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# **St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council**

## **Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for the St Helens Local Plan**

Prepared by LUC  
December 2015

**Project Title:** Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for the St Helens Local Plan

**Client:** St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council

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# St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council

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# 1 Introduction

## Introduction

### What is the Scoping Report

- 1.1 This Scoping Report provides a context and establishes the range and level of detail for the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (incorporating the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive) of the St Helens Local Plan (the Plan is expected to cover the period 2018-2033).
- 1.2 The Scoping stage is the first stage of the SA process and involves reviewing other relevant plans, policies and programmes, provides information on the baseline characteristics of the Borough, identifies key sustainability issues or problems of relevance to the Borough and sets out the 'SA Framework' – a series of sustainability objectives against which the likely effects of the Local Plan can be assessed.

### SA/SEA Requirements

- 1.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was introduced through EU Directive 2001/42/EC, transposed into English law via the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 ('the SEA Regulations'). SEA seeks to assess the environmental effects of implementing plans or programmes and results in the production of an 'Environmental Report'.
- 1.4 Sustainability Appraisal was introduced through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004. This process seeks to integrate social and economic as well as environmental considerations into the assessment of plans and programmes.
- 1.5 The requirement for SA/SEA is reiterated in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – see paragraphs 165 and 167, for example. Government Guidance on SA requires that SA and SEA are combined to allow for a single appraisal to be carried out. Consequently, an integrated SA/SEA of the St Helens Local Plan will be undertaken.
- 1.6 The SA process, as set out in Government Guidance<sup>1</sup> comprises a number of stages. Stage A is the Scoping Stage of the SA. This Scoping Report forms the output of Stage A of the SA/SEA process.
- 1.7 Consultation on the scope and level of the detail proposed for the SA Report should be undertaken with the statutory environmental consultation bodies: Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency. As set out in the SEA Regulations responses should be made within five weeks.
- 1.8 This Scoping Report replaces the previous Local Development Framework (LDF) Scoping Report (published in 2010) and the Scoping Update Consultation undertaken in 2013 (which related specifically to the Allocations and Sustainable Development Local Plan which was under preparation at that time).

### Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.9 Under Article 6 (3) and (4) of the Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive) land-use plans, including Local Plans, are also subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). The purpose of HRA is to assess the impacts of a land-use plan against the conservation objectives of a European Site and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of that site. HRA for the St Helens Local Plan will

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<sup>1</sup> National Planning Practice Guidance website [http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal/sustainability-appraisal-requirements-for-local-plans/#paragraph\\_013](http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal/sustainability-appraisal-requirements-for-local-plans/#paragraph_013)

be undertaken during the production of the Local Plan and the findings will be taken into account in the SA where relevant.

## St Helens Local Plan

- 1.10 St Helens Council, as a Local Planning Authority (LPA) is preparing a Local Plan in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004.
- 1.11 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 ("housing 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 Local Plan which will inform decisions on planning applications. It will replace the St Helen's Local Plan Core Strategy, adopted in October 2012 and the Saved Policies of the 1998 St Helens Unitary Development Plan.

### St Helens Core Strategy

- 1.12 The St Helens Core Strategy was adopted on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2012. It was envisaged that the Core Strategy would be supported by three further Local Plan documents:
- Allocations Local Plan – which would allocate land for development.
  - Sustainable Development Local Plan – which would set out detailed planning policies.
  - Bold Forest Area Action Plan – which would set out extra policies to apply in the Bold Forest Park Area.
- 1.13 The Core Strategy set out the strategy for development in the Borough up to 2027, and while it is still a sound and robust Local Plan, some issues have moved on from when the Core Strategy started preparation in 2005. For example, there has been a large increase in the demand for employment land as the economy has started to recover. As the Borough has made good use of existing (previously developed) 'brownfield' sites, there is now less land available for new homes and businesses. The Core Strategy recognised that Green Belt land would be needed to meet housing land need and the Council is of the view that it will also be need to meet employment land needs.
- 1.14 Consequently, the Council has decided to consolidate the Core Strategy and proposed Allocations and Sustainable Development Management Local Plans into one Local Plan document and the Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan will continue to be prepared separately.

## Structure of the Scoping Report

- 1.15 This chapter has described the background to the production of the new St Helens Local Plan and the requirement to undertake SA and other assessment processes. The remainder of this report is structured into the following sections:
- **Chapter 2** describes the next steps to be undertaken in the SA of the Local Plan.
  - **Chapter 3** describes the review of plans, policies and programmes of relevance to the SA of the Local Plan (this is supported by more detailed information in **Appendix 1**).
  - **Chapter 4** presents the baseline information which will inform the assessment of the policies and sites in the emerging Local Plan.
  - **Chapter 5** identifies the key sustainability issues and problems in St Helens of relevance to the Local Plan and considers the likely evolution of those issues without its implementation.
  - **Chapter 6** presents the SA framework that will be used for the appraisal of the Local Plan and the proposed method for carrying out the SA.
  - **Chapter 7** presents the proposed method for carrying out the SA/SEA.

## Consultation

- 1.16 Public consultation plays an important role in SA/SEA. Therefore, to ensure that the scope and level of detail of the SA/SEA is fit for purpose, consultees and relevant stakeholders are being given an opportunity to comment on this Scoping Report.
- 1.17 Public consultation is scheduled to take place between 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and 12:00 noon on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016.

## 2 Stages in the SA/SEA Process

- 2.1 There are two main outputs of the SA/SEA – a Scoping Report and an 'Environmental Report'. The SA/SEA process comprises a number of stages, with Scoping (the 'information gathering stage') being Stage A:
- Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the Scope.**
- Stage B: Developing and Refining Options (i.e. reasonable alternatives) and assessing effects.
- Stage C: Preparing the Environmental Report.
- Stage D: Consulting on the preferred options of the Plan and the Environmental Report.
- Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Plan.
- 2.2 This report presents the findings of the Scoping stage of the SA/SEA (Stage A), which involves the following key tasks:
- A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans and programmes and sustainability objectives.
- A2: Collecting baseline information.
- A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems.
- A4: Developing the SA/SEA framework.
- A5: Consulting on the Scope of the SA/SEA.
- 2.3 Stages B-E of the SA/SEA of St Helens Local Plan will be undertaken at a later stage and reported on separately.

### A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans and programmes and sustainability objectives

- 2.4 This task is relevant to both the development of the Local Plan itself and the SA/SEA process - the Local Plan should reflect national policy objectives and should also relate to the policy context set by other plans. In addition, the review of other plans, policies and programmes provides the policy context within which the SA/SEA is being undertaken.
- 2.5 A matrix has been compiled, listing the various plans, policies and programmes that are of relevance to the Local Plan at the international, national, sub-national and local levels. Each plan, policy or programme has been reviewed and its content and key objectives described. Consideration has then been given to the implications of each plan, policy or programme for the emerging Local Plan and the SA/SEA.
- 2.6 The review of plans, policies and programmes is summarised in **Chapter 3** of this report and the detailed matrix can be found in **Appendix 1**. It should help to identify any potential conflicts or synergies between the emerging Local Plan and other plans, policies and programmes.

### A2: Collecting Baseline Information

- 2.7 This task was undertaken by drawing on a variety of publications and data sources relating to St Helens, with the relevant information being compiled to present an up-to-date picture of the Borough. Data sources were reviewed in order to ensure that the information drawn from them is as recent as possible and care has been taken to only describe those aspects of the baseline that will be of relevance when assessing the effects of the Local Plan.

- 2.8 The baseline information for the SA/SEA of the Local Plan is presented in **Chapter 4** of this report.

### A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems

- 2.9 By identifying the key sustainability issues and problems relevant to St Helens, it is possible to ensure that the Local Plan addresses these as far as possible and that opportunities are taken to bring about sustainability improvements through the implementation of the Local Plan.
- 2.10 The key relevant sustainability issues for St Helens have been identified through the review of plans, policies and programmes and the collation of baseline information and are presented in **Chapter 5** of this report.

### A4: Developing the SA/SEA Framework

- 2.11 Although not a requirement of the SEA Directive, the development of an SA/SEA framework provides a recognised way in which the likely sustainability effects of a plan can be assessed and described. The framework consists of a number of SA/SEA objectives, which are drawn from the key sustainability issues facing St Helens (presented in **Chapter 5**).
- 2.12 During the later stages of the SA/SEA, the sites and policy options included in the Local Plan will be assessed against each of the SA/SEA objectives so that any likely significant effects of the Local Plan (both positive and negative) can be identified and appropriate mitigation and monitoring measures can be devised.
- 2.13 The SA/SEA framework that will be used in the assessment of the St Helens Local Plan is set out in **Chapter 6**, along with an outline of the broad approach that will be taken to the later stages of the SA/SEA.

### A5: Consulting on the Scope of the SA/SEA

- 2.14 In line with the requirements of the SEA Directive, this scoping report will be made available to the three statutory consultees (the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England) as well as wider stakeholders, for a six week consultation period between 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and 12:00 noon on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016.

### How will the Scoping Report be used

- 2.15 This Scoping Report has been produced in order to allow the statutory authorities and other interested parties to make comments on the scope of the SA/SEA. Any significant gaps in the information gathered can be identified and steps taken to remedy these before the Local Plan is developed further. The suitability of the SA/SEA objectives for carrying out the assessment, and their consistency with other plans and programmes, can also be considered by consultees.

### 3 A1- Identifying other relevant policies, plans and programmes and sustainability objectives

The Environment Report should include:

*"an outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes"*

(SEA Regulations Schedule 2(1))

*"The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation."*

(SEA Regulations Schedule 2(5))

- 3.1 As described, earlier a review of plans, policies and programmes of relevance to the St Helens Local Plan has been carried out in order to establish the policy context for the SA/SEA and to ensure that the emerging Local Plan complies with other relevant international, national, sub-national and local policies.
- 3.2 A wide range of plans, policies and programmes was reviewed as part of this process. The purpose of this review was to:
- Identify environmental, social and economic objectives which should be reflected in the Local Plan and SA.
  - Identify any factors that might influence the preparation of the Local Plan and inform the SA/SEA.
  - Consider whether there are any potential incompatibilities between plans, policies and programmes that will need to be taken into account in both the Local Plan and the SA/SEA.
- 3.3 When considering the plans, policies and programmes included in the review it is important to note that:
- The context will be dynamic because other relevant plans, policies and programmes are likely to emerge during the Local Plan preparation period which will need to be considered through the assessment process. If a significant amount of time passes between stages in the SA/SEA process, it will therefore be necessary to update the review.
  - Plans, policies and programmes range from those at the international level (such as European Directives) to the local level.
  - While the list of plans, policies and programmes is extensive, it is not, and can never be, fully exhaustive. The review seeks to identify those plans, policies and programmes that are most relevant to the Local Plan.
- 3.4 The international, national, sub-national and local policies, plans and programmes considered in the review are listed in **Appendix 1**.

#### Summary of the Review of Plans, Policies and Programmes

- 3.5 There are a wide range of plans, policies and programmes at the international and national levels that are relevant to the emerging St Helens Local Plan. The full review of relevant plans, policies and programmes can be seen in **Appendix 1** and the key components are summarised below.

### International and European Policies, Plans and Programmes

- 3.6 At the international level, Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the 'SEA Directive') and Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the 'Habitats Directive') are particularly important as they require Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to be undertaken in relation to the emerging Local Plan. These processes should be undertaken iteratively and integrated into the production of the Local Plan in order to ensure that any potential negative environmental effects (including on European-level nature conservation designations) are identified and can be mitigated.
- 3.7 There are a wide range of other EU Directives relating to issues such as water quality, waste and air quality, most of which have been transposed into UK law through national-level policy; however the international directives have been included in **Appendix 1** for completeness.

### National Policies, Plans and Programmes

- 3.8 The most significant development in terms of the policy context for the emerging Local Plan was the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which replaced the suite of Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs). The purpose of the NPPF was to streamline national planning policy, having reduced over a thousand pages of policy down to around 60 pages. The St Helens Local Plan must be consistent with the requirements of the NPPF, which sets out information about the purposes of local plan-making. It states that:
- "Local Plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. To this end, they should be consistent with the principles and policies set out in this Framework, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development."*
- 3.9 The NPPF also requires Local Plans to be 'aspirational but realistic'. This means that opportunities for appropriate development should be identified in order to achieve net gains in terms of sustainable social, environmental and economic development; however significant adverse impacts in any of those areas should not be allowed to occur.
- 3.10 One of the core planning principles set out in the NPPF is that planning should take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs. Other core planning principles are linked to health – such as design and transportation. Section 8 of the NPPF recognises that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities.
- 3.11 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan. This should include strategic policies to deliver:
- the homes and jobs needed in the area;
  - the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;
  - the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
  - the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
  - climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.
- 3.12 In addition, Local Plans should:
- plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of this Framework;
  - be drawn up over an appropriate time scale, preferably a 15-year time horizon, take account of longer term requirements, and be kept up to date;
  - be based on co-operation with neighbouring authorities, public, voluntary and private sector organisations;

- indicate broad locations for strategic development on a key diagram and land-use designations on a proposals map;
- allocate sites to promote development and flexible use of land, bringing forward new land where necessary, and provide detail on form, scale, access and quantum of development where appropriate;
- identify areas where it may be necessary to limit freedom to change the uses of buildings, and support such restrictions with a clear explanation;
- identify land where development would be inappropriate, for instance because of its environmental or historic significance; and
- contain a clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment, and supporting Nature Improvement Areas where they have been identified.

3.13 **Appendix 1** provides a detailed review of National Policy.

### **Local Plans, Programmes and Proposals**

3.14 At the sub-regional and local levels there are a wide range of plans and programmes that are specific to St Helens and the Merseyside Sub-Region, and which provide further context for the emerging Local Plan. These plans and programmes relate to issues such as housing, transport, renewable energy and green infrastructure, and have also been reviewed in **Appendix 1**.

## 4 Stage A2 – Baseline Information

The 'Environmental Report' should include:

- *"The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme"*
- *"the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected"*
- *"any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme, including in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as any areas designated pursuant to Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds and the Habitats Directive."*

SEA Regulations Schedule 2 (2, 3 and 4)

- 4.1 The SEA Regulations require the consideration of likely significant effects on the environment, including on biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between these factors. This list of issues is often referred to as the 'SEA Topics'.
- 4.2 The sections below set out the baseline information and any local trends that can be identified from a range of data sources in relation to each of the above topics. At the end of each section, the ways in which the St Helens Local Plan could potentially affect each topic are summarised. Note that some topics (such as population and human health and biodiversity, flora and fauna) have been grouped together as there is a significant amount of crossover between these topics in terms of the relevant data and the key environmental issues.
- 4.3 Baseline information has been sourced from publicly available documents and data and in consultation with St Helens Metropolitan Council. Where a source is not specifically identified in the text the information will have been sourced from the St. Helens analysis and research exchange (SHARE). SHARE is an interactive online resource managed by St. Helens Council which has been developed to provide easy access to key facts and figures about St. Helens. Information on a wide range of topics can be viewed using tables, reports, graphs and maps. Information can be accessed at the following link <http://share.sthelens.gov.uk/IAS/>

### The Study Area and Key Characteristics

- 4.4 St Helens Borough is a Unitary Authority in Merseyside with a population of approximately 177,000 and covering an area of 135.9 square kilometres. The two defined town centres in the Borough are St Helens and Earlestown (within Newton-le-Willows).
- 4.5 The history of St Helens 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 1970s onwards these industries began to decline in importance, with a corresponding reduction in jobs and business opportunities. The influences of heavy industry and the fundamental shift in employment patterns have been at the heart of many of the challenges facing the Borough since this time.
- 4.6 The rapid and intensive process of industrialisation has left a legacy of derelict, contaminated land and issues related to poor health. St Helens is now ranked as the 36<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority in England out of 326. Life expectancy is considerably below national averages. The proportion of people employed is also significantly less than regional and national averages.

## St Helens Borough Geographical Context

- 4.7 The Borough of St Helens is located between the two cities of Liverpool (19 km to the west) and Manchester (36 km to the east). The Borough covers a total area of 136 square kilometres, of which approximately half is countryside, with much of this designated as Green Belt (65% of the Borough in total).
- 4.8 St Helens is bordered by the authorities of Knowsley to the west, West Lancashire to the north, Wigan to the east and Halton and Warrington to the south.
- 4.9 The Borough enjoys a strategic position at the heart of the North West. The M6 and M62 motorways run through the Borough, as does the West Coast Main Line which can be accessed at Wigan and Warrington. The Liverpool to Manchester, via Newton-le-Willows, and the two Liverpool to Wigan railway lines, serving a total of ten stations, also bisect the Borough.

## Environmental, Social and Economic Baseline Profile

### Biodiversity, flora and fauna

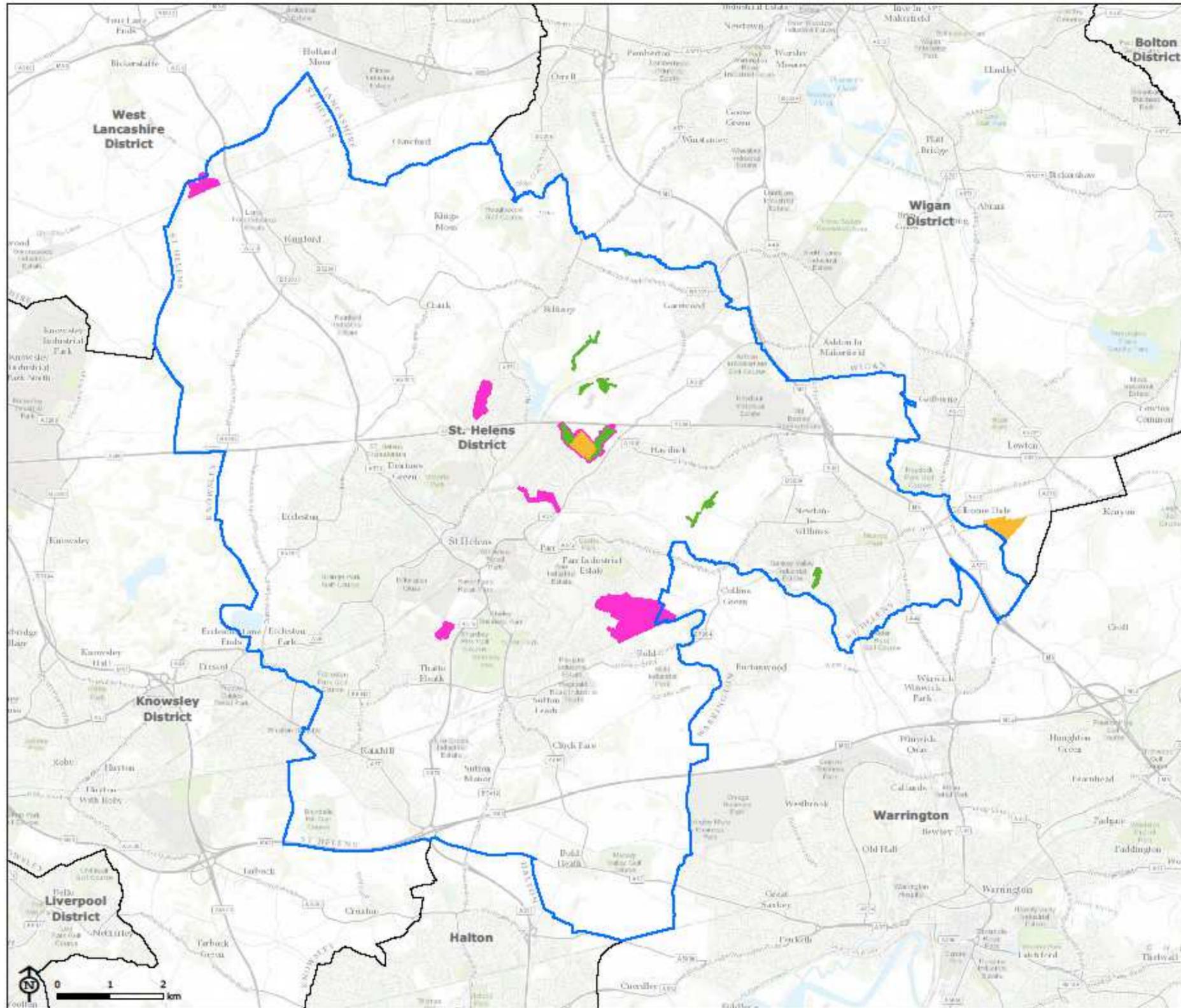
- 4.10 There are no internationally designated nature conservation sites within the Borough. The Manchester Mosses SAC, the Rixton Clay Pits SAC and the Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar sites all lie within 15km of the Borough Boundary. The only Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the St Helens Borough boundary is the Stanley Bank Meadow SSSI. The site covers 14.5 hectares and its main habitat is neutral grassland. The SSSI is considered to be wholly in favourable condition. This marks an improvement on recent years when the SSSI was in an unfavourable condition.
- 4.11 Local nature reserves (LNR) are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. In total, there are six LNRs within St Helens:
- Stanley Bank Meadows, Haydock;
  - Siding Lane, Rainford;
  - Thatto Heath Meadows,
  - Clinkham Wood, St Helens;
  - Parr Hall Millenium Green, St Helens; and
  - Colliers Moss Common (North).
- 4.12 Within St Helens, 6.8% of land is covered in woodland, which equates to a total of 945 hectares of land (this includes areas recorded as ancient woodland, particularly to the north and east of the Borough). This figure is below England's national average of 8%. Most of this comprises a mosaic of small woodlands, shelterbelts, hedgerows and associated habitats. The majority of woodlands within the Borough consist of secondary and recent plantation woodlands comprising a mix of deciduous and coniferous species<sup>2</sup>.
- 4.13 There are also a number of local wildlife sites, and tree preservation orders within St Helens

### *Sustainability Issues*

- 4.14 Human use (e.g. recreational disturbance) and climate change pose threats to the Borough's sites of interest. The Local Plan should seek to conserve and enhance existing nature conservation sites and identify opportunities to deliver biodiversity benefits on a strategic scale (e.g. green infrastructure networks).

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<sup>2</sup> Information was taken from the St Helens Town in the Forest report prepared by Gillespies for St Helens Borough Council in 2006



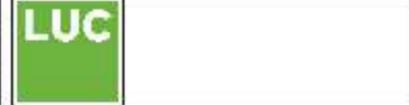
**St. Helens Local Plan  
SA Scoping Report**

**St. Helens District Nature  
Conservation Designations**

- St Helens District boundary
- District boundary
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- Ancient Woodland

*Note:*  
Only designations that are within St. Helens District are shown. The following designations were considered but are not within St. Helens: SAC, SPA, Ramsar, NNR

Map Scale @ A3: 1:70,000



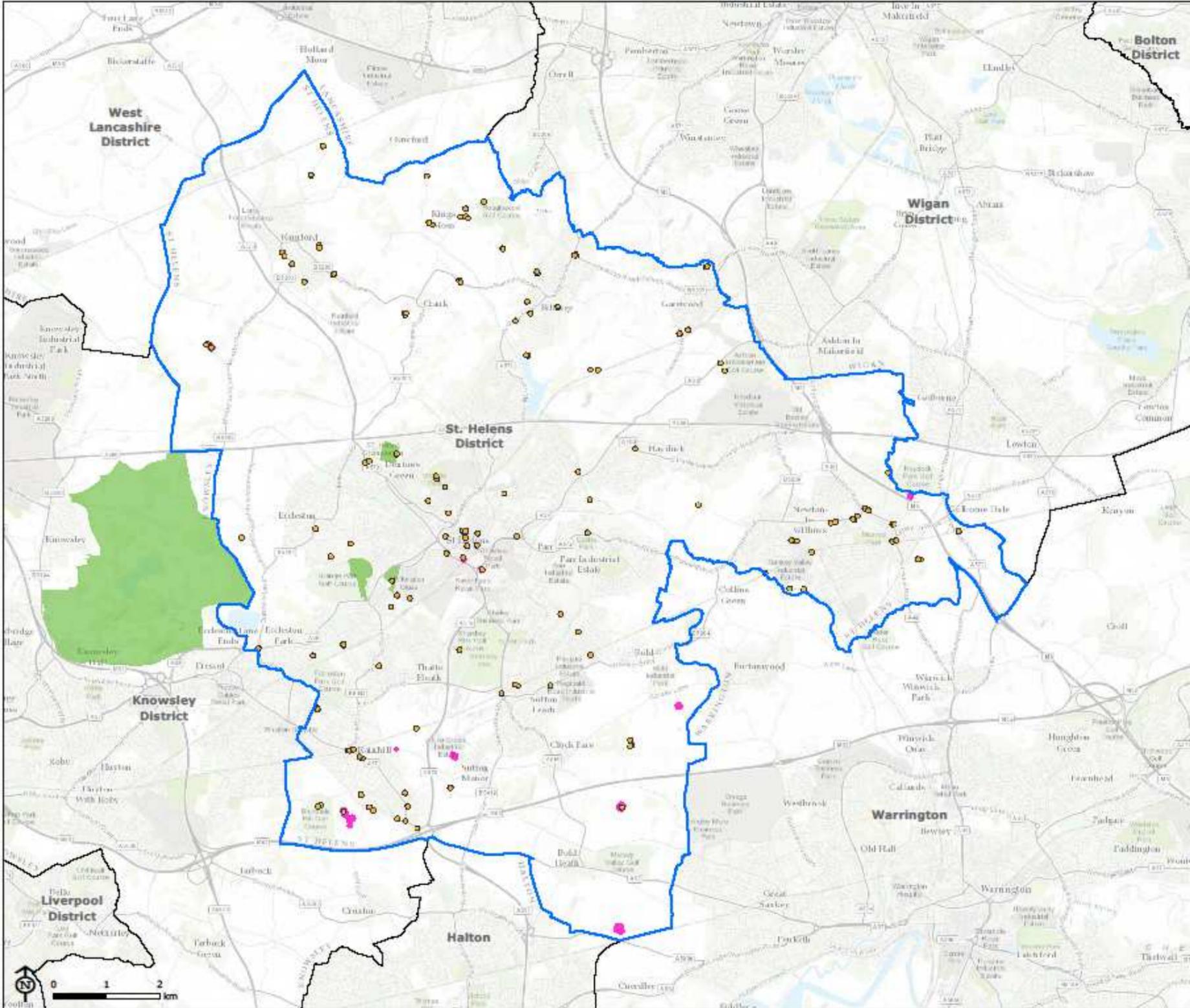
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### **Cultural Heritage**

- 4.15 There are many heritage assets in the Borough related to its industrial and railway history. For example, Stanley Bank is a picturesque area and is the gateway to the Sankey Valley and is of rich historical importance. It is the site of an 18th century Iron Slitting Mill, the terminus of England's First Canal.
- 4.16 There are 146 Listed Buildings in St Helens, of which Historic England deems 18 to be at risk as per the Risk Register 2014. This includes the Grade I Sankey Viaduct (over the Sankey Brook) and a number of Grade II Listed Structures. In addition there are 2 Listed Parks & Gardens (Taylor Park and St Helens Cemetery) and 12 Scheduled Monuments in St Helens Borough (these include Moated Sites, the Ruins of Chantry of St Thomas of Canterbury Windleshaw Abbey and Heavy Anti-aircraft Gunsite Disused Camp). St Helens has ten Conservation Areas. All Conservation Areas in the Borough have Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans in place. A local list of important buildings has been prepared to recognise buildings of considerable local historical and/or architectural merit.

### *Sustainability Issues*

- 4.17 Pressure from new development that is not in keeping with the character of the area may pose a risk to designated assets. The Local Plan should seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment.



**St. Helens Local Plan  
SA Scoping Report**

**St. Helens District Cultural Heritage**

- St Helens District boundary
- District boundary
- Listed Building
- Scheduled Monument
- Registered Parks and Gardens

*Note:  
Only designations that are within  
St. Helens District are shown.*

**Map Scale @ A3: 1:70,000**



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## Landscape

- 4.18 The landscape of the Borough of St Helens is facing a number of contrasting pressures and complex landscape planning issues. Much of the Borough can be described as urban fringe, a transitional character zone between the urban and rural landscape. These areas have an inherent sensitivity as they are often identified as the most appropriate areas to accommodate the ever-increasing requirement for developable land. These landscapes however, often play an important role providing a landscape setting and contrast to urban areas as well as offering opportunities for recreation. 2027<sup>3</sup>.
- 4.19 There are no Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in the Borough. However, the majority of rural land within St Helens is within the Green Belt (65% of the Borough's land area in total).
- 4.20 In 2006, Land Use Consultants undertook a landscape character assessment of St Helens Borough. The information contained within these can be used to determine the sensitivity of certain landscape areas to development. A large area towards the north of the Borough is rated as medium to high or high, while areas in the town centre are predominantly graded as low to medium.

### *Sustainability Issues*

- 4.21 The integrity of landscape within St Helens should not be impacted upon through planning decisions. The Local Plan should ensure that landscapes are protected as appropriate and that development takes account of the variation in landscape character across the Borough.

## Geodiversity

- 4.22 Formally known as Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS), Locally Important Geological Sites (LIGS) are evaluated for important geological and geomorphological features such as aspects of stratigraphy, palaeontology and petrology. LIGS sites do not have formal statutory protection like Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) but are protected by the Local Authority in the planning process by being listed in Local Development Plans and associated documents such as the Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (2011). There are 11 Locally Important Geological Sites in St Helens.

### *Sustainability Issues*

- 4.23 The Borough contains a number of Locally Important Geological Sites which could be vulnerable to development.

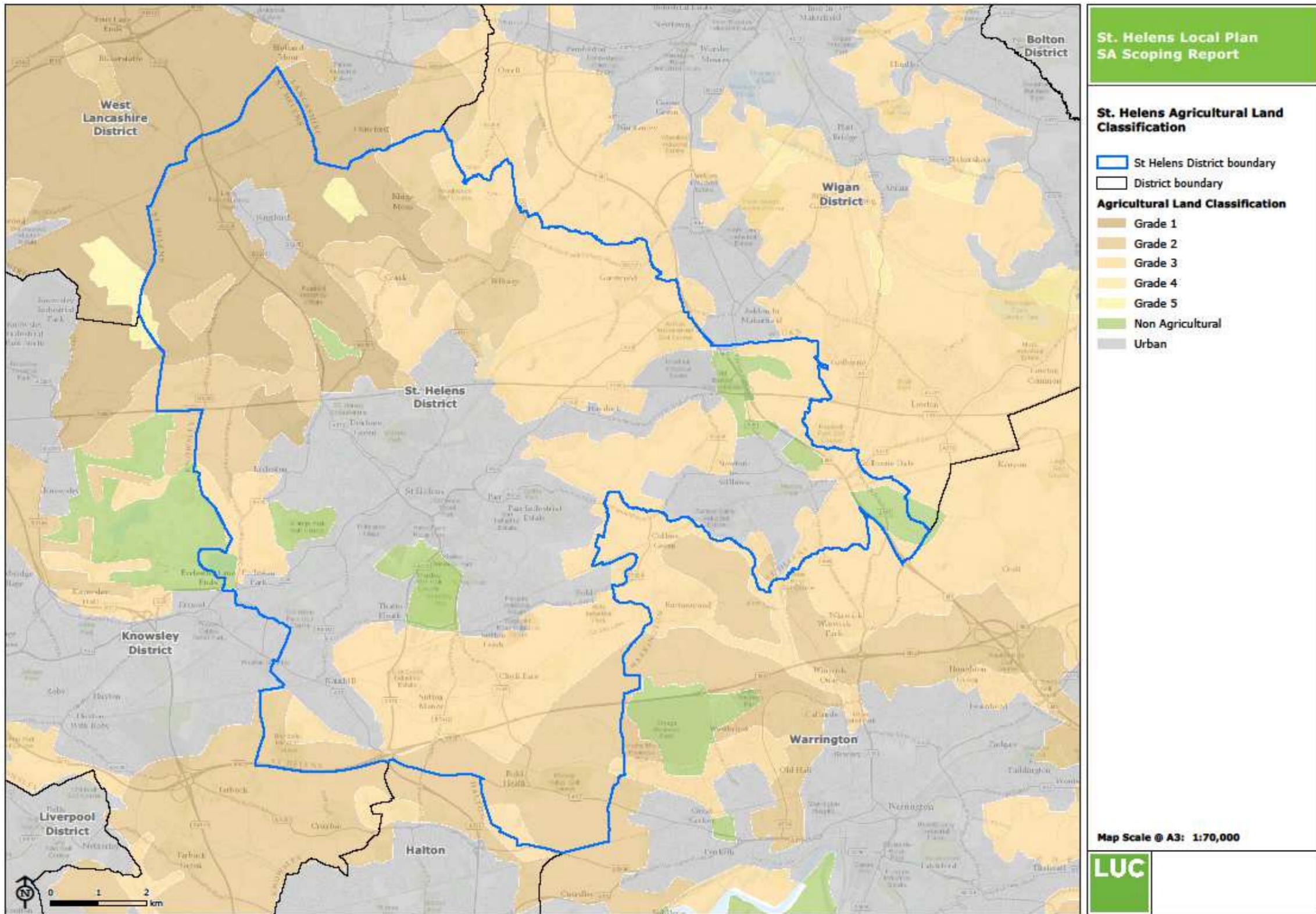
## Soil

### *Agricultural Land*

- 4.24 Land Quality varies from place to place. The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) provides a method for assessing the quality of farmland. The ALC system classifies land into five grades, with Grade 3 subdivided into sub-grades 3a and 3b. The best and most versatile land is defined as Grades 1, 2, and 3a by policy guidance (see Annex 2 of the NPPF). Large areas of Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land are located towards the north west of the St Helens Borough. There are also areas of grade 3 agricultural land towards the north, east, west and south of the Borough. The urban areas of the Borough are not classified under the ALC system.

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<sup>3</sup> LUC (2010) Landscape Character Assessment for St Helens – January 2006



### *Previously Developed Land ('Brownfield' land)*

- 4.25 The stock of previously developed land in St Helens at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 was approximately 253 hectares covering 242 sites. Of these, 54 sites, totalling 133 hectares are derelict, 53% of the total.
- 4.26 St Helens has a legacy of land contamination arising from industrial development and other related operational practices. The most significant influences in terms of the legacy of potential contamination in St Helens are:
- Coal mining.
  - Glass manufacture.
  - Alkali manufacture.
  - Copper smelting.
  - Iron works.
  - Landfill.
  - Railway and ancillary land.
- 4.27 To date, the St Helens Council has identified several thousand sites of potentially contaminated land and is currently investigating those it considers to be of higher risk. The Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy (July 2001) is the most recent strategy prepared that addresses contaminated land issues.

### *Sustainability Issues*

- 4.28 The Local Plan should seek to avoid development on the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where such use is permitted it should, where possible, be temporary and reversible. Previously developed land should be prioritised for development, recognising that brownfield sites may include priority habitats and/or support significant biodiversity interest.
- 4.29 St Helens contains areas of historically contaminated land which could pose a risk to human health and the natural environment or which could be remediated and brought into appropriate use. The Local Plan should support development which achieves remediation of contaminated sites and avoid development which poses a risk to human health or the wider natural environment.

### **Minerals**

- 4.30 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. However, although significant reserves of these minerals remain, activity has recently declined to the point that there is only one active extractive operation – Bold Heath Quarry (sand and crushed sandstone) – in the Borough.

### *Sustainability Issues*

- 4.31 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

### **Air Quality**

- 4.32 The Environment Act 1995 established the process of Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) and set a duty on Local Authorities to review air quality in their area. St Helens Council use continuous analysers and passive diffusion tubes to monitor air quality at several locations within the Borough.
- 4.33 On the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009, St Helens Council declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) at two locations within the Borough where the annual mean objective for Nitrogen Dioxide will not be met. This includes the M6 AQMA and the High Street AQMA

- 4.34 A further two AQMAs were declared at Borough Road and Reflection Court at the Linkway on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011 as the annual mean objective for Nitrogen Dioxide is not being met.

#### *Sustainability Issues*

- 4.35 St Helens is characterised by a good road network with motorways and a significant proportion of industry relies on these connections. Vehicle emissions are a major contributor of greenhouse gases contributing to climate change and local air pollution affecting human health. Emissions from petrol and diesel engines include carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), hydrocarbons (HCs), particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) all of which have environmental impacts. The Local Plan should seek to minimise the need to travel by car by promoting sustainable locations for development and travel by sustainable modes.

#### **Climate Change and energy**

- 4.36 There is widespread scientific consensus that the Earth's climate is changing and that human activity could be the principal cause. In June 2009, the outcome of research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) team<sup>4</sup>. The research predicts the effects of climate change for the south east England by 2050. In summary, climatic changes are likely to include increases in the mean temperature in the winter and summer months alongside changes in the annual winter and summer precipitation levels. Regionally St Helens, as part of the North West, will experience hotter and drier summers, warmer and wetter winters, and more frequent extreme weather events such as heavy rains all year round.
- 4.37 The per capita emissions in St Helens are slightly higher than the North West average (for 2006). The majority of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions originate from business (52%) followed by 26% from home and 22% from transport.
- 4.38 The St Helens climate action plan brings together the contributions that local people and local organisations can make in reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The actions are structured around four themes; home, transport, public and third sector and businesses. Each theme considers current initiative, successful projects and goals that need to be achieved in order to reduce the overall impact of climate change in St Helens.

#### *Sustainability Issues*

- 4.39 A significant proportion of carbon dioxide emissions within St Helens originate from industry and commercial, domestic uses and road transport. The Local Plan could address climate change through requiring high standards of design and construction, reducing reliance on fossil fuels through support for renewables and other low carbon technologies; reducing the need to travel, especially by private car; avoiding development on areas at the highest risk of flooding; adapting to climate change (e.g. through encouraging sustainable building designs; greening buildings), enhancing existing green space and making provision for new green space throughout the Borough.

#### **Water Resources**

- 4.40 St Helens is drained to the south-east by a number of water courses, chief among these, Sankey Brook which runs from the central low-lying landscape of the Borough, east and then south, into the River Mersey at Sankey Bridges in Warrington.
- 4.41 A number of tributaries feed into the River Mersey, draining the central areas of the Borough. They include 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 and Pendlebury Brook draining Rainhill.
- 4.42 The Borough is home to Carr Mill Dam Merseyside's largest body of inland water. This occupies the valley of Black Brook and the Goyt watercourses.
- 4.43 The quality of river waters in the North West has improved in recent years, however, the region does still contain about one third of the poorest quality rivers in England. The standard of rivers

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<sup>4</sup> Met Office (2009), UK Climate Projections 2009 (UKCP09), <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/services/climate-services/uk/ukcp>

according to Environment Agency measures for chemical and biological quality indicate that overall river water quality is below national averages, particularly for biological quality. Approximately 10% of rivers in the region have 'very high' or 'excessively high' levels of nitrate, and 28% have 'very high' or 'excessively high' levels of phosphate, compared to a national average of 28% and 37% respectively.<sup>5</sup>

- 4.44 The United Utilities Water Resources Management Plan 2009 indicates sufficient capacity for water provision. Through the Water Framework Directive and the North West Basin Management Plan, plans and actions have been highlighted to return all surface water bodies to Good Ecological Status, or 'Good Ecological Potential' by 2027<sup>6</sup>.

#### *Sustainability Issues*

- 4.45 The Local Plan should seek to ensure that the location of development takes into account the sensitivity of the water environment and processes are in place such that development will not result in deterioration in water quality. It should also ensure that development is designed so as to make efficient use of water resources. Efficient use of water resources can also help to safeguard surface water quality by helping to maintain flows within surface water and reducing the risk of combined sewer overflows.

#### **Flooding**

- 4.46 In accordance with the NPPF a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)<sup>7</sup> has been undertaken to identify areas at risk of flooding across the Borough. The SFRA found that the main source of flood risk is from fluvial flooding, surface flooding, groundwater flooding and canal and reservoir flooding.
- 4.47 St Helens Strategic Flood risk Assessment identifies the zones of flood risk with Zone 1 being of lowest risk (less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flooding) and Zone 3a being of highest risk (1 in 100 or greater annual probability of flooding). 336 residential properties have been identified to be within Flood Zone 3.

#### *Sustainability Issues*

- 4.48 There are number of areas are at risk of flooding in St Helens as they are located within flood zones 2 or 3. The Local Plan should avoid the highest flood risk locations when allocating sites for development.

#### **Open Space**

- 4.49 The Council's Civic Pride and Community Spaces Section is responsible for the provision and management of over 720 hectares of Public Parks and Countryside Areas including the Council's parks and open spaces, incidental open space, playing fields, allotments, children's play areas, skate parks, ball courts, Country Parks, Local Nature Reserves, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Greenways, woodlands, meadows, water bodies, pets corner and local neighbourhood and environmental management.
- 4.50 The Council's Community Green Space Strategy was adopted in October 2007. It recognises the importance of green space and sets out to improve the provision of high quality, well used spaces in the Borough, which will meet the needs of local people both now and in the future. In July 2011 the Council was awarded 11 Green Flags in recognition for its quality provision of parks and green spaces at the following locations:
- Bankes Park.
  - Clinkham Wood Local Nature Reserve.
  - Downall Croft Doorstep Green.
  - Fosters Park, Gaskell Park.
  - Mesnes Park.

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<sup>5</sup> URS (2010) St. Helens Borough Council LDF: SA Scoping Report

<sup>6</sup> St. Helens (2012) Local Plan Core Strategy - October 2012

<sup>7</sup> St Helens Council (2014) Strategic Flood Risk Assessment: Final Report

- Nanny Goat Park.
- Siding Lane Local Nature Reserve.
- Taylor Park.
- The Duckeries.
- King George V, Haydock.

4.51 Consultants employed by the Council undertook an audit of open space in the Borough during 2005<sup>8</sup>. The Audit concluded that green space resources totalled approximately 1656 hectares and that there was no fundamental shortfall of open space in St Helens. Localised shortfalls could be addressed by the re-use of existing spaces and an improvement in quality.

#### *Sustainability Issues*

4.52 The Local Plan should seek to ensure that existing open spaces are protected, and where necessary, enhanced. Open space quality improvements should be sought, where relevant. New open and green spaces should be provided.

### **Population and Social Issues**

#### *Demographics*

- 4.53 The resident population of St Helens is 177,188 people (2014 mid-year estimate, ONS). This has remained fairly constant for the past decade; current population projections indicate that there will be a 5% increase of the total population by 2025.
- 4.54 The local population is expected to become older on average, with the mean average age for the Borough increasing from 40.9 years in 2012, to 42.8 years in 2025, and 44.3 years in 2037. 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.
- 4.55 St Helens is ethnically less diverse than many areas, with 97% of the population (Census, 2011) identifying themselves as white, compared to 79.8% nationally and 87.1% in the North West.

#### *Crime*

- 4.56 There were 2,726 incidents of violence against the person in 2014/15, an increase of 61% offences against the previous year, (though this was expected due to a change in recording practices following a Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) crime data inspection in 2014). St Helens was lower than the average of comparable districts, but only better than Liverpool in the Merseyside area.
- 4.57 St Helens Youth Offending Service (YOS) aims to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people. The YOS is a statutory multi-agency partnership between St Helens Council, Merseyside Police Service, Merseyside Probation Trust and Healthcare. The operation of Triage with Merseyside Police is effectively diverting appropriate young people depending on the seriousness of their offending away from the criminal justice system. This has led to a reduction in the number of custodial sentences given and the number of first time entrants to the criminal justice system compared to the baseline year (2009/10).

#### *Deprivation*

4.58 Deprivation relates to people who experience financial or material disadvantage, poor housing, lower educational attainment, insecure employment and homelessness, and are among those more likely to suffer poorer health, have poorer access to health and die prematurely. Overall St Helens is now ranked as the 36<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority in England out of 326. Its relative position has deteriorated since the 2010 Index of Deprivation where St Helens was ranked as the 51<sup>st</sup> most deprived area. Relative deprivation continues to grow, with some areas becoming more deprived relative to others. There are now a total of 28 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within the Borough that fall within the 10% most deprived LSOAs nationally, compared to 24 in 2010. A

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<sup>8</sup> St. Helens (2012) Local Plan Core Strategy - October 2012

total of 47 LSOAs within the Borough fall within the 20% most deprived nationally, compared to 43 in 2010.

### *Sustainability Issues*

- 4.59 Population growth and demographic change (e.g. an ageing population) will place additional and changing demands on key services and facilities such as housing, health, education and social care. These should be reflected in the Local Plan, for example, through identifying suitable sites to deliver housing for the elderly and by ensuring the stock of housing can meet the needs of residents across their life. St Helens as a whole suffers from considerable deprivation relative to the national average and there is also significant inequality within the Borough. It will be important that the Local Plan sets out to reduce deprivation and inequality, for example, by encouraging regeneration of the most deprived areas.

## **Human Health**

### *Life expectancy and Mortality*

- 4.60 Life expectancy at birth for males is 78.1 years (Public Health Outcomes Framework, 2011-13) and for females 81.6 years (Public Health Outcomes Framework, 2011-13). Whilst life expectancy rates in St Helens are improving they are still considerably below the national averages, 83.1 years (females) and 79.4 years (males). In St Helens there are wide differences between wards in both health and well-being. Life expectancy at birth for men varies by 10.7 years between the highest and the lowest wards in St Helens, while female expectancy varies by 9.1 years.
- 4.61 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 England, and alcohol misuse remains a problem locally.

### *Alcohol and Drug Misuse*

- 4.62 Alcohol remains an issue for St Helens; the number of admissions to hospital due to alcohol related conditions has increased each year for the past 5 years, with the rate considerably higher than the regional and national averages. Linked to this, the rate of mortality due to alcohol attributable factors has also increased in recent years.
- 4.63 The most recent nationally published data (2014/15) shows that St Helens drug rehabilitation services are proving successful and places St Helens 22<sup>nd</sup> out of 149 local authorities for people who successfully complete treatment for addiction to opiates and 9<sup>th</sup> out of 149 authorities for addiction to non-opiate substances, and who do not re-present again for treatment within 6 months.
- 4.64 The number of people who smoke has reduced in recent years. It is estimated (Integrated Household Survey, 2013) that 19.7% of people in St Helens smoke, which is better than the North West average of 20.1% but still higher than the national average (18.4%).

### *Obesity*

- 4.65 Healthy weight has been recognised as a challenge in St Helens and for this reason has been identified as a key priority in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The prevalence of children who are overweight (including obese) in Reception Year and Year 6 is 25.9% and 36.7% respectively, which is significantly higher than the national averages (22.5% Reception Year, 33.5% Year 6).
- 4.66 Child obesity levels vary considerably across the Wards in St Helens. The proportion of children in Reception Year who are overweight, including obese varies from 11.4% in Rainford Ward to 26.7% in Parr Ward (3 year rate: 2011/12 – 2013/14). The rate of Year 6 children assessed as overweight, including obese also varies by more than 11 percentage points from 29.7% in Eccleston Ward to 41.2% in Haydock Ward.

### *Other Health Issues*

- 4.67 Although showing strong improvements in recent years, teenage conceptions remain high in St Helens with values of 39.3% (3 year rolling rate) for under 18 conceptions per 1,000 (population

aged 15 to 17, ONS 2014) which is significantly higher than the North West (31.5%) and England (27.6%). Although, the last three years have seen the lowest numbers of teenage conceptions in St Helens since records were first published in 1998.

### *Sustainability Issues*

- 4.68 The Local Plan must provide for the needs of older people and tackle the health of its residents more generally in an integrated fashion by providing for, or encouraging access to, healthcare facilities, opportunities to walk or cycle, access to natural green space, as well as addressing deprivation and social inequality. The Council should also consider whether proliferation of use class types within the Borough (e.g. betting shops, hot food takeaways) could be viewed as contributing to health issues and whether policies can be developed to manage the number and distribution of certain use classes.

### **Housing**

- 4.69 The majority of the population of the Borough is located within the town of St Helens and its surrounding suburbs with other smaller concentrations of housing in Newton le Willows and Haydock. The tenure of housing is set out in the table below.

**Table 4.1 Housing Tenure**

Tenure	Number	%
Owner Occupied	51,379	67.8%
Private Rented	7,736	10.2%
Social Rented	15,597	20.6%
Other	1,024	1.4%

(Source: Census 2011, ONS)

- 4.70 18% of all dwellings in the Borough were constructed pre 1930. 29% of homes are terraced properties, 48% semi-detached, 9% detached, and 5% flat type accommodation. 2% of homes in the Borough do not have central heating. Over 7% of the properties are solid wall construction and there are high concentrations of private rented homes in pre-1919 terraced stock. These properties having a higher incidence of Category 1 hazards including excess cold (Source: UNO2010/Stock Condition Survey).
- 4.71 The quality of housing in the Borough has improved in recent years. Only 2.5% (Census 2011, ONS) of homes do not have central heating compared to over 13% in 2001. Fewer homes are judged as overcrowded (4.1% in 2011 compared to 4.8% in 2001). The level of fuel poverty experienced by households has decreased over the past 3 years to 9.7%, compared to 10.4% nationally (DECC, 2013). This is in part due to the activities of the Housing Service in ensuring residents access the heating and insulation grants available; referring clients for benefit entitlement checks; providing a price comparison service for gas and electricity to reduce fuel bills; and providing advice on the Warm Homes Discount scheme.
- 4.72 The mean price paid for a property (all types) in St Helens in January 2015 was £104,886, less than half the national average (£275,282). 68% of homes are privately owned (Census 2011, ONS), which is higher than the national figure (64%). Affordability of market housing for sale is an issue with lower quartile house prices over four times the lower quartile household income in the Borough.
- 4.73 2014/15 saw the construction of 632 net new dwellings, of which 142 were classed as affordable homes.
- 4.74 The Mid-Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2015 has identified an objectively assessed housing need for St. Helens as 451 homes per year up to 2037. In accordance with national policy and guidance, the objectively assessed needs figure will be tested against land supply, infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, the Council's economic growth aspirations, and be subject to sustainability appraisal in order to arrive at a housing target within the Local Plan.

- 4.75 In terms of Gypsies and Travellers accommodation, shortfalls of both pitches and plots have been identified. Six pitches are required to meet the 5 year shortfall in the Borough from 2013/14 to 2017/18<sup>9</sup>.

#### *Sustainability Issues*

- 4.76 The supply and type of housing across St Helens is a key issue in terms of promoting social, economic and environmental sustainability throughout the Borough. Provision for lifetime homes is essential in order to meet the needs of an ageing population. The Local Plan should seek to meet housing needs by reference to up to date evidence on the required mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures to decrease the number of people living in unfit housing. Identification of objectively assessed need for the Borough also needs to reflect the requirement for more affordable housing.

#### **Employment and economic activity**

- 4.77 The economic activity rate (75%) in the Borough exceeds the regional average (74.7%), however, it is lower than the national average (77.6%). The employment rate in the Borough (67.2%) is below both regional (69.8%) and national averages (72.9%).
- 4.78 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.
- 4.79 The majority of employment in the Borough (83.5%) is in the service sector, in line with regional and national averages. However, construction and manufacturing remain prominent sectors in St Helens, employing 9,000 people in the local economy.
- 4.80 Transport storage (logistics) is a major strength for St Helens, representing the highest proportion of employees in the whole of the North West (8.7% of the workforce -5,200 employees), almost double the national average.
- 4.81 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 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).
- 4.82 Since the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2012 employment land take-up has been slow and in fact there was a net loss of 0.64ha employment land in the Borough between 2012-15. Trends in employment land take-up remain significantly below long term averages. Employment sites have continued to face pressure from higher value uses such as residential and retail<sup>10</sup>.
- 4.83 The St. Helens Employment Land Needs Study (2015) has identified an overall employment land objectively assessed need of 214ha (gross) from 2012 up to 2037. The largest component of employment land growth is anticipated to be in the B8 Storage and Distribution sector. This is expected to be led by the large scale operators (greater than 200,000 sqft/19,000 sqm). In accordance with national policy and guidance, the objectively assessed needs figure will be tested against land supply, infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, the Council's economic growth aspirations, and be subject to sustainability appraisal in order to arrive at an employment land requirement within the Local Plan.

#### *Sustainability Issues*

- 4.84 Higher levels of unemployment in the Borough and inequalities in deprivation and the low take up of employment land show the importance of encouraging regeneration and growth in the local economy. The Local Plan should seek to ensure a sufficiency of supply and choice of accessible large scale sites to support the economy in the long term.

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<sup>9</sup> Merseyside and West Lancashire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment for Knowsley Council, Liverpool Council, Sefton Council, St Helens Council, West Lancashire Borough Council, and Wirral Council – January 2015

<sup>10</sup> St. Helens Allocations Local Plan Evidence Base Paper - September 2015

## Education, Skills and Training

- 4.85 Skill levels, which were traditionally low compared to the rest of England, are increasing, but further improvement is required in this area, particularly higher level skills linked to growth sectors.

**Table 4.2: Percentage of working age population by qualification level. Period: 2014**

Qualification Level	St Helens %	North West %	England %
No Qualifications	11.6	10.6	8.6
Level 1 Qualifications	82.5	83.4	85.1
Level 2 Qualifications	70.4	71.4	73.2
Level 3 Qualifications	47.8	52.7	56.5
Level 4+ Qualifications	26.7	30.9	35.7

(Source: NOMIS (ONS))

- 4.86 Although still an area of challenge there are increasing numbers of young people in education, employment or training in St Helens. The proportion of young people aged 16-18 years who were not in education; employment or training (NEET) at the end of 2014/15 was 6.9%, which is lower than the national average of 7.3%, reflecting the good progress made to engage with young people to help individuals' secure education and employment opportunities. The Raising the Participation Age agenda has increased the age young people in England must continue in education and training, requiring them to continue until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday from 2015. As at January 2015, 85.5% of young people aged 16-18 years were participating in education or training.
- 4.87 Educational performance has improved in recent years. Key Stage 2 results, which show the academic performance of 11 year olds in reading writing and maths for the 2014-15 academic year was well above the national average. GCSE results in academic year 2014/15 remained largely in line with previous years' results but remain below regional and national averages. However, A-level results saw strong improvement with 53.3% of entries, graded A\*-C, higher than the national average.

### Sustainability Issues

- 4.88 St Helens has relatively low levels of educational attainment and skills which could hinder economic growth in the Borough. The Local Plan should seek to support access to education. Loss of educational facilities should be resisted and large-scale housing developments should incorporate educational facilities or provide a contribution towards these.

### Transport and Accessibility

- 4.89 The Borough covers an area of 136 square kilometres, 65% of which is designated Green Belt. As reported by the St Helens Analysis & Research Exchange, households are defined as being 'significant' distances from key services if they are at least 6-8 km from the nearest service. In St Helens and in each Ward, no household is judged to be more than 6-8km from the nearest key service. Average travel time in St Helens to the nearest town centre, by walking and public transport is 14 minutes. This is quicker than the regional average of 15 minutes in the North West and the national average of 17 minutes for England. Travel times in St Helens by walking and public transport to the nearest employment centre, secondary school, hospital and supermarket are also at or below regional and national averages<sup>11</sup>.
- 4.90 However, people without access to private transport are still likely to experience barriers in accessing key services including hospitals, employment centres, supermarkets and other amenities (particularly in rural areas where distances to services are large and public transport provision is poor). National research has indicated that a lack of transport can contribute to social exclusion in urban areas and in rural areas can be the cause of social exclusion. Over a quarter of

<sup>11</sup> <http://share.sthelens.gov.uk/IAS/profiles/profile?profileId=146&geoTypeId=6&geoIds=00BZ>

all households do not own a car, which is higher than the England average. The table below shows the levels of Car Ownership in St. Helens in comparison to the North West and England.

**Table 4.3 Percentage households with no vehicles or one or more vehicles**

	St Helens %	North West %	England %
No cars or vans	26.7	28.0	25.8
1 car or van	42.6	42.5	42.2
2 cars or vans	24.9	23.5	24.7
3 cars or vans	4.6	4.6	5.6
4 or more cars or vans	1.3	1.4	1.9

(Source: Census 2011 (ONS))

- 4.91 Public transport on Merseyside is co-ordinated by Merseytravel. They work with the Local Authorities to plan and deliver public transport infrastructure improvements across Merseyside. Merseytravel also acts in partnership with private bus and rail operators to provide public transport services in Merseyside. However, approximately 80% of the bus services in Merseyside are run by private bus operators who are not controlled by Merseytravel or local councils. These private bus companies decide on the routes, timetables and fares of these services.

*Sustainability Issues*

- 4.92 A significant proportion of people in St Helens do not have access to a car. Where this combines with poorer public transport provision, such as in rural areas with a dispersed population, it leads to difficulty in accessing services and facilities. Inappropriately located development could exacerbate this. The Local Plan should seek to locate new development in areas which are accessible by non-car modes.

## 5 Stage A3 – Key Sustainability Issues and their Likely Evolution without the Plan

### Introduction

- 5.1 A list of the key sustainability issues has been developed drawing on the plans and policies review (see **Chapter 3** and **Appendix 1**) and the baseline information (see **Chapter 4**). The aim of this exercise is to draw out those issues that are particularly significant and relevant to the preparation of the Local Plan in St Helens.
- 5.2 It is also a requirement of the SEA Regulations that consideration is given to the likely evolution of the environment in the plan area (in this case St Helens) if the Local Plan were not implemented. This does not mean however, that there would be a policy vacuum, as the policies within the NPPF would still apply. However, in many cases, having a more detailed local strategy document is likely to have a benefit for sustainability issues, as it allows local response to issues. This analysis of likely evolution without the Local Plan is also presented in **Table 5.1**, in relation to each of the key sustainability issues.

**Table 5.1 Key sustainability issues in St Helens**

Key sustainability issues	Implications for the Local Plan	Likely evolution without the Local Plan
<p><b>1. Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna</b></p> <p>Human use (e.g. recreation and disturbance) and climate change can pose a risk to the Borough's biodiversity interest and sites of nature conservation interest</p>	<p>The Local Plan should seek to conserve and enhance existing nature conservation sites and identify opportunities to deliver biodiversity benefits on a strategic scale (e.g. through green infrastructure networks)</p>	<p>Policies in the NPPF will provide some protection. A local response is, however, required to plan strategically for new habitats and green infrastructure networks.</p>
<p><b>2. Cultural Heritage</b></p> <p>Pressure from new development not in keeping with the character of different areas may pose a risk to heritage assets.</p>	<p>The Local Plan should seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment.</p> <p>Look for opportunities bring derelict buildings back into positive use.</p>	<p>Policies in the NPPF will provide some protection. A local response is, however, required to identify local assets which merit protection and enhancement.</p>
<p><b>3. Landscape</b></p> <p>Landscape character across the Borough is varied. Development could contribute to an adverse change in landscape character.</p>	<p>The Local Plan should seek to conserve and enhance the landscape character of the Borough, protecting the most sensitive elements.</p>	<p>Policies in the NPPF will provide some protection. A local response is, however, required to identify specific, local landscape criteria which should be applied to new development.</p>
<p><b>4. Geodiversity</b></p> <p>The Borough contains a number of Locally Important Geological Sites which could be vulnerable</p>	<p>The Local Plan should seek to conserve and enhance the geodiversity of the Borough.</p>	<p>Policies in the NPPF will provide some protection. A local response is, however, required to plan strategically to enhance existing geological</p>

Key sustainability issues	Implications for the Local Plan	Likely evolution without the Local Plan
to development.		sites.
<p><b>5. Soil</b></p> <p>The Borough contains some of the highest grade agricultural land, which could be vulnerable to development pressure.</p>	<p>The Local Plan should seek to allocate sites for development which avoid the highest grade agricultural land.</p>	<p>Policies in the NPPF will provide some protection. However, a local response is required to positively allocate land in areas of poorer quality.</p>
<p><b>6. Contaminated Soils</b></p> <p>Much of the Borough contains areas of historically contaminated land which could pose a risk to human health and the environment.</p>	<p>The Local Plan should seek to support development which enables contaminated land to be appropriately remediated.</p>	<p>Other regulations and permits mean contaminated land is unlikely to be brought forward for development without appropriate remediation. However, the Local Plan can help allocate more previously developed sites as a first principle if viability and overall deliverability allows for this.</p>
<p><b>7. Air Quality</b></p> <p>There are four Air Quality Management Areas within the Borough which are exceeding annual mean objectives for Nitrogen Dioxide affecting local air pollution and human health.</p>	<p>The Local Plan should support development which is well-located to services and facilities and reduces reliance on the private car.</p> <p>The Local Plan should require development to contribute to public transport improvements.</p> <p>Development which is likely to contribute adversely to air quality should not be supported.</p>	<p>Policies in the NPPF will provide some protection and existing legislation will seek to manage existing air quality to within accepted thresholds.</p> <p>The Local Plan can allocate sites which are well-located in relation to access to services, reducing reliance on the private car, helping to reduce car based emissions.</p>
<p><b>9. Climate Change</b></p> <p>Per capita emissions in St Helens are slightly higher than the North West average. The majority of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions originate from business, domestic use and transport.</p>	<p>The Local Plan should address climate change through requiring high standards of design and construction, reducing reliance of fossil fuels (and hence supporting renewable energy and low carbon technologies), reducing the need to travel by car, avoiding development in the areas of highest flood risk and actively supporting climate change adaptation e.g. through encouraging sustainable buildings designs, greening buildings and enhancing existing and creating new areas of green space.</p>	<p>The impacts of climate change are expected to increase unless global action is taken to manage emissions.</p> <p>The Local Plan can support a Local response to climate change by requiring development to meet high standards of design and construction (including adaptation measures); supporting renewable energy developments and allocating development in locations which will not exacerbate the impacts of climate change.</p>

Key sustainability issues	Implications for the Local Plan	Likely evolution without the Local Plan
<p><b>10. Water Resources – Water Quality</b></p> <p>Water resources, supply infrastructure and sewerage capacity are not a constraint on growth</p> <p>The region contains some of the poorest quality rivers in England</p>	<p>The Local Plan should seek to ensure that the location of development takes into account the sensitivity of the water environment and processes are in place such that development will not result in deterioration in water quality. It should also ensure that development is designed so as to make efficient use of water resources.</p>	<p>National plans and strategies encourage new development to meet water efficiency standards and water companies must plan to reduce leaks from the water supply network as well as improve water efficiency.</p> <p>Without the Local Plan, however, it will be more difficult to adopt a co-ordinated approach to water resource planning with water companies and more difficult to implement water efficient design in new development.</p>
<p><b>11. Flood Risk</b></p> <p>The main sources of flood risk include surface water, groundwater, rivers and other watercourses. 336 residential properties have been identified to be within Flood Zone 3. Significant levels of fluvial flood risk are seen in the south and south eastern parts of the County.</p>	<p>The Local Plan should positively address flood risk through allocating sites sequentially (avoiding the highest flood risk locations as a first principle).</p> <p>Plan for new green infrastructure networks across the Borough which can fulfil a flood management function.</p>	<p>Flood risk is an increasing threat under projected climate trends, and the magnitude and extent of impacts from flood risk is likely to increase, which requires positive management</p> <p>A Local Response is required to allocate sites for development sequentially avoiding the highest risk areas as a first principle.</p>
<p><b>12. Open Space &amp; Recreation</b></p> <p>St Helens has a large number of open spaces fulfilling a range of functions. Existing open spaces should be protected and enhanced.</p> <p>Access to open space and recreation is varied across the Borough.</p> <p>There is no fundamental shortfall of open space in St Helens</p>	<p>The Local Plan should protect and enhance existing open spaces.</p> <p>Access to recreation and open spaces should be improved, particularly by non-car modes.</p>	<p>Policies in the NPPF will provide some protection.</p> <p>However, a local response is required to identify spaces for enhancement and protection and to allocate these through the Local Plan process.</p>
<p><b>13. Population and Social Issues</b></p> <p>Population growth and an ageing population will place additional and changing demands on key services and facilities. The quantity and type of housing should meet identified needs, including affordable housing and</p>	<p>The Local Plan should include policies which provide for a range of housing types, tenures and affordability to meet the needs of the Borough. This should include specialist accommodation, Lifetime homes and housing for gypsies, travellers and</p>	<p>Without a Local Plan and supporting evidence it will not be possible for the Borough to fully understand its development needs.</p> <p>Sufficient suitable and available sites should be identified to meet the identified needs.</p>

Key sustainability issues	Implications for the Local Plan	Likely evolution without the Local Plan
suitable housing for an ageing population.	travelling showpeople. The Local Plan should also positively plan for other requisite services and facilities including healthcare, education, retail and leisure.	
<p><b>14. Deprivation</b></p> <p>St Helens is ranked as the 36<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority in England. The relative position of the Borough has deteriorated since the 2010 Index of Deprivation.</p>	The Local Plan should seek to positively influence deprived areas through supporting regeneration in these areas; setting a positive framework for businesses to locate in such areas and generating employment opportunities across the Borough at appropriate skill level for residents within deprived area. This should include improving the condition of the existing housing stock where this remains a concern.	Without a Local Plan and supporting evidence it will not be possible for the Borough to fully understand its development needs and to plan positively to address these.
<p><b>15. Poor Health and Lower Life Expectancy</b></p> <p>The Borough suffers from a lower life expectancy than national averages.</p> <p>Significant health conditions include cardiovascular diseases (including heart disease and strokes) and obesity. There are significant inequalities in health conditions depending on where residents live.</p>	The Local Plan should seek to plan for more positive health outcomes across identified health conditions. For example, improving existing and creating new recreational spaces and green space; improving access to green/recreational spaces, particularly via walking and cycling; use development management policies to manage the number and distribution of certain use class types (e.g. hot food takeaways, betting shops) which could be contributing to negative health outcomes.	Without a Local Plan response, health conditions could continue to worsen, however, National programmes are likely to be implemented which seek to address specific health conditions e.g. obesity.
<p><b>16. High Unemployment Rate</b></p> <p>The unemployment rate in the Borough is higher than the regional and national averages. Take up of employment land is slow.</p>	The Local Plan should ensure that sufficient sites are available to meet the demand for employment land. Ensure employment provision matches skills and population projections; consider scope for diversification away from the service sector where	<p>Sub-regional Plans (e.g. associated with the Liverpool City Region) could help support economic and employment growth in the Borough.</p> <p>However, St. Helens Employment Land Needs Study concludes additional</p>

Key sustainability issues	Implications for the Local Plan	Likely evolution without the Local Plan
	appropriate.	land is considered necessary to meet employment needs <sup>12</sup> . This would require appropriate local evidence such as a Green Belt Study to support a potential for Green Belt release to provide for land for development.
<p><b>17. Educational Underachievement</b></p> <p>Relatively low proportion of young people not in education, employment or training.</p> <p>Low levels of educational attainment and skills.</p>	<p>The Local Plan should positively plan for the requisite educational needs.</p>	<p>Local level interventions have been having an impact on the number of young people in education, employment or training and this is expected to increase.</p> <p>The Raising the Participation Age Agenda will mean young people in England must continue in education and training until their 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday.</p>
<p><b>18. Transport and Accessibility</b></p> <p>Although travel times by walking and public transport to key services are lower than regional and national averages, a significant proportion of people in St Helens do not have access to a car. When coupled within poorer public transport provision (for example in rural areas) this can result in difficulties in accessing services and facilities.</p>	<p>The Local Plan should not allocate sites for development which are poorly located in terms of services and facilities. If development is to be located in less accessible locations, development should provide (or contribute to) new/improved services and access to public transport services.</p>	<p>Policies in the NPPF support a pattern of development that facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport.</p> <p>However, without action from the Local Plan to direct development to sustainable locations and increase provision of sustainable transport infrastructure, car dependency is likely to increase.</p>

<sup>12</sup> St. Helens Employment Land Needs Study - October 2015

## 6 Stage A4 – Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Framework

- 6.1 The development of an assessment framework of objectives provides a recognised way in which the likely sustainability effects of a plan can be predicted, described, analysed and compared in a consistent way. The SA/SEA objectives provide the basis for testing policy and site options associated with the St Helens Local Plan.
- 6.2 A set of objectives has been developed based on the review of policies/plans/programmes, the baseline review and the identification of sustainability issues and also draws on the previous SA framework (set out in the 2010 LDF Scoping Report and Scoping Consultation undertaken in 2013) and is set out in **Table 6.1** below.
- 6.3 The SA framework generally includes the same objectives and locally specific criteria as set out in the original SA Scoping Report. There are a few exceptions as listed below. In a number of instances the locally specific criteria have been rationalised (where these are no longer relevant) or new criteria have been added (where these are more appropriate to the objective in question).

### Changes to overarching objectives

- 6.4 The objective relating to biodiversity has been expanded to include geodiversity (To protect and enhance biodiversity *and geodiversity*). Geodiversity was previously only listed as a criterion. Refer to objective 1 in **Table 6.1** below.
- 6.5 The objective relating to climate change now seeks to *mitigate* and adapt to climate change (see objective 5 in **Table 6.1** below).
- 6.6 A new objective has been added relating to flood risk recognising that this issue merits inclusion as an overarching objective. The new objective is: *To minimise the risk of flooding from all potential sources and ensure there is no residual risk to people and properties*. Refer to objective 6 in **Table 6.1** below.
- 6.7 The original overarching objective relating to 'landscape' and the 'historic environment' has now been split into two distinct objectives to appropriately reflect the important of each issue. Refer to objectives 7 and 8 in **Table 6.1** below.
- 6.8 The objective relating to open and green space now also seeks to enhance open and green space. Refer to objective 9 in **Table 6.1** below.
- 6.9 The objective relating to supply of housing has now been simplified. Refer to objective 16 in **Table 6.1** below.
- 6.10 Changes are highlighted in red text in the table below.

**Table 6.1: SA/SEA Framework for the St Helen’s Local Plan**

SEA Objectives	Proposed Criteria	Link to Sustainability Issues in Chapter 5	SEA Topics
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>			
1. To protect and enhance biodiversity and <b>geodiversity</b>	<p>Will it protect and enhance natural/semi-natural habitats?</p> <p>Will it protect and enhance geodiversity?</p> <p>Will it maintain and enhance woodland cover and management?</p> <p>Will it improve biodiversity, especially within urban areas?</p> <p>Will it enhance the wider ecological network and seek to minimise the fragmentation of nature corridors and networks?</p> <p>Will it avoid the needless sterilisation of viable minerals resources?</p>	<p><b>Issue 1. Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna</b></p> <p><b>Issue 4. Geodiversity</b></p>	<p>Biodiversity</p> <p>Flora</p> <p>Fauna</p>
2. To protect and improve land quality in St. Helens	<p>Will it seek to reclaim derelict land?</p> <p><b>Will it result in the positive remediation of contaminated land?</b></p> <p>Will it protect and enhance soil quality in St Helens including the highest quality agricultural land?</p> <p>Will it increase the amount of development on Previously Developed Land?</p>	<p><b>Issue 4. Geodiversity</b></p> <p><b>Issue 5. Soil</b></p> <p><b>Issue 6. Contaminated Soils</b></p>	<p>Soil</p>
3. To improve air quality in St. Helens	<p>Will it improve air quality?</p> <p>Will it reduce the number of journeys made by private car in order to reduce the high levels of nitrogen dioxide in areas of traffic congestion in the Borough?</p>	<p><b>Issue 7. Air Quality</b></p>	<p>Air</p>

SEA Objectives	Proposed Criteria	Link to Sustainability Issues in Chapter 5	SEA Topics
4. To maintain and enhance the quality of controlled waters in St. Helens and to sustainably manage water resources	<p>Will it improve the quality of controlled waters?</p> <p>Will it ensure efficient use and management of water resources throughout the Borough?</p> <p>Will it promote sustainable design and construction measures that reduce water consumption and result in decreased run-off of polluted water (including during the construction phase).</p>	<b>Issue 10. Water Resources/Water Quality</b>	Water Material assets
5. To <b>mitigate</b> and adapt to the impacts of climate change	<p>Will it support building designs and a green infrastructure network that is adapted to climate change?</p> <p><b>Will it support take-up of renewable energy or low carbon technologies?</b></p>	<b>Issue 9. Climate Change</b>	Climatic factors
6. To minimise the risk of flooding from all potential sources and ensure there is no residual risk to people and properties	<p><b>Will it support development located outwith high flood risk areas?</b></p> <p><b>Will it incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems as part of the design?</b></p> <p><b>Will it incorporate new green spaces and habitat creation helping to mitigate flood risk?</b></p>	<b>Issue 11. Flood Risk</b>	Water Resources; Climatic factors.
7. To protect, enhance and make accessible for enjoyment, landscapes, townscapes and the countryside	<p><b>Will it contribute to landscape character?</b></p> <p><b>Will it protect and enhance the landscapes of the highest sensitivity in the Borough?</b></p>	<b>Issue 3. Landscape</b>	Landscape
8. To protect, enhance and make accessible for enjoyment the cultural heritage and historic environment	<p>Will it protect and enhance sites, features and areas of historic, archaeological and cultural value in both urban and rural areas?</p> <p>Will it help to protect and enhance historic buildings through sensitive adaptation and reuse?</p>	<b>Issue 2. Cultural Heritage</b>	Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

SEA Objectives	Proposed Criteria	Link to Sustainability Issues in Chapter 5	SEA Topics
9. Ensure access to and protection and enhancement of high quality public open space and natural greenspace	<p>Will it ensure that all people have access to public open space within a reasonable walking distance from where they live?</p> <p>Will it promote access to green infrastructure such as natural greenspace?</p> <p>Will it create new areas of open space and natural greenspace?</p>	<b>Issue 12. Open Space and Recreation</b>	Material assets
<b>Natural Resources</b>			
10. To minimise energy use and increase the proportion of energy both purchased and generated from renewable and sustainable sources	<p>Will it minimise greenhouse gas emissions?</p> <p>Will it lead to an increased proportion of energy needs being met from renewable sources?</p> <p>Will it increase energy efficiency and make use of new and clean technologies?</p> <p>Promote sustainable design and construction standards for housing and non-housing development?</p>	<b>Issue 9. Climate Change</b>	<p>Climatic Factors</p> <p>Population</p> <p>Material Assets</p>
11. To reduce the amount of waste, and to increase in order of priority, the proportion of waste reused, recycled and composted and recovered	<p>Will it reduce waste generation?</p> <p>Will it increase waste reuse, recovery and recycling?</p>	No specific issue identified.	<p>Population</p> <p>Material assets</p>
<b>Social and Economic</b>			
12. To improve health and reduce health inequalities	<p>Will it improve access to high quality health facilities?</p> <p>Will it encourage healthier lifestyles e.g. provide more opportunities for physical activity reduce car dependency and encourage walking and cycling and provide better access to healthy food?</p>	<p><b>Issue 13: Population and Social Issues</b></p> <p><b>Issue 15. Poor Health and Lower Life Expectancy</b></p>	<p>Population</p> <p>Human health</p>

SEA Objectives	Proposed Criteria	Link to Sustainability Issues in Chapter 5	SEA Topics
	Will it reduce health inequalities in health between different groups by improving the health of the least healthy in society?		
13. To improve the education and skills levels of the population overall	<p>Will it increase opportunities for access to education, training and employment opportunities for all, but in particular those in greatest need, such as those with low educational attainment, the unemployed and lower skilled and those in deprived communities?</p> <p>Will it provide access to work experience, apprenticeships and training, especially for young people?</p>	<b>Issue 17. Educational Underachievement</b>	Population
14. To ensure local residents have access to employment opportunities	<p>Will it reduce unemployment levels, particularly in areas of high employment deprivation?</p> <p>Will it help improve earnings?</p>	<b>Issue 14. Deprivation</b> <b>Issue 16. High Unemployment Rate</b>	Population
15. To support a strong, diverse, vibrant and sustainable local economy to foster balanced economic growth	<p>Will it improve business development and enhance competitiveness?</p> <p>Will it encourage inward investment?</p> <p>Will it encourage graduates to return and help to retain skilled employees in the area?</p> <p>Will it encourage tourism development?</p> <p>Will it provide or contribute to a balanced portfolio of employment sites?</p> <p>Will it maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of St Helens and Earlestown town centres?</p>	<b>Issue 14. Deprivation</b> <b>Issue 16. High Unemployment Rate</b>	Population
16. To improve access to a range of good quality and affordable housing that meets the diverse	Will it contribute towards addressing the objectively assessed housing needs?	<b>Issue 13. Population and Social Issues</b>	Population

SEA Objectives	Proposed Criteria	Link to Sustainability Issues in Chapter 5	SEA Topics
needs of the Borough	<p>Will it improve housing quality?</p> <p>Will it increase the availability of affordable housing?</p> <p>Will it ensure that specialist housing needs, including those of an ageing population are met?</p> <p>Will it meet the identified needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople?</p> <p>Will it reduce the number of vacant properties?</p>		
17. To reduce poverty and social exclusion	<p>Will it reduce poverty in those areas most affected?</p> <p>Will it reduce social exclusion including access to employment opportunities and health and educational facilities in those areas most affected by deprivation?</p>	<b>Issue 14. Deprivation</b>	Population
18. To reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime	<p>Will it reduce the potential for crime?</p> <p>Will it promote design that discourages crime?</p>	No specific issue identified	Population
<b>Transport and Access to Services</b>			
19. To reduce the need to travel, encourage alternatives to the car, and other motor vehicles improve highway safety and make best use of existing transport infrastructure	<p>Will it reduce traffic volumes/miles travelled by motor vehicles?</p> <p>Will it increase the proportion of journeys using modes other than the car?</p> <p>Will it reduce the effect of transport such as heavy goods traffic on people and the environment?</p> <p>Will it improve highway safety and so reduce road accidents?</p> <p>Will it avoid the capacity of the transport network being exceeded?</p>	<b>Issue 18. Transport and Accessibility</b>	Air; Climatic Factors
20. To improve access to and use	Will it improve accessibility to key local services	<b>Issue 18. Transport</b>	Population

SEA Objectives	Proposed Criteria	Link to Sustainability Issues in Chapter 5	SEA Topics
of basic goods, services and amenities in town and local centres	<p>(primary and secondary schools; GP surgeries; hospitals, town, district and local centres) and employment opportunities?</p> <p>Will it make access easier for those without access to a car?</p> <p>Will it protect the shopping and community services function of local service centres?</p>	<b>and Accessibility</b>	

## 7 Proposed Approach to SA/SEA

- 7.1 The later stages of the SA/SEA will involve assessing the likely effects of the policy and site options included in the Local Plan on each of the SA/SEA objectives (and therefore the SA/SEA topics) using a matrix. Each option will be assessed individually with consideration being given to the likely significant positive and negative effects, including cumulative, synergistic, short and long-term effects. A colour-coded score will be given in relation to each objective, in line with the key shown in **Figure 7.1** below.

**Figure 7.1: Key to symbols and colour coding to be used in the SA/SEA of the Local Plan**

<b>++</b>	The policy is likely to have a <b>significant positive</b> impact on the SA objective(s).
<b>+</b>	The policy is likely to have a <b>minor positive</b> impact on the SA objective(s).
<b>0</b>	The policy is likely to have a <b>negligible or no impact</b> on the SA objective(s).
<b>+/-</b>	The policy is likely to have a <b>mixture of positive and negative</b> impacts on the SA objective(s).
<b>-</b>	The policy is likely to have a <b>minor negative</b> impact on the SA objective(s).
<b>--</b>	The policy is likely to have a <b>significant negative</b> impact on the SA objective(s).
<b>?</b>	It is <b>uncertain</b> what effect the policy will have on the SA objective(s).

- 7.2 It is likely that a more detailed set of criteria and assumptions underpinning each of the overarching SA/SEA objectives will be developed in order to appraise the proposed site allocations. Further details of these will be provided at a later stage in the SA/SEA process.

### Draft Environmental Report

- 7.3 Undertaking the SA/SEA of the Local Plan with the framework outlined in this Chapter will inform and lead to the preparation of the full draft Environmental Report (drawing on and including relevant elements from this Scoping Report), which will address all of the requirements of the SEA Directive and Regulations.
- 7.4 The draft Environmental Report will include:
- An outline of the contents of the Local Plan and its relationship with other relevant plans, policies and programmes.
  - The environmental, social and economic characteristics of St Helens, including any problems and issues identified and their likely evolution without the plan.
  - Key environmental, social and economic policy objectives set at the international, national and local level, of relevance to the Local Plan.
  - The SA/SEA Framework and the assumptions used to make judgements about the effects of the Local Plan options.
  - Any difficulties encountered during the appraisal process, including lack of information and data.
  - How consultation comments have been taken into account, including those obtained on the SA/SEA Scoping Report.

- The reasonable alternatives considered, and their environmental impacts, and an outline of the Council's reasons for selecting and rejecting particular options to include in the draft Local Plan.
- The appraisal findings for the key elements of the Local Plan including any significant effects identified for each of the objectives in the SA/SEA framework, taking into account mitigation (which may take the form of policy safeguards elsewhere in the Plan, in national policy or other regulatory mechanisms).
- Proposed monitoring framework for significant effects identified (including uncertain effects where these could become significant).
- A Non-Technical Summary (NTS) which summarises all of the above (as required in the SEA Regulations).

## Consultation

- 7.5 To meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations, the views of the three statutory consultees (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency) will be sought in relation to the scope and level of detail to be included in the SA/SEA. This requirement is being met by publishing this SA/SEA Scoping Report for public consultation for a six week period.

# Appendix 1 Review of Plans, Policies and Programmes

Policy/Plan/Programme/Strategy/ Initiative	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the SA of St Helens Local Plan
<b>INTERNATIONAL</b>		
<b>European</b>		
SEA Directive 2001 Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment	Provide for a high level of protection of the environment and contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.  The Directive must be applied to plans or programmes whose formal preparation begins after 21 July 2004 and to those already in preparation by that date.	Requirements of the Directive must be met in Sustainability Appraisals.
The Industrial Emissions Directive 2010 Directive 2010/75/EU on industrial emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control)	This Directive lays down rules on integrated prevention and control of pollution arising from industrial activities. It also lays down rules designed to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to reduce emissions into air, water and land and to prevent the generation of waste, in order to achieve a high level of protection of the environment taken as a whole.  The Directive sets emission limit values for substances that are harmful to air or water.	The Local Plan should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.  Include SA objective for reducing pollution.
Energy Performance of Buildings Directive 2010 on the energy performance of buildings 2010/31/EU	The Directive aims to promote the energy performance of buildings and building units.  It requests that member states adopt either national or regional methodology for calculating energy performance and minimum requirements for energy performance.	The Local Plan should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.  Include SA objective relating to the energy performance/efficiency of existing and proposed buildings.
The Birds Directive 2009 Directive 2009/147/EC is a codified version of Directive 79/409/EEC as amended	The preservation, maintenance, and re-establishment of biotopes and habitats shall include the following measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of protected areas.</li> <li>• Upkeep and management in accordance with the ecological needs of habitats inside and outside the protected zones.</li> <li>• Re-establishment of destroyed biotopes.</li> <li>• Creation of biotopes.</li> </ul>	The Local Plan should make sure that the up keep of recognised habitats is maintained and not damaged from development.  Avoid pollution or deterioration of habitats or any other disturbances effecting birds.  Include SA objectives for the protection of wildlife and habitats.

Policy/Plan/Programme/Strategy/ Initiative	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the SA of St Helens Local Plan
The Waste Framework Directive 2008 Directive 2008/98/EC on waste	Prevention or reduction of waste production and its harmfulness. The recovery of waste by means of recycling, re-use or reclamation. Recovery or disposal of waste without endangering human health and without using processes that could harm the environment.  Development of clean technology to process waste and promote recycling.	The Local Plan should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.  Include SA objectives that minimise waste production as well as promote recycling.
The Floods Directive 2007 Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risk	Establish a framework for the assessment and management of flood risk, aiming at the reduction of the adverse consequences for human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity associated with floods.  Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments to be completed by December 2011. Flood Hazard Maps and Flood Risk Maps to be completed by December 2013. Flood Risk Management Plans to be completed by December 2015.	The Local Plan should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.  Include SA objectives that relate to flood management and reduction of risk.
The Water Framework Directive 2000 Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for community action in the field of water policy	Protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwaters.	The Local Plan should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.  Include SA objectives to protect and minimise the impact on water quality.
The Environmental Noise Directive 2002 Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise	Defines a common approach to avoid, prevent and reduce the adverse effects due to the exposure to environmental noise.  It also provides a basis for developing European wide measures to deal with noise emitted by road and rail vehicles, infrastructure, aircraft and outdoor, industrial and mobile machinery.  Principles of the directive include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring the environmental problems.</li> <li>• Informing and consulting the public.</li> <li>• Addressing local noise issues</li> <li>• Developing a long-term EU strategy.</li> </ul>	The Local Plan should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.
The Landfill Directive 1999 Directive 99/31/EC on the landfill of waste	Prevent or reduce negative effects on the environment from the landfilling of waste by introducing stringent technical requirements for waste and landfills.  Reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill to 75% of the 1995 level by 2010. Reduce this to 50% in 2013 and 35% by 2020.	The Local Plan should take account of the Directive as well as The Local Plan more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.  Include SA objectives to increase recycling and reduce the amount of waste.

Policy/Plan/Programme/Strategy/ Initiative	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the SA of St Helens Local Plan
The Drinking Water Directive 1998 Directive 98/83/EC on the quality of water intended for human consumption	Protect human health from the adverse effects of any contamination of water intended for human consumption by ensuring that it is wholesome and clean.  Member States must set values for water intended for human consumption.	The Local Plan should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.  Include SA objectives to protect and enhance water quality.
The Air Quality Framework Directive 1996 Directive 96/62/EC on ambient air quality assessment and management	Avoid, prevent and reduce harmful effects of ambient air pollution on human health and the environment.	The Local Plan should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.  Include SA objectives to maintain and enhance air quality.
Air Quality Directive 2008 Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe	This directive sets legally binding limits for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead</li> <li>• Nitrogen dioxide</li> <li>• Sulphur dioxide</li> <li>• Benzene</li> <li>• Carbon Monoxide</li> <li>• Arsenic</li> <li>• Cadmium</li> <li>• Nickel</li> <li>• Benzo(a)pyrene</li> <li>• Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons</li> <li>• ozone</li> <li>• Particulate matter</li> </ul>	The Local Plan should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.  Include SA objectives to maintain and enhance air quality.
The Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive 1994 Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste	Harmonise the packaging waste system of Member States. Reduce the environmental impact of packaging waste.  By June 2001 at least 50% by weight of packaging waste should have been recovered, at least 25% by weight of the totality of packaging materials contained in packaging waste to be recycled with a minimum of 15% by	The Local Plan should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.  Include SA objectives to minimise the

Policy/Plan/Programme/Strategy/ Initiative	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the SA of St Helens Local Plan
	weight for each packaging material.	environmental impact of waste and promote recycling.
The Habitats Directive 1992 Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora	Promote the maintenance of biodiversity taking account of economic, social, cultural and regional requirements. Conservation of natural habitats and maintain landscape features of importance to wildlife and fauna.	The Local Plan should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.  Include SA objectives to protect and maintain the natural environment and important habitats.
The Nitrates Directive 1991 Directive 91/676/EEC on nitrates from agricultural sources.	Reduce water pollution caused or induced by nitrates from agricultural sources and prevent further such pollution.  Identification of vulnerable areas.	The Local Plan should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.  Include SA objectives to reduce water pollution.
The Urban Waste Water Directive 1991 Directive 91/271/EEC concerning urban waste water treatment	Protect the environment from the adverse effects of urban waste water collection, treatment and discharge, and discharge from certain industrial sectors.	Develop policies that take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.  Include sustainability objectives to reduce water pollution.
European Spatial Development Perspective (1999)	Economic and social cohesion across the community. Conservation of natural resources and cultural heritage. Balanced competitiveness between different tiers of government.	The Local Plan should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.  Include SA objectives to conserve natural resources and cultural heritage.
European Landscape Convention (Florence, 2002)	The convention promotes landscape protection, management and planning.	The Local Plan should take account of the Convention.  Include SA objectives to protect the urban and rural landscape and identify opportunities for enhancement.
EU Seventh Environmental Action Plan (2002-2012)	The EU's objectives in implementing the programme are: (a) to protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital; (b) to turn the Union into a resource-efficient, green and competitive low-carbon economy;	Include sustainability objectives to protect and enhance the natural environment and promote energy efficiency.

Policy/Plan/Programme/Strategy/ Initiative	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the SA of St Helens Local Plan
	(c) to safeguard the Union's citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing; (d) to maximise the benefits of the Union's environment legislation; (e) to improve the evidence base for environment policy; (f) to secure investment for environment and climate policy and get the prices right; (g) to improve environmental integration and policy coherence; (h) to enhance the sustainability of the Union's cities; (i) to increase the Union's effectiveness in confronting regional and global environmental challenges.	
European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta, 1992) Revision of the 1985 Granada Convention	Protection of the archaeological heritage, including any physical evidence of the human past that can be investigated archaeologically both on land and underwater. Creation of archaeological reserves and conservation of excavated sites.	The Local Plan should take account of the Convention. Include SA objectives to protect the archaeological heritage.
<b>Other International</b>		
Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to building a humane, equitable and caring global society aware of the need for human dignity for all.</li> <li>• Renewable energy and energy efficiency.</li> <li>• Accelerate shift towards sustainable consumption and production.</li> <li>• Greater resource efficiency.</li> <li>• New technology for renewable energy.</li> <li>• Increase energy efficiency.</li> </ul>	The Local Plan should take account of the Declaration. Include SA objectives to enhance the natural environment, promote renewable energy and energy efficiency and sustainable use of natural resources.
Aarhus Convention (1998)	Established a number of rights of the public with regard to the environment. Local authorities should provide for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The right of everyone to receive environmental information</li> <li>• The right to participate from an early stage in environmental decision making</li> <li>• The right to challenge in a court of law public decisions that have been made without respecting the two rights above or</li> </ul>	The Local Plan should take account of the Convention. Ensure that public are involved and consulted at all relevant stages of SA production.

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	environmental law in general.	
<b>NATIONAL</b>		
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (DCLG, 2012)	Presumption in favour of sustainable development. Delivering sustainable development by:	The Local Plan must be in conformity with the NPPF. SA should be an integral part of the plan preparation process, and should consider all the likely significant effects on the environment, economic and social factors.
	Building a strong, competitive economy.	Set out clear economic visions for that particular area. Include a sustainability objective relating to strengthening the rural economy.
	Ensuring vitality of town centres.	Recognise town centres as the heart of their communities. Include a sustainability objective relating to the vitality of town centres.
	Promoting sustainable transport	To implement sustainable transport modes depending on nature/location of the site, to reduce the need for major road transport infrastructure. Include a sustainability objective relating to sustainable transport.
	Supporting high quality communications infrastructure.	Enhance the provision of local community facilities and services by supporting the expansion of electronic communications networks. Consider the sustainability implications of any new communications infrastructure.
	Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes.	Identify size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations. Include a sustainability objective relating to housing availability and quality.
	Requiring good design.	Establish a strong sense of place to live, work and visit.

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		Consider a sustainability objective relating to good design.
	Promoting healthy communities.	Promote safe and accessible environments with a high quality of life and community cohesion.  Include a sustainability objective relating to health and well-being.
	Protecting Green Belt Land.	To prevent the coalescence of neighbouring towns.  Consider the sustainability implications of any policies which may result in coalescence.
	Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding, and coastal change.	Use opportunities offered by new development to reduce causes/impacts of flooding.  Include a sustainability objective relating to climate change mitigation and adaption, to include minimising the risk of flooding.
	Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.	Recognise the wider benefits of biodiversity.  Include a sustainability objective relating to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment.
	Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	Sustain and enhance heritage assets and put them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.  The Local Plan may be considered unsound if there has been no proper assessment of the significance of heritage assets in the area, and does not contain a positive strategy for the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the historic environment.  Include a sustainability objective relating to the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets.
	Facilitating the use of sustainable materials.	Include policies which identify and safeguard mineral resources and associated infrastructure and promote the use of

Policy/Plan/Programme/Strategy/ Initiative	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the SA of St Helens Local Plan
		<p>recycled/secondary materials prior to the extraction of primary materials.</p> <p>Consider a sustainability objective relating to sustainable use of materials.</p>
<p>Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (DCLG, 2012)</p>	<p>This document sets out the Government’s planning policy for traveller sites, replacing ODPM Circular 01/2006: Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites and Circular 04/2007: Planning for Travelling Showpeople. It sets out the Government’s aims in respect of Traveller’s sites, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that local planning authorities, working collaboratively, develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites.</li> <li>• To encourage local planning authorities to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale.</li> <li>• That plan-making and decision-taking should protect Green Belt from inappropriate development.</li> <li>• For local planning authorities to ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies.</li> <li>• To increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply.</li> <li>• To reduce tensions between settled and traveller communities in plan making and planning decisions.</li> <li>• To enable provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure.</li> <li>• For local planning authorities to have due regard to the protection of local amenity and local environment.</li> </ul>	<p>The Core Strategy and Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Policies will need to be in conformity with this document which sets out national policy for planning for Traveller sites.</p> <p>Include a sustainability objective relative to supply of housing available to all.</p>
<p>National Planning Policy for Waste</p>	<p>Sets out the Government’s ambition to work towards a more sustainable and efficient approach to resource use and management. Replaces Planning Policy Statement 10.</p>	<p>Include a sustainability objective relating to waste generation and management.</p>

Policy/Plan/Programme/Strategy/ Initiative	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the SA of St Helens Local Plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of sustainable development and resource efficiency, including provision of modern infrastructure, local employment opportunities and wider climate change benefits, by driving waste management up the waste hierarchy.</li> <li>• Ensuring that waste management is considered alongside other spatial planning concerns, such as housing and transport, recognising the positive contribution that waste management can make to the development of sustainable communities.</li> <li>• Providing a framework in which communities and businesses are engaged</li> <li>• with and take more responsibility for their own waste, including by enabling waste to be disposed of or, in the case of mixed municipal waste from households, recovered, in line with the proximity principle.</li> <li>• Helping to secure the re-use, recovery or disposal of waste without endangering human health and without harming the environment.</li> </ul> <p>Ensuring the design and layout of new residential and commercial development and other infrastructure (such as safe and reliable transport links) complements sustainable waste management, including the provision of appropriate storage and segregation facilities to facilitate high quality collections of waste.</p>	
<b>White Papers</b>		
<p>Natural Environment White Paper, 2011 The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (HM Government, 2011)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protecting and improving our natural environment.</li> <li>• Growing a green economy.</li> <li>• Reconnecting people and nature.</li> </ul>	<p>The Local Plan should protect the intrinsic value of nature and recognise the multiple benefits it could have for communities.</p> <p>Include a sustainability objective relating to the enhancement of the natural environment and consider the multiple benefits that the natural environment can provide (e.g. health benefits).</p>
<p>Electricity Market Reform White Paper 2011, Planning our Electric Future: A White Paper for Secure, Affordable and</p>	<p>This White Paper sets out the Government's commitment to transform the UK's electricity system to ensure that our future electricity supply is secure, low-carbon and affordable.</p>	<p>The Local Plan should support renewable energy generation and encourage greater energy efficiency.</p>

Policy/Plan/Programme/Strategy/ Initiative	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the SA of St Helens Local Plan
Low-Carbon Electricity (DECC, 2011)	15 per cent renewable energy target by 2020 and 80 per cent carbon reduction target by 2050.	Include sustainability objectives to reduce carbon emissions and increase proportion of energy generated from renewable sources.
Water White Paper, 2011 <i>Water for Life</i>	<p>Objectives of the White Paper are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paint a clear vision of the future and create the conditions which enable the water sector and water users to prepare for it;</li> <li>Deliver benefits across society through an ambitious agenda for improving water quality, working with local communities to make early improvements in the health of our rivers by reducing pollution and tackling unsustainable abstraction;</li> <li>Keep short and longer term affordability for customers at the centre of decision making in the water sector;</li> <li>Protect the interests of taxpayers in the policy decisions that we take;</li> <li>Ensure a stable framework for the water sector which remains attractive to investors;</li> <li>Stimulate cultural change in the water sector by removing barriers to competition, fostering innovation and efficiency, and encouraging new entrants to the market to help improve the range and quality of services offered to customers and cut business costs;</li> <li>Work with water companies, regulators and other stakeholders to build understanding of the impact personal choices have on the water environment, water resources and costs; and</li> <li>Set out roles and responsibilities – including where Government will take a stronger role in strategic direction setting and assessing resilience to future challenges, as well as clear expectations on the regulators.</li> </ul>	Include sustainability objectives that relate to water quality and quantity.
The Future of Transport White Paper 2004: A network for 2030 (DfT, 2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure we can benefit from mobility and access while minimising the impact on other people and the environment,</li> </ul>	The Local Plan should provide for an increase in demand for travel whilst minimising impact on the environment.

Policy/Plan/Programme/Strategy/ Initiative	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the SA of St Helens Local Plan
	<p>now and in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get the best out of our transport system without damaging our overall quality of life.</li> <li>• Develop strategies that recognise that demand for travel will increase in the future.</li> <li>• Work towards a transport network that can meet the challenges of a growing economy and the increasing demand for travel but can also achieve the government's environmental objectives.</li> <li>• Provides targets for emission reductions, now superseded by later agreements. Transport is currently responsible for about a quarter of total emissions.</li> </ul>	<p>Policies also needed to promote public transport use rather than increasing reliance on the car.</p> <p>Include sustainability objectives to reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of sustainable transport modes.</p>
<p>Rural White Paper 2000, Our Countryside: The Future – a fair deal for rural England (ODPM, 2000)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate the development of dynamic, competitive and sustainable economies in the countryside.</li> <li>• Maintain and stimulate communities and secure access to services for those who live and work in the countryside.</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance rural landscapes.</li> <li>• Increase opportunities for people to get enjoyment from the countryside.</li> </ul>	<p>The Local Plan should help increase employment and services for the rural economy whilst conserving the landscape.</p> <p>Include sustainability objectives that aim to improve the rural economy with minimal impact to the environment.</p>
<p><b>Policies and Strategies</b></p>		
<p>Door to Door: A Strategy for Improving Sustainable Transport Integration (DfT, 2013)</p>	<p>The strategy focuses on four core areas which need to be addressed so that people can be confident in choosing greener modes of transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate, accessible and reliable information about different transport options</li> <li>• Convenient and affordable tickets</li> <li>• Regular and straightforward connections at all stages of the journey and between different modes of transport</li> <li>• Safe and comfortable transport facilities</li> </ul>	<p>The Local Plan should take into account their role in addressing the four core areas outlined in the Strategy.</p> <p>Include SA objectives relating to high quality, efficient sustainable transport systems.</p>

Policy/Plan/Programme/Strategy/ Initiative	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the SA of St Helens Local Plan
	<p>The strategy also includes details on how the Government is using behaviour change methods to reduce or remove barriers to the use of sustainable transport, and working closely with stakeholders to deliver a better-connected transport system.</p>	
<p>Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services (DEFRA, 2011)</p>	<p>The aim of the Strategy is to guide conservation efforts in England up to 2020. Moving further on from 2020, the ambition is to move from a net biodiversity loss to gain.</p> <p>The strategy includes 22 priorities which include actions for the following sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Forestry</li> <li>• Planning and Development</li> <li>• Water Management</li> <li>• Marine Management</li> <li>• Fisheries</li> <li>• Air Pollution</li> <li>• Invasive Non-Native Species</li> </ul>	<p>The Local Plan should take this into account seeking to prevent the degradation of biodiversity and ecosystem services within the Borough. The Local Plan should also recognise its contribution to securing a net gain in biodiversity.</p> <p>Include SA objective relating to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.</p>
<p>Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England (DEFRA, 2009)</p>	<p>The vision is "by 2030, all England's soils will be managed sustainably and degradation threats tackled successfully. This will improve the quality of England's soils and safeguard their ability to provide essential services for future generations".</p> <p>The Strategy highlights the areas for priority including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better protection for agricultural soils.</li> <li>• Protecting and enhancing stores of soil carbon.</li> <li>• Building the resilience of soils to a changing climate.</li> <li>• Preventing soil pollution.</li> <li>• Effective soil protection during construction and development.</li> <li>• Dealing with our legacy of contaminated land.</li> </ul>	<p>The Local Plan should help protect and enhance the quality of soils and seek to sustainably manage their quality for future generations.</p> <p>Include SA objective which seeks to safeguard and enhance the quality of soil.</p>

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<p>Securing the Future: Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy (DEFRA, 2005)</p>	<p>Enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life for future generations. There are 4 shared priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sustainable consumption and production;</li> <li>• climate change and energy;</li> <li>• natural resource protection and environmental enhancement; and</li> <li>• sustainable communities.</li> </ul> <p>Sets out indicators to give an overview of sustainable development and priority areas in the UK. They include 20 of the UK Framework indicators and a further 48 indicators related to the priority areas.</p>	<p>The Local Plan should meet the aims of the Sustainable Development Strategy.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to cover the shared priorities.</p>
<p>The UK Renewable Energy Strategy (DECC, 2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase our use of renewable electricity, heat and transport, and help tackle climate change.</li> <li>• Build the UK low-carbon economy, promote energy security and take action against climate change.</li> <li>• 15% of energy from renewable sources by 2020.</li> <li>• Reducing UK CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 750 million tonnes by 2030.</li> </ul>	<p>The Local Plan should encourage developments that would support renewable energy provision including electricity, heat and transport.</p> <p>Include SA objectives relating to increasing energy provided from renewable sources.</p>
<p>The Energy Efficiency Opportunity in the UK (DECC, 2012)</p>	<p>This is an Energy Efficiency Strategy aiming to realise the wider energy efficiency potential that is available in the UK economy.</p> <p>The Strategy identifies four barriers to energy efficiency which need to be overcome which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embryonic markets.</li> <li>• Information.</li> <li>• Misaligned financial incentives.</li> <li>• Undervaluing energy efficiency.</li> </ul> <p>The Strategy draws attention to maximising the potential of existing dwellings by implementing 21<sup>st</sup> century energy management initiatives on 19<sup>th</sup> century homes.</p>	<p>The Local Plan should seek to address the barriers identified within the Strategy and improve the existing building stock through appropriate adaptation measures.</p> <p>Include SA objectives relating to energy efficiency and adaptation of the existing building stock.</p>

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<p>The National Adaptation Programme – Making the Country Resilient to a Changing Climate (Defra, 2013)</p>	<p>The report sets out visions for the following sectors:</p> <p>Built Environment – “buildings and places and the people who live and work in them are resilient to a changing climate and extreme weather and organisations in the built environment sector have an increased capacity to address the risks and take the opportunities from climate change”.</p> <p>Infrastructure – “an infrastructure network that is resilient to today’s natural hazards and prepared for the future changing climate”.</p> <p>Healthy and resilient communities – “a health service, a public health and social care system which are resilient and adapted to a changing climate. Communities and individuals, including the most vulnerable, are better prepared to cope with severe weather events and other impacts of climate change. Emergency services and local resilience capability take account of and are resilient to, a changing climate”.</p> <p>Agriculture and Forestry – “profitable and productive agriculture and forestry sectors that take the opportunities from climate change, are resilient to its threats and contribute to the resilience of the natural environment by helping maintain ecosystem services and protect and enhance biodiversity”.</p> <p>Natural Environment – “the natural environment, with diverse and healthy ecosystems, is resilient to climate change, able to accommodate change and valued for the adaptation services it provides”.</p> <p>Business – “UK businesses are resilient to extreme weather and prepared for future risks and opportunities from climate change”.</p> <p>Local Government – “Local government plays a central in leading and supporting local places to become more resilient to a range of future risk and to be prepared for the opportunities</p>	<p>The Local Plan should take account of the visions set out in the Programme.</p> <p>Include SA objectives which seek to promote the implementation of adaptation measures to make St Helen’s more resilient to a changing climate.</p>

Policy/Plan/Programme/Strategy/ Initiative	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the SA of St Helens Local Plan
	from a changing climate”.	
Healthy Lives, Healthy People: our Strategy for public health in England (Department of Health, 2010)	Protect the population from serious health threats; helping people live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives; and improving the health of the poorest, fastest. Prioritise public health funding from within the overall NHS budget.	Policies within the Local Plan should reflect the objectives of the strategy where relevant.  Include SA objectives relating to health and well-being.
The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (DEFRA, 2007)	Make sure that everyone can enjoy a level of ambient air quality in public spaces, which poses no significant risk to health or quality of life.  Render polluting emissions harmless.  Sets air quality standards for 13 air pollutants.	The Local Plan should take account of the likely impact on air quality from development.  Include SA objectives to protect and improve air quality.
Future Water: The Government’s Water Strategy for England (DEFRA, 2008)	Sets out how the Government want the water sector to look by 2030 and an outline of the steps which need to be taken to get there.  The vision for 2030 is one where we, as a country have:  “improved the quality of our water environment and the ecology it supports, and continue to maintain high standards of drinking water quality from taps;  Sustainably managed risks from flooding and coastal erosion, with greater understanding and more effective management of surface water;  Ensure a sustainable use of water resources, and implement fair, affordable and cost-reflective water charges;  Cut greenhouse gas emissions; and  Embed continuous adaptation to climate change and other pressures across the water industry and water users”.	The Local Plan should aim to contribute to the vision set out in this Strategy.  Include SA objectives which seek to protect, manage and enhance the water environment.
Water for People and the Environment: Water Resources Strategy for England and Wales (Environment Agency, 2009)	The Strategy vision for water resource “is for there to be enough water for people and the environment, meeting legitimate needs”. Its aims include:  To manage water resource and protect the water environment from climate	Policies within the Local Plan should reflect the aims of the strategy where relevant.  Include SA objective which seeks to promote water management and efficiency.

Policy/Plan/Programme/Strategy/ Initiative	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the SA of St Helens Local Plan
	<p>change.</p> <p>Restore, protect, improve and value species and habitats that depend on water.</p> <p>To contribute to sustainable development through good water management.</p> <p>People to understand how water and the water environment contribute to their quality of life.</p>	
<p>The National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England (Environment Agency, 2011)</p>	<p>This Strategy sets out the national framework for managing the risk of flooding and coastal erosion. It sets out the roles for risk management authorities and communities to help them understand their responsibilities. The strategic aims and objectives of the Strategy are to:</p> <p>“manage the risk to people and their property;</p> <p>Facilitate decision-making and action at the appropriate level – individual, community or local authority, river catchment, coastal cell or national;</p> <p>Achieve environmental, social and economic benefits, consistent with the principles of sustainable development”.</p>	<p>The Local Plan should seek to reduce and manage the risk of all type of flooding.</p> <p>The SA framework should include objectives/indicators which seek to reduce the risk and manage flooding sustainably.</p>
<p>Waste Strategy for England 2007 (DEFRA, 2007)</p>	<p>Future of waste management – the government commitment.</p> <p>Tackle the amount of waste produced, by breaking the link between economic growth and waste production.</p> <p>Put waste which is produced to good use through substantial increases in re-use, recycling, composting, and recovery of energy.</p>	<p>The Local Plan should encourage the minimisation of waste production and the maximisation of recycling and re-use of materials.</p> <p>SA objectives should seek to ensure waste is minimised and promote recycling and reuse.</p>
<b>REGIONAL</b>		
<p>Water for People and the Environment: Water Resources Strategy – Regional Action Plan for the North West region (Environment Agency, 2009)</p>	<p>The Strategies vision for water resource “is for there to be enough water for people and the environment”.</p> <p>“The management and use of water and land must be shown to be sustainable – environmentally, socially and economically. We require the right amount of good quality water for people, agriculture, commerce and industry and the environment”.</p>	<p>Policies within the Local Plan should reflect the actions identified within the strategy where relevant.</p> <p>Include SA objective which seeks to promote water management and efficiency.</p>

Policy/Plan/Programme/Strategy/ Initiative	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the SA of St Helens Local Plan
	<p>The Strategy has identified four actions which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protecting the environment.</li> <li>Driving water efficiency.</li> <li>Ensuring resilience of water resources.</li> <li>Sharing and development of water resources.</li> </ul>	
The North West Landscape Character Framework (2009)	<p>The project aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Map and describe our diverse landscapes at a regional scale, seamlessly from upland to city centre to sea.</li> <li>Develop the idea of landscape as a 'framework' to help joined-up thinking about the environment we all share, leading to better management.</li> <li>Be a focus for promoting the principles of the European Landscape Convention in the North West.</li> </ul>	<p>The Local Plan should take account the Framework into account.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to protect the urban and rural landscape and identify opportunities for enhancement.</p>
<b>SUB-REGIONAL</b>		
North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan 2001 (updated 2008)	<p>The North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan aims to help local people become more aware of the area's natural environment and the issues facing it. There are a total of 44 habitat and species action plans; each one describing the current status of the habitat or species, issues affecting its wellbeing, conservation objectives &amp; targets and actions to meet them.</p>	<p>The Local Plan should take account of the aims of the Action Plan.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to protect and maintain the natural environment and important landscape features.</p>
Mersey Forest Plan (2014)	<p>The Mersey Forest Plan, launched in 2014, includes forest-wide policies under the headings Who, What, How, and Why. It also includes spatially specific policies, set out for each of the local authorities in turn, under the heading Where. These guide where and what is planted.</p>	<p>The Local Plan should take account of the objectives of the plan and future revision.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to support the current rural economic capacity and future development</p>
Mersey Forest Delivery Plan 2015-2019	<p>This Delivery Plan accompanies the Mersey Forest Plan (2014) and covers the topic of When; it sets out targets for the next five years, along with the budget and actions for the next year. It also sets out the role, core values and responsibilities of The Mersey Forest team, as they are largely responsible for the delivery of the actions.</p>	<p>The Local Plan should take account of the objectives of the plan.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to support the current rural economic capacity and future development</p>
Mersey Estuary Catchment Flood Management Plan (2009)	<p>The Plan primarily focuses on developing actions to sustainably manage flood risk in the Mersey basin. The aim of the plan is to enable the EA to deliver "flood risk management in a way to maximise the opportunities to</p>	<p>The Local Plan should take account of the plan.</p>

Policy/Plan/Programme/Strategy/ Initiative	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the SA of St Helens Local Plan
	achieve wider benefits such as the environmental objectives for river basin districts".	Include SA objectives that relate to flood management and reduction of risk.
Merseyside Local Transport Plan 3 (2011)	<p>The goals of the Plan are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help create the right conditions for sustainable economic growth by supporting the priorities of the Liverpool City Region, the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Local Strategic Partnerships.</li> <li>Provide and promote a clean, low emission transport system which is resilient to changes to climate and oil availability.</li> <li>Ensure the transport system promotes and enables improved health and wellbeing and road safety.</li> <li>Ensure equality of travel opportunity for all, through a transport system that allows people to connect easily with employment, education, healthcare, other essential services and leisure and recreational opportunities.</li> <li>Ensure the transport network supports the economic success of the city region by the efficient movement of people and goods.</li> <li>Maintain our assets to a high standard.</li> </ul>	<p>The Local Plan should take account of the plan by implementing sustainable transport modes depending on nature/location of the site, to reduce the need for major road transport infrastructure.</p> <p>Include a sustainability objective relating to sustainable transport.</p>

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RESOURCES Merseyside (2011-2041)	<p>Working with partners and the community the strategy aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the climate change/carbon impacts of waste management</li> <li>Maximise waste prevention</li> <li>Maximise landfill diversion/recovery of residual waste</li> <li>Maximise sustainable economic activity associated with waste management</li> <li>Reduce the ecological footprint of waste management activities</li> <li>Promote behavioural/cultural change that delivers the Strategy objectives</li> <li>Promote the use of renewable energy</li> <li>Achieve high recycling rates</li> <li>Promote resource efficiency</li> <li>Provide sufficient capacity for waste management activity</li> </ul>	<p>The Local Plan should encourage the minimisation of waste production and the maximisation of recycling and re-use of materials.</p> <p>SA objectives should seek to ensure waste is minimised and promote recycling and reuse.</p>
The third Local Transport Plan for Merseyside Annex 4 : Freight Strategy	<p>The overall aim of the strategy is to develop and maintain a sustainable freight system that seeks to maximise the opportunities for the movement of goods by rail, effectively manages the highway network to keep traffic moving and to minimise and mitigate the adverse impacts from the movement of freight on road and rail.</p>	<p>The Local Plan should take account of the strategy.</p>
Merseyside Local Transport Plan: Improving Access to Employment and Services	<p>Our Accessibility Strategy highlights priority areas to be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to jobs and training;</li> <li>• Access to education in particular to post 16 education;</li> <li>• Access to healthcare; and</li> <li>• Access to fresh food shopping.</li> </ul>	<p>The Local Plan should take account of the strategy.</p> <p>Include SA objectives that relate to improved access to local services.</p>
Liverpool City Region Growth Plan 2014	<p>This document represents the strategic, over-arching ambition of the Liverpool City Region. This Plan is laid out as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic approach</li> <li>• Competitive Business Base</li> </ul>	<p>The Local Plan should take account of the strategy.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to support the current regional economic capacity and future development</p>

Policy/Plan/Programme/Strategy/ Initiative	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the SA of St Helens Local Plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive Strengths</li> <li>• How we will be the Place for Growth</li> <li>• Our Strategic Projects to transform our economy</li> </ul>	
Merseyside and Halton Joint Waste Local Plan 2013	The Waste Local Plan will be promoting the Waste Hierarchy through strategies, policies and provision of sites. By 2027, the Waste Local Plan will have facilitated the development of a network of sustainable and modern waste management facilities which serve the needs of the local communities of Merseyside and Halton, enabling them to be as sustainable and self-sufficient as possible in terms of waste management.	<p>The Local Plan should encourage the minimisation of waste production and the maximisation of recycling and re-use of materials.</p> <p>SA objectives should seek to ensure waste is minimised and promote recycling and reuse.</p>
<b>LOCAL</b>		
St Helens Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Level 1 and Level 2 Part 1 (2014)	This SFRA updates the previous SFRA completed in 2009. The Level 1 SFRA collates all flood risk evidence into one document. The core output of this study is a series of maps and GIS datasets, which include a narrative of flood risk issues across the Borough. The Level 2 element includes a flood risk review focusing on proposed development sites at significant risk. The flood risk review provides a detailed but high level overview of all sources of flood risk for each proposed development site. Using this analysis, development recommendations have been provided on site-specific FRAs and appropriate flood risk management within that community.	<p>The Local Plan should take account of the flood risk assessment.</p> <p>Include SA objectives that relate to flood management and reduction of risk.</p>
St Helens Town in the Forest Strategic Vision for Woodland Planting (2006)	The aim of the document is to create a green woodland infrastructure for the Borough that is attractive, accessible, multifunctional and viable. It would serve the needs of the people and create an improved environment for inward investment, tourism and recreation, contributing direct and indirect economic benefits to the regeneration, liveability and sustainable development agendas.	<p>The Local Plan should take account of the strategic vision.</p> <p>Include SA objectives that relate to rural economic vibrancy of rural centres and health and wellbeing.</p>
St Helens Policy for Nature, A biodiversity action plan for St Helens (2006)	<p>To work with the community to encourage wildlife in St Helens for its own sake, for the people of St Helens and for the attractiveness of the Borough. Objectives within the plan include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To protect and enhance habitats and species;</li> <li>• To raise awareness of and improve accessibility to nature;</li> <li>• To manage land for the benefit of biodiversity;</li> <li>• To control harmful Exotic Species; and</li> <li>• To increase training to improve biodiversity.</li> </ul>	<p>The Local Plan should take account of the plans objectives.</p> <p>Include SA objectives for the protection of wildlife and habitats.</p>

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St Helens Green Space Strategy (2008)	Identifies biodiversity as a key issue within green space and has an objective to "safeguard, enhance and increase the enjoyment of the wildlife resource."	The Local Plan should take account of the strategy. Include SA objectives for the protection of wildlife and habitats.
Supplementary Planning Document - Biodiversity	Set out the expectations of St Helens Council in relation to development and biodiversity.	The Local Plan should take account of this SPD. Include SA objectives for the protection of wildlife and habitats.
Trees and Development SPD (2008)	The overall aim of this SPD is to assist St Helens Borough Council and developers in working together to achieve high quality developments that retain good quality trees and secure new tree planting as an integral part of the design.	The Local Plan should take account of this SPD. Include SA objectives for the protection of trees and woodlands.
St Helens Contaminated Land Strategy (2001)	The strategy describes the framework within which land which merits detailed individual inspection will be identified in a detailed and rational manner, identifying the most serious and pressing problems first and concentrating resources on the areas where contaminated land is likely to be found.	The Local Plan should take account of this SPD. Consider SA objectives for the remediation and recovery of derelict land.
St Helens Sustainable Community Plan 2008-2018 (2008)	A relevant objective of the plan is to deliver a cleaner, greener and safer Borough and improve the quality of life for all residents.	Promote safe and accessible environments with a high quality of life and community cohesion. Include a sustainability objective relating to health and well-being.
St Helens Climate Change Action Plan (March 2009)	<p>Key objectives of the climate change action plan include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage all sectors in our local community to take the opportunity to adapt to the impacts of climate change, to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions and to make public their commitment to action.</li> <li>Promote energy efficiency in the home.</li> <li>Increase choice of services available and ensure appropriate standards are in place</li> <li>Deliver the Merseyside Transport Plan and associated strategies in St Helens.</li> <li>Improve travel choice, affordability and availability of public</li> </ul>	<p>Use opportunities offered by new development to reduce causes/impacts of flooding.</p> <p>Include a sustainability objective relating to climate change mitigation and adaption.</p>

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	<p>transport</p> <p>Improve amenities to make St Helens a much more attractive location for residents, for investors and visitors</p> <p>Preparation and implementation of proposed Climate Change DPD and national and regional policy (e.g. Regional Spatial Strategy)</p> <p>Requirements of appropriate planting of trees for new development plans</p> <p>Promote energy efficiency in the home and the Council's assets including the transport fleet.</p> <p>Reduce the number of homes that fail to meet the minimum housing standards and levels of fuel poverty.</p> <p>Increase recycling and divert waste from landfill, particularly the biodegradable proportion.</p>	
<p>St Helens Plan 2014-2017 Improving People's Lives, Creating a Better Place, and Delivering Effectively Together</p>	<p>Improving people's lives so that they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy and Active</li> <li>• Skilled and Educated</li> <li>• Independent and Empowered</li> </ul> <p>Creating a Better Place, so that St Helens is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Safer and Stronger Place</li> <li>• A Cleaner, Greener and Accessible Place</li> <li>• A Thriving, Vibrant and Competitive Place</li> </ul> <p>Delivering Effectively, so that partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share the Same Principles and Values</li> <li>• Consult, Engage and Empower our Communities</li> <li>• Be Open, Accessible and Transparent</li> <li>• Be Successful</li> </ul>	<p>Promote access to high quality health facilities which integrate physical and mental well-being.</p> <p>Include a sustainability objective relating to health and well-being.</p>

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St Helens City Growth Strategy 2008-2018 (2008)	<p>Key objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“To grow, strengthen &amp; diversify the business Base;</li> <li>“To raise aspirations towards enterprise &amp; work among St Helens residents &amp; workers;</li> <li>“To create a high quality physical environment for residents, businesses &amp; visitors;</li> <li>“To increase recognition of St Helens as a regional location of choice for residents, businesses &amp; visitors.</li> </ul>	<p>The Local Plan should take account of this strategy.</p> <p>Include a sustainability objective relating to education and training.</p>

