
k	Total SHLAA Identified supply on 1/4/16 (SHLAA sites, planning permissions and small sites allowance)	6,639
l	SHLAA likely capacity on 1/4/18 (capacity at 1/4/16 - minus 2 years of delivery) from 1/4/16 to 30/3/31	5,499
m	SHLAA capacity reduction for non-delivery (10% of SHLAA identified capacity for years 6-15)	437
n	SHLAA + PP likely capacity over first 15 years of Plan (1/4/18 - 30/3/33)	5,062
o	Number of dwellings required on new sites i.e. Green Belt for first 15 years (1/4/18 - 30/3/33) [f) adjusted 15yr need - l) adjusted SHLAA capacity]	3,421
p	Allow for a 20% buffer for choice, flexibility and compensate for lead-in times to start of housing delivery	4,105
q	Estimated windfall capacity over second 15 years (1/4/33 - 30/3/48) = 45 dwellings per annum (assume no contribution from current identified SHLAA sites)	675
r	Number of dwellings for which land needs to be found over second 15 years (1/4/33 - 30/3/48) [g-q] i.e. amount which Local Plan Preferred Option is to accommodate on Green Belt	7,875
s	Number of dwellings for which land needs to be found over second 30 years (1/4/18 - 30/3/48) i.e. amount which Local Plan Preferred Option is to accommodate on Green Belt	11,980

Table 4.6 – Housing land requirement calculation

Distribution of development

4.107 LPA02, Spatial Strategy, explains that development will be distributed across the Borough to meet the development needs of all of the Key Settlements. Analysis of the housing completions in the wards of St. Helens for the period 2005/06 to 2015/16 inclusive (11 years) has shown that the delivery of housing has been in the inner urban wards of Parr and St. Helens Town Centre and adjacent wards such as Thatto Heath (Waterside Village) and in Newton (Vulcan Urban Village). There has been relatively little housing development in the outlying key settlements such as Rainford, Billinge, Garswood, Blackbrook and Haydock, Rainhill, Eccleston and Windle, and for most the share of past

housing growth has not reflected population or ward size due to a lack of brownfield land and Green Belt constraint. At the same time Billinge & Seneley Green, Blackbrook and Rainford wards have all seen declines in population between the 2011 Census and the 2014-Mid-Year Population Estimates.

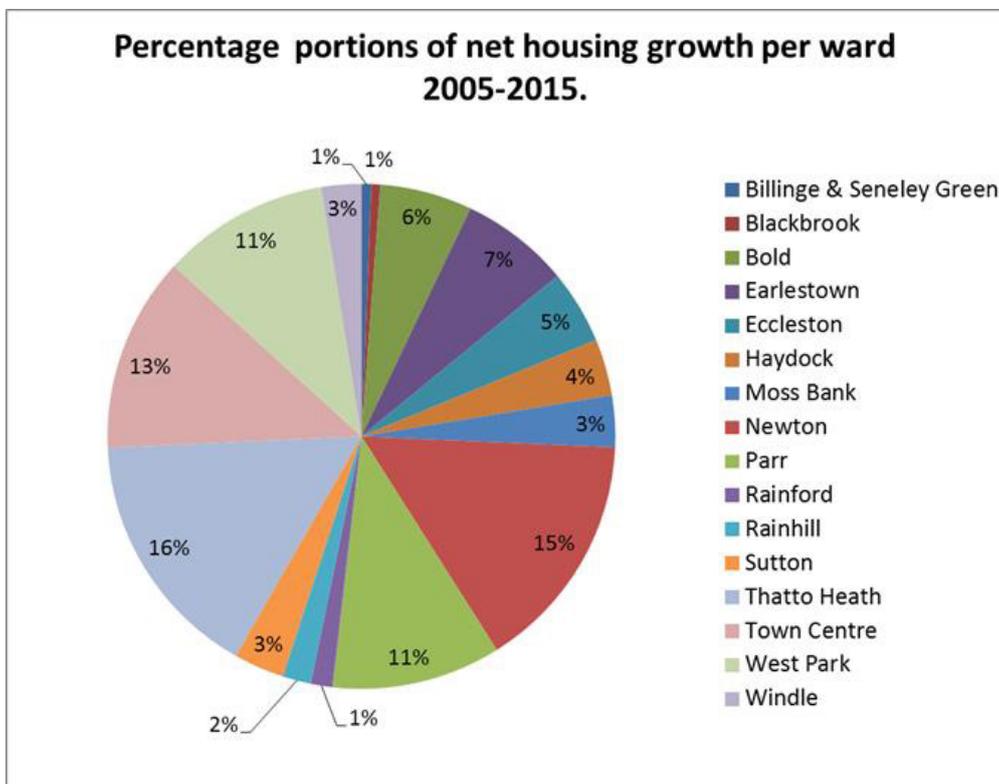


Figure 4.3 Percentage Portions of Net Housing Growth Per Ward 2005-2015

Distribution/proportions

4.108 As explained in Policy LPA02, Spatial Strategy, the Local Plan aims to ensure there is additional new housing provided in every Key Settlement to ensure all communities have access to new market and affordable housing. Appendix 10 sets out the distribution per ward.

Cooperation in meeting housing needs across the Housing Market Area and beyond

4.109 When establishing the housing requirement, the need to meet the unmet housing need of neighbouring authorities has been considered. St. Helens has not received requests from neighbouring authorities to meet their unmet market or affordable housing needs. Likewise, St. Helens do not consider it appropriate to rely on neighbours to meet any of St. Helens housing needs as this may undermine communities in St. Helens if members of the community need to move out of the borough to meet their housing need. It would also undermine efforts for regeneration and economic growth in St. Helens, and may lead to decreased population and make services less viable.

- 4.110 Furthermore, all of St. Helens neighbours have undertaken or are undertaking Green Belt reviews to enable them to meet their own needs, so it any reliance on neighbours to meet St. Helens needs would not prevent Green Belt release, just move it to another location.

Phasing

- 4.111 The Plan does not phase the release of housing sites as the Council wishes to provide a range of housing sites across the borough that together will deliver the housing target and ensure the maintenance of a five year supply of land. Further investigation of infrastructure requirements, including through the masterplanning of Strategic Housing Sites, before Planning permission is applied for may identify where infrastructure needs to be upgraded before dwellings are built and occupied. In these cases, the development of the site will be required to be phased to ensure that the infrastructure is provided before occupation of dwellings.

Safeguarded Land

- 4.112 In line with NPPF guidance on making changes to the Green Belt, the Plan aims to ensure that changes to the Green Belt will take account of long term development needs so that the revised Green Belt boundary remains unaltered for as long as possible. The Council intends to safeguard land for future housing need by removing it from the Green Belt and protecting it from development until allocated for development through the Local Plan. The SHMA considered housing need up to 2037, and so the Council considers it appropriate to continue using the net annual average housing requirement beyond 2033, along with a reduced allowance for windfall housing development of 45 dwellings per year (half the allowance for 2014 to 2033). Policy LPA06: Safeguarded Land identifies sites that have been safeguarded for housing (and employment) development beyond this Plan period.

Permission in Principle

- 4.113 None of the sites allocated in this Local Plan are granted Permission in Principle by this plan as the implications of Permission in Principle are not yet clear. Brownfield housing sites identified by the SHLAA will be considered for inclusion in the Council's Brownfield Register when it is compiled, and this can indicate which sites are considered suitable for Permission in Principle.

Previously Developed Land

- 4.114 Policy LPA02, Spatial Strategy, explains how the Local Plan aims to ensure the development of brownfield sites by setting threshold for developer contributions to levels that reflect viability of brownfield sites and the areas they are in, and to keep an up to date brownfield register to promote sites to potential developers.

Alternatives Options

4.115 *Alternative Option 1: Set the housing requirement at 451 dwellings per annum for 2014 to 2033, based on the Full Objectively Assessed Housing Need figure of 451 identified by the Mid Mersey SHMA. Also, do not allow for 10% of the SHLAA sites in the 6-15 year supply period to not deliver, require 30dph minimum on Green Belt sites, do not allow 20% extra capacity on Green Belt sites for choice and flexibility and non-delivery of sites, instead cope with under-supply through a Local Plan Review. Allow for a larger windfall allowance in the second plan period to reduce the need for safeguarded land. This requires lower housing delivery, reducing the amount of houses that need to be found on greenfield and/or Green Belt land to 0 in the period 2014-2033 and 6,090 in the period 2034-2048, which equates to approximately 232 hectares of land (assuming 75% of the land will be developed for housing and it is built at 30 dwellings per hectare).*

4.116 *Reason for Rejection:* This alternative has been rejected as it:

- does not reflect the Borough's ambitions to continue stabilising the population,
- does not allow for more housing choice and competition so more households can afford to form;
- does not allow for significant economic growth;
- fails to reflect the high levels of housebuilding achieved in years before and after the 2008-2009 recession;
- although it is required target under this policy, a blanket 30 dph requirement may not reflect the character to of the areas and density should be determined on a site by site basis
- does not allow for non-delivery or slippage from SHLAA sites and not allowing for extra Green Belt sites to allow for choice, flexibility and to compensate for lead-in times for site delivery would instead increase the risk of there not being an adequate supply of sites and would therefore fail in maintaining a five year supply of land leading to less planning control and increasing the likelihood of a Local Plan review to bring forward safeguarded sites, causing cost and delay;
- the current windfall allowance of 45 units per year in the period beyond the plan, which is half the level in the current plan period, is considered a realistic level based on the large amount of land identified through the SHLAA as suitable and not suitable in the next 15 years, past windfall trends, the stock of brownfield land in the borough and the continued recycling of land over time. A higher figure could be over-optimistic given how thorough the SHLAA has been.

4.117 *Alternative Option 2: Set the housing target at 712 dwellings per annum target, which is 25% above the Preferred Option and current Core Strategy target in order to:*

- enable more people who work in the borough to move to the borough, reducing commuting, and should economic growth be higher than expected, allow more workers to live in the borough;

- make houses more affordable and delivering more choice by delivering more houses and encouraging competition between housing providers, so more households can afford to form;
 - by providing more housing, encouraging more household formation amongst young people, encouraging more families to start and grow population back to higher level, leading to more economic activity which can sustain and attract more services to the borough;
 - to reflect the peak levels of housebuilding achieved in years since 2000.
- 4.118 Also, increase the allowance of non-delivery and slippage from SHLAA sites from the 10% to 20% and apply over the entire plan period; allow for 25% extra capacity on Green Belt sites for choice and flexibility and non-delivery of sites and do not allow for a windfall allowance in the second plan period.
- 4.119 Reason for Rejection: Increasing the housing target to 712 would result in a housing requirement of 13,528 over the period 2014 to 2033. This would require around 7,343 houses to be found on greenfield and/or Green Belt land, requiring around 392 ha of land (assuming a 75% net developable area and 25 dwellings per hectare) over the Plan Period, and 17,348 dwellings and 925 ha of land (assuming a 45 dpa windfall) when the Safeguarded period is included.
- 4.120 A 712 unit per year target is substantially above the amount of housing achieved in the last two years (603.5), than on average over the past 5 years (478) and 10 years (422), indicating that the local housing market and infrastructure could struggle to absorb this number of dwellings and the development industry could struggle to supply this level of housing. It is unlikely that with a 712 target that a five year land supply could be maintained for a number of years at the start of the plan period, reducing planning control over development. The housing could lead to unsustainable commuting patterns if not well connected to new jobs being created and existing jobs.
- 4.121 *Alternative Option 3*: Set the housing target at 912 dwellings per annum, which is approximately 60% above the Preferred Option and current Core Strategy target of 570 in order to:
- As with Alternative Option 2, address additional economic growth, make homes more affordable and, encourage household formation, plus
 - Potentially meet unmet need from other authority areas and / or arising from new evidence such as the Liverpool City Region SHELMA
- 4.122 Reason for rejection: Increasing the housing requirement to housing target to 912 would result in a housing requirement of 14,297 over the period 2014 to 2033. This would require around 11,903 houses to be found on greenfield and/or Green Belt land, requiring around 634 ha of land (assuming a 75% net developable area and 25 dwellings per hectare) over the Plan Period, and 24,908 dwellings and 1,107 ha of land (assuming a 45 dpa windfall) when the Safeguarded period is included.
- 4.123 A 912 unit per year target is substantially above the amount of housing achieved in the last two years and on average over the past 5 and 10 years,

indicating that the local housing market and infrastructure could struggle to absorb this number of dwellings and the development industry could struggle to supply this level of housing. It is unlikely that with a 912 target that a five year land supply could be maintained for a number of years at the start of the plan period, reducing planning control over development. The housing could lead to unsustainable commuting patterns if not well connected to new jobs being created and existing jobs.

4.124 *Alternative Option 4:* A stepped housing target, starting at the OAN of 451 for five years, rising to 630 for the period 2018 to 2033, giving an overall average of 570 dwellings per annum over the period 2014 to 2033. This will reflect the likely housing delivery from the sites allocated in the plan by allowing time for masterplanning of strategic housing sites prior to planning applications being made and will reflect increasing employment and jobs growth resulting from increased employment land availability and build-out. As jobs growth increases, employment levels and incomes in the borough will rise, leading to increased purchase of housing, and so the housing supply will increase steadily in line with this, rather than housing sites being released too early and attracting residents who would commute to work in other areas.

4.125 *Reason for Rejection:* This is more likely to ensure a five year supply of housing land is maintained, so that planning control would be maintained over the delivery of sites and associated infrastructure needs. At this stage of preparing the Plan, there is no evidence that this phasing is necessary.

Strategic Aims Met	SA1, SA4
Strategic Objectives Met	SO1.1, SO4.1
Key Delivery Items	Delivery of housing at or above housing target levels

Policy LPA05.1: Strategic Housing Sites

Policy LPA05.1 Strategic Housing Sites

1. The following sites have been allocated as Strategic Housing Development Sites as shown on the Policies Map:

- HA3: Land at Florida Farm South, Slag Lane, Blackbrook
- HA5: Land South of Gartons Lane and former St. Theresa's Social Club, Gartons Lane, Bold
- HA7: Land between Vista Road and Ashton Road, Earlestown
- HA8: Land at Eccleston Park Golf Club, Rainhill Road, Eccleston
- HA10: Land south west of M6 J23 between Vista Road and Lodge Lane, Haydock
- HA16: Land south of A580 between Houghton's Lane and Crantock Grove, Windle

2. All strategic development sites will be required to deliver:

- A masterplan of the site, including phasing, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority;
- All sites should be outward facing with high quality soft landscaping;
- A robust and implementable Travel Plan for the entire site to address the provision of, and promote access to, frequent public transport services, pedestrian and cycling links;
- Measures to address the potential flood risk and surface water drainage issues on the site and assist in reducing flood risk downstream to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency, United Utilities and the Lead Local Flood Authority; and
- High levels of energy efficiency in all new development. Where viable development will be required to deliver energy efficiency measures 10% above what is required by the most up to date Building Regulations.

Furthermore these strategic sites would have to comply with the relevant policies of the Local Plan, for example in relation to design, highway safety, affordable housing provision, ecology and heritage.

3. Financial contributions or the provision of on-site infrastructure may be required towards highways, improving public transport services and facilities, education, playing pitches and open space provision; this will be subject to further assessment before the Publication Stage of the Local Plan.

4. Where a Strategic Development Site will be developed out by more than one developer, developers will be expected to work together to establish how the site's infrastructure will be delivered as a whole and to ensure it is delivered in a timely manner. Developers will be expected to produce evidence of collaborative working and demonstrate how their particular scheme will deliver the Council's policy for the site and contribute towards the masterplan of the site.

High Level Site Specific Requirements

HA3: Land at Florida Farm South, Blackbrook

- Appropriate highway access via a primary access from Vicarage Road and a left-in, left-out access from the A580 East Lancashire Road, together with a suitable internal road network;
- Suitable highway improvements required along Vicarage Road;
- Design and layout should mitigate and minimise impacts on existing road network;
- Satisfactory pedestrian and cycleway access onto Slag Lane leading onto Haydock Lane;
- 25 metre easement required from Clipsley Brook where possible and where this is not feasible suitable, ecologically friendly, engineering solutions should be provided. The development should incorporate measures to “slow the flow” to reduce the risk of flooding downstream and enhance biodiversity; and
- Financial contributions for education and off-site highway works very likely to be required and there may be further requirements subject to detailed assessment of infrastructure needs.

HA5: Land South of Gartons Lane and former St. Theresa’s Social Club, Gartons Lane, Bold

- The masterplan should seek to incorporate the former St. Teresa’s Social Club (HA5.1);
- Appropriate highway access to be provided via Jubits Lane and Gartons Lane, together with a suitable internal road network;
- A development that integrates well into the Bold Forest Park setting and provides satisfactory pedestrian, bridleway and cycleway access into the Forest Park;
- The development would be expected to fund the provision of a suitable access road to the car park area in the adjacent Bold Forest Park, as well as utility service connections; and
- A financial contribution for education and off-site highway works is likely to be required and there may be further requirements subject to detailed assessment of infrastructure needs.

HA7: Land between Vista Road and Ashton Road, Earlestown; and HA10: Land south west of M6 J23 between Vista Road and Lodge Lane, Haydock

- Appropriate highway access primarily via Vista Road and Ashton Road together with a suitable internal road network;
- Any enhancement work required or financial contribution to M6 Junction 23 to mitigate the impacts from the proposed development, and/ or safeguard sufficient land for future enhancement works which may be required to Junction 23;

Continued on next page...

- Re-alignment of the current temporary access road to create a permanent east-west link road and cycleway connecting Vista Road and Ashton Road;
- Provide new playing pitches to meet the identified shortfall in provision and safeguard land to the north of the Selwyn Jones sports centre for additional playing pitch provision;
- Creation of a green gap to provide a separation between Haydock and Newton-le-Willows and an extension to the Lyme and Woods Pits Country Park;
- Create high quality pedestrian and cycleways to connect the sites to Lyme and Woods Pits Country Park, Haydock Industrial Estate and where feasible to land north east of M6 Junction 23 (EA4) along Penny Lane;
- Financial contributions for education and off-site highway works very likely to be required and there may be further requirements subject to detailed assessment of infrastructure needs; and
- 25 metre easement required from the Ellam's Brook and the Local Wildlife Site. 15 metre easement required from other open watercourses. The development should incorporate measures to "slow the flow" to reduce the risk of flooding downstream and enhance biodiversity.

HA8: Land at Eccleston Park Golf Club, Rainhill Road, Eccleston

- Appropriate highway access via a primary access from the B5413 Rainhill Road and secondary access at Portico Lane together with a suitable internal road network;
- Layout should make suitable provision for bus service to access the primary access road and consider feasibility of bus through route from Portico Lane to Rainhill Road;
- Safe pedestrian and cycle access to Eccleston Park Station;
- Consider the potential for park and ride facilities;
- Consider possible access for limited number of properties from Two Butt Lane subject to detailed assessment and consultation with Knowsley Highways Authority;
- Design and layout should mitigate and minimise impacts on existing road network, Rainhill Road/ Warrington Road junction, Rainhill road/ Elton Head Road, and Elton Head Road/ St. Helens Linkway roundabout in particular;
- Financial contributions for education and off-site highway works very likely to be required and there may be further requirements subject to detailed assessment of infrastructure needs;
- Sandstone Wall on Rainhill Road frontage should be reclaimed and rebuilt once the access road is constructed; and
- 25 metre easement required from the open watercourse and the development should incorporate measures to "slow the flow" to reduce the risk of flooding downstream and enhance biodiversity.

HA16: Land south of A580 between Houghton's Lane and Crantock Grove, Windle & Eccleston

Appropriate highway access via a new access from the A580 East Lancashire Road at Houghton's Lane junction (or suitable alternative) during initial phases of development to link into a new primary access road into the site and a pedestrian and cycle access through to adjacent roads together with a suitable internal road network;

- Design and layout should mitigate and minimise impacts on existing road network, including cul-de-sacs adjoining the site and Rainford Road/ Bleak Hill Road in particular;
- Diversion and upgrading of Houghton's Lane;
- Layout should make suitable provision for bus service to access the primary access road;
- 25 metre easement required from Windle Brook and the development should incorporate measures to "slow the flow" to reduce the risk of flooding downstream and enhance biodiversity;
- Financial contributions for education and off-site highway works very likely to be required and there may be further requirements subject to detailed assessment of infrastructure needs.

Reasoned Justification

4.126 These sites are considered to be strategic as given their scale they will play a significant role in the delivery of the overall strategy of the Plan. It is anticipated that during the Plan period these sites will deliver the bulk of housing required to meet need. None strategic sites identified within Policy LPA05 for allocation are sites which are not considered large enough to warrant a strategic allocation. Whilst such sites are anticipated to yield less numbers of homes compared to strategic sites, their allocation will serve to support the overall delivery of housing and they will be a key part of the supply balancing out the phased delivery that typically results from the build out of large strategic housing sites.

Eccleston Park Golf Club

4.127 Land at Eccleston Park Golf Club, Rainhill Road, Eccleston has been identified as a strategic housing development site. The St. Helens Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Assessment (Golf Course Addendum) (2016) has identified a high provision of golf courses and holes in the Borough in comparison to neighbouring areas. It is therefore considered that the loss of Eccleston Golf Course to a residential use would not have a detrimental impact on the provision of golf courses and holes in the Borough. It is considered that there are sufficient golf courses within the Borough and surrounding area to cater for current and potential golfers in the Borough.

Alternative Options

4.128 All sites submitted in previous Call for Sites between 2008 and 2016 have been subject to assessment by the Council in the St. Helens Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2016 (SHLAA) or the St. Helens Green Belt Review. The Green Belt Review considered the suitability of broad areas and then where appropriate, assessed individual sites. The Preferred Option sites and reasonable alternatives have then been subject to SA.

Strategic Aims Met	SA 6
Strategic Objectives Met	SO6.2 SO 6.3
Key Delivery Items	Development of the strategic sites identified in this policy.

Policy LPA06: Extent of the Green Belt and Safeguarded Land

Policy LPA06: Extent of the Green Belt and Safeguarded Land

1. The Green Belt boundary for St. Helens is identified on the Policies Map.
2. Policies LPA04 and LPA05 set out the sites to be removed from the Green Belt and allocated to meet the housing and employment development targets set out in this Plan.
3. Within the Green Belt national Green Belt planning policy will be applied. The construction of new buildings, changes of use, and other development is regarded as inappropriate development in Green Belt unless it is allowed as an exception by national planning policy. Inappropriate development in Green Belt will not be approved except in very special circumstances.
4. Safeguarded Land sites are identified on the Policies Map and listed in Table 4.7 below for employment development and in Table 4.8 below for housing development. Safeguarded Land sites have been removed from the Green Belt by this Plan but are protected from permanent forms of development for the duration of this plan period in order to provide a reserve of potential sites to meet longer term development needs (after 2033) and so protect the permanence of the Green Belt. Planning Permission for the permanent development of Safeguarded Land should only be granted following a Local Plan Review which proposes development on those sites and following masterplanning for the larger sites by the Council working with the developers.
5. Development on Safeguarded Land will only be permitted where the proposal is:
 - necessary for the operation of the existing use(s); or
 - a temporary use that would retain the open nature of the land and would not prejudice the long term ability to redevelop the site to meet future development needs.
6. Development on other sites that prevents or limits development of the Safeguarded sites for their identified future uses will not be permitted.

Table 4.7 –Safeguarded Land for Employment

Reference Number	Site Name	Area (hectares)
ES-01	Omega North Western Extension, Bold	29.98
ES-02	Omega South - Western Extension Phase 2, Land north of Booth's Wood, Bold	22.84
Employment Total		52.82

Table 4.8 –Safeguarded Land for Housing

Ref.	Site Name	Area (hectares)	NDA (indicative maximum)	Density (dwellings per hectare)	Capacity (indicative minimum)
HS01	Land north of Strange Road and west of Camp Road, Garswood	4.45	75%	25	83
HS02	Land south of Leyland Green Road, North of Billinge Road and East of Garswood Road, Garswood	12.99	75%	25	240
HS03	Bold Forest Garden Suburb: land south of Reginald Road / Bold Road / Traver's Entry, west of Neil's Road, north of Gorsey Lane and east of Crawford Street, Bold	130.00	75%	25	2200
HS04	Land north of Bell Lane and south-west of Milton Street (individual plots), Bold	3.83	75%	30	80
HS05	Land to west of Bridge Road and Sweet Brier Court, off Clock Face Road, Bold	5.00	75%	30	113
HS06	Land off Common Road / Swan Road, Newton-le-Willows	3.56	100%	30	107
HS07	Parcel B (Housing), Land between Ashton Road and M6, Earlestown, Newton-le-Willows	3.44	100%	30	113
HA08	<i>Eccleston Park Golf Club, Rainhill Road, Eccleston (Note: this is an allocated site, not a safeguarded site, but construction is likely to continue beyond 2033)</i>	49.67	65%	30	383
HS08	Land south of Burrows Lane, Eccleston	7.00	75%	25	131
HS09	Land south of Howards Lane / east of Gillars Lane, Eccleston	36.20	75%	25	678
HS10	Land south of former Central Works, Bellerophon Way, Haydock	6.59	75%	25	120
HS11	Land south of Station Road, Haydock	5.67	60%	25	85
HS12	Land at Martindale Road, Carr Mill, Moss Bank	1.45	75%	25	25

HS13	Land at Old Hey Farm, south of Tyrer Road, Newton-le-Willows	12.01	75%	25	225
HS14	Land east of Newlands Grange, Newton-le-Willows	15.56	75%	25	291
HS15	Land east of Rob Lane and rear of Castle Hill, Newton-le-Willows	3.50	100%	30	105
HS16	Land to rear of 6 Ashton Road and Elms Farm and west of Rob Lane, Newton-le-Willows	5.56	75%	30	110
HS17	Land west of Winwick Road and south of Wayfarers Drive, Newton-le-Willows	12.83	75%	25	255
HS18	Land east of Higher Lane / South of Muncaster Drive / at White House Lane, Rainford	11.02	75%	25	206
HS19	Land south of Bushey Lane / Red Delph Farm, Red Delph Lane, Rainford	8.66	70%	25	151
HS20	Land south of Higher Lane and west of Mill Lane, Rainford	21.64	75%	25	415
HS21	Land south of Rookery Lane and east of Pasture Lane, Rainford	20.37	32%	21	138
HS22	Land at Hanging Bridge Farm, Elton Head Road, Rainhill	16.87	75%	25	300
HS23	Land south of Mill Lane, east of Hall Lane, west of Norlands Lane and north of M62, Rainhill	37.54	75%	25	701
HS24	Land south of Elton Head Road (from Nutgrove Road to St. John Vianney Primary School), Thatto Heath	18.77	53%	25	248
HA16	<i>Land south of A580 between Houghtons Lane and Crantock Grove, Windle (Note: this is an allocated site, not a safeguarded site, but construction is likely to continue beyond 2033))</i>	54.27	60%	30	392
				Total	7895

Reasoned Justification

Extent of the Green Belt

- 4.129 The boundary of the Green Belt has been reviewed in order to meet St. Helens' needs for land for housing and employment over the Plan period and to meet longer terms needs. Unless land is released from the Green Belt development needs in the next 15 years and beyond will not be met in a sustainable manner. The Council considers that the need to meet the development needs of the Borough and additional planned growth to provide jobs and economic growth as set out in the targets in policies LPA04 and LPA05 constitutes exceptional circumstances requiring the review of St. Helens' Green Belt boundaries to accommodate this need.
- 4.130 The land to be released from the Green Belt comprises about 13.4% of the current Green Belt. The revised Green Belt will cover 56% of the total area of St. Helens. The Green Belt review also provides the opportunity to make small changes to the boundary to reflect where minor development has taken place and to amend minor anomalies dating from when the Green Belt boundary was originally drafted.
- 4.131 Inappropriate development in the Green Belt will be resisted unless there are very special circumstances which justify an exception in accordance with Paragraphs 87 and 88 of the NPPF.

Safeguarded Land

- 4.132 To ensure that Green Belt boundaries meet national planning policy guidance that requires that they last longer than the lifetime of a single Local Plan⁴, land on the edge of settlements and employment areas that was previously designated as Green Belt in the St. Helens Unitary Development Plan has been identified as safeguarded land which may be suitable to meet longer term development needs. The land is not expected to be required for meeting development needs during this Local Plan period (2018-2033), because other development sites have been identified that are either more suitable, are likely to be available sooner, would need to be developed before the safeguarded sites could be accessed or provide a better distribution of development when taken as a whole. These Safeguarded areas are protected from development that would prevent or significantly hinder their future development for the identified need to ensure that they are available to be used for development in the longer term, should the need arise.
- 4.133 The suitability of safeguarded land for allocation in the next Local Plan will require an assessment of the need for housing and employment land in the context of the overarching spatial development strategy set out in the Local Plan at the time of such an assessment.

⁴ NPPF paragraph 85

- 4.134 If employment land uptake from 2033 onwards continues at the Baseline objectively assessed need rate projected for 2012-2033 of 5.8 hectares (ha) per year, this would require 87 ha of employment land. With a 5 year buffer to allow for market choice and churn, this increases to 116 ha. The amount of land safeguarded for employment needs is 52.82 ha on two sites, which is 63.18 ha less than the 116 ha projected need. However, this should be viewed together with the 306.9 ha of land allocated for the Plan period up to 2033, which is 116.1 ha higher than the identified minimum need of 190.8 ha set out in the Employment Land and Needs Study (2015). Also, the build-out of sites allocated in the period up to 2033 is likely to continue into the period following the Plan, providing more than the 52.82 identified.
- 4.135 The amount of employment land allocated in the period up to 2033 is higher than the OAN up to 2033 in order to reflect the Council's growth ambitions and the responses to the Local Plan Scoping Consultation (2016) which suggested that St. Helens should be planning positively to accommodate at least 70 ha of land for logistics over and above baseline levels of demand. The employment land requirement also allows for losses of employment land in the Borough since 2012 (-32.56ha) and seeks to provide a choice of sites. It also seeks to meet the imminent potential significant increase in employment land as a result of SuperPort and Liverpool 2 and respond to any requirement to meet B8 strategic land needs resulting from the SHELMA over and above that identified in the ELNS (see policy LPA04 for more details).
- 4.136 In total 358.9 ha of land is allocated for employment use up to 2048, this is 52.1 ha of additional land allocated above minimum OAN for 2012-2048 (190.8ha is identified as the OAN in the ELNS for 2012-2033 and 116ha has been identified as the OAN for 2033-2048) in order to cope with potential significant increases in employment land demand in the Borough and Liverpool City Region. In addition it is anticipated that some of the employment land allocations could be built out beyond the Plan period (after 2033) such as Parkside SRFI.
- 4.137 The Safeguarded employment sites consist of two sites that are potential expansions of existing employment areas. One site would form an extension to Omega North in Warrington, another would form the second phase of a westward expansion of Omega South in Warrington. The Omega extension sites will rely on access from the existing Omega North and South sites and the planning of the development and transport access requirements will require close cooperation with the developers of Omega and with Warrington Council.
- 4.138 The safeguarded housing land requirement has been calculated using the average annual net additional housing need for the period 2014-2033 of 570 net additional dwellings per year and projecting it forward to 2048, giving a total need of 8,550 dwellings. This figure of 8,550 has then been discounted to take account of a predicted net additional windfall allowance of 45 dwellings per year. This is half the rate of 91 dwellings per year allowed for in the period 2014-2033, using the assumption that there will continue to be a net gain to the dwelling stock from changes of use and windfalls from brownfield sites under 0.25 hectares not identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

4.139 If the Safeguarded Land at Bold (HS03) is allocated for development in a future Local Plan, will be developed following the development of a masterplan that will:

- Complements and enhances the Bold Forest Park, in line with the Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan
- Ensure the development meets the housing needs of the community through the provision of Affordable Housing and other forms of specialist housing (to be determined in line with an up to date Housing Needs Assessment)
- Preserves the amenity of residential, business and amenity areas within the parcel that will not be developed, such as the existing residential properties, the Northway riding school, Local Wildlife Site (and extension)
- Ensures the existing Local Wildlife Site and extension are protected from adverse impacts and (where appropriate) incorporate mitigation for loss of habitat elsewhere on the site
- Preserve existing trees wherever possible and provide enhanced tree cover across the site, giving the site a green appearance
- Ensure significant landscaping to the southern edges of the site to reduce the impact of the site in the landscape and promote the objective of the Forest park to increase tree cover.
- Ensure foot, bridleway, cycle, public transport and road access through the site, but where necessary segregated for safety, and
- Enhance and extend existing Bridleways and create new ones to ensure links through the Bold Forest Park, in line with policy INF6, Creating an Accessible Forest Park, of the Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan
- Enable the routing of bus services through the site to enable linkages from Clock Face to St. Helens Junction

Alternative Options

4.140 *Alternative Option 1: Maintain existing Green Belt Boundaries*

4.141 *Reason for Rejection:* This option would not be consistent with the NPPF as it would not allow for objectively assessed housing and employment needs to be met in the Borough

4.142 *Alternative Option 2: Do not safeguard land for future development*

4.143 *Reason for Rejection:* This option would not allow for the permanence of Green Belt boundaries in the long term and would therefore not be consistent with the NPPF which requires local authorities to ensure that Green Belt boundaries are capable of enduring the Plan period.

4.144 *Alternative Option 3: To safeguard significantly more land for future development.*

4.145 *Reason for Rejection:* This option would involve safeguarding more land than is required to meet development needs for beyond the next 30 years. Releasing

land from the Green Belt to meet development needs for beyond the next 30 years before development needs are known is considered unnecessary for this plan and for compliance with the NPPF and would difficult to justify as needs may be considerably different in 30 years' time, and would therefore run the risk of the Plan being found unsound.

Strategic Aims Met	SA1, SA4, SA5, SA6,
Strategic Objectives Met	SO1.1, SO4.1, SO5.1, SO6.2
Key Delivery Items	Protection of Green Belt form inappropriate development Protecting Safeguarded Land from inappropriate development

Policy LPA07: Transport and Travel

Policy LPA07: Transport and Travel

1. New development should:
 - Be located where there is potential for good access to existing and proposed public transport services or be developed to allow access by public transport;
 - Actively promote sustainable modes of transport including where practicable electric vehicles and vehicle charging;
 - Provide for safe and adequate pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to, from and within the development, including adequate visibility splays;
 - Ensure adequate access for emergency, service and refuse collection vehicles;
 - Provide for adequate on-site parking, in accordance with the Council's adopted standards as set out in the Ensuring a Choice of Travel SPD;
 - Provide for adequate parking for those of limited mobility, service vehicles, and cycles which meets the Council's minimum guidelines as set out in the Ensuring a Choice of Travel SPD; and
 - Maintain the safe and efficient flow of traffic on the surrounding highway network. Development proposals will not be permitted where vehicle movements would cause demonstrable harm to the highway network and surrounding environment.
2. Transport Assessments or Transport Statements will be required for all significant development in accordance with the requirements of the Ensuring a Choice of Travel SPD.
3. The Council will seek to minimise the negative impacts of transport including air and noise pollution through requiring developers to implement Travel Plans in accordance with the requirements of the Ensuring a Choice of Travel SPD.
4. Direct access onto the Key Route Network will only be allowed where it does not restrict the capacity of the road. Where a reasonable alternative exists, direct access will not be permitted.
5. Direct access to the Strategic Road Network in St. Helens will only be permitted where it accords with Highways England's Policies.
6. The preferred location for development which generates significant movement of freight are sites which are served by rail or where rail facilities can be provided as part of the development, or where these options are not available, locating where there is good access to a road designated as a Freight Priority Route.

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7. The Council's priorities for the transport network in St. Helens during the Plan period will be set out in the Merseyside Local Transport Plan 3, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority A Transport Plan for Growth (or equivalent) and in Transport for the North's strategies and include, but are not limited to:
- I. Improving existing rail links and capacity;
 - II. Supporting new rail infrastructure such as, but not limited to: HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail (HS3) and Skelmersdale Rail Link;
 - III. Improving existing Highways England capacity and infrastructure;
 - IV. Improving station accessibility and facilities, including protecting opportunities for improve access by all modes (e.g. walking, cycling, bus, park and ride) to existing and proposed rail stations in St. Helens;
 - V. Ensuring future highway schemes by protecting land around key junctions;
 - VI. Protecting old railway lines and corridors; and
 - VII. Ensuring new transport modes such as light rail are deliverable in new developments.

Reasoned Justification

- 4.146 An effective transport network supports a strong economy and a strong community. Quality environments that are conducive to walking and cycling can contribute to a healthier lifestyle. The measures and priorities identified in this Policy should help support economic growth, improve access to employment and services and support a healthier lifestyle.

Carbon Emissions

- 4.147 Transport is a major source of carbon dioxide emissions which, in turn, is a major cause of climate change. Therefore transport can play a key part in the development of a low carbon economy. Many of the priorities identified in this Policy will play an important part in helping to de-carbonise transport. Measures to reduce the need to travel, widen travel choice and reduce dependence on the private car, alongside investment in low-carbon vehicle technologies are an important part of helping to meet national climate change targets.

Transport Assessments

- 4.148 Development proposals that are likely to generate a significant number of trips may benefit from closer scrutiny of a greater number of transport problems and solutions. In such cases, a more detailed assessment of the following, in the form of a Transport Assessment, may be requested:
- Giving access to all means of transport;
 - Limiting the harm from traffic on safety, noise and air pollution and on the environment or local amenity; and
 - Ensuring safe and easy access for all users.

Travel Plans

- 4.149 A Travel Plan can help reduce the number of car trips to a development. Travel Plans aim to reduce the number of journeys needed, where possible, and to encourage choice and use of sustainable means of transport to development sites. This includes, for example, car-sharing, working from home, awareness-raising campaigns or subsidised public transport season tickets for employees. Travel Plans will be used to ensure that travel demand arising from new development will make the best use of sustainable transport.

Merseyside Local Transport Plan

- 4.150 The Merseyside Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) provides a long-term strategy and delivery programme of transport investment and service improvements. It aims to give Merseyside a safer, sustainable, efficient and integrated transport network, accessible to all. The Plan is operational from 2011 until 2024 and covers Liverpool, Knowsley, Sefton, St. Helens and the Wirral.

- 4.151 LTP3 has the following vision:

“A city region committed to a low carbon future, which has a transport network and mobility culture that positively contributes to a thriving economy and the health and wellbeing of its citizens and where sustainable travel is the option of choice”

A Transport Plan for Growth

- 4.152 The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority document ‘A Transport Plan for Growth’ aims to improve the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of the City Region, by delivering a world-class transport network. The Transport Plan for Growth has been developed to provide a clear vision for a successful transport provision in the City Region, and act as an investment plan to promote and support economic growth. The City Region authorities will continue to work together to produce a new Local Transport Plan for the whole area from 2025.

Key Route Network

- 4.153 The Key Route Network will be managed and maintained by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority on behalf of the Liverpool City Region Mayor, from May 2017.

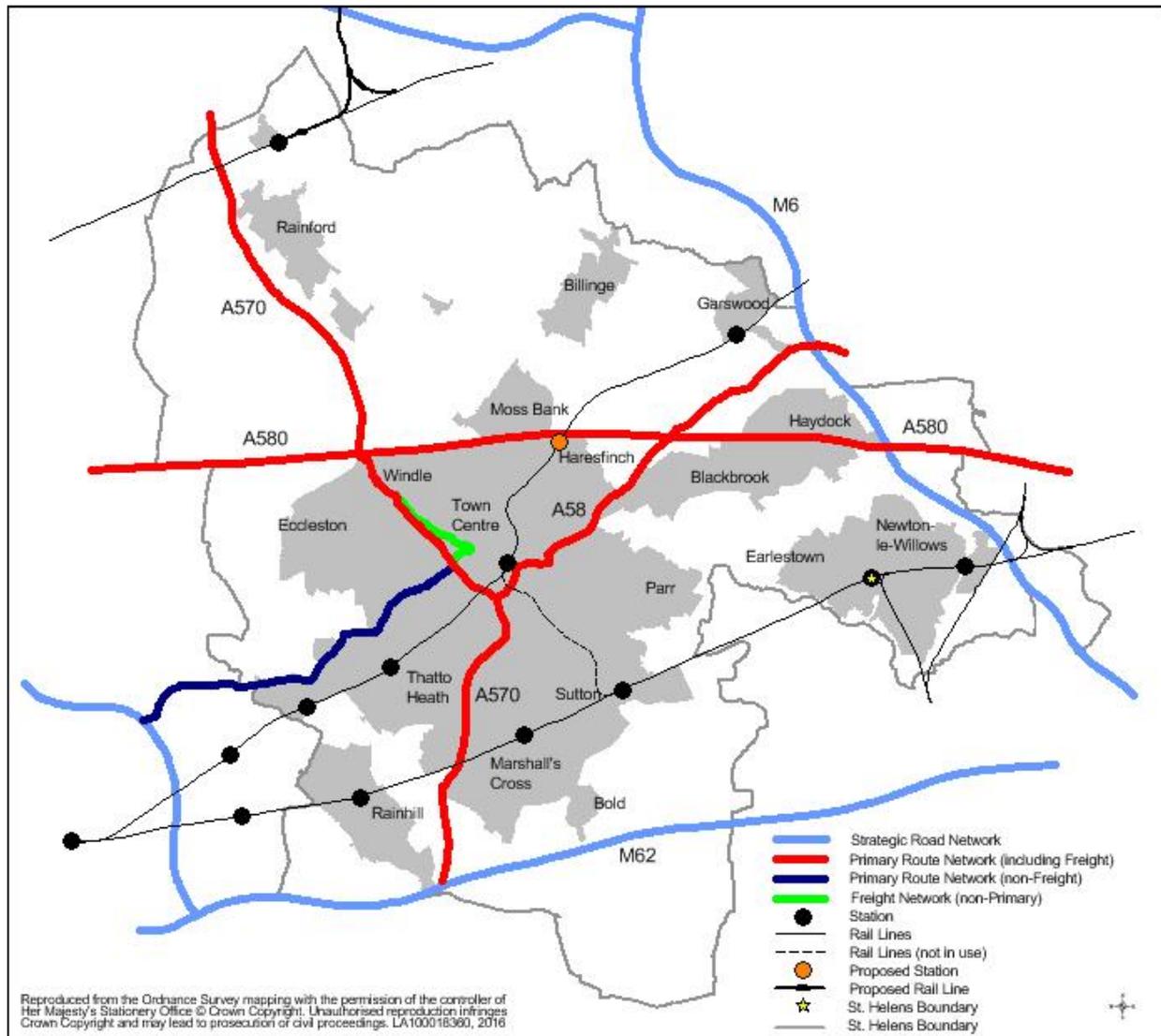


Figure 4.2: Key Transport Designations

Alternative Options

4.154 *Alternative Option 1:* Rely on policies contained with the NPPF and the Third Merseyside Local Transport Plan

4.155 *Reason for Rejection:* The policies contained within the Local Transport Plan and the NPPF are strategic in nature and they do not contain guidance which can be used on a development management basis to guide development. Those policies are also not spatially specific to St. Helens.

Strategic Aims Met	SA 3
Strategic Objectives Met	SA 3.1
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan Implementation of Local Transport Plan Implementation of Ensuring Choice of Travel SPD

Policy LPA08: Infrastructure Delivery and Funding

- 4.156 The provision of high quality infrastructure to support existing and future development is a key element in delivering successful, sustainable communities.
- 4.157 Working with partners and infrastructure providers, the Council will ensure that sufficient physical, social and community infrastructure is provided to support the development identified in this Local Plan through the use of integrated demand and asset management or new infrastructure provision.

Policy LPA08: Infrastructure Delivery and Funding

Protection, enhancement and provision

1. Infrastructure including health, education, neighbourhood retail or leisure, built sports, cultural, emergency service and community facilities and institutions will be protected, provided and enhanced to support sustainable communities by:
 - a) Protecting existing facilities from their loss where there is an identified need;
 - b) Supporting improvements to provision where there is an identified need;
 - c) Safeguarding and allocating sites where there is an identified, planned provision;
 - d) Where appropriate, secure developer contributions to enhance existing provision or provide new infrastructure, including replacement infrastructure; and
 - e) Requiring new Social Infrastructure to be located in sustainable locations, and where possible be clustered with other facilities.

Funding – Developer Contributions

2. Developers would be expected to contribute, where appropriate, to the provision of on-site or directly ancillary infrastructure to support new development; and the provision of strategic infrastructure to support local communities and Borough wide development, as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This may include in-kind provision of infrastructure and/or financial contributions which will be secured by:
 - a) On site or off site provision of infrastructure; and/ or
 - b) Making payments through Section 106 planning obligations (or other legally binding contract such as developer agreements); or
 - c) A tariff based system such as the Community Infrastructure Levy;
3. Where the delivery of development is dependent upon key infrastructure provision, that development will be phased to coincide with the release of additional infrastructure or service capacity as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

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Economic Viability

4. Due regard will be given to the potential impacts of developer contributions for infrastructure provision, and other policy requirements on the economic viability of new development. This will be supported by plan-level economic viability evidence and where appropriate, by the undertaking of site specific development appraisals to determine the ability of development schemes to support the required level of developer contributions.

Hierarchy of Developer Contributions

5. The Council will, as a general rule, apply the following hierarchy for developer contributions in cases where viability constraints can be demonstrated:
 - I. Contributions which are essential for public safety or to achieve a minimum acceptable level of design quality, for example essential highway works or flood risk mitigation;
 - II. Contributions which are necessary to address a local infrastructure requirement or deficiency that would be caused or exacerbated by the development, for example education needs or green space provision in areas of deficit;
 - III. Any remaining contributions except those in Category 4 below, for example affordable housing provision and qualitative improvements to greenspace provision in areas of surplus;
 - IV. Finally, those contributions which have the status of being encouraged by the Council's planning policies.
6. It may on occasion be appropriate to deviate from the above hierarchy where a specific acute need has been identified through the planning process. The Council intends to provide further detailed advice on developer contributions through a subsequent Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Reasoned Justification

- 4.158 The existing infrastructure network, which serves residents, businesses and visitors need to be protected, and enhanced where required, to ensure the future durability and vitality of the communities in St. Helens.
- 4.159 New infrastructure will also be required to support new development, particularly within parts of the Borough which are expected to undergo major

change in accordance with the Local Plan. This can include the provision of wholly new infrastructure, for example new road infrastructure, and investment in existing infrastructure to cope with additional demand, for example expanding local schools to cope with additional students arising from a new large housing development in the local area.

- 4.160 Infrastructure may also need to be replaced or repaired during its operational lifetime, and the need for new or replacement infrastructure to be provided may also result in innovation in infrastructure provision; this is particularly relevant for energy production and digital infrastructure provision. It will be necessary for local delivery partners to work closely together in ensuring that a sufficient level of infrastructure provision is available.
- 4.161 Since almost all development has some impact on the need for infrastructure, services and amenities - or benefits from it - such development should contribute towards the cost. Hence, it is appropriate for the Council to consider the mechanisms by which costs for new infrastructure can be sought from development.
- 4.162 To support Preferred Option LPA08 and ensure compliance with national policy, the Council will, through engagement with key infrastructure providers, complete and maintain an Infrastructure Delivery Plan for St. Helens. A first draft of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan is currently being prepared and will take account of any infrastructure requirements identified as part of the consultation on the Preferred Options Local Plan. This will be published along with subsequent versions of the Local Plan, with a finalised Infrastructure Delivery Plan being adopted by the Council alongside the adopted version of the Local Plan. Post adoption the Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be subject to regular review and will be updated with new projects as appropriate.
- 4.163 The Preferred Option refers to the role of economic viability evidence in supporting the policy approach. This will enable the Council to take a view as to the level and range of developer contributions (including "in kind" contributions or financial contributions) which can be sought without prejudicing the financial viability of a development. This economic viability evidence will be utilised in the setting of the detailed level of developer contributions within the St. Helens LDF. It is anticipated that in some cases, development-level economic viability assessments will also be required, to account for site-specific circumstances and costs. Developers will be expected to fund these assessments, which will be undertaken objectively and transparently, and scrutinised by the Council.

Alternative Options

- 4.164 *Alternative Option 1: Introduce an Infrastructure tariff.*
- 4.165 *Reason for Rejection:* This has been discounted at this stage, due to the lack of clarity about the future role of the Community Infrastructure Levy or other charging regimes. It was considered beneficial to keep this option open in

the short term, but to delay introduction until the policy context is sufficiently clear.

4.166 *Alternative Option 2: Have no policy on planning obligations in the Local Plan*

4.167 *Reason for Rejection:* This was not considered to be an appropriate option, as there is scope to expand the range of planning obligations to better reflect the impacts of new development on local communities, supporting infrastructure and services, and this opportunity should be capitalised upon as part of the Local Plan preparation.

Strategic Aims Met	1 – 7
Strategic Objectives Met	1 – 7
Key Delivery Items	Development management processes; Development assessments; Collation of economic viability evidence; Developer contributions; Partnership working; Master planning exercises; Public and private sector investment; Council policies, procedures and plans

Policy LPA09: Green Infrastructure

Policy LPA09: Green Infrastructure

The Council will protect, manage, enhance and where appropriate expand the Green Infrastructure network through the following ways:

1. Protect the elements of the Borough's Green Infrastructure network as shown in detail in Policies:
 - LPC05: Open Space and Outdoor Sports Facilities;
 - LPC06: Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
 - LPC07: Greenways;
 - LPC08: Ecological Network;
 - LPC09: Landscape Protection and Enhancement;
 - LPC10: Trees and Woodlands; and
 - LPC12: Flood Risk and Water Management.
2. Take account of the standards for open space provision derived from the Open Spaces Study (or any subsequent equivalent standards derived from a Council study and adopted by the Council for planning purposes);
3. Require new development to contribute to the expansion and/or improvement of the functionality and connectivity of the Green Infrastructure network, in accordance with local circumstance;
4. Promote and improve the accessibility of open space within walking distance of housing, health, employment and education facilities;
5. Create new Local Nature Reserves including at Billinge Hill;
6. Implement the Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan;
7. Contribute to the development and implementation of a Sankey Catchment Hydrology Plan;
8. Work with Warrington and Halton Councils along with a wider partnership including the Mersey Forest, to develop the Sankey Valley as a multifunctional green corridor; and
9. Making improvements to the quality and connectivity of the Greenway network.

In considering proposals for any new development the Borough Council will encourage schemes which contribute toward, or provide, opportunities to enhance the function of existing green infrastructure, and improve connectivity. Development which results in the loss, fragmentation or isolation of green infrastructure assets will be resisted.

Reasoned Justification

- 4.168 Green Infrastructure is the network of green spaces and water bodies within the countryside and urban areas which has a wide range of functions and values for recreation, ecology, public access, health, water management, and mitigation of climate change, landscape enhancement, regeneration, and the economy. Of particular importance are the St. Helens Greenway Network and the Liverpool City Region Ecological Network.
- 4.169 National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 114 states that local planning authorities should “set out a strategic approach in their local plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure”. Green Infrastructure is defined in the Framework (Annexe 2 page 52) as being “a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities”. In St. Helens this includes the countryside around the towns, which accounts for around 50% of the Borough land area. This is predominantly productive farmland so the approach will be primarily through liaison and partnership working with key landowners and agents, and the implementation of Green Belt policies. The importance of countryside around St. Helens was recognised by the pilot study ‘Countryside in and Around Towns’ undertaken with the Countryside agency (now Natural England) in 2006.
- 4.170 Open space forms a part of Green Infrastructure and for the purposes of this policy includes formal intensively managed open space such as parks, sports grounds, amenity Greenspace, play areas, allotments, cemeteries and church yards. It also includes natural and semi-natural open space, which is less intensively managed with more attention given to natural habitats of value to wildlife. Many of these form greenway links between the countryside and urban areas. The NPPF states that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make important contribution to health and well-being of communities.
- 4.171 The Borough commissioned studies in 2006 and 2016 to examine the provision of open space in the Borough. In accordance with advice in the NPPF for studies to identify specific needs, surpluses and deficits, the studies have recommended local standards in order to assess provision in the Borough. The standards have been derived from the local community’s view on existing levels of provision and accessibility, which were researched as part of the study.
- 4.172 The latest study has concluded that, overall there is a sufficient quantity of open space; however, there are issues of quality and accessibility. It is, therefore, important that policies make provision for the protection and provision of open space to meet the communities’ needs and safeguard the visual amenity and character of the built up area.

Alternative Options

4.173 *Alternative Option 1:* Do no plan for the protection or enhancement of the Borough's green infrastructure network.

4.174 *Reason for Rejection:* This is not considered an acceptable option as it would fail to recognise the importance of Green Infrastructure particularly in terms of the health and well-being of residents. It would also be inconsistent with the NPPF which requires local authorities to planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of green infrastructure.

Strategic Aims Met	SA 02 SA 06
Strategic Objectives Met	S0 2.1, 2.2 6.2, 6.3
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of this Local Plan Adoption and implementation of Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan Implementation of Biodiversity SPD

LPA10: Development of Strategic Rail Freight Interchange

LPA10: Development of Strategic Rail Freight Interchange

1. Land to the east and west of the M6 including part of the site of the former Parkside Colliery is identified as a strategic location which has the potential to facilitate the transfer of freight between road and rail. The Council supports the delivery of a SRFI in this location as it has been identified as a site of national significance and regional importance in the Transport for the North Northern Freight and Logistics Report, 2016.
2. The Council believes a deliverable and viable SRFI can be developed on the land straddling the M6 with an operational area of approximately 64.55 ha to the East of the M6 and 5.58 hectares to the West of the M6, as shown indicatively on Figure 4.3.
3. The Council will work positively with developers and other key stakeholders to facilitate the development of a SRFI.
4. The environmental impact of development proposals for a SRFI will be assessed against other policies within this Plan, however development proposals will be specifically required to:
 - a) Provide direct access to the site from the M6 for HGVs, avoiding use of Traffic Sensitive Routes identified in the Network Management Plan;
 - b) Mitigate any adverse impacts on the surrounding road network;
 - c) Achieve direct access to/from the rail network from all directions and conform with rail industry strategies (or recent relevant case law) and capacity utilisation;
 - d) Be designed in such a way to limit the potential impacts on residential amenity to the least number of residential properties possible, and where impacts are unavoidable, suitable mitigation and/ or compensation shall be provided;
 - e) Establish and implement a Travel Plan that incorporates measures which encourage travel to/from the site using sustainable transport modes, including access by public transport, cycle and foot, in accordance with Policy LPA07.
 - f) Make provision for the positive management of existing and new environmental assets; and
 - g) Put training schemes in place to increase the opportunity for the local population to obtain employment at the site.
5. All uses within the SRFI area shown on Figure 4.3 should have the primary purpose of facilitating the movement of freight by rail. Any ancillary uses to this main use must be directly related to the operation or functioning of the SRFI and must demonstrate clearly why they need to be located on the site.
6. Planning permission will not be granted for any use within the SRFI area shown in Figure 4.3 which would prejudice its use as a rail freight interchange.

Reasoned Justification

- 4.175 There is a long standing history of developer interest in bringing the site of the former Parkside Colliery and its immediate environs forward for a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI). There have been a number of planning applications for a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI), and the area was highlighted as a potential location for inter-modal freight terminal in the now withdrawn North West Regional Spatial Strategy. St. Helens Core Strategy (2012) Policy CAS3.2 identifies the site as a 'strategic location' for a SFRI.
- 4.176 In January 2014 a new joint venture company, Parkside Regeneration LLP, acquired the elements of the Parkside site owned by the previous owner, Pro-Logis. The joint venture is made up of St. Helens Council and Langtree with the aim of bringing economic development forward on the site.

National Policy Statement for National Networks (2015)

- 4.177 Since the adoption of the St. Helens Core Strategy in 2012 national planning policy has continued to explicitly identify the need for an expanded network of SRFIs and recognise the importance of SRFIs in terms of both economic development and addressing climate change.
- 4.178 The National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPS) sets out Government policies for nationally significant rail and road infrastructure projects for England. The NPS recognises that railways are a vital part of the UK's transport infrastructure. Specific to freight and in the context of the Government's vision for the transport system as a driver of economic growth and social development, it states the railway network must:
- "provide for the transport of freight across the country, and to and from ports, in order to help meet environmental goals and improve quality of life"*
- 4.179 SRFIs are strongly supported with the following stated as the main drivers of demand:
- The changing needs of the logistics sector;
 - Rail freight growth;
 - Environmental; and
 - UK economy, national and local benefits – jobs and growth.
- 4.180 The NPS strongly supports the need for an expanded network of SRFIs in the UK. It also recognises the importance that SRFIs are located near the business markets they will serve such as major urban centres, or groups of centres and are linked to key supply chain routes. The NPS suggests that SRFI capacity needs to be provided at a wide range of locations, in order to provide the flexibility needed to match the changing demands of the market.

Parkside Logistics and Rail Freight Interchange Study (AECOM and Cushman & Wakefield 2016)

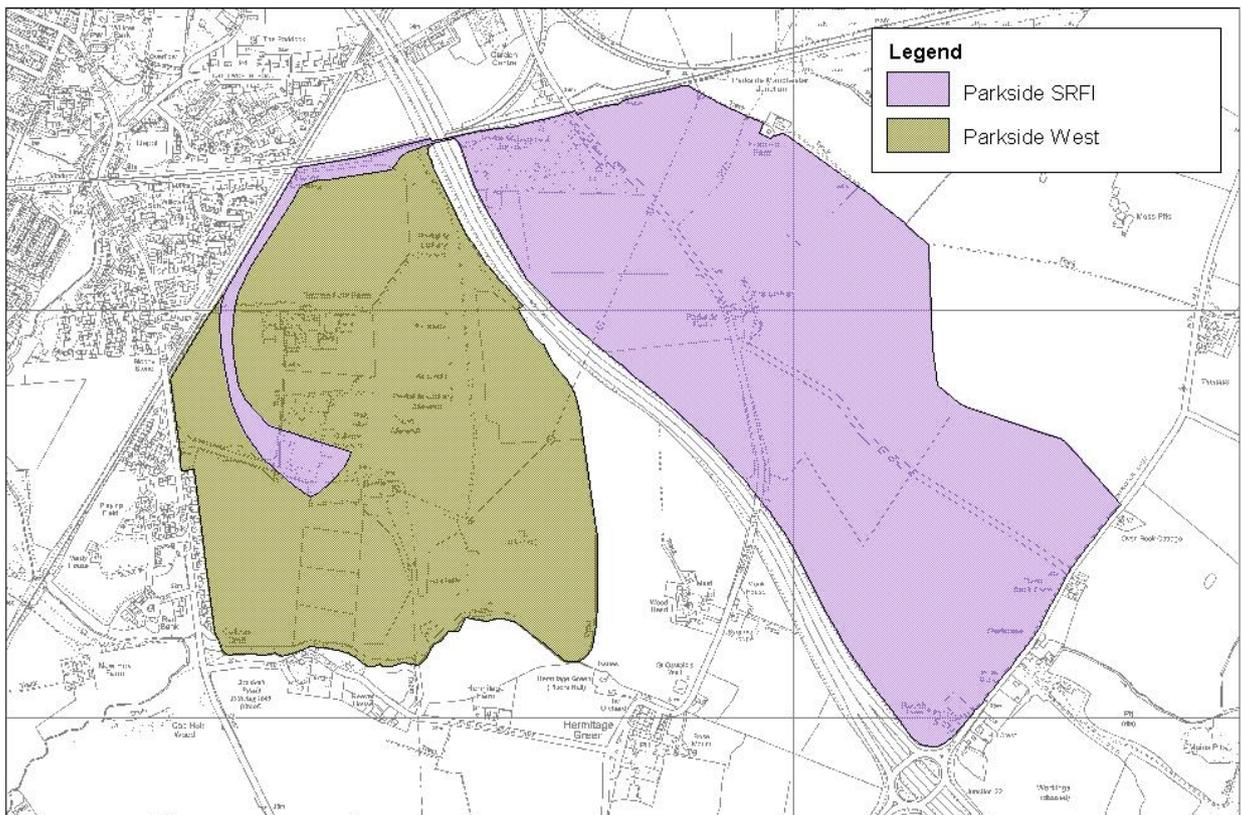
- 4.181 In 2016 consultants AECOM and Cushman & Wakefield undertook the Parkside Logistics and Rail Freight Interchange Study. The Study investigated the feasibility of delivery options for a road and rail-linked logistics development on land east and west of the M6 including land at the former Parkside colliery site.
- 4.182 The Study identifies Parkside as a site of national importance as well as regional significance in relation to national and regional policy, the market demand and need for the delivery of new and improved SRFIs. From industry consultation the Study found that it is clear that there is a clear demand for a new SRFI in the North West, with Parkside regarded as the best placed site to satisfy this need. The opportunities for rail access from the site are second to none in the North West and also nationally with access to the West Coast Mainline and Chat Moss line easily achievable. This allows train movements to/from the north, south, east and west to be catered for at the site.
- 4.183 The Study indicates that based on current evidence the Parkside site can viably deliver a medium (8 trains per day) to large (12 trains per day) facility. The Study concludes that it is fundamental to the delivery of a viable SRFI that land on the west and east side of the M6 is included for future development. As part of this, the Study recommends that the required land (to the east and west of the M6) would need to be allocated for the intermodal terminal along with land required for the associated rail infrastructure.

Green Belt Exceptional Circumstances

- 4.184 The proposed SRFI site is located in the Green Belt and therefore in accordance with Paragraph 83 of the NPPF, there is a need to demonstrate exceptional circumstances to release the site from the Green Belt.
- 4.185 The AECOM Study indicates that increased support for rail-linked development at both the national and sub-regional level since the St. Helens Core Strategy was adopted in 2012, assist in the justification of a rail-linked logistics allocation in the Local Plan and help support the exceptional circumstances case required to meet the national Green Belt planning policy tests.
- 4.186 As outlined above the development of a key network of SRFI facilities is central to the Government's aims of building a strong northern economy and reducing carbon emissions and congestion by limiting freight movement by road.
- 4.187 The Parkside site is named specifically in the Transport for the North Northern Freight & Logistics Report Technical Appendices as a site suitable for consideration as a rail freight interchange, and is identified in the Liverpool City Region Growth Plan and Strategic Economic Plan (2016) as a key project in delivering SuperPort and the wider Liverpool City Region Freight and Logistics Hub.

- 4.188 The site remains the single largest potential economic development site in the Borough, providing the greatest opportunity to meet the economic development aspirations of the Borough, being in a prime location for a SRFI. The site continues to offer unique opportunities to attract new inward investment and economic growth and continues to provide a substantial opportunity for the wider North West region through increasing freight capacity and capability in a growing economic sector.
- 4.189 Taking into consideration all of the above the Council consider there to be exceptional circumstances to justify the allocation of land for a SRFI on the west and east of the M6 (as shown in Figure 4.3) and for this land to be removed from the Green Belt. In total an area of approximately 124.55 ha is proposed to be removed from the Green Belt at Parkside East for a SRFI, with 64.55 ha of this land proposed to be allocated for the operational SRFI site and the wider 60 ha required for the necessary SRFI rail and road infrastructure and landscaping. A further 5.58ha is allocated for SRFI use at Parkside West to facilitate rail access to/from the north to the land allocated for a SRFI at Parkside East.

Figure 4.3: Land Allocated for SRFI at Parkside



Alternative Options

- 4.190 *Alternative Option 1: Do not allocate the site for a SRFI*
- 4.191 *Reason for Rejection:* This option would fail to realise the unique opportunities presented by the site being in a prime location for a SRFI, in attracting inward

investment and economic growth to the Borough and wider region, and meeting the Government's aims of reducing carbon emissions and congestion by limiting freight movement by road.

- 4.192 *Alternative Option 2:* Allocate land at the former Parkside Colliery site (west of the M6) only for SRFI
- 4.193 *Reason for Rejection:* The AECOM Study found that a small facility (3 trains per day) on land west of the M6 would not be viable and only a terminal that is at least a medium facility (8 trains per day) would be operationally and financially viable. The Study indicates that land is required on the east of the M6 to deliver the required road capacity to serve a medium or large facility. This option would therefore significantly limit the opportunity for a deliverable SRFI to be developed on the site, and therefore fail to realise the unique opportunities for economic growth and meeting the Government's aims of reducing carbon emissions and congestion by limiting freight movement by road presented by the site.
- 4.194 *Alternative Option 3:* Safeguard the site for SRFI and only release it from the Green Belt once a SRFI had been delivered as per existing St. Helens Core Strategy Policy CAS 3.2.
- 4.195 *Reason for Rejection:* The AECOM Study recommends that Core Strategy Policy CAS 3.2 is modified in order to provide a more flexible policy position to support a viable and deliverable SRFI scheme to come forward on the site. Releasing land from the Green Belt on both the east and west of the M6 from the Green Belt is seen as essential to installing market confidence in the deliverability of the site for a medium or large SRFI.
- 4.196 Therefore as per Alternative Option 2, it is considered that this option would significantly limit the opportunity for a deliverable SRFI to be developed on the site, and therefore fail to realise the unique opportunities for economic growth and meeting the Government's aims of reducing carbon emissions and congestion by limiting freight movement by road presented by this site.
- 4.197 It is also considered appropriate to amend the Green Belt boundaries through the new Local Plan in order to ensure permanence of the Green Belt boundary now rather than wait for a future Local Plan Review.
- 4.198 *Alternative Option 4:* Allocate the site for general market employment land
- 4.199 *Reason for Rejection:* This option would fail to realise the unique opportunities presented by the site being in a prime location for a SRFI, in attracting inward investment and economic growth to the Borough and wider region, and meeting the Government's aims of reducing carbon emissions and congestion by limiting freight movement by road.
- 4.200 *Alternative Option 5:* Allocate land to the east of the M6 only

4.201 *Reason for Rejection:* As per Option 2 the AECOM Study concludes that it is fundamental to the delivery of a viable SRFI that land on both the west and east side of the M6 is allocated for future development. Land on the west of the M6 is required to allow rail access to/from the north. The ability of the site to be accessed from north, south, east and west is unrivalled and has been identified in the AECOM Study as a key factor in the site's attractiveness to the market. This option would therefore significantly limit the opportunity for a deliverable optimum SRFI to be developed on the site, and therefore fail to realise the unique opportunities for economic growth and meeting the Government's aims of reducing carbon emissions and congestion by limiting freight movement by road presented by the site.

Strategic Aims Met	SA1, SA3, SA5
Strategic Objectives Met	SO 1.1, SO 3.1, SO 5.1
Key Delivery Items	Development of a SRFI

5. Area Policies

Policy LPB01: St. Helens Town Centre and Central Spatial Area

LPB01: St. Helens Town Centre and Central Spatial Area

The Council will work to promote the Central Spatial Area centred around St. Helens Town Centre as an accessible and welcoming destination for shopping, leisure, culture, tourism, employment and housing with an emphasis on creating a high quality built environment. This will be achieved by:

1. Directing future comparison retail and leisure development to suitable locations within the Town Centre and then other sequentially preferable sites in line with Policy LPC04 and national policy to meet identified needs at the appropriate time. The first preference for significant new comparison retail and leisure development will be on site(s) centred around the 'Area of Opportunity' for retail and leisure identified on the Policies Map, as updated by the planned St. Helens Town Centre Strategy. Outside the Town Centre, Development which would result in a significant adverse impact on the Town Centre's vitality and viability or planned investment within it will be resisted;
2. Development on the vacant land to the south west of Langtree Park Stadium ('Langtree Park Phase 2') should be complementary to the Stadium's use by providing opportunities for appropriate leisure, food and drink, conferencing and hotels. Retail development and intensive leisure uses which would compromise planned investment in the Town Centre or result in significantly adverse impacts on its vitality and viability would be resisted;
3. Defining on the Policies Map the Primary and Secondary Retail Frontages, Primary Shopping Area and Town Centre boundaries in accordance with national policy. The Council will seek to ensure that a least 70% of units in the Primary Retail Frontage remain in an A1 retail use. Applications within the Primary and Secondary Frontages which would result in the loss of an active ground floor use will not be supported.
4. Facilitating linked trips between the Primary Shopping Area and other existing and developments within the St. Helens Central Spatial Area, including, amongst others: Asda on Kirkland Street, The Range on Chalon Way, St. Helens and Ravenhead Retail Parks, Tesco Extra on Linkway and Langtree Park Stadium;
5. Monitoring the Town Centre's vitality and viability though undertaking regular Town Centre Health Checks;

Continued on next page...

6. Mixed use development within and on the edge of the Town Centre which makes a positive contribution to the economic role of the Town Centre, does not reduce provision of retail floorspace and is in accordance with Policy LPC04 will be promoted;
7. Securing opportunities to improve the public realm by retaining and enhancing the existing waterway of the St. Helens Canal, requiring development to positively integrate with the canal and securing improvements to Green Infrastructure in line with Policy LPA09; and
8. Managing pedestrian and vehicular accessibility to meet the varying demands of the Town Centre in line with the road-user hierarchy by:
 - i. Maintaining pedestrian priority within the Town Centre and extending links to adjacent areas;
 - ii. Supporting the Town Centre as the hub of the public transport network in St. Helens.

Reasoned Justification

- 5.1 The St. Helens Central Spatial Area (as shown in Appendix 7) includes the proposed Town Centre boundary and the surrounding hinterland. This includes residential, retail and leisure uses which link to the central retail core.
- 5.2 A Retail & Leisure Study carried out by WYG is being finalised to provide an assessment of the Borough's future retail and leisure needs. This study will update their 2012 Study⁵ to provide key evidence informing future policy on retail and main town centre uses in the Borough. Emerging findings indicate that the Town Centre's market share for comparison goods expenditure has decreased since the last study from 28.2% to 20.4% whilst the market share for both Ravenhead and St. Helens Retail Park has increased significantly.
- 5.3 Based on an assessment of expected level of population and expenditure growth, a requirement for additional comparison goods floorspace across the Borough has been identified from 2023 onwards. It is estimated that this requirement will correspond to a need for between 11,400 sq.m and 18,900 sq.m at 2028 rising to between 20,100sq.m and 33,500sq.m by 2033 (it should be noted however that long term estimates should be viewed with caution due to the difficulties in predicting the economy's performance over time).
- 5.4 To meet this need and address the weakening of the town centre's comparison goods market share in recent years, the Council will continue to pursue 'town centre first' principles in line with national policy and seek to accommodate as much of this additional floorspace within St. Helens town centre as possible. A

⁵ [St Helens Council St. Helens & Earlestown Retail and Town Centre Uses Study Final Report January 2012](#)

- healthcheck of the town centre carried out as part of the emerging study has reported that 15.8% of the total units were vacant, which is significantly greater than the national average vacancy rate of 11.2%. Therefore it is sensible to prioritise the re-occupation of these vacant units in the first instance to boost the health of the town centre.
- 5.5 The same town centre first approach will apply to locating future leisure based development to provide for diversification in the Town Centre's offer to the public and so improve its vitality and viability.
- 5.6 The vacant land to the south west of Langtree Park Stadium (home of St. Helens R.F.C.) was cleared as part of the wider redevelopment of the former United Glass works site. Phase 1 of the scheme has been completed comprising the rugby stadium and Tesco Extra along with associated petrol filling station, car parking and footbridge crossing over Linkway East (the Steve Prescott Bridge). Phase 2 of the scheme, which had envisaged accommodating a range of complementary leisure activities, remains uncompleted. The Council will work to bring forward beneficial use(s) on the vacant 'Langtree Park Phase 2' site that would not have a significantly adverse impact on the Town Centre in accordance with Policy LPC04 and national policy.
- 5.7 Work is underway on the preparation of a Town Centre Strategy to provide a comprehensive strategy for future the St. Helens Town Centre in consultation with the Council's partners and wider stakeholders. The Local Plan will fully align with the Strategy enabling the implementation of its recommendations including the identification of potential redevelopment opportunity areas to revitalise and enhance the Town Centre's retail and leisure offer. The identification of the 'Area of Opportunity' has arisen from early stages of the Strategy. The Area has potential for the reconfiguration and / or redevelopment of existing land and premises, subject to securing agreement of landowners, in order to enhance the retail and leisure offer of the Primary Shopping Area and the Town Centre.
- 5.8 Draft Town Centre, Primary Shopping Area and Primary and Secondary Retail Frontages have been drawn following a review of the existing Core Strategy boundaries using the definitions in the NPPF (see Appendix 8).
- 5.9 The Town Centre boundary has been revised to be substantially tighter to the north, north-east and south-east. These areas predominately comprise industrial and residential uses and are not considered to function as part of the town centre, nor do they specifically improve the overall offer of the town centre. To the east, the railway line forms the new recommended boundary line, whilst to the north, the boundary traces the southern extent of the residential area, continuing to incorporate retail and service units to the north of Duke Street. Asda and other commercial uses in close proximity to the south western edge of the centre remain within the boundary, due to the importance of these operators in drawing shoppers to the centre. The A58 ring-road acts as a 'natural' boundary to the south west of the town centre. This consolidated boundary reflects a more appropriate representation of a town centre as defined by the NPPF.

- 5.10 The Primary Shopping Area remains unaltered to that shown in the adopted Core Strategy and is considered to still reflect the area within the Town Centre in which retail uses are concentrated in line with the NPPF definition.
- 5.11 The Primary Retail Frontage have been extended to incorporate the full stretch of Church Street and to include the frontages contained within the Church Square Shopping Centre (Comprising Lagrange Arcade, Palatine Arcade, St. Mary's Arcade and Brownlow Arcade) and the Hardshaw Centre and is made up of a high proportion of retail uses.
- 5.12 The remaining retail and service units within the Primary Shopping Area form the Secondary Retail Frontage. This incorporates the retail and service units on Ormskirk Street, Bridge Street, Barrow Street, Cotham Street, Westfield Street and Baldwin Street.
- 5.13 The Primary Frontages are considered to be the most appropriate location for retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods. The Secondary Frontages will provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas and businesses.
- 5.14 For the purposes of retail development, the first preference for location is within the Primary Shopping Area. Proposals for retail uses that are in an edge or out-of-centre location in terms of the Primary Shopping Area will require a Sequential Assessment in accordance with national policy and Policy LPC04.
- 5.15 For all other non-retail Main Town Centre uses (as defined by the NPPF) the appropriate location is within the Town Centre Boundary. Proposals for Main Town Centre Uses that are in an edge or out-of-centre location in terms of the Town Centre Boundary will require a Sequential Assessment in accordance with national policy and Policy LPC04.
- 5.16 All Main Town Centre uses in an edge or out-of-centre location that meet the thresholds in Policy LPC04 will also require an Impact Assessment in accordance with national policy.
- 5.17 In order to maintain the functionality and vitality of the Town Centre, the Council will seek to ensure that a least 70% of units in the Primary Retail Frontage remain in an A1 retail use and will not support applications within the Primary and Secondary Frontages that will result in the loss of an active ground floor use.
- 5.18 Within the Central Spatial Area, development including Asda on Kirkland Street, The Range on Chalon Way, Ravenhead Retail Park, St. Helens Retail Park, Tesco Extra on Linkway and Langtree Park Stadium are recognised as performing a key function in retaining local retail expenditure and attracting visitors to the town. The Council will continue to pursue the integration of these outlying facilities with the Town Centre and its retail core through improved pedestrian routes, bus services and other means.

- 5.19 Continuous monitoring of the vitality and viability of the Town Centre will provide the Council will regular up to date on data on occupancy and vacancy rates and enable effective monitoring of policies to ensure they are performing effectively.
- 5.20 To enhance the vitality of the Town Centre and promote healthy communities in line with NPPF paragraph 69 the Council will support mixed schemes where they do not restrict the availability of viable retail floorspace. In particular, schemes which upgrade the quality of the existing office stock (B1a) will be encouraged even where overall this results in a net loss of office floorspace.
- 5.21 The road-user hierarchy is set out in the Third Local Transport Plan for Merseyside. It seeks prioritise road users in the following order:
- (a) Pedestrian
 - (b) Cycle
 - (c) Public Transport
 - (d) Access traffic
- 5.22 The hierarchy applies to the non-strategic highway network and supports priorities to manage carbon reduction, to manage the risk of road traffic incidents and to promote active travel.
- 5.23 At locations where the strategic road network overlaps with the non-strategic road network, the approach will be to apply the hierarchy for the non-strategic highway network. This approach will support the amenity of the town centre and will act to encourage visitors and attract further business to the area. However, it is recognised that such an approach will need to be flexible for certain locations.

Alternative Options

- 5.24 Alternative Option 1: Do not identify 'Areas of Opportunity' for growth and accept decline in retail market share, encouraging diversification to other uses including residential conversion of offices.
- 5.25 *Reason for Rejection:* National Planning Policy requires Local Planning Authorities to be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period. This approach would not allow the Town Centre and spatial area to fulfil its economic potential as a sustainable and accessible retail and leisure destination.
- 5.26 *Alternative Option 2:* Allocate vacant and under-used land around the town centre for potential retail and leisure uses.
- 5.27 *Reason for Rejection:* The latest evidence shows that comparison retail need will not increase to a level requiring new floorspace by until 2023 and there are existing sites which have had permission for retail uses which have not been implemented (Ravenhead Retail Park). There are currently vacancies within the PSA to meet short term need, but there are currently no sites available

within the PSA. The allocation of sites outside the PSA may harm the current PSA while there is low market retail demand. A Town Centre Strategy is being developed to enhance the attractiveness of the town centre for retail, leisure, housing and cultural investment, and this will act as a guide for plans to facilitate redevelopment within the Areas of Opportunity in a way that complements the existing PSA and Town Centre, and provides the right premises at the right time.

5.28 *Alternative Option 3:* Draw the town centre boundary closer to the north west and designate Duke Street as a Local Centre as shown in Appendix 8.

5.29 *Reason for Rejection:* This boundary would exclude key main town centre uses off King Street (including Asda and Lidl) which have good linkages to the rest of the town centre. Duke Street is not considered to function effectively as a Local Centre with a relatively limited convenience offer and is well connected to the retail and other main town centre uses to its south and south west.

Strategic Aims Met	1,3,5,6
Strategic Objectives Met	1.1, 3.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the St. Helens Town Centre Strategy

Policy LPB02: Earlestown Town Centre

LPB02: Earlestown Town Centre

The Council will safeguard the function and role of Earlestown Town Centre as the second town centre within the Borough by:

1. Defining the Town Centre boundary and Primary Shopping Area in order to:
 - Direct Main Town Centre uses development to suitable locations within the Town Centre first and then other sequentially preferable sites in line with Policy LPC04 and national policy; and
 - Resisting edge and out of centre Development which would result in a significant adverse impact on the Town Centre's vitality and viability or planned investment within it
2. Producing and implementing an Area Action Plan or Town Centre Masterplan to:
 - Maintain and enhance the town's built heritage;
 - Promote Earlestown as a key commuter settlement with its direct rail connectivity to Liverpool, Manchester and Chester;
 - Increase the number and variety of residential units through encouraging mixed use development which makes a positive contribution to the economic role of the Town Centre.

Reasoned Justification

- 5.30 Earlestown is recognised as the second town centre within the Borough. It is highly accessible from the surrounding residential areas and from other parts of the Newton-le-Willows area. Earlestown has both a railway station and bus station located within the Town Centre boundary, providing access to local and regional destinations.
- 5.31 Findings from the Draft Retail and Leisure Study (2016) by WYG that undertook a health check of Earlestown noted that the town has a reasonable provision of goods and services for a centre of its size, although it has a relatively limited comparison goods offer. Its convenience goods offer is significantly strengthened by the presence of the Tesco foodstore within the Town Centre boundary which generates linked trips to other activities. Earlestown is, however, poorly represented by national multiple retailers. It concluded that the town centre provides a local community focus and its retail and service offer is sufficient to meet the day to day needs of the surrounding community.
- 5.32 The Council will seek to safeguard this important role and function to ensure that Earlestown remains the Borough's second centre providing a highly sustainable location for retail and other services.

- 5.33 The existing Earlestown town centre boundary was originally defined in the St. Helens UDP 1998 (saved 2007). It incorporates the majority of the town's existing retail and service facilities, as well as areas of residential uses to the south-west and south-east.
- 5.34 It is proposed that the existing Town Centre boundary is tightened to the south-west and south as shown Appendix 8. This excludes the residential area to the south-west of the town-centre, as well as industrial uses to the direct south. These areas are not considered to function as part of the town centre.
- 5.35 A proposed Primary Shopping Area has been defined to direct main town centre uses to the 'heart' of the centre in the first instance and which is considered to be an important additional control for Earlestown.
- 5.36 The core shopping area in Earlestown is situated along the pedestrianised Market Street and the adjoining Bridge Street. These two streets contain the highest density of retail and service uses within the Town Centre boundary. It is also proposed that the Primary Shopping Area includes Tesco, Wilkinsons and Home Bargains and incorporates Market Square. These retailers act as key drawing factors to the centre and are considered to function as part of the retail core.
- 5.37 For the purposes of retail development, the appropriate location is within the Primary Shopping Area. Proposals for retail uses that are in an edge or out-of-centre location in terms of the Primary Shopping Area will require a Sequential Assessment in accordance with national policy and Policy LPC04.
- 5.38 For all other non-retail Main Town Centre uses (as defined by the NPPF) the appropriate location is within the Town Centre Boundary. Proposals for Main Town Centre Uses that are in an edge or out-of-centre location in terms of the Town Centre Boundary will require a Sequential Assessment in accordance with national policy and Policy LPC04.
- 5.39 All Main Town Centre uses in an edge or out-of-centre location that meet the thresholds in Policy LPC04 will also require an Impact Assessment in accordance with national policy.
- 5.40 To provide a focus for future development of the town centre, the Council will work to produce an Area Action Plan or Town Centre Masterplan. This will seek to recognise, protect and enhance the town's built heritage and positively promote Earlestown as location to live.

Alternative Options

- 5.41 *Alternative Option 1:* Continue to use the existing defined centre boundaries for Earlestown.
- 5.42 *Reason for Rejection:* Updated evidence on a network and hierarchy of centres with the Borough has been prepared. Using existing defined boundaries would

not reflect current role and functionality of the centre therefore the policy would be based on out of date evidence.

5.43 *Alternative Option 2:* Not to pursue a specific policy seeking the safeguard Earlestown as a Town Centre and instead rely on Policy LPC04 to control retail development and main town centre uses.

5.44 *Reasons for Rejection:* It is recognised that Earlestown serves an important role and function as an accessible and sustainable centre. It is considered appropriate to emphasis and protect this position through an area based policy.

Strategic Aims Met	1, 5
Strategic Objectives Met	1.1, 5.3
Key Delivery Items	Earlestown Area Action Plan/ Masterplan

6. Homes and Communities

Policy LPC01: Housing Mix

Policy LPC01: Housing Mix

1. New housing, both market and affordable, must be well designed to address local housing need incorporating a range of different types, tenures and sizes of homes consistent with the Borough's latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
2. For greenfield sites delivering 25 or more units, the Council will require 5% of the market housing mix to be bungalows.
3. For all sites delivering 25 or more units, the Council will require 20% or more of all units to be designed to Lifetime Homes standard.
4. The Council will work with partners to help facilitate the provision of specialist and supported housing for elderly and vulnerable people. Provision of sheltered housing, extra care housing, retirement accommodation and residential care homes will be supported in sustainable locations.
5. The Council will maintain a live Self-Build and Custom Build Register and will support the delivery of self and custom build schemes in the Borough.
6. Where an applicant believes they cannot comply with these requirements above in full, they will be expected to accompany their planning application with clear evidence to justify this. If an applicant considers that the requirements set out by this policy are not viable on a specific site, then this will need to be justified through an independent site-specific viability assessment.

Reasoned Justification

- 6.1 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes and create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities. This includes housing for families with children, older people, and people with disabilities. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends.
- 6.2 The Mid Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2016 is the latest assessment of housing need in the Borough. It considers the need for different types of housing and the housing needs of different groups within the community, such as the elderly. The SHMA takes account of characteristics of the local housing market, along with detailed demographic projections.

- 6.3 The SHMA has analysed likely house size need for the period 2014 to 2037 and these requirements are set out in Table 6.1 below both for market housing and affordable housing.

Table 6.1: Estimated Size of Homes Needed 2014-2037

Market Housing			
1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4+ Bedrooms
4.6%	34.2%	55.7%	5.5%
Affordable Housing			
1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4+ Bedrooms
39.4%	29.2%	29.5%	1.9%

- 6.4 As the table shows, there is currently a pressing need for larger market homes, principally 2 and 3 bedroom homes and smaller affordable units, principally 1 bedroom homes and larger units principally 2 and 3 bedroom homes. However, it is recognised that housing size requirements could change over the Plan period, therefore each planning application will be considered on its own merits taking into the account the character of the surrounding area, alongside the findings of the most up-to-date SHMA.
- 6.5 A 75% increase in the 75+ population is forecast between 2014 and 2037 in St. Helens. Some older households will require specialist housing solutions, such as sheltered or extra care homes. The need for specialist housing for older people in St. Helens identified within the SHMA is shown in the table below.

Table 6.2 Need for Special Housing for Older Persons, 2014-37

Population aged 75+ (2014)	Population aged 75+ (2037)	Change in population aged 75+	Specialist Housing Need (@170 units per 1000)
15,166	26,542	11,376	1,934

- 6.6 Building homes that remain accessible for all stages of life and can be adapted are necessary to support an ageing population as well disabled people. The Council will expect that in new residential developments at least 20% of all dwellings are constructed to Lifetime Homes standards. This is so that a proportion of all homes available in the Borough are capable of adaptation, without undue difficulty, for occupation by residents who are wheelchair users and to ensure these homes will also be accessible to visitors with limited mobility.

Self and Custom Build

- 6.7 Self-build and custom house building are defined in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 as:

“the building or completion by— (a) individuals, (b) associations of individuals, or (c) persons working with or for individuals or associations

of individuals of houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals. But it does not include the building of a house on a plot acquired from a person who builds the house wholly or mainly to plans or specifications decided or offered by that person.”

- 6.8 Custom and self-build dwellings share the same definition in planning and the terms are used interchangeably. Custom build is where a person commissions a specialist developer to help to deliver their own home, while self-build is where a person is more directly involved in organising and constructing their home. Both routes require significant input from the home owner in the design process of the dwelling.
- 6.9 The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 placed a duty on local authorities to keep a register of individuals and associations of individuals who wish to acquire serviced plots of land to bring forward self-build and custom housebuilding projects.
- 6.10 St. Helens Borough Council’s Self Build Register can be found by following this link <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/planning-building-control/planning-policy/self-build-and-custom-build-register/> whilst further information is available via the Government endorsed self-build portal <http://www.selfbuildportal.org.uk/custombuild>.
- 6.11 The NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should identify and make provision for the housing needs of different groups in the community such as people wishing to build their own homes. The PPG also makes it clear that the Government is keen to support and encourage individuals and communities who want to build their own homes.
- 6.12 The Mid Mersey SHMA did not identify a specific quantum of demand for self-build in St. Helens. It is anticipated that as the Self-Build Register becomes more established, demand for self and custom build plots could increase. Further evidence of need for self and custom build plots will be informed by future SHMAs, as well as the live Register itself.

Alternative Options

- 6.13 *Alternative Option 1:* Do not have a policy requirement for applicants to refer to the latest SHMA when considering a suitable housing mix for a site.
- 6.14 *Reason for Rejection:* It is a requirement of the NPPF that local authorities plan for a mix of housing to meet local demand. This option would fail to meet identified housing needs in the Borough.
- 6.15 *Alternative Option 2:* Do not have a policy that sets a requirement for the provision of lifetime homes and bungalows.
- 6.16 *Reason for Rejection:* It is a requirement of the NPPF that local authorities plan for a mix of housing to meet local demand this includes housing for older people, and people with disabilities. This option would therefore fail to meet the requirements of the NPPF.

- 6.17 *Alternative Option 3:* Introduce a higher or lower unit threshold for the provision of lifetime homes and bungalows.
- 6.18 *Reason for Rejection:* The option of setting a higher or lower unit threshold for the provision of lifetime homes and bungalows was considered. However, taking account of the scale of need for adaptable housing to support an ageing population in St. Helens and taking into account viability it is considered that a 25 unit threshold represents an appropriate unit threshold.
- 6.19 *Alternative Option 4:* Introduce a specific policy requirement for all new residential development over a certain unit threshold (e.g. 40 units) to supply a set percentage (e.g. 5%) of dwelling plots for sale to self or custom builders on the Borough's Self Build Register.
- 6.20 *Reason for Rejection:* The Council currently have a supply of self build plots under construction and currently nobody is registered on the Council's Self Build Register. The Council's Self Build Register will continue to be monitored as the Local Plan is prepared.

Strategic Aims Met	SA 4
Strategic Objectives Met	SA4.1
Key Delivery Items	SHMA, Planning Conditions, Section 106 Legal Agreements

Policy LPC02: Affordable Housing Provision

LPC02: Affordable Housing Provision

The delivery of Affordable Housing will be achieved through:

1. Supporting new provision by Registered Providers of Social Housing;
2. Requiring all new open market housing developments of 11 units or more to contribute as follows:
 - a) 30% of the total development will be provided as affordable housing on greenfield sites in Affordable Housing Zones 2, 3 and 4;
 - b) 10% of the total development will be provided as affordable housing on brownfield sites in Affordable Housing Zone 4.
3. The provision of affordable housing may vary on a site-by-site basis taking into account evidence of local need and where appropriate, the economic viability of the development. Any relaxation of the above affordable housing requirement will only be considered if fully justified by an independent site-specific viability appraisal;
4. The presumption will be for on-site provision unless no local need exists or overriding benefits of alternative provision can be demonstrated by the applicant, in which case a commuted sum in lieu of on-site provision will be required. The mechanisms for calculating financial contributions in lieu of on-site provision are set out in the Affordable Housing SPD.

Reasoned Justification

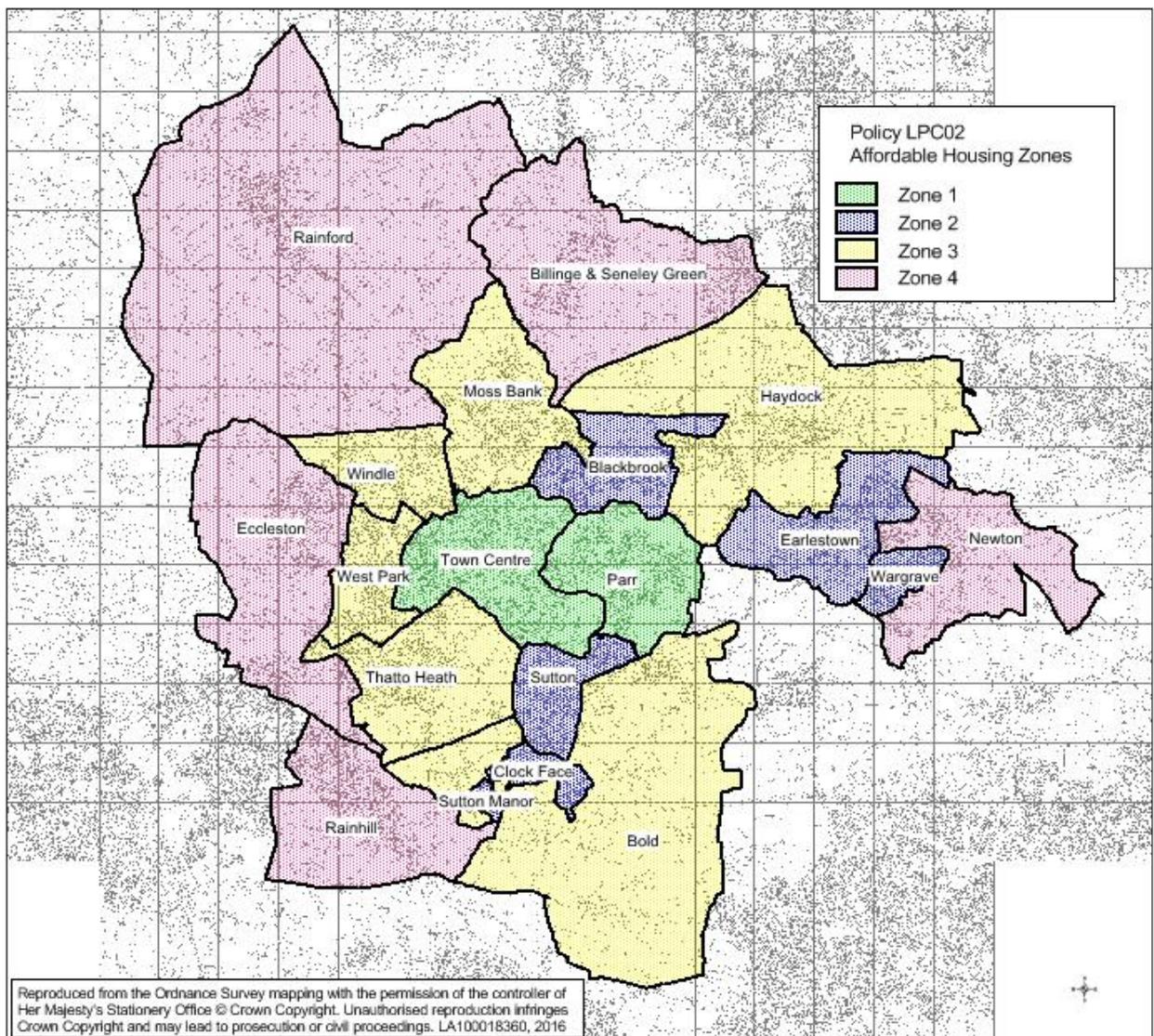
- 6.21 This policy sets out when affordable housing provision will be required and indicate the proportions which will be sought from open market housing development. For St. Helens the Mid Mersey SHMA identified an affordable housing need of 96 units per annum up to 2037.
- 6.22 The existing Council policy for the provision of affordable homes is set out in the adopted Core Strategy Policy CH 2. Policy CH2 requires at least 30% of all new developments of 5 units or more to be affordable. Since this policy was adopted in 2012, the Government has introduced guidance that limits the provision of affordable homes to developments of 11 or more units and has introduced a new type of affordable housing called Starter Homes.
- 6.23 Starter homes are broadly defined as homes that would be sold to persons under the age of 40, and which cost 20% less than the open market value of the home, up to a maximum of £250,000 (in areas outside of London). The Housing and Planning Act 2016 creates a new duty on all local authorities to promote the supply of starter homes in their area. The Act also allows the government to set regulations requiring starter homes to be included on residential sites as a condition of securing planning permission. These regulations will be issued at a

later date. The Local Plan will need to be consistent with national planning policy on starter homes and any future updates to this policy will therefore be drafted to respond to these emerging changes.

Economic Viability

- 6.24 The provision of affordable housing linked to open market housing development must be realistic with regard to economic viability, but flexible to variations between sites and changes in market conditions over the Plan period.
- 6.25 The Core Strategy contained a 30% Borough-wide requirement for affordable housing; however early drafts of the St. Helens Local Plan Economic Viability Report have demonstrated geographical disparities in viability and this has informed the new zonal approach proposed. This policy contains four separate affordable housing zones which broadly follow ward boundaries in most areas as presented on the Policies map an on Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1: Policy LPC02 Draft Affordable Housing Zones



Affordable Housing Zone	Areas included	Affordable Housing Requirement
1	Town Centre and Parr wards	No affordable housing requirement due to viability constraints
2	Blackbrook ward, Clock Face area, Sutton ward, Sutton Manor area, Earlestown ward, Wargrave area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% requirement on greenfield sites • 0% requirement on brownfield sites
3	Parts of Bold ward, Haydock Ward, Moss Bank ward, Windle Ward, West Park ward, Thatto Heath ward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% requirement on greenfield sites • 0% requirement on brownfield sites
4	Rainford ward, Eccleston ward, Rainhill ward, Billinge & Seneley Green, parts of Newton ward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% requirement on greenfield sites • 10% requirement on brownfield sites

Table 6.3: Affordable Housing Zone Requirements

- 6.26 If a developer considers that the affordable housing requirements set out by this policy are not viable on a specific site, then this will need to be justified through an independent financial appraisal. Developers will be expected to fund an independent financial appraisal, undertaken by a consultant appointed by the Council on a retainer contract demonstrating their justification.
- 6.27 The St. Helens Affordable Housing SPD (2010) will be updated as necessary to incorporate any changes to the Council's requirements for affordable housing as the new Local Plan is prepared.
- 6.28 **Alternative Options**
- 6.29 *Alternative Option 1: Continue with the Core Strategy 30% affordable housing requirement across St. Helens (rather than have the varying requirements across different locations).*
- 6.30 *Reason for Rejection:* Early drafts of the St. Helens Local Plan Economic Viability Report indicate that a continuation of the Core Strategy requirement would render development unviable in some areas; this approach would therefore stifle some development sites and do little to help meet the Borough's housing needs. In addition, a review of the level of affordable housing achieved on new residential developments approved since January 2013 has demonstrated that viability has been a major constraint on most brownfield sites. The regeneration of brownfield sites is still a key priority for the Council and therefore it is deemed appropriate to enhance viability of these sites by removing the requirement for affordable housing from all brownfield sites, apart from Zone 4, which will have a significantly reduced requirement.
- 6.31 *Alternative Option 2: Seek lower than 30% affordable housing provision on greenfield sites in Affordable Housing Zones 2, 3 and 4.*

- 6.32 *Reason for Rejection:* Early drafts of the St. Helens Local Plan Economic Viability Report indicate that generally greenfield sites in Affordable Housing Zones 2, 3 and 4 can viably support the delivery of 30% affordable housing. If a requirement is lower, it may mean that sites in the more viable areas deliver less affordable housing than could viably be delivered, thus making a less significant contribution to meeting the affordable housing need identified in the Mid-Mersey SHMA.
- 6.33 *Alternative Option 3: Seek higher than 30% affordable housing provision on greenfield sites in Affordable Housing Zones 2, 3 and 4*
- 6.34 *Reason for Rejection:* Early drafts of the St. Helens Local Plan Economic Viability Report indicate that generally greenfield sites in Affordable Housing Zones 2, 3 and 4 can viably support the delivery of 30% affordable housing. If a requirement is higher, it could mean that sites are not viable, thereby stifling development from coming forward and doing little to help meet the Borough's housing needs.
- 6.35 *Alternative Option 4: Seek higher than 10% affordable housing provision on brownfield land.*
- 6.36 *Reason for Rejection:* As per Option 3, early drafts of the St. Helens Local Plan Economic Viability Report indicate that generally brownfield sites in Affordable Housing Zone 4 can viably support the delivery of 10% affordable housing. If a requirement is higher, it could mean that sites are not viable, thereby stifling development from coming forward and doing little to help meet the Borough's housing needs.
- 6.37 *Alternative Option 5: Seek 10% affordable housing provision on all brownfield land.*
- 6.38 *Reason for Rejection:* Early drafts of the St. Helens Local Plan Economic Viability Report indicate that generally brownfield sites in Affordable Housing Zones 1, 2 and 3 cannot viably support the delivery of 10% affordable housing. The requirement of 10% affordable housing on all brownfield sites would render development unviable in some areas; this approach would therefore stifle some development sites and do little to help meet the Borough's housing needs.

Strategic Aims Met	SA 4
Strategic Objectives Met	SA4.1
Key Delivery Items	Affordable Housing SPD, Section 106 Legal Agreements, Planning Conditions

Policy LPC03: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

LPC03: Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- The following sites are allocated for Gypsy & Traveller Pitches in order to meet the Borough's identified need for Gypsy & Traveller permanent and transit accommodation and are identified on the Policies Map:

Site ref	Site location	Size (hectares)	Type of site	Indicative number of pitches
GTA01	Land north of Sherdley Road and west of Sutton Heath Road, Sherdley Road, Thatto Heath	0.39	Permanent	8
GTA02	Land adjacent to land east of Sherdley Road Caravan Park, Sherdley Road, Thatto Heath	0.09	Transit (limited length of stay)	3

- GTA01 is suitable for permanent Gypsy & Traveller pitches including amenity buildings. GTA02 is suitable for transit (limited length of stay) accommodation of Gypsies and Travellers. Development which is not compatible with Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation will not be permitted on these sites or on adjacent sites.
- The loss of Gypsy & Traveller sites or pitches and Travelling Showpeople sites or plots will not be permitted unless:
 - Pitch and plot provision is significantly in excess of the latest Council assessment of pitch / plot need and is expected to be so for the plan period, and the site has been marketed for a period of time and in a manner agreed with the Local Planning Authority; or
 - The loss of a pitch is necessary to provide required essential improvements to the site; or
 - The site is unsuitable and there is new additional equivalent provision being provided.
- Proposals for new, reconfigured or expanded sites for Gypsies and Travellers or Travelling Showpeople should:
 - Have a suitable, practical and safe site layout and design, including adequate internal circulation, marked pitches, parking, amenity buildings/facilities and amenity space, wherever possible in accordance with national government guidance and including consultation with local users where possible;
 - Have suitable physical environmental conditions including ground conditions and flood risk;
 - Have adequate levels of amenity and privacy between plots/pitches and neighbouring uses and respects the character of the local built and/or natural environment;

- d) Have footpath access and road access suitable for the vehicles and caravans likely to access the site, which enables pedestrian or public transport access to local, district or town centres, education and health facilities, jobs and public transport interchanges;
- e) In addition to (a) to (d) above, sites for Travelling Showpeople must be suitable for maintenance and testing of equipment and must not prejudice the operations of existing employment uses. Conditions and/or section 106 obligations will be used limiting the hours that equipment can be tested.

Reasoned Justification

- 6.39 The 2004 Housing Act and the Government's 2012 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) requires local authorities to assess Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation needs and ensure steps are taken in meeting those needs, including through the allocation of sites in the Local Plan. The 2014 Merseyside and West Lancashire Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) used extensive fieldwork by interviewers (themselves from the Gypsy & Traveller community) to understand current and future housing need from the members of the Gypsy & Traveller Community living in caravans and in "bricks and mortar" houses. The GTAA found that St. Helens required 35 additional permanent pitches (8 net additional when turnover taken into account) up to 2033. This consisted of 6 in the period 2013/14 to 2017/18, 1 in the period 2018/19 to 2022/23 and an additional 2 in 2023/24 to 2032/33. This need changes each year as occupancy of sites alters, and pitches are gained and lost, and the current need in 2016 for the period up to 2017/18 is a net additional 16 pitches. For the entire plan period this would be a net additional of around 18 permanent pitches. The GTAA also found a need for 3 transit pitches (capable of taking 6 touring caravans) for Gypsies and Travellers for the period 2013/14 to 2032/33. The GTAA did not identify a need for accommodation for Travelling Showpeople.
- 6.40 A permanent pitch acts as main place of residence, with the occupier being able to go off site to travel for periods of time during the year. It should have utilities provision to the pitch and have enough space for a permanent static caravan, a touring caravan, an amenity building (toilet, bathroom, and possibly also a utility/sitting room) and space for vehicles (which must be suitable for a commercial vehicle). A transit pitch is for occupation on a short term, temporary basis by Gypsies and Travellers who are travelling away from their "home" pitch. A transit pitch needs to have enough space for a touring caravan plus the vehicle that tows it and access to utilities provision.
- 6.41 In August 2015, the Government changed the definition of a Traveller for planning purposes so that it no longer includes travellers who have given up a nomadic way of life. However, this has not over-ridden the Equalities Act 2010 which recognises that Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are distinct ethnic groups, and their cultural preferences for caravans is still a relevant factor. In May 2016, the Housing and Planning Act removed the requirement for a separate GTAA to be undertaken, however an assessment of

need for Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople still needs to be made within a general housing needs assessment such as a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and the GTAA remains a relevant evidence base document until this happens.

- 6.42 In terms of current supply, from which future supply can arise in terms of pitch turnover, St. Helens has at least 12 sites that are authorised or that have become lawful by the passage of time for occupation by Gypsies and Travellers. They vary from small sites occupied by just two caravans and occupied by one family up to the Council owned and operated Sherdley Road caravan site with 20 pitches and occupied by several families, totalling around 70 authorised pitches. Exact capacity has fluctuated as sites have been reconfigured, and monitoring of occupancy of all sites is difficult due to access and privacy concerns. There are no Travelling Showpeople sites in St. Helens. The GTAA took an informed view of current vacancies and likely turnover on certain sites, but excluded some sites, such as those in single family use and those that were not available. For example, one site has been vacant for several years, another is now used for storing caravans, and so they were not counted as being part of the supply. A private caravan site on Sherdley Road, which has not been occupied for several years and so not counted as part of the supply, has in 2016 been granted permission for reconfiguration to 12 permanent pitches. It is considered appropriate to now count this as part of the supply of sites. There are also two unauthorised sites which have been subject to appeals against enforcement action, one of which was successful and the other was not.
- 6.43 No privately owned sites have been suggested by members of the Gypsy & Traveller community or for permanent or transit Gypsy & Traveller and Travelling Showpersons use during “Call for Sites” exercises, the most recent of which was in early 2016. The 0.09 ha “land adjacent to land east of Sherdley Road Caravan Park, Sherdley Road, Thatto Heath” (Local Plan reference: GTA02) has been purchased by the Council in order to deliver what was envisaged in 2008 to be a larger transit of around 12 pitches. The larger transit site was to include the permanent privately owned Gypsy & Traveller Site on Sherdley Road called “land to east of Sherdley Road Caravan Park” (Council reference : “11_ACS”), which by 2008 had been vacant for several years, but the Council was unable to agree its purchase with the landowner. The private site 11_ACS had planning permission granted in 2016 for a reconfigured layout of 12 pitches with amenity blocks, and is now counted as part of the permanent land supply. 11_ACS is itself to the east of the Council owned and operated Sherdley Road Caravan Park (“10_ACS”). GTA02 is of a suitable size to meet the requirement set out in the 2014 GTAA, meets the criteria in policy LPC03, is centrally located and easily accessible for council and other support staff to access, monitor and maintain the site, and so is the Preferred location for a transit site. It was not considered necessary to search for other sites.
- 6.44 The permission granted in 2016 for 12 pitches on 11_ACS will make a significant contribution to the need identified in the 2014 GTAA. However, there will still be unmet need of 6 pitches. The Council owns land (GTA01) to the west of the existing Council owned Sherdley Road Caravan Park (“10_ACS”)

and this is the preferred option for delivery of additional permanent transit provision. The site is considered to meet or be capable of meeting policy LCP03, is deliverable by the Council and is estimated to have capacity for 8 pitches. Together with 11_ACS, the total estimated net need over the plan period would be met.

- 6.45 No provision has been made for provision beyond the plan period in terms of predicting need, windfall allowance and safeguarding sites as the GTAA found looking ahead that far was difficult and it was preferable to base estimates of need on discussion with members of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson communities. Accordingly, the preferred approach is for needs beyond the plan period to be reviewed in a new GTAA taking account of the outcome of the latest changes to Government Guidance and consideration can be given to utilising brownfield SHLAA sites and land safeguarded for housing if no suggestions are again forthcoming from the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson communities.

Alternatives Options

- 6.44 *Alternative Option 1:* Not allocating a new permanent site at GTA01 and let existing vacant sites and sites with permission provide new supply by preventing their loss to other uses.
- 6.45 *Reason for Rejection:* It is possible this would lead to a shortfall and there is no commitment from owners to bring the vacant sites forward, which may then require compulsory purchase orders and other costly and time consuming processes.
- 6.46 *Alternative Option 2:* Consider all brownfield sites in the SHLAA and Green Belt sites for use as permanent sites and select.
- 6.47 *Reason for Rejection:* None of the privately owned sites have been suggested for Gypsy & Traveller use, so their implementation would rely on the Council purchase, which may be difficult to justify given that some Gypsy & traveller sites are currently vacant.
- 6.48 *Alternative Option 3:* Do not allocate a transit site as levels of encampments are below historic highs in the early 2000s.
- 6.49 *Reason for Rejection:* This is not a realistic alternative as the 2014 Merseyside and West Lancashire GTAA recommended that each Local Authority in the study provide transit capacity to meet needs on each authority and avoid putting pressure on other authorities.

Strategic Aims Met	SA1, SA2, SA3, SA4, SA6
Strategic Objectives Met	SO1.1, SO2.1, SO3.1, SO4.1, SO6.2
Key Delivery Items	Provision of additional Gypsy & Traveller permanent pitch provision to meet identified need Provision of Gypsy & Traveller transit pitch provision to meet identified need Protection of existing sites and pitches New development meeting standards set out in policy LPC03

Policy LPC04: Retail and Town Centres

LPC04: Retail and Town Centres

1. Proposals for retail, leisure and other Main Town Centre uses will be directed towards the Borough's defined centres as listed below and as shown on the Policies Map:

- **Principal Town Centre:** St. Helens.
- **Town Centre:** Earlestown.
- **District Centres:** Rainhill and Thatto Heath.
- **Local Centres:** Billinge; Chain Lane; Clipsley Lane; Denton's Green; Eccleston; Fingerpost; Marshall's Cross; Newton-le-Willows; Newtown; Rainford; and Sutton.

2. Planning permission will only be granted for development which is appropriate relative to the role and function of each centre.

3. Proposals for Main Town Centre uses that are not located in an existing centre will be subject to a sequential approach to development in line with national policy. This will require applications for Main Town Centre uses to be located firstly in Town, District or Local Centres, then Edge of Centre locations, and only if suitable sites are not available should Out of Centre sites be considered. For St. Helens and Earlestown, the Primary Shopping Area is the appropriate 'in centre' location.

4. When considering new proposals in out of centre locations, preference will be given to accessible sites that are well connected to a defined centre as listed in Part 1 of the policy.

5. The sequential approach will not apply to applications for small scale rural offices or other small scale rural development.

6. For retail, leisure and office use proposals, Impact Assessments will be required to accompany planning applications at the locations identified below based on the following floorspace thresholds:

- I. outside of the St. Helens Primary Shopping Area (for retail uses) or the Town, District and Local Centres (for leisure and office uses) impact assessments will be required for development which proposes more than 500sq.m gross floorspace;
- II. outside of the Earlestown Primary Shopping Area (for retail uses) or of Earlestown Town Centre (for leisure and office uses) impact assessments will be required for development which proposes more than 300sq.m gross floorspace;
- III. within 800m outside of the boundaries of the district centres, an impact

- assessment will be required for development which proposes more than 300sq.m gross floorspace; and
- IV. within 800m outside of the boundaries of the local centres, an impact assessment will be required for development which proposes more than 200sq.m gross floorspace
7. Where more than one impact threshold applies, the lower impact threshold will take precedence.
8. Impact Assessment thresholds will apply to applications for new floorspace as well as changes of use and variations of condition to remove or amend restrictions on how units operate in practice.

Reasoned Justification

Network and Hierarchy of Centres

- 6.50 The network and hierarchy centres within the Borough has been defined following the recommendations of the draft Retail and Leisure Study 2016 by WYG which undertook health checks of each centre to assess their role and functionality. This study updates the 2006 Local Centre Study also by WYG.
- 6.51 The network of centres remains unchanged from the Core Strategy 2012 with the exception of Chancery Lane which is no longer defined as a Local Centre.
- 6.52 The boundaries of each centre (as defined by the Core Strategy and 2006 Study) have been revisited and in several instances redefined to reflect the centre's current functionality and levels of provision. The location of the centre boundaries are shown on the Policies Map and in detailed in Appendix 8.
- 6.53 St. Helens remains the top tier town centre performing an important role and containing a good representation of retail, leisure, and civic uses that to cater the need of the Borough's residents. As such it is considered the Principal Town Centre.
- 6.54 Earlestown, as a second tier Town Centre, contains a reasonable provision of goods and services for a centre of its size, and is highly accessible from the surrounding residential areas and from other parts of the Newton-le-Willows area. Its retail and service offer is sufficient to meet the day to day needs of the surrounding community.
- 6.55 Rainhill and Thatto Heath, as District Centres, provide accessible locations with sufficient levels of retail and service provision and community facilities to meet day to day needs of local residents.
- 6.56 The twelve Local Centres have a role of catering for the day to day shopping needs of the local communities providing an important local service to meet the needs of residents within the surrounding catchment. Chancery Lane Local

Centre, which was included in the St. Helens Core Strategy, has been de-selected as it no longer meets the criteria for a local centre.

Sequential Approach

- 6.57 To ensure the vitality and viability of the Borough's centres is maintained and enhanced, the Council will continue to apply the 'Town Centre First' principle when considering proposals for Main Town Centre uses, including retail, whereby development will be directed to defined centres in the first instance
- 6.58 In line paragraph 24 of the NPPF, a sequential test should be applied to planning applications for Main Town Centre uses that are not in an existing centre. In the case of St. Helens and Earlestown, the Primary Shopping Area is the 'in centre' boundary for retail development. For other Main Town Centre uses the Town Centre boundary defines where is 'in centre'. For District and Local Centres, their defined centre boundaries mark what is considered 'in centre' for all Main Town Centre uses. This approach is consistent with NPPF definitions.
- 6.59 To satisfy the sequential test, a Sequential Assessment will be required as part of a planning application. The Assessment should set out the reasoning why sequentially preferable i.e. more centrally located locations have been ruled out. When considering alternative sites, the suitability, availability and viability of the site should be considered, with particular regard to the nature of the need that is to be addressed.
- 6.60 When considering how the sequential test should be applied, the Council will take account of planning practice guidance and only require that Assessments that are proportionate and appropriate to size and scale of the development proposed.
- 6.61 It is recognised that certain Main Town Centre uses have particular market and locational requirements which mean that they may only be accommodated in specific locations. In the case of proposals for small scale shops and services in predominantly residential areas serving a localised catchment, it may not be reasonable to expect the same customer base or market to be served from premises within a defined centre or on the edge of it. Where this can be fully justified and the proposal is in a highly and safely accessible location (including by walking and cycling) a Sequential Assessment of alternative locations may not be required.

Impact Assessment

- 6.62 In line with paragraph 26 of the NPPF, the emerging Retail and Leisure Study 2016 has recommended a range of locally set thresholds for the requirement of an Impact Assessment commensurate to the hierarchy of centres set out in Policy LPA02.
- 6.63 With regard to the area to which the local impact threshold will apply outside of District and Local Centres, this will be within 800 metres of the boundary of the

relevant centre. The distance of 800 metres is considered to be broadly commensurate with the potential walk-in catchments of smaller centres and is identified by Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot (The Institution of Highways & Transportation, 2000) as being the 'preferred maximum' acceptable walking distance to a centre.

- 6.64 Beyond 800 metres from District and Local centres, the higher threshold of 500sq.m will apply.
- 6.65 Where an Impact Assessment is required, the applicant should agree the scope with the Council at an early stage to ensure it is proportionate to the scale of the proposed development and provides the required information to address the concerns of the Council. The Council will take account of planning practice guidance when considering the assessment of a proposal's impact.

Alternative Options

- 6.66 *Alternative Option 1:* Continue to use existing Town, District and Local boundary definitions as defined in the Core Strategy and the 2006 Local Centre Study.
- 6.67 *Reason for Rejection:* Updated evidence on a network and hierarchy of centres with the Borough has been prepared. Using existing defined boundaries would not reflect current role and functionality of centres therefore policy would be based on out of date evidence.
- 6.68 *Alternative Option 2:* Do not set local thresholds for the impact test, instead relying on the default floorspace threshold in the NPPF of 2,500sq.m.
- 6.69 *Reason for Rejection:* This is less likely to ensure the vitality and viability of defined centres. By using a blanket 2,500sq.m threshold to trigger the need for an Impact Assessment, significant scale out of centre retail development could be permitted without its impact on defined centres being considered as part of the planning process, potentially leading to adverse impacts and unsustainable patterns of development.
- 6.70 *Alternative Option 3:* Set intermediate floorspace thresholds (i.e. between those recommended in the draft Retail & Leisure and the NPPF default threshold of 2,500 sq.m) for requiring an Impact Assessment
- 6.71 *Reason for rejection:* Higher thresholds than those recommended may not necessarily ensure that the impacts of certain types of retail development which can generate a high turnover and significant levels of trade draw can be assessed. Setting higher than proposed thresholds may still be appropriate, subject to consideration of further evidence.
- 6.72 *Alternative Option 4:* Set policy criteria whereby proposals for small neighbourhood shops and services proposing 150sq.m gross floorspace or less in out of centre locations are not required to submit Sequential Assessments

providing they are easily and safely accessible by foot and by cycle from the surrounding area.

- 6.73 *Reason for rejection:* Although the approach would seek to remove onerous requirements from applicants who have good reason not to locate in or on the edge of centres and are in sustainable locations, it would go beyond the provisions of the NPPF and may result in available and suitable units of this size in defined centres not being considered. Further evidence to justify an exclusionary approach based on floorspace threshold would be needed.

Strategic Aims Met	1, 5
Strategic Objectives Met	1.1, 5.3
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan Determination of planning applications using this policy

7. Environment and Resources

Policy LPC05: Open Space, Sports and Recreation

Policy LPC05: Open Space, Sports and Recreation

The Council will protect, manage and enhance open spaces, sporting and recreational facilities by:

- 1) Protecting the Borough's network of open spaces from development, including those identified on the Policies Map;
- 2) Determining proposals for development that would result in the loss of open space with regard to local assessments and standards set out in table 7.1;
- 3) Determining proposals that would result in the loss of land or buildings in use or most recently in use for sport and recreation, with regard to local assessments of need and in accordance with national planning policy (including Sport England's Policy);
- 4) Supporting the delivery of programmes and strategies to provide and enhance open space and sports and recreation provision such as allotments, sports facilities and youth and children's play facilities;
- 5) Promoting and improving the accessibility of open space within walking distance of housing, health, employment and education facilities;
- 6) Requiring new development to provide for appropriate open space provision in accordance with Policy LPD03 (Open Space and Residential Development) and Policy LPA08 (Infrastructure Delivery and Funding); and
- 7) Supporting open space improvements through a programme of Green Flag designation or equivalent.

Reasoned Justification:

- 7.1 This policy effectively seeks to protect the Borough's open spaces, sports and recreation facilities and to manage existing provision in the most effective way. It also enables the provision of improved facilities based on up to date assessments on where they are most needed
- 7.2 The proposed network of open spaces, sports and recreation facilities is shown on the proposed Policies Map. This network includes:
- Parks and gardens
 - Natural and semi-natural greenspaces
 - Amenity greenspace
 - Provision for children and young people (including equipped play areas)
 - Allotments
 - Cemeteries and churchyards

- Outdoor sports and recreation facilities (including playing fields, golf courses, bowling greens, tennis courts, sailing spaces)
- 7.3 The sites included in this network fulfil a variety of functions including providing attractive landscapes, environmental habitat and recreational space, and overall they provide strong health and well-being benefits for people. It should be noted that the network of sites is not exhaustive and some areas of open space under 0.2 hectares, particularly areas functioning as amenity greenspace or natural and semi natural greenspace, are not identified. For the avoidance of doubt, open spaces of public value under 0.2 ha in size are protected by this policy.
- 7.4 Furthermore, new areas of open space are expected to be created as a result of new residential development in line with Policy LPD03 (Open Space and Residential Development) and Policy LPA08 (Infrastructure Delivery and Funding). These new areas of open space will also be protected and subject to the requirements of this policy.
- 7.5 The identified network includes outdoor sports and recreation facilities only. However, in accordance with national planning policy, built (i.e. indoor) sports and recreation facilities are afforded equal protection and are also subject to this policy.
- 7.6 When determining proposals that would result in the loss of existing open space, sports or recreation facilities, the most recent Open Space, Sports and Recreation Assessment (or equivalent) will be the basis for assessing whether the open space, sports or recreation facility in question are considered surplus to requirements. This evidence will also inform the acceptability of any proposed replacement or alternative provision in accordance with paragraph 74 of the NPPF and, in the case of playing fields, the latest Sport England policy.
- 7.7 The St. Helens Open Space Sport and Recreation Assessment (OSSRA) completed in 2016 provides the most up to date evidence on open space and sports and recreation facilities in the Borough. It comprises: an Open Space Assessment; a Playing Pitch Assessment, Strategy and Action Plan; and a Built and Indoor Sports Facilities Assessment with Golf Course Addendum.
- 7.8 With regards to open space, the assessment concluded that overall there is a sufficient quantity of open space in the Borough when considered against the standards set out in Table 7.1. However, there are parts of the Borough where clear deficiencies exist and where issues in quality and accessibility have been identified.
- 7.9 The following table sets out open space provision and accessibility standards for the Borough. These standards were set out in the 2012 Core Strategy having been recommended by the 2006 Open Space Study and derived from the local community's view on existing levels of provision and accessibility. Having reviewed the updated Borough wide levels of open space provision identified in 2016 Open Space Assessment, which for the key typologies of parks and gardens and amenity greenspace are not significantly different, it is considered that these standards remain appropriate.

Table 7.1: Open Space Standards

Open Space Typology	Standard per 1,000 population (ha)	Accessibility Standard (time/distance)
Parks and gardens	0.8	15 min walk (1.2km)
Natural and semi-natural open space	2	15 min walk (1.2km)
Amenity greenspace	1	5 min walk (400m)
Provision for children and young people	0.1	10 min walk (800m)
Allotments	0.1	15 min walk (1.2km)

7.10 The Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan, informed by a comprehensive Playing Pitch Assessment, has established the supply and demand for playing pitch facilities across the Borough in terms of usage and provision. It identifies a series of sport by sport recommendations which provide a strategic framework for the protection, enhancement and provision of outdoor sports facilities.

7.11 Where replacement or alternative provision is proposed to address the loss of existing open space, sports or recreation facilities, this evidence will be taken into consideration when applying this policy in order to direct the right improvements to the right locations and strengthen the existing network.

7.12 Where new residential development will result in a deficiency of open space or sports and recreation facilities in the locality, or be in a location where a deficiency already exists. Such development will be expected to provide sufficient open space on-site where possible and appropriate, to meet the demand created by the development in line with Policy LPD03 (Open Space and Residential Development) and Policy LPA08 (Infrastructure Delivery and Funding). Any requirement for new sports or recreation facilities will be additional to this.

Alternative Options

7.13 *Alternative Option 1:* Do not have specific policy and rely on policies in the NPPF with regards to open space, sports and recreational buildings and land.

7.14 *Reason for Rejection:* The absence of any local policy and designations would not give the necessary focus for the protection, enhancement or provision of new open spaces and sports facilities where they are most needed, potentially resulting in a less sustainable outcome.

7.15 *Alternative Option 2:* Use alternative open space standards for the Borough; for example propose lower provision standards.

7.16 *Reasons for Rejection:* The existing standards were recommended by the 2006 Open Space Study and derived from the local community's view on existing levels of provision and accessibility. For the key typologies of parks and gardens and amenity greenspace, these standards broadly reflect current levels

of borough wide provision. There is no evidence to support alternative standards at this stage.

Strategic Aims Met	2, 6
Strategic Objectives Met	2.1, 6.2, 6.3
Key Delivery Items	St. Helens Playing Pitch Strategy 2016 Planning applications, Section 106 Legal Agreements

Policy LPC06: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

Policy LPC06: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

1. Development on or outside a proposed or designated Site of Special Scientific Interest which is likely to have a detrimental effect (either singly or in combination with other developments) will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development can clearly be demonstrated to outweigh the impacts it is likely to have on the features for which the site has been designated.
2. Development directly or indirectly affecting sites of local nature conservation interest (Local Wildlife Sites, Local Geological Sites or Local Nature Reserves) will only be permitted if the Council is satisfied that the ecological or geological features, and additionally, in the case of Local Nature Reserves, educational features can be safeguarded. If necessary this may require appropriate conditions and/or seeking legal agreements. The LWS, LGS and LNRs at the time of the adoption of this plan are shown on the Policies Map and listed in Appendix 6, but new sites may be designated outside of the Local Plan process.
3. Development will not be permitted where the Council is satisfied that it would have an adverse effect on priority wildlife species listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 or Sections 2,5 & 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended).
4. Where the benefits of development outweigh the nature conservation interests of a site, the Council will require mitigation measures to be agreed and implemented. Where impacts cannot be mitigated, compensation habitat creation on or off-site, on a 3:1 ratio, will be required. Mitigation and compensation features must be linked to a 25 year management and implementation plan.
5. Irrespective of any need for mitigation or compensation measures, small scale – large scale major developments must provide an overall net increase in the biodiversity resource of the Borough and where appropriate, contribute to strengthening the ecological framework of the Borough.
6. Further guidance on impacts, mitigation, compensation and enhancement can be found in the Biodiversity SPD.

Reasoned Justification

- 7.17 NPPF paragraph 109 states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by “minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitments to halt the overall decline in biodiversity”.
- 7.18 NPPF paragraph 113 advises that local planning authorities should:

“set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscapes will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution they give to the wider ecological network”.

- 7.19 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a duty on all public authorities to have regards to biodiversity in all its duties and decision making.
- 7.20 Local Wildlife Sites, Local Geological Sites and Local Nature Reserves are shown on the Policies Map for information and may be subject to change over time.

Alternative Options

- 7.21 *Alternative Option 1:* Do not allow any development that could have an impact on a natural asset.
- 7.22 *Reason for Rejection:* This option could result in serious implications for the deliverability of the Local Plan which is seeking to balance the social, economic and environmental needs of the Borough. The Policy seeks to ensure that natural assets are protected and, where possible, enhanced. This is considered the most appropriate response.
- 7.23 *Alternative Option 2:* Do not protect the Borough’s biodiversity and geological assets.
- 7.24 *Reason for Rejection:* This approach could allow natural habitats and geological assets to be lost and therefore would be contrary to national planning policy.
- 7.25 *Alternative Option 3:* Seek lower ratio of mitigation for habitat loss, for example 2 for 1 replacement to reduce land requirement and impact on viability.
- 7.26 *Reason for Rejection:* This would be less than the current adopted standard and would provide less mitigation.

Strategic Aims Met	SA6
Strategic Objectives Met	S0 6.2 SO 6.3
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan Biodiversity SPD

Policy LPC07: Greenways

Policy LPC07: Greenways

1. A strategic network of greenways, as shown on the Policies Map, will be protected from inappropriate development and enhanced, in order to:
 - i. Provide a recreational resource capable of delivering a continuous off-road network of footpath, cycle and bridleway routes. These routes will be publicly accessible within the main urban areas and areas of deprivation, and provide linkages to the adjoining countryside;
 - ii. Give additional definition and protection to the network of wildlife corridors, historic and archeological resources;
 - iii. Contribute to the sub-regional network of cross boundary green infrastructure corridors; and
 - iv. Compliment the Borough's economic activities by improving the appearance of the area and providing sustainable road transport links between the home and workplace.
2. Development proposals affecting Greenways will only be accepted if they satisfy all of the following:
 - i. They do not prejudice the continuity of public access;
 - ii. They do not destroy the integrity of the Greenway in terms of off road, linkages, character and amenity;
 - iii. They do not prejudice the appearance of the Greenway; and
 - iv. They do not impair the integrity of the Greenway as a wildlife corridor or its resilience to development pressures and climate change.

Reasoned Justification

- 7.27 St. Helens has a long association with Greenways. The initial network was identified in the St. Helens Unitary Development Plan adopted in 1998. Greenways provide the fundamental connectivity to the Green Infrastructure network in St. Helens and are also key components of the ecological network of the Borough.
- 7.28 The NPPF advises that local planning authorities should plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.
- 7.29 Greenways, whilst primarily sustainable travel routes, provide a range of benefits to the community such as access to employment sites, healthy recreation and also to the environment such as wildlife habitat and wildlife corridors, landscape and adaptation to climate change. The European Greenways Association defines Greenways as "*communications routes*" reserved exclusively for non-motorised journeys, developed in integrated

manners which enhance both the environment and the quality of life of the surrounding area (Lille Declaration. European Greenways Association 12th September 2000).

Alternative Options

7.30 *Alternative Option 1:* Do not safeguard and enhance Greenways.

7.31 *Reason for Rejection:* St. Helens Greenways provide the fundamental connectivity to the Green Infrastructure network in the Borough and are a key component of the Borough's ecological network. The NPPF advises that local planning authorities should plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure. This option would therefore fail to meet the requirements of the NPPF.

Strategic Aims Met	SA 6
Strategic Objectives Met	SO6.2 SO 6.3
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan

Policy LPC08: Ecological Network

Policy LPC08: Ecological Network

1. As part of the wider Liverpool City Region ecological network, St. Helens natural assets should continue to contribute to the Borough's sense of place, local distinctiveness and quality of life for those living, working, investing and spending their leisure time in the Borough. Development proposals and other initiatives should help achieve this.
2. St. Helens' natural assets are the designated nature sites (outlined in Appendix 5) and Priority Habitats, and include linear features and stepping stone sites, together with the species dependent on these.

Natural Assets

3. A hierarchical approach will be taken to the protection and enhancement of St. Helens' natural assets, according to their designation and significance. Development should seek to protect and manage the natural assets (including natural habitats, sites and ecological network and green infrastructure) and where possible:
 - I. Restore, enhance or extend natural assets;
 - II. Create new habitats and green infrastructure; and
 - III. Secure their long-term management.
4. Where it has been demonstrated that appropriate protection or retention of natural assets cannot be achieved, and there are no alternatives, mitigation and/or as a last resort compensatory provision will be required.
5. Priority should be given to improving the quality, linkages and habitat within the Liverpool City Region Ecological Network, including the Liverpool City Region Nature Improvement Area.

Reasoned Justification

- 7.32 St. Helens natural assets include the designated nature sites and Priority Habitats which comprise the Core Biodiversity Area that underpins the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Ecological Network. Paragraph 9 of the NPPF recognises that pursuing sustainable development includes moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature, in line with wider Government policy set out in 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' (2011). Other national policy for nature conservation is set out in paragraphs 109 to 119 of the Framework. This complements legal duties and requirements for nature conservation set out in a range of legislation

including the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and the Habitats Regulations 2010 (as amended).

7.33 The key priorities for nature and geology in the City Region are:

- To manage our natural assets better – to protect the integrity of nature sites of international importance in the City Region, and to protect the City Region’s nature and geodiversity assets; and
- To make sure there is no net loss of these natural assets and to extend and enhance the City Region’s Ecological Network and natural assets.

7.34 The LCR Ecological Network draws together the evidence (for example, nature site designations and Priority Habitats) and indicates strategic priorities and opportunities in St Helens and across the City Region.

7.35 The LCR Ecological Network includes a Core Biodiversity Area of designated nature and geological sites and Priority Habitats. It also includes linking networks and opportunities for further habitat creation and enhancement. The linking networks and opportunities for further habitat creation and enhancement are set out in seventeen Nature Improvement Focus Areas which together make up the LCR Nature Improvement Area.

7.36 More information about the hierarchical approach to the protection and enhancement of insert Borough’s designated sites, Priority Habitats, Priority Species and protected species, according to their designation and significance, is set out in LPC06: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.

Alternative Options

7.37 *Alternative Option 1:* Do not allow any development that could have an impact on a natural asset.

7.38 *Reason for Rejection:* This option could result in serious implications for the deliverability of the Local Plan which is seeking to balance the social, economic and environmental needs of the Borough. The Policy seeks to ensure that natural assets are protected and, where possible, enhanced. This is considered the most appropriate response.

7.39 *Alternative Option 2:* Do not protect the Borough’s ecological network.

7.40 *Reason for Rejection:* This approach could allow natural habitats and geological assets to be lost and therefore would be contrary to national planning policy.

Strategic Aims Met	SA6
Strategic Objectives Met	S0 6.2 SO 6.3
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan

Policy LPC09: Landscape Protection and Enhancement

Policy LPC09: Landscape Protection and Enhancement

1. Where appropriate to the nature and scale of development, development proposals must:
 - I. Demonstrate that proposal is the best option for meeting the aims of the development and minimising impacts on the landscape and respecting local distinctiveness;
 - II. Seek to implement St. Helens Landscape Character Assessment guidance to help conserve, enhance or restore landscape character, as appropriate;
 - III. Include an assessment of landscape sensitivity and the implications of the development proposal on landscape character; and
 - IV. Include a visual impact assessment of the development, carried out to current best practice guidelines.
2. Where impacts on landscape character are agreed to be unavoidable, the Council will require mitigation measures to reduce the scale of impacts to acceptable levels. Where this cannot be achieved, but the overall value of the development outweighs the impacts, the Council will require compensation measures. If unacceptable harm cannot be avoided, suitably mitigated or compensated, planning permission will not be granted.

Reasoned Justification

- 7.41 Landscape is an important part of the quality of life and encompasses the natural environment and its interaction with human development. It is equally as relevant to degraded urban areas as to scenic countryside.
- 7.42 St. Helens Landscape Character Assessment (2006) provides an overview of the landscape character of the Borough and provides borough-wide guidance on landscape and visual sensitivity, woodland planting and landscape strategies. The Character Assessment (or any future replacement) should be used as a context for site-specific assessments of development proposals.
- 7.43 The NPPF Paragraph 109 states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. The European Landscape Directive was ratified by UK Government and entered into force in 2007. The Convention acknowledges that the landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in urban areas and in the countryside, in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality, in areas recognised as being of outstanding beauty as well as everyday areas.

Alternative Options

7.44 *Alternative Option 1: Do not protect landscape character.*

Reason for Rejection: This approach could allow for landscape character to be lost and therefore would be contrary to national planning policy which seeks to protect and enhance valued landscape.

Strategic Aims Met	SO 6
Strategic Objectives Met	SO 6.2
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan

Policy LPC10: Trees and Woodland

Policy LPC10: Trees and Woodland

The multi-purpose value of trees, woodlands and hedgerows will be protected and enhanced by:

1. Requiring developers to plant new trees, woodlands and hedgerows on appropriate sites or contribute to offsite provision and elsewhere support new tree planting, with any trees planted being replaced in the event of failure or damage within a prescribed period;
2. Conserving, enhancing and managing existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows, with layouts to provide adequate spacing between existing trees and buildings and long term management proposals to be provided where appropriate;
3. Where a development proposal affects a site containing trees or woodlands the Council will normally require applications to be accompanied by a tree survey and arboricultural constraints / implications report, produced to the current British Standard, to enable the effect of the development on the trees to be properly assessed;
4. Requiring absolute protection for all ancient woodland within the Borough;
5. Ensuring that development does not damage or destroy any tree subject to a Tree Preservation Order, any other protected tree, any other tree of value including veteran trees, or hedgerows unless it can be justified for good arboricultural reasons or there is a clearly demonstrated public benefit, which outweighs the value of the tree(s) and or hedgerow(s). Where trees are justifiably lost the replacement of trees will be required on at least a 2 for 1 ratio with individual and groups of trees and 3 for 1 in terms of area of woodland habitat lost, with any trees planted to be replaced in the event of failure or damage during a prescribed period;
6. Supporting proposals, which assist in the positive use of woodlands for green infrastructure purposes, including recreation, education, enhancement of transport corridors, enhancement of greenbelt, biodiversity, geological conservation, health, tourism and economic regeneration; and
7. Implementing the Town in the Forest Initiative, Mersey Forest Plan and Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan.

Reasoned Justification

- 7.45 Trees and woodlands are an integral component of Green Infrastructure forming part of the network of natural habitats and improving the visual appearance of the countryside and urban areas and providing opportunities for

the positive use of the Green Infrastructure for climate change, recreation, education, health, biodiversity, regeneration and mitigation of environmental processes such as air pollution, water retention and run-off, which is consistent with the Regional Forestry Framework Woodland Strategy, St. Helens Landscape Character Assessment, North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan and targets, Town in the Forest Initiative and Policy for Nature St. Helens.

7.46 Trees are an important part of our environment and their successful retention in new developments is for the benefit of the whole community. The successful retention of healthy trees and planting of new trees as part of a new development can have numerous benefits.

7.47 Trees can:

- Enhance the landscape character of an area (in areas where trees are appropriate as guided by St. Helens Landscape Character Assessment)
- Be a vital component of our Green Infrastructure
- Help to create a more positive image of an area and so help to encourage economic regeneration and inward investment
- Soften and screen buildings
- Enhance property prices (property prices in tree-lined streets can be worth 18% more than in similar streets without trees)
- Provide a vital role in biodiversity and the urban ecosystem by helping to support a great variety of wildlife
- Save up to 10% of energy consumption through their moderation of the local climate
- Produce oxygen and help to lock up carbon emissions that contribute to global warming
- Help to stabilise ground
- Absorb water, control run-off and so help reduce flood risk
- Reduce noise by acting as a sound barrier
- Help to filter out pollution
- Provide shade
- Help alleviate the effects of extreme temperature and help to filter out harmful ultra violet radiation
- Help to improve mental wellbeing and reduce the stress of urban living

7.48 St. Helens Council has been a partner in The Mersey Forest which was established in 1991, with the vision to “get more from trees” to help make Merseyside and North Cheshire one of the best places in the country to live. Since then around 3,000 ha of woodland or nine million trees have been planted. Woodland cover has doubled, from 4% to 8%, at a rate of three times the England average. The maturing woodland, including the former colliery sites, now collectively known as Bold Forest Park, provides a recreation resource for much of the borough and neighbouring authorities. The Mersey Forest Plan is a long term and strategic guide to the work of the Forest and its partners. It is recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework (9.92) as a material consideration in preparing development plans and deciding planning applications.

- 7.49 The NPPF also states (11.118) that planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of ancient tree found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.
- 7.50 Woodlands have a wide range of benefits recognised in both the Mersey Forest Plan and the North West Regional Forestry Framework. Of particular significance in St. Helens is the contribution to urban regeneration. The Local Plan will be instrumental in delivering the St. Helens Woodland Strategy, which in turn, was prepared in response to the City Growth Strategy objective of creating the 'Town in the Forest'.
- 7.51 The North West Regional Forestry Framework is part of a wider national agenda on the protection, conservation and management of trees and woodlands across the UK. The Framework recognises the diverse, habitat rich and thriving 'green tourism' opportunities of our current trees and woodlands and sets out 'An Agenda for Growth' to help shape the woodland and forestry sector over the next 20 years.
- 7.52 Town in the Forest (2006) recognises the importance of St. Helens undergoing an urban renaissance and utilising the urban fringe as a mechanism for urban renewal, through the development of linear forests in urban areas and connecting to community woodlands on the periphery.
- 7.53 All trees have a potential value to the character and amenity of the area. While particularly important trees will continue to be protected by Tree Preservation Orders, the policies will recognise that other trees affected by development should be identified, safeguarded, and where necessary, replaced.
- 7.54 Biodiversity Action Plans are crucial tools in the protection, conservation, enhancement and management of habitats and species throughout the UK. Currently a hierarchy of Biodiversity Action Plans exist ranging from the UK, through regional, sub-regional and finally on a local level. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan is the Government's response to the Convention on Biological Diversity signed in 1992 and recognises the UK's existing biological resource at the same time as developing a wide range of species and habitat plans. The North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan develops area-specific action plans and concentrates resources on developing and managing habitats and species native to the specific areas and offers guidance on a local level.
- 7.55 Policy for Nature: St. Helens Local Biodiversity Action Plan (March 2006), is the third biodiversity action plan for St. Helens and aims to work with the community to encourage wildlife by protecting and enhancing habitats and species, raising awareness, managing land positively for biodiversity, managing harmful exotic species and encouraging greater training opportunities.
- 7.56 St. Helens Landscape Character Assessment (2006) identifies and evaluates the character of areas throughout the Borough and provides a set of broad objectives and constraints to inform future development within the Borough.

7.57 All trees that are to be retained on site should be protected throughout the period of development activity by protection measures of a standard not less than the standards indicated in British Standards BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction recommendations and BS3998:2010 Tree Work – Recommendations set the standards to which we expect tree work, tree surveys, arboricultural implications / constraints plans, as well as tree protection plans. These are updated, periodically and the relevant British Standards will always inform the standard to which work must be carried out within developments.

Alternative Options

7.58 Alternative Option 1: Do not protect trees and woodland.

7.59 *Reason for Rejection:* This approach could allow for valuable trees and to be lost and therefore would be contrary to national planning policy which seeks to protect and enhance the natural and local environment.

Strategic Aims Met	SA6
Strategic Objectives Met	SO 6.2 and 6.3
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan Implementation of Trees and Development and Biodiversity SPDs Adoption of and implementation of Bold Forest Park AAP Delivery of The Mersey Forest Plan

Policy LPC11: Historic Environment

Policy LPC11: Historic Environment

The Council will protect, conserve, preserve and enhance St. Helens' heritage assets including Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, Non-designated heritage assets and areas of archaeological interest by:

Designated Heritage Assets

1. Requiring where appropriate applications to be accompanied by a Heritage Statement which should form part of a Design and Access Statement and/or a Heritage Impact Assessment. A Heritage Statement should clearly set out the significance of the heritage asset including any contribution made by its setting and demonstrate how the proposals respond to the significance of the asset. Merseyside Historic Environment Record (HER) should be consulted as a minimum;
2. Ensuring that all development and/or works respects the significance and distinct quality of the built and historic environment and is of a high standard of design;
3. Resisting proposals which would result in a loss or unacceptable harm to a heritage asset and where the public benefits of the development do not outweigh the harm;
4. Implementing Conservation Area Plans, education, interpretation and public access measures;
5. Working with landowners, Historic England and developers to find solutions to Scheduled Monuments at Risk within the Borough;

Non-designated Heritage Assets

6. Ensuring development proposals that may include heritage assets of archaeological interest undertake and submit an archaeological evaluation as part of any application;
7. Identifying Areas of Archaeological Importance where there is considerable likelihood that archaeological remains will be found and where development may be inappropriate because of its historic significance;
8. Requiring development proposals to preserve in situ and to protect important archaeological remains and their settings unless the public benefit greatly outweighs the harm of excavation and preservation in a museum environment.
9. Identifying non designated heritage assets of local significance for inclusion on the Local List and resisting development involving substantial harm to its significance unless the public benefit has been clearly demonstrated; and

Policy LPC11: Historic Environment (continued)

- 10. Working with partner organisations such as the Museum of Liverpool, Merseyside Archaeological Society, Merseyside Industrial Heritage Society, Sankey Canal Restoration Society, St. Helens History Society and where appropriate, developers, to encourage community participation through Community Archaeology projects such as at Stanley Bank.

Reasoned Justification

7.60 NPPF paragraph 126 requires local planning authorities to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in their Local Plan.

7.61 NPPF paragraph 128 states that in determining applications local planning authorities should:

“require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting...where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.”

7.62 Merseyside Historic Environment Record managed by Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service on behalf of the district authorities in the Liverpool City Region is the central heritage asset database for the city region. St. Helens Council and partner organisations have successfully utilised Community Archaeology at Stanley Bank to engage communities in their local heritage and significantly furthered the understanding of the development of St. Helens as a town of the industrial revolution.

Alternative Options

7.63 *Alternative Option 1:* Do not plan for the protection, conservation, preservation and enhancement of the Borough’s historic assets.

7.64 *Reason for Rejection:* The Borough has a number of heritage assets which contribute to its uniqueness and special character. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. This option would therefore fail to meet the requirements of the NPPF.

Strategic Aims Met	SA 6
Strategic Objectives Met	S0 6.2
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan

Policy LPC12: Flood Risk and Water Management

Policy LPC12: Flood Risk and Water Management

Flood Risk

1. New Development that may cause an unacceptable risk of flooding on the site or elsewhere will not be permitted.
2. Any development proposals which may have a material impact on flood risk will only be supported where applicants can demonstrate the risk of flooding has been fully assessed, and if required, can be appropriately mitigated. Any assessment and mitigation should have regard to:
 - St. Helens Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;
 - Advice and guidance from the Environment Agency (or equivalent);
 - Advice and guidance from the Lead Local Flood Authority (St. Helens Council); and
 - Any relevant Surface Water Management Plan or local drainage strategy, for example the Sankey Catchment Action Plan, Mersey Estuary Catchment Flood Management Plan and North West River Basin Management Plan (or equivalent).
3. Flood mitigation measures to manage flood risk associated with, or caused by the development, shall:
 - Be designed to contribute to the biodiversity of the Borough unless it can be demonstrated that this would not be technically feasible;
 - Incorporate a sustainable drainage system (SUDS);
 - Be fully described in the planning application; and
 - Be funded by the developer, including long term maintenance.
4. The Council will require development proposals to be supported by a Flood Risk Assessment, appropriate to the nature and scale of the proposed development where the application is:
 - Within flood zones 2 and 3;
 - 1 hectare or above within flood zone 1; or
 - 0.5 hectare or above within a Critical Drainage Area¹ or in areas identified by the Council as being at intermediate and high risk of surface water flooding
5. Where major development sites abut or include any watercourse identified in blue or black on the Sankey Catchment Action Plan (Figure 7.1), applicants would be required to incorporate riparian development to temporarily attenuate flood water in order to reduce downstream flood risk as part of the new development, unless it can be demonstrated that it is not feasible or viable.

Policy LPC12: Flood Risk and Water Management (continued)

6. New development should adopt a sequential approach by locating in areas of low probability of flooding.
7. When assessing specific proposals for sites located in Flood Zones 2 and 3, the Sequential Test, and, if required, the Exception Test will be applied alongside evidence from the St. Helens Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, in order to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding.
8. New development will only be permitted in flood risk areas where appropriate mitigation or adaption measures are proposed to reduce the likelihood or impact of flooding.
9. Damage to nature conservation and biodiversity assets within existing water resources is minimised from new development (including flood defence measures) in accordance with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive.

Water Quality

10. Development which could adversely affect the quality or quantity of water in watercourses or groundwater will not be permitted unless measures are included which would overcome any threat, to the satisfaction of the Council, in consultation with the Environment Agency (or equivalent) and other appropriate authorities.
11. New development will be required to enhance and protect the water quality of existing water resources, such as watercourses and groundwater.

Sustainable Drainage Systems

12. In accordance with the hierarchy below, surface water will be expected to be managed at source and not transferred. Applicants will be required to clearly demonstrate that all alternative options have been thoroughly investigated before discharging surface water, directly or indirectly, into a public sewerage network. A discharge to groundwater or watercourse may require the consent of the Environment Agency. The priority options for the management of surface water are:
 1. An adequate soakaway or some other form of infiltration system.
 2. An attenuated discharge to watercourse.
 3. An attenuated discharge to public surface water sewer.
 4. An attenuated discharge to public combined sewer.

Policy LPC12: Flood Risk and Water Management (continued)

13. Applicants wishing to discharge to public sewer will need to submit clear evidence demonstrating why alternative options are not available. Approved development proposals will be expected to be supplemented by appropriate maintenance and management regimes for surface water drainage schemes. On large sites it may be necessary to ensure the drainage proposals are part of a wider, holistic strategy which coordinates the approach to drainage between phases, between developers, and over a number of years of construction.
14. If after having investigated the above hierarchy it is necessary to have recourse to the public sewer, it will be necessary for development on greenfield sites to minimise the rate of discharge to the public sewerage system to existing greenfield run-off rates as a minimum. On previously developed land, a reduction of at least 30% will be sought, rising to a minimum of 50% in Critical Drainage Areas or in areas identified as being susceptible to intermediate or high risk surface water flooding.
15. Landscaping proposals should consider what contribution the landscaping of a site can make to reducing surface water discharge. This can include hard and soft landscaping such as permeable surfaces.
16. Applicants should have regard to the St. Helens Council Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidance.

Flood Risk

- 7.65 Flood risk has potential impacts upon public safety, human health, social and economic wellbeing and the environment. The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that development is directed to locations with the lowest probability risk of flooding and to locations with the least impact on water quality in accordance with the NPPF and the St. Helens Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.
- 7.66 This policy will ensure that where development is necessary in high-medium flood risk areas that appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures are put in place to ensure that the development is safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.
- 7.67 The vast majority of the Borough lies within the catchment of the River Mersey and in the River Sankey sub catchment. The remainder is located within the Alt Catchment.
- 7.68 Sankey Brook is the primary watercourse draining St. Helens running from the central low-lying landscape of the Borough before heading east and then south, into the River Mersey at Sankey Bridges in Warrington. The central area of the Borough is drained by a radial pattern of tributaries including Black Brook draining the north and running west of Billinge Hill; Rainford Brook and Windle

Brook to the northwest and west respectively, and Sutton Brook to the south draining Rainhill. Some areas of the Borough are at significant risk of surface water flooding. These areas include:

- Eccleston
- Billinge
- Rainford
- Shevington Close, St. Helens
- Stanley Bank, Blackbrook
- Toll Bar, St. Helens
- Old Boston, Haydock
- Queens Drive, Newton-le-Willows
- Sturgess Street, Newton-le-Willows
- Wargrave, Newton-le-Willows

- 7.69 St. Helens Council is working in partnership with the Environment Agency, Healthy Rivers Trust, Halton and Warrington Councils as part of a catchment based approach, to produce a Sankey Catchment Action Plan which has the aims of reducing the reactive nature of the catchment by “Slowing the Flow” in the rural headwaters and filtering agricultural run-off, improving water quality and wildlife habitat; addressing issues in the urban areas of the catchment such as wrong connections and removing pinch-points that can contribute to poor water quality and localised flooding. Riparian development can make a significant contribution to slowing the flow by temporarily attenuating flood water.
- 7.70 The strategic approach of the emerging Sankey Action Plan is shown below in Figure 7.1.

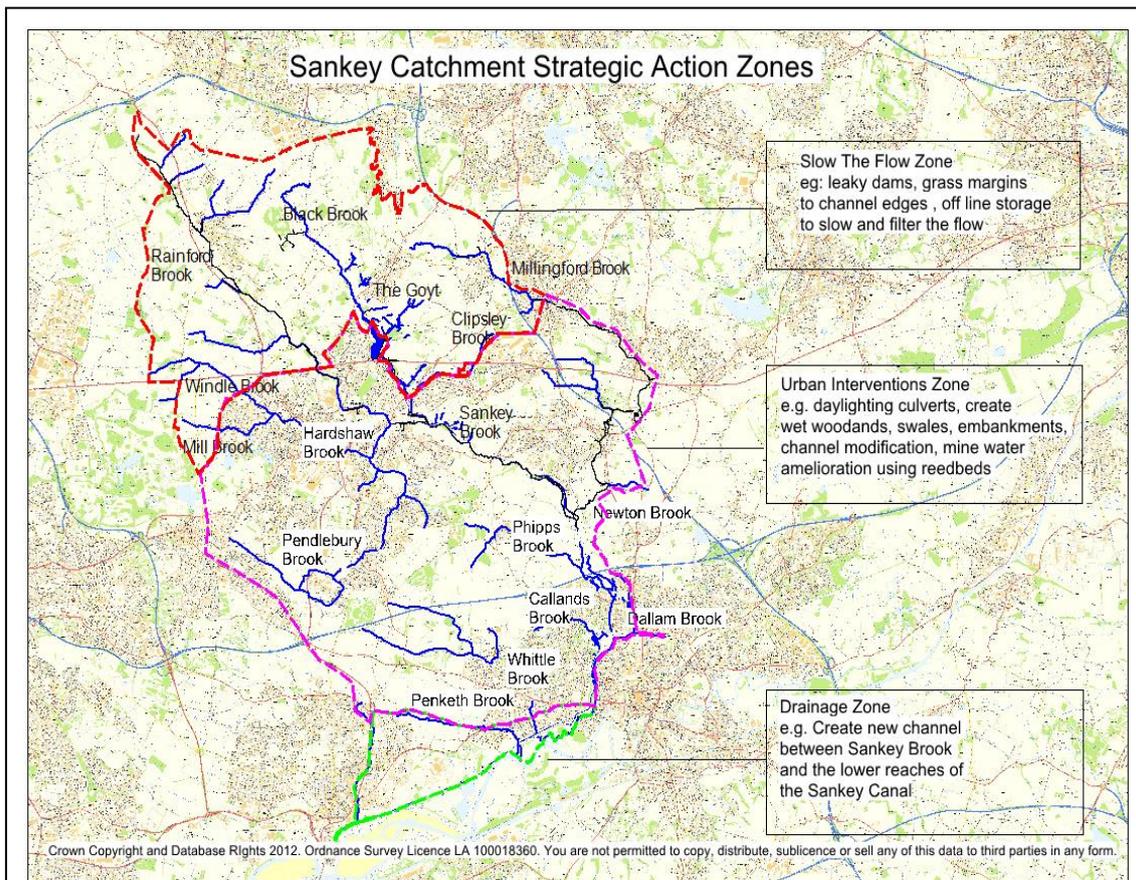


Figure 7.1 – Sankey Catchment Action Plan - Strategic Approach

- 7.71 A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) of the Borough was undertaken in 2014. The findings of the SFRA have informed the sequential, risk-based approach taken by the Council to the proposed geographical distribution of new development in the Local Plan.
- 7.72 The Lead Local Flood Authority will also hold recorded incidents of flood events within the Borough as per the duties in the Flood Water Management Act 2010.

Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment

- 7.73 Where a site specific flood risk assessment is required, applicants should enter into early discussions with the Council to establish the requirements of the assessment. Liaison with the Environment Agency is recommended at pre-application stage for sites within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and those sites above 1 hectare in Flood Zone 1. It will be the applicant’s responsibility to fully assess flood risk and to propose measures to mitigate and manage flood risk during the lifetime of the development.

Sequential and Exception Test

- 7.74 The aim of the Sequential Test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. Development will not be permitted in the Borough

if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability risk of flooding. If, following application of the Sequential Test, it is not possible, consistent with wider sustainability objectives, for the development to be located in zones with a lower probability of flooding, where appropriate, the Exception Test will be applied.

7.75 For the Exception Test to be passed:

a) it must be demonstrated that the development provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk; and

b) a site specific flood risk assessment must demonstrate that the development will be safe for its lifetime, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible will reduce overall flood risk.

7.76 Further information in relation to the application of the Sequential and Exception Test is available in the St. Helens Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the National Planning Practice Guidance.

Water Quality

7.77 There is increasing concern for the protection of the water environment, which not only serves as a source of water but provides essential habitats and a valued resource for leisure and recreation. Under the Water Framework Directive water bodies have a range of chemical and ecological criteria to meet to protect aquatic ecosystems and drinking water resources. All water bodies in the EU are required to achieve a 'good' ecological status by 2027 at the latest. Therefore it is important that new development does not cause detrimental environmental impacts that will hinder the ability of water bodies in the Borough to meet this target.

7.78 *Alternative Option 1:* Rely on the NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance.

7.79 *Reason for Rejection:* Whilst this option would provide some guidance to flood risk and water management it would not account for local context, particularly the vital role that some areas in the Borough play in managing surface water.

Strategic Aims Met	SA2, SA6, SA7
Strategic Objectives Met	SO2.2 SO6.2, S07.1
Key Delivery Items	Determining planning applications in accordance with this policy Sankey Catchment Action Plan

Policy LPC13: Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Development

Policy LPC13: Renewable and Low Carbon Development

1. The Council will support proposals that will produce and distribute decentralised, low carbon and renewable energy, provided that they do not cause significant harm (in terms of their number, scale, siting or cumulative impacts) to:

- a) Natural resources, biodiversity, geodiversity, water and air quality and, landscape character;
- b) Aviation and transport safety;
- c) Historical and cultural assets;
- d) Public amenity and living conditions; or
- e) Openness and amenity of the Green Belt, except in very special circumstances.

Proposals resulting in an unacceptable impact must be mitigated by appropriate measures agreed by the Council. Proposals must be accompanied by information that shows how the local environment will be protected, and how the site will be restored when energy production ends.

2. Where viable, strategic development sites will be required to deliver high levels of energy efficiency in all new development:
 - I. Strategic housing development sites should deliver energy efficiency measures 10% above what is required by the most up to date Building Regulations on a “fabric first” approach; and
 - II. Strategic employment development sites should provide a minimum of 10% of the development's energy requirements through the on-site generation of renewable or low carbon energy, or district energy network.

If an applicant considers that the requirements set out by this policy are not viable on a specific site, then this will need to be justified through an independent site-specific viability assessment.

3. The whole of the St. Helens Borough is considered potentially suitable for wind energy development. A wind energy suitability map will be prepared for the Local Plan Publication Draft which will identify areas the Council considers most suitable and unsuitable for wind energy development following an assessment of:
 - Wind speed;
 - Environmental and landscape designations; and
 - Proximity to sensitive receptors, including residential properties.

4. Areas identified as potentially suitable on the wind energy suitability map will require further detailed assessment during the planning application stage. Any planning application will be assessed on a site by site basis and the mapping will only act as a guideline for potentially suitable and unsuitable areas for wind energy development.
5. When assessing the landscape and visual impact of wind energy proposals the Council will have particular regard to landscape character and sensitivity, as identified in the latest Landscape Character Assessment. Applicants proposing a specific site must be able to demonstrate community engagement and support for the wind turbine development.

Reasoned Justification

- 7.80 One of the core planning principles set out in the NPPF is to support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate and to encourage the use of renewable resources. The NPPF indicates that planning has a key role to play in supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy.
- 7.81 Inevitably some proposals for renewable energy will have significant effects on the local area. For example, large scale renewable energy developments will be prominent in the landscape. In these cases the Council will carefully weigh up the environmental, social and economic benefits of the proposals against effects on the local area including any effects on the Green Belt.
- 7.82 Approvals for renewable energy schemes will be conditioned to require the removal of infrastructure and reinstatement of the development site should the development cease to be operational and where it is not feasible for the infrastructure to be re-used for a commercial or community renewable or decentralised energy scheme.
- 7.83 Recent changes to Building Regulations require greater use of renewable and low carbon energy in new development. The Council will require development to meet these progressively more demanding standards but the Council does not intend to impose Borough-wide energy targets but does expect where viable, strategic developments to exceed Building Regulation requirements.

Wind Energy

- 7.84 The June 2015 Written Ministerial Statement on Wind Energy states that local authorities should only consider granting planning permission for wind turbines where they have been allocated within a Local or Neighbourhood Plan and have community support.
- 7.85 The Ministerial Statement makes the specific consideration of wind turbines effectively mandatory within this Local Plan. Planning Practice Guidance provides detailed guidance to determine planning applications for wind turbine

development. At this stage the Council has not identified, nor been requested to identify development sites for wind turbines within St. Helens.

- 7.86 The Council will undertake a piece of evidence base work to ascertain the most suitable and unsuitable areas for wind energy development based on an assessment of wind speed, environmental and landscape designations and proximity to sensitive receptors such as residential properties.

Alternative Options

- 7.87 *Alternative Option 1:* Implement a Borough-wide target for new development to meet a percentage of their energy consumption through renewable or low carbon sources.
- 7.88 *Reason for Rejection:* Building Regulations are now introducing progressively more demanding energy standards and these standards are considered appropriate for the majority of new development in the Borough. However, the Council consider it appropriate that given the scale of the strategic housing and employment sites that where viable, these sites should seek to be energy efficient and meet as much of their energy generation from renewable and low carbon sources as possible.
- 7.89 *Alternative Option 2:* Do not identify any areas in the Borough as being potentially suitable for wind energy development
- 7.90 *Reason for Rejection:* This option would fail to meet one of the core principles of the NPPF, which is to support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, and to encourage the use of renewable resources.

Strategic Aims Met	SA2, SA6, SA7
Strategic Objectives Met	SO2.2, SO 6.2, S07.1
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan

Policy LPC14: Minerals

Policy LPC14: Minerals

1. The Council will seek to achieve a steady and adequate supply of minerals to ensure that the Borough contributes towards sub-regional needs. To minimise the need for primary mineral extraction, provision of substitute, secondary or recycled sources will be encouraged in preference to land-won resources. This will include temporary materials-recycling facilities on the sites of major demolition or construction projects and provision of permanent recycling plants for construction and demolition waste in appropriate locations.
2. Mineral Safeguarding Areas will be defined around deposits of coal, clay (including brick clay and fire clay) and sandstone, considered to be of current or future economic importance. Within Mineral Safeguarding Areas, proposals for non-mineral related development will be permitted where:
 - a) The site or area is 5ha or less in urban areas (outside the Green Belt);
 - b) The site or area is 0.5ha or less in the Green Belt;
 - c) The mineral resource can be extracted satisfactorily prior to the non-mineral development taking place (in accordance with Part 4 and 5 of this policy and other relevant policies and proposals); or
 - d) It can be demonstrated that the minerals are either not present, are no longer of any economic value, or have already been fully extracted; or
 - e) It can be demonstrated that the prior extraction of minerals is not feasible, for reasons such as the depth of the deposit or because extraction would lead to or exacerbate ground instability; or
 - f) It can be demonstrated that the prior extraction of minerals would have unacceptable impacts on neighbouring uses, the amenity of local communities or other important environmental assets; or
 - g) It can be demonstrated that the prior extraction of minerals would result in abnormal costs and / or delays which would jeopardise the viability of the development; or
 - h) The need for the proposed development outweighs the need to safeguard the mineral resource; or
 - i) The proposed development is compatible with the purposes of safeguarding the mineral; or
 - j) The proposed development is of a temporary nature and can be completed and the site restored to a condition that does not inhibit future extraction; or
 - k) The development is included on the list of exempt developments (as set out in the policy justification).
3. Development on or in proximity to existing mineral workings or existing, planned and potential mineral infrastructure will be permitted provided it would not have an unacceptable impact on the continuation of mineral workings or on the operation of the mineral infrastructure.
Where the development is likely to have an unacceptable impact on the

continuation of mineral working or on the operation of the minerals infrastructure, the applicant will be required to clearly demonstrate either:

- a) The mineral working and / or mineral infrastructure is no longer required to meet the current or anticipated future needs of the minerals, construction or waste management industry; or
 - b) The need for the proposed development outweighs the need to continue the mineral working and / or the need to safeguard the mineral infrastructure; or
 - c) An alternative site within an acceptable distance can be provided, which is at least as appropriate for the use as the safeguarded site
4. Proposals for the exploration, extraction, storage, processing and distribution of minerals will only be permitted if all of the following criteria are met:
- a) Adverse impacts relating to any of the criteria set out in Part 5 of this policy can be avoided or appropriately mitigated;
 - b) The developer has demonstrated that the proposed location for the development is suitable, taking into account factors including environmental, geological and technical issues; and
 - c) Provisions for the restoration and aftercare of the site have been made and will be implemented at the earliest opportunity to an agreed timescale and to a standard and manner consistent with the agreed end use and the context of its surrounding area including its character, setting and landscape.
5. Planning and environmental criteria to be taken into account when considering planning applications for minerals development will include:
- Amenity (e.g. dust, noise, visual intrusion, vibration or other nuisance);
 - Air and water quality;
 - Lighting;
 - Landscape character setting;
 - Traffic, including air and rail, and access;
 - Risk of contamination to land;
 - Soil resources and the impact on best and most versatile agricultural land;
 - Flood risk and drainage;
 - Disposal of mineral waste;
 - Land stability, including subsidence and risk of damage to buildings, structures and land;
 - Ecology, including habitats, species and designated sites and particularly the internationally important nature sites;
 - Heritage assets and their setting.
6. Proposals for the development of onshore oil and gas resources (including

Policy LPC14: Minerals (continued)

coal bed methane, coal mine methane and shale gas and oil) must clearly demonstrate that the highest levels of environmental, health and social protection and benefit consistent with prevailing national policy and regulation, including Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment, will be provided.

Reasoned Justification

- 7.91 St. Helens has been a significant producer of minerals in the past, including the extraction of coal (both deep-mined and open cast), clay, sandstone and sand and gravel. Whilst reserves of these minerals remain, much of this activity has now ceased. There is now only one quarry site in Borough with an active planning consent – Bold Heath Quarry – which produces crushed sandstone for use in the construction industry. In addition, there is active permission for methane extraction from the workings of the former Sutton Manor colliery near Union Bank Farm. There have been no major proposals for new mineral extraction in recent years and the level of future industry interest in exploiting the Borough’s minerals resources remains uncertain.
- 7.92 Many minerals can only be worked at locations where they occur, whilst others, particularly where deep extraction by drilling is involved, allow for more flexibility to choose locations for surface development. St. Helens seeks to ensure in each case that future minerals workings will be located in the most appropriate places.

Mineral Supply

- 7.93 The principal evidence base informing St. Helens’ future role in facilitating an appropriate supply of aggregate minerals is the annual Local Aggregate Assessment (LAA). The LAA is produced jointly with other local authorities to reflect an aggregate producing sub-region comprising Merseyside, Warrington and Greater Manchester. Matters relating to aggregate production, reserves, landbanks and future supply are reported annually at this sub-regional level through the LAA.
- 7.94 St. Helens Council, as part of Merseyside, is represented as a member North West Aggregates Working Party and subscribes to the national Managed Aggregate Supply System (MASS) through market monitoring and production of annual LAAs. Through continued representation in the North West Aggregates Working Party (NWAWP), St. Helens will maintain its commitment to the MASS.
- 7.95 Bold Heath Quarry is the only quarry in Merseyside with an active planning consent for production of crushed rock (sandstone) aggregate. Whilst production levels at the quarry have been affected by economic conditions in

recent years, its reserves make it capable of contributing to sub-regional supply some time into the future.

- 7.96 By prioritising the use of secondary and recycled materials this not only reduces the requirement for production of new primary (land-won) aggregates, but also reduces the need for disposal to landfill of Construction Demolition and Excavation (CD&E) waste materials. The NPPF recognises this and strongly promotes the use of secondary and recycled materials as an alternative to primary aggregate.

Mineral Safeguarding

- 7.97 Mineral resources are finite and are likely to be lost when building or other forms of development take place. Resources which are scarce or economically important should therefore be safeguarded from sterilisation. Where it is necessary for development to take place, the prior extraction of resources will be encouraged, where this is feasible in terms of size and location, and subject to compliance with the other plan policies and proposals. Prior extraction of mineral resources can also have the benefit of removing land instability issues on certain sites.

- 7.98 To alert developers to the presence of known mineral resources and ensure their potential sterilisation is considered as part of the planning process, a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA) has been defined. The designation of the MSA does not indicate a presumption that resources within it will be worked, rather the policy seeks to avoid their unnecessary sterilisation.

- 7.99 In line with best practice guidance⁶, a draft MSA has been drawn around the following mineral resources found in the Borough that are considered to be of economic importance, based on the best and most up-to-date available evidence⁷:

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

- 7.100 The MSA is shown on the Policies Map as a single area. Given the complexity of the mineral deposits within the Borough, it is not possible to show each mineral resource separately alongside all the other designations and maintain an acceptable degree of clarity. To give clear guidance to the development industry on where the different mineral resources may be found within the Borough, the extent of each resource is shown in Appendix 9.

- 7.101 Where supporting information is required by the applicant to comply with Part 2 of the policy, this should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal. Where the Council considers that there is potential for the significant

⁶ 'Mineral Safeguarding in England: Good Practice Advice' (2011) BGS & The Coal Authority

⁷ BGS Mineral Resource Information for Merseyside supplemented by Coal Authority Data; The Gtr Manchester, Merseyside, Halton and Warrington Joint Local Aggregate Assessment 2014; 'Mineral Planning on Merseyside', Urban Vision (2008).

sterilisation of mineral resources as a result of the proposal, a detailed Minerals Assessment will be required prepared by a qualified mineral surveyor or geologist. This should include information relating to the extent or quality of the mineral resource and geotechnical issues informed by the most up-to-date mineral resource information available for the site or area.

7.102 In line with best practice guidance, the MSA does not exclude urban or built up areas so as not to rule out the potential for prior extraction as part of larger urban regeneration schemes. However, given the abnormal costs associated with many development sites in the Borough it would be unreasonable and disproportionate to apply a mineral safeguarding requirement to all but the largest schemes within the built-up areas.

7.103 Whilst prior extraction of minerals will be encouraged subject to compliance with Part 4 and Part 5 of this and other relevant policies, the requirement to demonstrate that minerals have not needlessly been sterilised will apply only to development proposals on sites of 5ha and over. A lower size threshold of 0.5ha or over will apply to non-mineral development within the Green Belt, as opportunities to safeguard mineral resources are likely to be greater because development is strictly controlled and there are fewer physical constraints.

Mineral Safeguarding Area - Exempt Development

- Applications that are in accordance with the development plan where the plan took account of the prevention of unnecessary mineral sterilisation and determined that prior extraction should not be considered when development applications in a MSA came forward;
- Applications for Householder Development;
- Applications for alterations and extensions to existing buildings and for change of use of existing development;
- Applications for advertisement consent;
- Applications for reserved matters including subsequent applications after outline consent has been granted;
- Prior notifications (telecoms, forestry, agriculture, demolition);
- Certificates of Lawfulness of Existing Use or Development (CLEUD) and Certificates of Lawfulness of Proposed Use or Development (CLOPUD);
- Applications for works to trees;
- Applications for temporary planning permission.

Mineral Infrastructure Safeguarding

7.104 Development proposed either on or in proximity to existing mineral extraction sites or mineral related infrastructure has the potential to introduce conflicting uses and could mean the continued use of a location for mineral development becomes incompatible with surrounding uses. As such, sensitive forms development will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that it will have no unacceptable adverse impact on the existing or future minerals related operations.

- 7.105 Minerals related infrastructure includes strategic rail freight links and sites for concrete batching, the manufacture of coated materials, other concrete products and the handling, processing and distribution of substitute, recycled and secondary aggregate material.

Development Management Requirements

- 7.106 All proposals for exploration, extraction, storage, processing and distribution of mineral resources, including energy minerals, should be accompanied by supporting information to demonstrate compliance with Part 4 and 5 of the Policy. The level of information should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal. Applicants will be expected to agree with the Council at pre-application stage the scope of any assessments of potential impact, including the need for Environmental Impact Assessment or Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Energy Minerals

- 7.107 Energy minerals include coal and other hydrocarbons such as oil and natural gas used to generate power. Hydrocarbon extraction covers both 'conventional' and 'unconventional' hydrocarbons. Unconventional hydrocarbons refer to oil and natural gas which comes from sources such as underground shale or coal seams. The term 'unconventional' relates to the extraction methods required to reach these resources which includes horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing (or 'fracking').
- 7.108 Previous interest in energy mineral extraction within St. Helens (with the exception of coal) has primarily involved capturing methane from former coal working or landfill sites. As some indication of future industry interest regarding energy minerals, Petroleum Exploration and Development Licences (PEDLs) covering parts of the Borough have been issued by the government to energy companies for onshore hydrocarbon extraction. These licence areas are shown on the Policies Map. It should be noted that whilst the Council is required to show them, they are not subject to any local authority control and the Local Plan cannot influence them.
- 7.109 There are three phases of onshore hydrocarbon extraction: exploration, testing (appraisal) and production. Applications for energy mineral development require planning consent at each phase of onshore oil and gas development, although applicants can apply for all three at the same time. The Council will advise applicants on the evidence, issues and scope of information required as part of the pre-application process. In all cases, full compliance with prevailing industry standards or best practice and national regulatory requirements will be expected.
- 7.110 Some exploration work or testing, such as initial seismic work, may not require consent from the planning authority. The exploratory, appraisal or production phase of hydrocarbon extraction can only take place in areas where a licence

has been issued under the Petroleum Act 1998 (Petroleum Exploration and Development Licence, or PEDL)⁸.

Alternative Options

7.111 *Alternative Option 1:* Identify Area(s) of Search and / or Preferred Area(s) for future primary mineral extraction.

7.112 *Reasons for Rejection:* There has been no recent industry interest in putting sites or areas forward for future mineral development indicating limited viability. The minerals extraction industry in St. Helens has all but ceased with the only remaining permitted site (Bold Heath Quarry) affected by economic conditions in recent years, though remaining operational. The definition of a MSA is considered the most appropriate method to ensure resources are not unnecessarily sterilised and remain available for use at a future time. Promoting the provision of secondary and recycled sources of minerals in preference to primary extraction is considered more sustainable approach; reducing the need for exploiting new resources and reducing the amount of CD&E waste being sent to landfill.

7.113 *Alternative Option 2:* Safeguard additional known mineral deposits of sand (including silica sand) and peat.

7.114 *Reason for Rejection:* Evidence indicates that sand (Glaciofluvial) deposits found in the Borough have either been extensively sterilized or are variable and unpredictable in nature. Shirdley Hill (silica) sand resources in the Borough have been extensively worked in the past primarily to supply the glass making industry. As remaining deposits are thin, meaning large areas would be required to maintain production, it is unlikely that the Shirdley Sand will be used as a source of glass sand in future. In addition current market trends are for lower iron content so supply for the glass industry comes from elsewhere. For these reasons the BGS do not include the Shirdley Sand on its main resource mapping. St. Helens therefore proposes not to safeguard sand unless further evidence is made available to justify otherwise.

7.115 Peat resources are also found within the Borough. However, as national policy does not allow for the granting of future peat extraction, they do not warrant safeguarding for the purposes of keeping open potential future extraction.

7.116 *Alternative Option 3:* Delineate Mineral Safeguarding Areas to exclude urban (i.e. non Green Belt) areas.

7.117 *Reason for Rejection:* This approach would go against BGS best practice guidance and could result the sterilisation of resources under larger brownfield

⁸ N.B. Older licences issued by the Department of Energy from the First Onshore Licensing Round (1986) until the Sixth (1992) carry the prefix 'EXL'. EXLs that have not expired or been relinquished have been converted to the same terms as a PEDL. Further information on EXL and PEDL areas is available on the Oil & Gas Authority website: <https://www.ogauthority.co.uk/data-centre/interactive-maps-and-tools/>

regeneration schemes that could feasibly involve prior extraction. A criteria based approach whereby urban sites are excluded, based on an appropriate size threshold or through the demonstration that prior extraction is not feasible or practicable, is considered to be more appropriate and effective.

Strategic Aims Met	SA2, SA6, SA7
Strategic Objectives Met	SO2.1, SO2.2, SO6.2, SO7.1
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan

Policy LPC15: Waste

LPC15: Waste

The Council will promote the sustainable management of waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy. As set out in the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan 2013 it will work to:

- Identify and safeguard (where appropriate) waste management sites in appropriate locations;
- Assist in the implementation of a resource-recovery led strategy for sustainable waste management;
- Ensure that the Borough contributes to meeting the identified sub-regional waste management need;
- Encourage good design in new development in order to minimise waste, promote the use of reclaimed and recycled materials and to facilitate the storage, collection and recycling of waste;
- Encourage the sustainable transport of waste and promote use and waste audits or a similar mechanism, such as waste management plans; and

Ensure that waste management facilities are developed whilst minimising any negative impacts on the environment and communities of the Borough.

Reasoned Justification

7.118 Decisions regarding planning for new waste management facilities or other waste related uses should comply with policies in the adopted Joint Waste Local Plan 2013, this policy and other relevant policies and proposals in the Local Plan. The allocation of sites and detailed development management policies are set out in the adopted Joint Waste Local Plan.

7.119 The joint Waste Local Plan allocated waste management sites (as listed under Policies WM2, WM3 and WM4 of the Joint Waste Local Plan). These are:

- Site S1a - Former Transco Site, Pocket Nook (Sub-regional Site)
- Site S2 - Land North of T.A.C., Abbotsfield Industrial Estate (District Level Site)
- Site S3 - Bold Heath Quarry (Inert Landfill Site)

7.120 The Joint Waste Local Plan (under Policy WM5) also defines an area of search for additional small-scale waste management operations and re-processing sites in St. Helens, with an associated policy. The St. Helens area of search

comprises Abbotsfield Industrial Estate and industrial areas in the immediate vicinity.

Alternative Options

7.121 *Alternative Option 1:* Adopt a policy approach that diverges from the Joint WLP e.g. plan for more or less waste management facilities within St. Helens.

7.122 *Reason for rejection:* There is no evidence to support this approach. The adopted WLP was found sound having been subject to Sustainability Appraisal to provide a clear direction for future waste management development to 2027, both in terms of site allocations and detailed development management policies. To pursue a policy that would compromise or undermine the network of facilities identified to meet the waste management needs of the joint authority area may lead to unsustainable development or patterns of waste movement.

Strategic Aims Met	SA7
Strategic Objectives Met	SO 7.1
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan

8. Development Management Policies

Policy LPD01: Ensuring Quality Development in St. Helens

LPD01: Ensuring Quality Development in St. Helens

All proposals for development within the Borough will be expected to meet the following standards, where appropriate, as a minimum:

1. Quality of the Built Environment

- i. Maintain and where feasible enhance the overall character and appearance of the local environment (with regard to siting, layout, massing, scale, design, materials, building to plot ratio and landscaping);
- ii. Be sympathetic to surrounding land uses and occupiers, avoiding detrimental impact on the amenities of the local area, in particular residential amenities;
- iii. Ensure that the occupiers of new developments enjoy an appropriate standard of amenity and will not be adversely affected by neighbouring uses and vice versa;
- iv. Link in with surrounding movement patterns and not be prejudicial to the development of neighbouring land, including the creation of landlocked sites;
- v. Minimise opportunity for crime and maximise natural surveillance;
- vi. Provide landscaping as an integral part of the development, protecting existing landscape features, and enhancing the public realm;
- vii. Include or contribute to the provision of public art in appropriate circumstances; and
- viii. Make provision for the needs of special groups in the community such as the elderly and those with disabilities.

2. Environmental Quality

- i. Avoid loss or damage to high quality soils where possible and minimise loss or damage where this can be shown to be unavoidable; and
- ii. Ensure protection of watercourses from encroachment, modification and degradation and return modified and degraded water bodies to sustainable, natural environments where appropriate and feasible.
- iii. Minimise and mitigate to acceptable levels against the effects of air, light and water pollution (including contamination of soil, surface water and groundwater resources) and noise, vibration, smells, dust and electromagnetic fields caused by the development;
- iv. Ensure that the site of the proposed development is not contaminated and/or unstable or that provision can be made for its remediation to an appropriate standard, taking into account its intended use and making use of sustainable remediation technologies; and

- v. Include satisfactory arrangements for the disposal of foul sewage, liquid waste, trade effluent and contaminated surface water.

3. Resource Management

- i. In the construction and operation of new development minimise, and where possible, prevent waste being produced and pursue a strategy which promotes reuse and recycling;
- ii. Use local and recycled building materials; and
- iii. Not prejudice the delivery/improvement of utility networks.

Alternative Options

- 8.1 This policy has been developed from Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy and builds upon Policy LPA03: Development Principles, to help define some generic design requirements to ensure that a consistent approach is taken in the determination of all new planning applications.
- 8.2 It is considered that the policy will help to promote good design and improvements in the quality of where people live and their satisfaction with their local environment. It will help encourage efficient use of resources and protection of the natural environment. There are not considered to be any reasonable alternatives to this policy.

Strategic Aims Met	SA 2
Strategic Objectives Met	SO2.1-2.3
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan

Policy LPD02: Design and Layout of New Housing

Policy LPD02: Design and Layout of New Housing

The Council will develop a policy covering the following points:

New residential developments will be required to:

- Be well designed and not lead to substandard layouts;
- Preserve existing levels of amenity and meet minimum separation distances;
- Demonstrate how it will incorporate a housing mix to help to meet identified local housing need;
- Provide adequate outdoor amenity space;
- Integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones, particularly in relation to pedestrians and cyclists;
- Respect existing buildings and land uses;
- Create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character
- Take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimates;
- Be designed and positioned with landscaping and POS to define and enhance streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well;
- Make it easy to find your way around;
- Have streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds, prioritise pedestrians and cyclists, and allow them to function as social spaces;
- Provide sufficient levels of resident and visitor parking which is well integrated so that it does not dominate the street;
- Respect the appearance, scale, mass, height and pattern of surrounding buildings, spaces and streets; and
- Create safe and secure environments and reduce opportunities for crime and minimise the fear of crime.

The St. Helens New Residential Development SPD (2011) will be updated as necessary to incorporate any changes to the Council's requirements for the design and layout of new housing as the new Local Plan is prepared.

Alternative Options

- 8.3 There are not considered to be any reasonable alternatives to this policy approach.

Strategic Aims Met	SA 2 SO 4
Strategic Objectives Met	SO2.1-2.3, SO 4.1
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan

LPD03: Open Space and Residential Development

LPD03: Open Space and Residential Development

1. Appropriate high quality new public open space of at least 40 square metres per new dwelling (subject to a minimum of 0.15 hectares) must be provided for the following developments:
 - Residential developments of 40 or more dwellings, or
 - Sites of 1.5 hectares or more.
2. This new public open space must be provided on-site unless it can be demonstrated that contributions towards the provision or enhancement of off-site open space is more appropriate, with regards to:
 - a) The type and density of housing development and site size, or
 - b) Provision levels and proximity to existing open space, or
 - c) Other site-specific factors.

Reasoned Justification

8.4 Key points:

- The provision requirements proposed present a continuation of those in Policy GEN 6 of the 1998 UDP which have worked successfully. They take into account existing open space standards and household size for St. Helens.
- Areas provided on site should be able to function effectively as open space and should not include landscaping or inaccessible areas such as water storage. Provision should include equipped children's play areas, where there is an identified need.
- In line with Policy LPA08 (Infrastructure Delivery and Funding), it may be acceptable for lower density development with larger garden sizes or sites in areas in close proximity to sufficient existing open space to make an appropriate compensating contribution to the extension or enhancement of open space in the vicinity, whether by provision of land, direct funding of equipment or commuted payments.
- Findings of latest open space surveys and local standards set out in Policy LPC05 (Open Space, Sports and Recreation) will be used when considering existing levels of open space provision and its proximity.

Alternative Options

- 8.5 *Alternative Option 1:* Do not require new development to provide incidental on site open space provision or make contributions towards other open space in compensations where appropriate.
- 8.6 *Reason for rejection:* Could result in new housing developments not providing enough, or any, amenity open space for residents or create a deficit an area. In turn this would have detrimental impacts on health and wellbeing.

Strategic Aims Met	SA 2 SA 4 SA 6
Strategic Objectives Met	SO2.1-2.3, SO 4.1 SO 6.1
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan

LPD04: Householder Developments

LPD04: Householder Developments

The Council will develop a policy covering the following points:

Householder developments will be expected to comply with the following requirements:

- respect the scale, design, character and appearance of the original dwelling in question;
- respect the character of its neighbours and local setting;
- maintenance of reasonable standards of light and privacy for the dwelling in question and its affected neighbours (including, in both cases, garden privacy);
- avoids unacceptable intrusiveness, overshadowing and dominance at close quarters in respect of both homes and gardens; and
- adequate provision for motor cars and other common domestic needs, including outdoor pursuits, so as to maintain unimpeded visibility for all road users, the safe and free flow of traffic, pedestrian safety and appropriate levels of visual amenity.

The St. Helens Householder Development SPD (2011) will be updated as necessary to incorporate any changes to the Council's requirements for the design and layout of new housing as the new Local Plan is prepared.

Alternative Options

- 8.7 There are not considered to be any reasonable alternatives to this policy approach.

Strategic Aims Met	SA 2 SA 4
Strategic Objectives Met	SO2.1-2.3, SO 4.1
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan

LPD05: Extension, Alteration or Replacement of Buildings or conversion to dwellings in the Green Belt

LPD05: Extension, Alteration or Replacement of Buildings or conversion to dwellings in the Green Belt

The Council will develop a policy covering the following points:

Extension, alteration or replacement of buildings or conversion to dwellings in the Green Belt will be required to comply with the following requirements:

- Provide proper provision for ancillary activities – garaging, storage of goods;
- Provide appropriate landscaping;
- Extensions should not be disproportionate and should be in keeping with original– no larger than 30% of original dwelling volume when it was built or as at 1 July 1948 if built before that date;
- Appropriate materials should be used;
- General compliance with policies for householder developments;
- New dwellings shall not be materially larger, no more than 15% larger than original volume and shall comply with design quality policies; and
- Buildings for conversion shall be of permanent and substantial construction, capable of conversion without major reconstruction and shall not result in building volume more than 15% greater than authorised volume as existing prior to conversion.

Alternative Options

8.8 There are not considered to be any reasonable alternatives to this policy approach.

Strategic Aims Met	SA 2 SA 4
Strategic Objectives Met	SO2.1-2.3, SO 4.1
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan

LPD06: Development in Prominent Gateway Locations or Character Areas

LPD06: Development in Prominent Gateway Locations

The Council will develop a policy covering the following points:

- New development at prominent gateway locations and frontages along major gateway routes will be required to be of significant architectural quality which could be contemporary in design provided it would make a positive contribution to the setting of the location. New development will be expected to contribute positively to the image and built environment of St. Helens.
- Prominent gateway locations in the Borough are motorways, A roads, railway lines and visually prominent sites especially at road junctions and railway stations.

Alternative Options

8.9 There are not considered to be any reasonable alternatives to this policy approach.

Strategic Aims Met	SA 2
Strategic Objectives Met	SO2.1
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan

LPD07: Digital Communications

LPD07: Digital Communications

The Council will prepare a policy covering the following points:

Planning permission will be granted for digital communications developments provided that the following general principles are satisfied:

- i. Wherever possible, non-domestic apparatus should be sited within the urban areas;
- ii. Wherever possible, masts and towers should be shared and mounted apparatus should otherwise be grouped to minimise visual clutter;
- iii. Apparatus in the countryside and close to open land within the urban areas should normally either be sited so that it is out of sight of the general public or where the landform, buildings, established trees and opportunities for new woodland planting make it possible to ensure that views are masked or broken up;
- iv. Apparatus should normally be unobtrusive in relation to primary residential areas, areas of mixed use, Conservation Areas and the setting of listed buildings;
- v. In areas frequented by the general public for their business, shopping and pleasure apparatus should be out of sight from street level, so far as practicable;
- vi. Siting at ground level, with appropriate screening, is to be preferred to mounting on buildings or other structures;
- vii. Wall - mounted dishes and apparatus should be placed in the least obtrusive position possible, taking account of the architectural detailing of the building and its neighbours;
- viii. Dishes and antennae should not normally be placed above the highest part of the roof of a building, on chimneys or otherwise, except where they would be no more obtrusive than a conventional television aerial; and
- ix. Apparatus, mountings and ancillary structures should be coloured in a durable finish appropriate to the background against which they will be seen, so as to merge into it.

Developers will be required to work with appropriate providers to deliver the necessary physical infrastructure to accommodate the latest information and digital communications (ICT) networks as an integral part of all new developments.

New employment development will be required to provide the infrastructure to enable fibre to the premises.

New residential development of 10 units or more will be required to enable fibre to the cabinet to serve all dwellings on the site.

- 8.10 The St. Helens Telecommunications SPD (2008) will be updated as necessary to incorporate any changes to the Council's requirements for the design and layout of new housing as the new Local Plan is prepared.
- 8.11 Developers will be required to ensure major residential development (10+ units) and all employment development has access to the highest available broadband speed. The Council is seeking to ensure that all new housing has fibre optic to the site and all new employment development has fibre optic to the premises.

Alternative Options

- 8.12 There are not considered to be any reasonable alternatives to this policy approach.

Strategic Aims Met	SA 7
Strategic Objectives Met	SO7.1
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan

LPD08: Advertisements

LPD08: Advertisements

The Council will prepare an advertisements policy that clarifies the Council's expectations in relation to amenity and safety.

Alternative Options

8.13 There are not considered to be any reasonable alternatives to this policy approach.

Strategic Aims Met	SA 2
Strategic Objectives Met	SO2.1
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan

LPD09: Air Quality

LPD09: Air Quality

1. Development proposals must demonstrate that they will not:
 - Hinder the achievement of Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) objectives and the measures set out in an Air Quality Management Area Action Plan; or
 - Hinder the revocation of an Air Quality Management Area by:
 - introducing significant new sources of air pollutants, or
 - Introducing new development whose users will be especially susceptible to air pollution; or
 - Lead to the declaration of an Air Quality Management Area; or
 - Lead to a material decline in air quality.
2. Where appropriate Major developments must incorporate appropriate measures to reduce air pollution and minimise exposure to harmful levels of air pollution to both occupiers of the site and occupiers of neighbouring sites.

Alternative Options

- 8.14 There are not considered to be any reasonable alternatives to this policy approach.

Strategic Aims Met	SA 2 SA6
Strategic Objectives Met	SO2.2 S06.2
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan

LPD10: Hot Food Takeaways

LPD10: Hot Food Takeaways

1. Planning permission for a hot food takeaway will only be granted provided that it is located:

- i) Within the defined town centres of St. Helens or Earlestown, or;
- ii) Beyond a 400m exclusion zone around any primary or secondary school and sixth form college either within or outside Local Education Authority control.

Where the 400m exclusion zone (as identified in Appendix 1 of the Hot food Takeaway SPD) has a boundary that cuts across a building or curtilage in whole or part, for the purposes of this document, that whole site shall be considered to be within the exclusion zone.

2. Where a hot food takeaway is to be located within a town, district or local centre it should not result in:

- i) More than 5% of the units within the centre or frontage being hot food takeaways;
- ii) More than two A5 units being located adjacent to each other;
- iii) Any less than two non-A5 units between individual or groups of hot food takeaways;
- iv) The proportion of A1 uses in a primary retail frontage falling below 70%.

The hot food takeaway exclusion zone is detailed in Appendix 1 of the Hot Food Takeaway SPD.

Alternative Options

8.15 There are not considered to be any reasonable alternatives to this policy approach.

Strategic Aims Met	SA 2 SA6
Strategic Objectives Met	SO2.2 S06.1
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan Hot Food Takeaway SPD

LPD11: Health and Wellbeing

LPD11: Health and Wellbeing

Development should help maximise opportunities to improve quality of life to make it easier for people in St. Helens to lead healthy, active lifestyles, by:

- 1) Improving access to a choice of homes and providing new homes that meet the needs of future occupiers;
- 2) Improving access to jobs;
- 3) Making adequate provision for safe waste storage or recycling opportunities;
- 4) Designing easy to maintain, safe and attractive public areas and green spaces which minimise the opportunity for crime and reduce the fear of crime, and which promote social cohesion and mental wellbeing;
- 5) Encouraging people to be physically active by providing opportunities for walking, cycling, outdoor recreation and sport;
- 6) Appropriately locating food and drink shops, hot food takeaways, drinking establishments, restaurants, cafes and other non-food and drink uses which have negative health impacts, having regard to other land uses in the local area;
- 7) Having regard to accessibility of homes, education, jobs, public transport services, health and other services, recreational opportunities and community, cultural and leisure facilities;
- 8) Encouraging measures to achieve affordable warmth; and
- 9) Managing air quality and pollution.

Alternative Options

8.16 There are not considered to be any reasonable alternatives to this policy approach.

Strategic Aims Met	SA 2 SA6
Strategic Objectives Met	SO2.2 S06.1
Key Delivery Items	Implementation of the policies within this Local Plan Hot Food Takeaway SPD