

# ST HELENS BOROUGH

# LOCAL PLAN 2020-2035



ST HELENS  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



 #STHELENSTOGETHER



# A BALANCED PLAN FOR A BETTER FUTURE

We want St Helens to be a vibrant, attractive and prosperous borough. We want local people to benefit from a good choice of quality and affordable homes, skilled local jobs, efficient infrastructure, beautiful open green spaces, good transport links and better health and wellbeing.

Our new local plan sets out our ambitions to achieve this over the next 15 years.

While we must deliver a local plan that accounts for the growth in employment and housing demand that we know there is, we will be sensitive and balanced in how we deliver that plan.

A balanced plan is one that looks at our existing needs together with our future development

plans, and strikes a balance between growth, prosperity and quality of life for our residents.

We will continue to look for opportunities to regenerate brownfield land and bring it back into use, fighting for government and regional funding as we have done recently in bidding for Liverpool City Region funding to transform the Moss Nook and Cowley Hill sites.

Our plan ensures that we have the necessary infrastructure such as schools, doctors' surgeries, and highways to support new development.

And our plan will also protect and enhance our natural environment, protecting 56% of our borough as greenbelt, and in addition our many beautiful parks and open green spaces.

# FIVE KEY PRIORITIES FOR A BALANCED LOCAL PLAN

We've developed a balanced plan for a better borough, with five key priorities that guided our approach.

## 1

### SUPPORTING A GROWING POPULATION AND STRONG ECONOMY

Our plan will help support economic growth and create better job opportunities for local people. This is more important than ever post-Covid.

It will aim to provide enough homes for local people now and in the future and attract new people to come and live here.

It will also help young people access jobs and affordable homes as near to their own communities as possible.

## 2

### CONTINUING COMMITMENT TO BROWNFIELD FIRST

This plan ensures that 59% of our Borough will remain as greenbelt. We are prioritising development on brownfield sites and we are working with the city region to make challenging sites financially viable.

## 3

### REGENERATING OUR TOWN AND DISTRICT CENTRES

Working with English Cities Fund and our Town Deal Board our Local Plan will support and enhance our vision to regenerate St Helens and Earlestown Town Centres and support our businesses in a post Covid-19 economy. It will also support our commitment to bring back into public use our civic buildings such as Earlestown Town Hall and The Gamble Building.

## 4

### PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR OPEN GREEN SPACES

Our local plan will help us to tackle the climate emergency. It will protect 952 hectares of public parks and green spaces, our Local Plan seeks to enhance, expand and connect these spaces. It protects areas of importance for St Helens environment, ecology and heritage and where there are unavoidable impacts, it requires that development provides extensive mitigation. It also supports our commitment to tackling the climate emergency.

## 5

### INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT

We know local people are concerned about the impact of housing numbers on infrastructure and traffic. We are committed to ensuring that where an area sees growth and development, it will be accompanied by investment in the appropriate infrastructure, with greater community benefits such as improved roads, highways and schools.



# WHY DO WE NEED A NEW LOCAL PLAN?

St Helens Borough must have a Local Plan to show the vision for future development in our borough. Every area in England and Wales should have an up-to-date Local Plan in place and review it at least every five years.

It gives local residents some certainty about our development plans and future use of land in the borough.

It shows where development is planned, and therefore where resources and possible additional infrastructure such as roads, or new schools, are needed to support it.

It prevents decisions being made on developments which may not be in the best interests of our local community, but most importantly it sets out our ambitions to create jobs, build homes, shape infrastructure investments, create and protect our open green spaces and develops our town and district centres.

All the things that matter to you, and to us too.

# WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR?

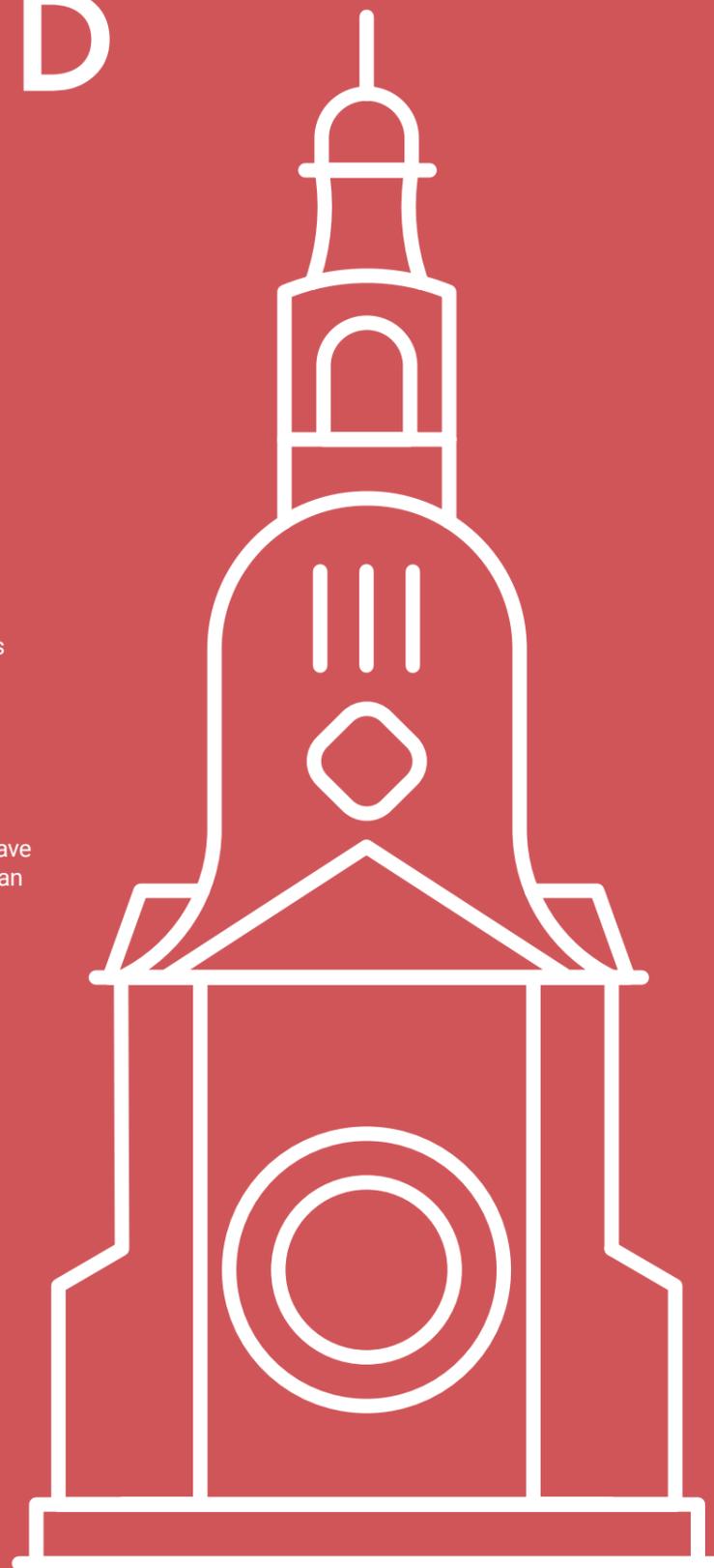
We have carried out extensive consultation with residents, local communities, businesses and other stakeholders.

This involved three public consultations, including; an initial consultation on the scope of the plan in 2016; the Preferred Options version of the plan in 2016/2017, and the Submission Draft version of the plan in 2019.

We received nearly 6,000 responses from the Preferred Options version.

We listened to what you told us and used your comments to produce the Submission Draft version of the plan.

Full Council approved the Submission Draft in December 2019 and since then officers have been working to prepare the Plan for submission to government.



# WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Senior officers of St Helens Borough Council recommend the Plan be submitted, and Cabinet approved this recommendation on 23rd September.

The Local Plan, supporting documentation and comments will now be handed to the Secretary of State.

The Secretary of State appoints an independent Planning Inspector to examine the plan and documentation.

The Inspector will assess the legal compliance of the plan and whether it meets the 'tests of soundness' set down in national policy. They will develop a list of what they consider to be the Key Matters, Issues and Questions to guide the Examination process, and these will be kept up to date as the Examination progresses.

These will be made publicly available on the Council's website.

This will be in advance of the public hearing sessions.

The inspector will hold public hearing sessions. Those who have made comments (known as representations) on the Local Plan at the Submission Draft phase, and who have expressed an interest in actively participating in the public hearing sessions, may be invited by the inspector to speak at the hearings.

The inspector will consider all the issues on the basis of written documents provided to them, and discussion at the public hearing sessions. They will consider whether any modifications need to be made to the Local Plan to ensure that it meets the 'test of soundness'.

If this is the case, a schedule of the proposed main modifications will be prepared and will be the subject of further public consultation. The inspector will then consider the representations received at this stage before issuing their final report on the plan.

Publication of the inspector's report on the Local Plan will formally close the examination stage of the process.

The council will only be able to adopt the plan if it is found to be legally compliant and sound by the Planning Inspector as set out in their final report.

# GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER: 'PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE'



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The recently published White Paper 'Planning for the Future' sets out the Government's proposals for the planning system and is currently the subject of a consultation.

In relation to local plans, the Government proposes that all areas within the borough would be identified as one of three categories: growth, renewal and protected.

In particular, areas allocated for growth are proposed to be identified for specific development (housing, employment etc) and outline planning permission would be granted as a result of the allocation.

Whilst 'Planning for the Future' is an interesting and important document, its status as part of a public consultation process must be noted, and there can be no certainty at this time that any of the proposed reforms set out within it will be carried forward.

The Government is still expecting local authorities to progress their Local Plans in a timely manner within the current planning framework.

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# WHAT IS SAFEGUARDED LAND?

Safeguarded land is a Government term for land which would be removed from the Green Belt and 'safeguarded' for potential future development.

Under the terms of the current draft plan this would mean after 2035.

The draft plan states (in policy LPA06) that "planning permission for the development of the safeguarded sites will only be granted following a future Local Plan review that proposes such development."

That review would also have to allocate the land for development.

# SUPPORTING A GROWING POPULATION



486

NEW HOMES BUILT PER YEAR

7,290

OVER 15 YEARS TO 2035

5,234

NEW HOMES TO BE BUILT ON  
URBAN/BROWNFIELD SITES UP TO

2035

Our population in St Helens Borough is growing and we want our economy to thrive.

We need to respond to this and support future growth by making sure that we have enough homes for local people now and in the future.

We need to make sure our residents, and in particular young people in our borough, have access to affordable housing. We will take every step possible to encourage and provide affordable housing across the borough, including by setting a minimum target of 30% affordable homes for all developments on greenfield sites.

UP TO

30%

OF AFFORDABLE HOMES TO  
BE BUILT \*ON GREENFIELD SITES

20%

OF ACCESSIBLE HOMES TO  
BE BUILT \*ON GREENFIELD SITES

It's also vital we meet the needs of an ageing population and those with vulnerabilities. That's why our plan sets a target for 20% of homes to be built to an accessible and adaptable standard, and that 5% are built to wheelchair user standards. We have also set a target for 5% of homes built on greenfield sites, to be bungalows.

We will continue to work closely with housing associations and private developers to make affordable, specialised and supported housing available right across our borough.

The population of St Helens borough is expected to grow by at least 9,000 to 2035, and we want to do all we can to attract people from outside the borough to come and live here.

Our projections highlight the need to build 486 new homes a year to support future job growth in the borough and provide sufficient homes for our growing population. This is a minimum. Starting now and continuing over the next 15 years to 2035, we require an additional 7,290 new homes.

If our plan contains insufficient land for housing the Planning Inspector is likely to find it to be 'unsound'. We would then have to redraft the plan. This would delay our adoption of the Local Plan and make it harder for us to resist any ad hoc planning applications on unsuitable sites.

The minimum number of new homes we need exceeds the amount of urban and brownfield land available in St Helens. As the borough has grown, the reality is that our urban areas are nearing their development capacity. We've undertaken an extensive search of all urban and brownfield development options; this has shown that it is possible to deliver around 5,234 new homes in existing brownfield and urban land up to 2035. This means that the remainder of land for housing and employment would need to be released from the Green Belt.

Releasing land from the Green Belt for housing and employment needs is a last resort and we will always take a brownfield first approach whenever possible.

**"I'VE BEEN  
BLESSED WITH  
A BRAND-NEW  
HOME WHERE I  
CAN FEEL SAFE  
AND SECURE"**

## **CASE STUDY: HELPING PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR LOCAL PEOPLE**

Back in 2018 St Helens Borough Council granted planning permission for a two-storey residential development on Crab Street, St Helens.

The brownfield site had originally been the site of the Traveller's Rest pub before becoming a builder's yard. Now newly built, Gorsuch House has 61 apartments for over 55's, managed by growth and regeneration group Torus.

Kevin, a 59-year-old frontline Nurse, recently received the keys to his own apartment in Gorsuch House;

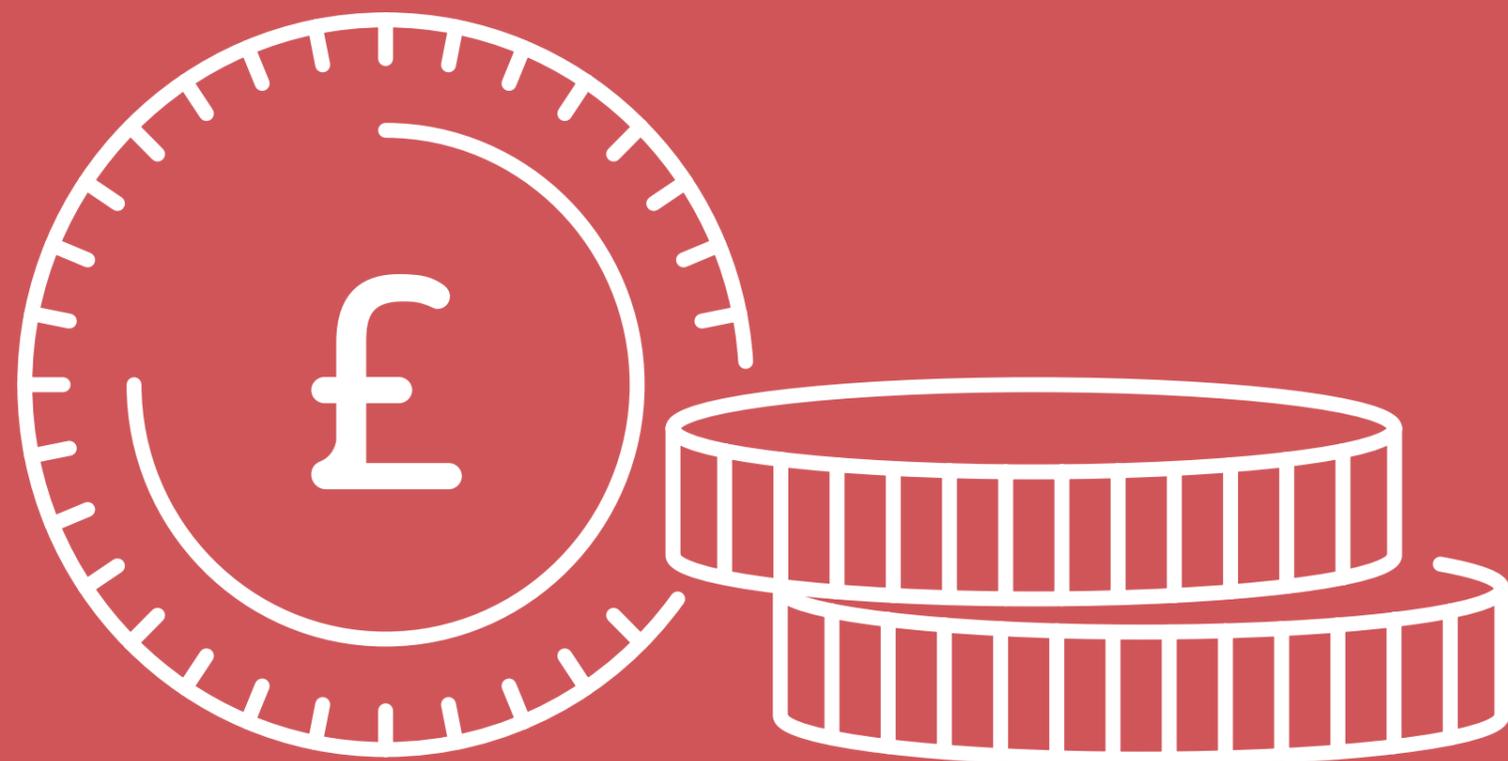
"After going through a divorce, I found myself with just my motorbike and two bin bags to my name. I moved to live closer to my adult children, but despite working as a Registered General Nurse, the only place I could afford to move into was a shared house with four strangers.

I was one of the unfortunate ones to actually catch Covid-19 and being in a shared home was not

a great place to be during that time. My daughter encouraged me to sign up to Under One Roof for an affordable rent property. I really didn't hold out much hope of being offered somewhere, but Torus has prioritised homes for the older generation.

It's completely changed my life. I picked up my keys this week and I feel like a young man moving into his first home, I'm that excited! After getting coronavirus and thinking 'this is it', I've been blessed with a brand-new home where I can feel safe and secure."

# SUPPORTING A STRONG ECONOMY



We want to create an environment which allows our economy to thrive for the good of everyone who lives and works in our borough.

As part of the wider Liverpool City Region (LCR), we work closely together with the LCR Combined Authority to strengthen our local economy, promote business growth, increase employment and apprenticeship opportunities and reduce the number of people not in work.

Specific locations beside the M6 and M62 motorways are particularly attractive for large scale development especially for companies within the logistics and distribution sector. But to enable us to capitalise on these advantages and to realise the benefits that growth and development can bring we need to release land for employment use in key locations from the Green Belt.

Since 2016 the St Helens business base has grown at a slower rate than the North West and national average. St Helens is ranked 303rd out of 317 local authorities in England for business density, and the second lowest in the Liverpool City Region. This is too low and may indicate a lack of resilience to an economic shock that could force a significant proportion of businesses to close – such as the Covid 19 pandemic.

Youth unemployment in St Helens stands at 16.9%, for those aged 20-24 years compared to a North West average of 10.8%. The release of employment land will allow us to meet the boroughs need for economic growth and create more job opportunities to bring more local people of working age back into employment and offer a greater choice to the existing workforce.

It will also give our young people an opportunity to access employment on their own doorstep and will help stem the increasing numbers of young people who move away from the area in search of employment.

The creation of jobs also reduces the amount of people dependent on claiming benefits within the borough, as well as generally increasing the amount of money in the local economy. This in turn can support local businesses, retailers and service providers, and so further aid the creation of more jobs locally.



**“THIS MARKS  
THE START OF  
A NEW DAWN IN  
THE BOROUGH’S  
JOURNEY”**

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**CASE STUDY: AWARD WINNING INDUSTRIAL AND OFFICE  
ACCOMMODATION AT MERE GRANGE**

Mere Grange is a mixed-use site comprising of industrial, office and residential developments.

The 30-acre site adjacent to the St Helens Linkway has been a significant project with over 10 years of construction activity on the site. The developer, Network Space, completed the third and final phase in 2019 which saw the addition of 162,000 sq ft of new industrial warehousing development. The scheme, which won Development of the Year in 2019 Invest in St Helens Business Awards, has been developed in association with Network Space, Homes England, St Helens Borough Council and Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

Phase one had seen the £7m development of mainly office workspace and the creation of 154 new jobs. Phase two involved the development of over 149,000 sq ft of industrial space creating around 60 new jobs and bringing £13.9m of investment into the area.

The addition of phase three now brings the site up to 75% capacity, with a commercial laundry for the healthcare industry taking a 25-year lease and an electrical switchgear manufacturer taking a 15-year lease, joining the list of high calibre national and international tenants taking up residency. The two remaining units left on the site are also receiving strong interest.

Councillor Richard McCauley, Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Housing said, “Mere Grange has been a significant project delivering over 162,000 sq ft of top-class, award winning industrial space, and hundreds of jobs, for decades to come. This marks the start of a new dawn in the borough’s journey to drive forward growth across our borough.”

**“WE’VE GOT  
BIG PLANS  
FOR OUR NEW  
ST HELENS  
FACILITY AS  
WE EXPAND  
ACROSS  
THE NORTH”**

## CASE STUDY: MANUFACTURER’S INVESTMENT IS A GOOD SIGN FOR ST HELENS

Leeds based digital and traditional signage specialists, Widdsigns, moved to St Helens in early 2020 after completing the takeover of Spectrum Sign & Display Ltd, safeguarding jobs and adding further scope for significant job creation over the next few years.

The 132-year-old company provides signage consultancy, design and production to a number of high-profile businesses including Marks & Spencers, Primark and Schuh as well as the National Science and Media Museum and Burnley FC.

The acquisition of its new 20,000 sq ft site in Sutton was supported by St Helens Borough Council, who actively assisted Widdsigns with the recruitment of local people to help fill a number of vacant positions. The company has already invested £50,000 in upgrading plant and equipment at the new site.

The move is being heralded as a real positive sign for St Helens and demonstrates that the borough is being seen as the place to be for economic activity, especially when it comes to industries such as manufacturing.

Phil Bamford, Head of Operations at Widd Signs, said;

“We’ve got big plans for our new St Helens facility as we expand across the north, acquiring the St Helens firm will support our business growth over the next few years. We’re looking forward to building on the important and valuable relationship we already have St Helens Borough Council over the coming months and years.”

# CONTINUING COMMITMENT TO BROWNFIELD FIRST APPROACH

59%

OF LAND IN ST HELENS WILL  
REMAIN GREEN BELT BY 2035

APPROXIMATELY

72%

OF NEW BUILD HOMES WILL BE  
ON BROWNFIELD/URBAN SITES  
UP TO 2035

St Helens is Merseyside's greenest borough, and it will stay that way.

At the end of the plan period in 2035, St Helens Borough will still have over half - 59% - of land designated as Green Belt. We will still have the highest amount of rural and semi-rural Green Belt land in the Merseyside region and we should be very proud of this fact.

This is in addition to open and green spaces such as parks, recreational grounds, allotments etc, which are greatly valued by us all.

Adoption of the plan would see around 890 hectares released from the Green Belt, signalling the first time that the Green Belt in the borough has been significantly altered since it was designated in 1983.

Of new homes to be built, approximately 72% will be built on brownfield and urban sites up to 2035, but there are insufficient numbers of these sites to accommodate all our housing and employment needs for the next 15 years.

This will mean that some release of Green Belt land, both for employment uses and new housing is needed. However, we will ensure that the contribution from brownfield land in existing urban areas is maximised and will maintain a "brownfield first" approach to all new development.

Moss Nook is a prime example of how a brownfield site can be developed. With a history of mining and other industrial processes, the land was scarred, contaminated and had been abandoned for many years. However a £2 million investment from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has now meant that the site, situated between Sutton, Parr and Bold, will now see an initial development of 240 homes in the first phase with the potential for up to 900 homes as well as community sports pitches in future phases.

Remediation work has already started on the land, and it is hoped the first homes will be built and occupied in 2021, with the entire site likely to take between eight and 10 years to complete.

In preparing the plan, we have sought to maximise the amount of land in urban areas to be developed, most of which is brownfield, although not all of this land will be suitable for housing, for example if they are situated next to noisy industrial units.

St Helens also has a heritage of heavy industry including coal mining, glass making and chemical works, meaning the land is often heavily contaminated making it difficult and costly to remediate.

We are however, doing all we can to progress and bring forward the development of brownfield land. We generally place less onerous requirements on developers of brownfield sites in order to encourage brownfield development.

We also work pro-actively with developers, owners and registered providers of housing to ensure we maximise urban regeneration, as well as continuing to maintain a public register of all brownfield sites which are suitable for housing development.

“A SITE WHICH  
IN TOTAL COULD  
HOUSE 630  
HOMES OVER  
A NUMBER OF  
PHASES”

## CASE STUDY: TRANSFORMING A FORMER FOUNDRY INTO A HIGH-QUALITY URBAN VILLAGE

The Vulcan Works Foundry produced locomotives and diesel engines, even tanks during WWII, that were exported all over the world, before finally closing its doors after 150 years in 2002.

As well as the foundry, Vulcan Village was built in the 1830's, to house the foundry's workers. In the 1940's a sports ground with running track, tennis courts, bowling greens, football and rugby pitches and an indoor rifle range were added.

When the works closed. The foundry land complete with sports ground was bought by housing developers, St Modwen, who set about the transformation of a derelict brownfield site into an urban village of high-quality homes alongside Persimmon Homes and Jones Homes.

Having seen a century and a half of heavy industry the land was contaminated and required extensive remediation.

In 2007, planning permission was granted on a site which in total could house 630 homes over a number of phases.

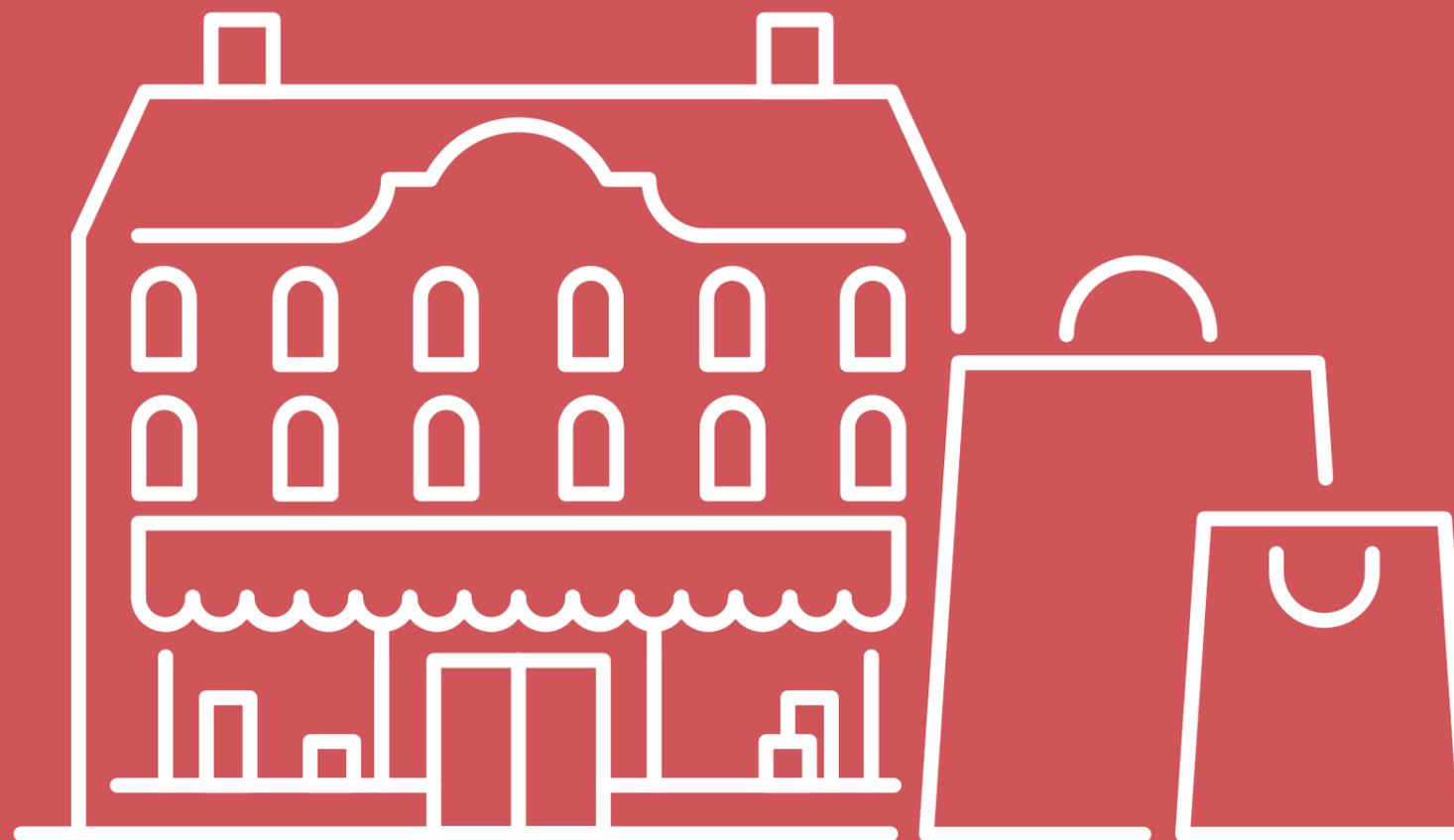
Fast forward 17 years and the developers have now received permission to build the fourth and final phase of 89 homes. The council also ensured the sporting facilities that were on the original site where not only replaced but received a full upgrade.



# REGENERATING OUR TOWN AND DISTRICT CENTRES

St Helens Borough Council is committed to pushing forward with its vision of regenerating our borough, with our town centres in St Helens and Earlestown a priority.

To help in making this vision a reality the council has joined in partnership with English Cities Fund (ECF) – a joint venture between Muse Developments, Homes England and Legal and General, to work on proposals to masterplan the two town centres and other potential opportunities across the borough.



Early work could see a £200m commercial and leisure investment in St Helens town centre including new homes, revitalised retail space, new units to accommodate our lively and growing independent food and drink sector, hotel accommodation and top-quality offices.

As the nature of the partnership would allow regeneration opportunities to be explored right across the borough, time was taken to determine the implications of it in terms of land use planning, however as the effects of the town centre master planning is only likely to be realised towards the end of the plan period, the decision was taken to proceed with the progression and subsequent submission of the plan.

In September 2019 the Government announced that St Helens was named as one of 100 places invited to come up with proposals to access up to £25m from the Government's Towns Fund, and in June 2020 announced that it would bring forward accelerated funding of £1m for St Helens from the Town's Fund to help deal with the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on town centres.

The Local Plan also looks to support the civic buildings in both St Helens and Earlestown town centres. The council is committed to bringing back Earlestown Town Hall into public use following a public consultation in early 2020.

A consultation was also held on the future use of St Helens Gamble Building, and although a report to Cabinet highlighting the findings from both consultations has been delayed due to Covid-19, initial feedback has shown an overwhelming desire by local people to see both buildings used as community spaces for arts, culture and education.

“IT’S IMPORTANT  
THAT LOCAL  
BUSINESSES  
ARE INVOLVED”

## CASE STUDY: LOCAL BUSINESSES HELPING TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF OUR TOWN

OD’s Designer Clothing, are a multi-channel retailer of designer clothing for men, women and children, as well as watches and jewellery, based in St Helen Town Centre. OD’s, which was founded 28 years ago by owner Chris O’Dea, is a St Helens success story, with the business going from strength to strength.

In recent months the men’s store has been extended, allowing for the women’s collections to now also be housed under one roof, and expand the office space to boost the online side of the business.

Chris is a St Helens Ambassador and proactively advocates for the borough regionally and nationally, as well as being a Town Deal Board member:

“I felt very honoured and privileged to be asked to join the Town Deal Board, and this together with my role as an Ambassador I take very seriously. It’s important that local businesses are involved in helping to shape the vision for our town centre, and that they have a voice which can have a positive impact on the future plans for our town centre.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity, to help deliver what the people of St Helens want and deserve. We must be brave in our approach and innovative in our thinking and strive to make St Helens the envy of towns across the region and the country.

To make this happen we need to engage with local people of all ages, grow and develop our food and drink offer, digitalise our high street, bring more residential and green spaces into the town and give people a reason to come in and stay for a while in our town.

This in return will encourage businesses and people to want to work, live and socialise here.

We are on the cusp of massive change, but to make this happen we must work in collaboration to unlock the funding that is crucial to our town’s success.

I know my colleagues on the Town Deal Board are as dedicated to this as I am and making this a reality is our ultimate goal.”

HOW WE'RE DELIVERING A BALANCED PLAN

# PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OPEN AND GREEN SPACE

Open and green spaces make an important contribution to our overall quality of life. They provide a place to relax, play, meet friends and family, exercise and enjoy the flora and fauna. They also act to improve the visual attractiveness of where we live and work and help to define the character of our borough.

MORE THAN  
**952**  
HECTARES OF PARKS  
AND RECREATION SPACE  
IN ST HELENS

Across St Helens Borough there is more than 952 hectares of public parks and green spaces, from formal parks and gardens to playing fields, from nature reserves to children's play areas. These make up over 10% of the borough.

The local plan aims to protect, manage, enhance and where appropriate expand on all types of open and green space and looks to employ strategies to further enhance and protect them through the use of awards and standards such as the Green Flag status awarded to Victoria Park and the recognition of all 18 woodlands across the borough meeting the UK Woodland Assurance Standard.

The plan also supports reclamation and improvement projects such as the Bold Forest Park and Sankey Valley Park.



# “A DIVERSE RANGE OF OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES”

## CASE STUDY: A GREEN OASIS FOR WALKERS, CYCLISTS AND FAMILIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bold Forest Park © McCoy Wynne



**“WE ARE  
COMMITTED  
TO IMPROVING  
CYCLING AND  
WALKING  
ROUTES”**

### **CASE STUDY: COMMITMENT TO IMPROVE CYCLING AND WALKING ROUTES**

We are committed to improving cycling and walking routes right across our borough.

Cycling and walking is good for our health, the planet and makes economic sense.

Our Local Plan supports the development and enhancement of our growing network, with the development of a 6.3 km route, linking St Helens town centre to Burtonwood and onwards to potential employment opportunities at Omega.

The improvements add additional walking and cycling links to the recently enhanced Sankey Valley cycle route. This will allow nearby residential and employment areas to access locations such as the town centre and Colliers Moss via the Sankey Valley.

Recent funding by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has seen a £2m scheme across the region, with improvements on existing cycle lanes in Clockface and on Chester Lane, and future potential investment

to provide new and improved walking and cycling routes that would link Lea Green Train Station to St Helens town centre and nearby residential, leisure and employment areas.

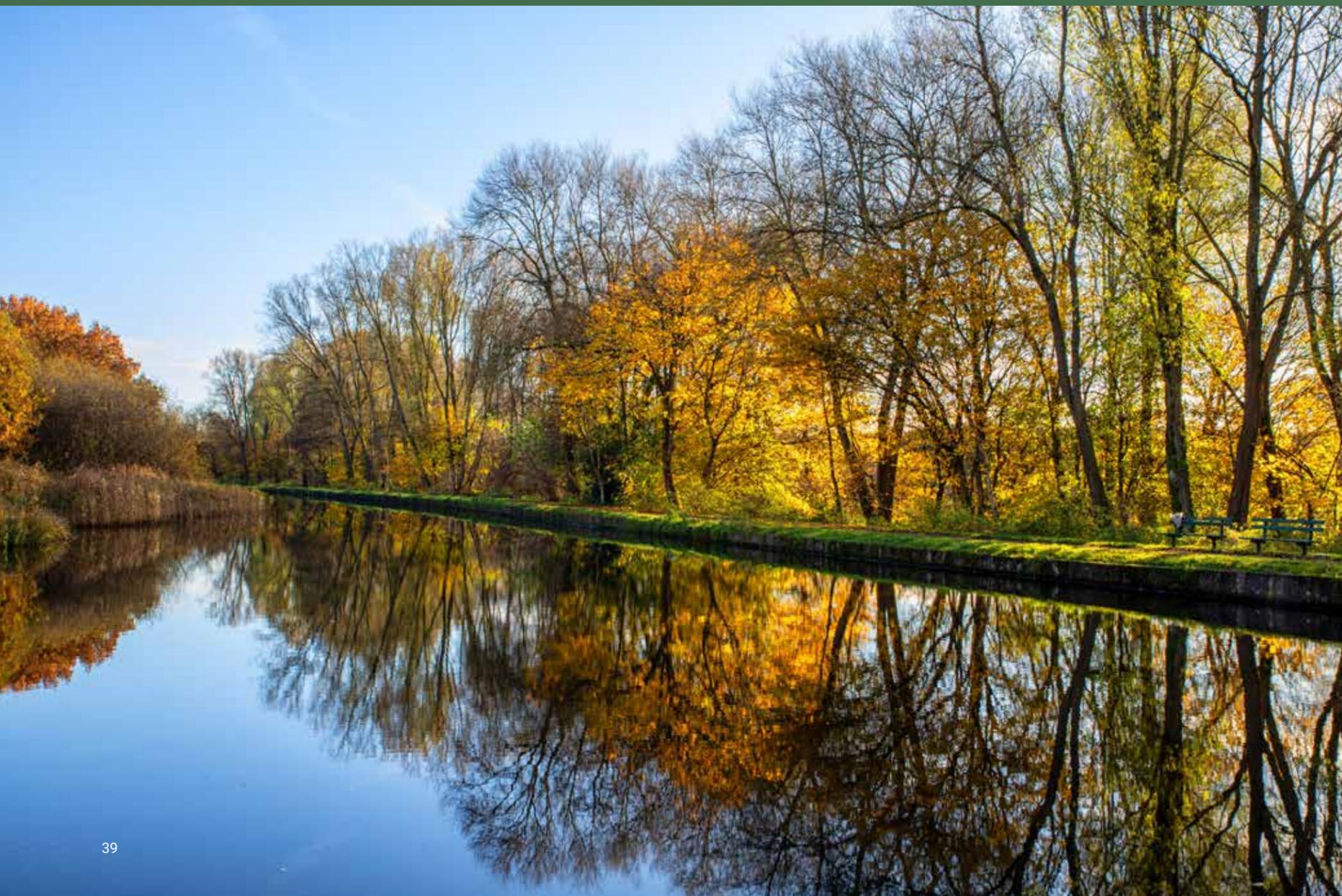
This includes providing links to a number of brownfield sites with planning permission for new homes nearby to encourage the developments to be more sustainable.

# PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

Our plan protects areas of importance for our borough's environment, ecology and heritage and where there are unavoidable impacts, the plan will require that development provides extensive mitigation.

It will ensure that where new housing development would result in a loss of open space or destruction of trees, woodlands and hedgerows that these will wherever possible be replaced by new, expanded or enhanced open green space with additional trees planted.

Our plan will consider the climate emergency, signed by the council, and will ensure all new developments are designed to reduce carbon emissions and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change, as well as increasing cycle and walking routes to reduce car use, increase electric vehicle charging points, manage flood risks and work with the Mersey Forest and others to increase the numbers of trees, woodlands and hedgerows across the borough.



**“OVER THE LAST  
DECADE THE  
DEVELOPMENT  
HAS SEEN  
AROUND 600  
HOMES BUILT”**

## **CASE STUDY: RETAINING AND ENHANCING OUR GREEN OPEN SPACE**

An English garden theme, tree lined boulevards, a village green and a series of natural water features, all make Waterside Village off Lowfield Lane, St Helens a very visually appealing, quality housing development. But that wasn't always the case.

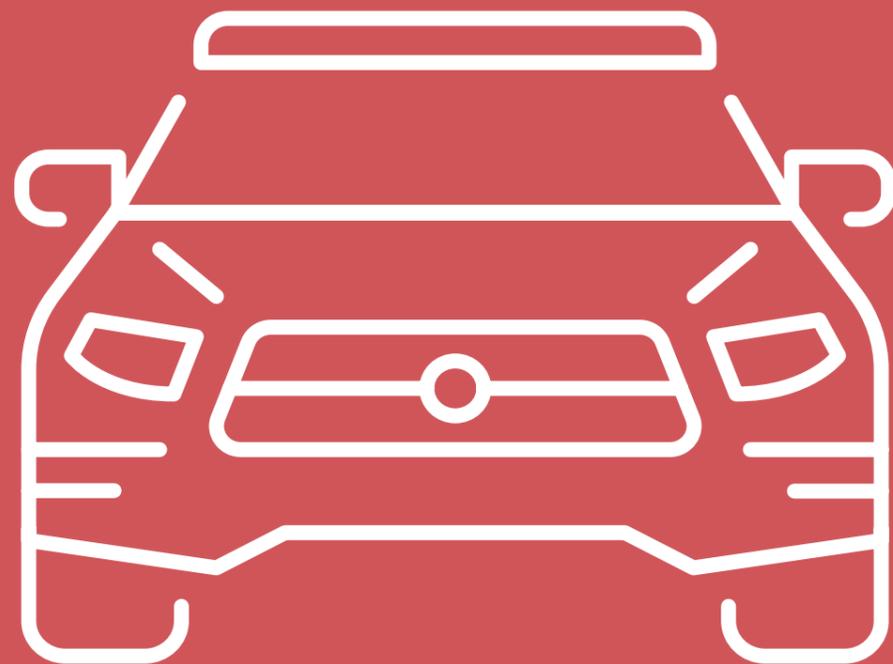
The land the development is built on was the former Lea Green Colliery, which closed in 1964.

The land lay mainly derelict for decades, until in 2005 St Helens Borough Council granted outline planning permission for an urban village development.

The land was heavily contaminated, and an extensive clean-up of the site was required. Surrounding woodland was retained, and significant landscaping works and tree planting were carried out by the developer to create its English garden theme.

Over the last decade the development has seen around 600 homes built, with the council recently granting planning permission for the final phase of development, with 24 homes to be built and the construction of an orchard area on the site.

# INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT



We recognise residents' concerns about infrastructure.

We also recognise that in order for us to build sustainable communities, the provision of high-quality infrastructure to support existing and future development is essential.

Increased development and investment in infrastructure will go hand in hand - one will not happen without the other.

Areas that see growth and development will see wider community benefits such as improved roads, highways and schools.

## £14M

IMPROVEMENTS ON WINDLE ISLAND  
AND PEWFALL JUNCTION

An effective transport infrastructure is also needed to support a strong economy and a growing community.

The plan will support the transport network to facilitate economic growth, enable good levels of accessibility between homes, jobs and services, improve air quality and minimise carbon emissions.

It ensures that new development is located where it can be accessed by a full range of sustainable transport modes including cycling, walking, public transport and car, and also supports any improvements and upgrades to these transport networks. Within the plan priority is given to transport links between homes and workplaces to ensure new jobs are as accessible as possible to local people.

The plan also supports the development of key transport infrastructure such as the work to improve the A580 (East Lancs).

Improvements on both Windle Island and Pewfall junction have been funded from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's Local Growth Fund and by St Helens Borough Council, with around £14m invested over three years to make our borough better connected to boost economic growth and employment opportunities, as well as making journeys quicker, safer and cleaner – thanks to reduced traffic queues.

# "AREAS THAT SEE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT WILL SEE WIDER COMMUNITY BENEFITS"

## CASE STUDY: IMPROVING TRANSPORT LINKS AND SUPPORTING ECONOMIC GROWTH

Newton le Willows train station is the second most popular station on the busy Liverpool to Manchester line.

So, to help local people access better links between local, regional and national transport and to support economic growth, St Helens Borough Council approved planning permission on a £18m revamp of the station and surrounding facilities.

This included;

- Step free access to and between the platform with a new subway and lifts
- A bus interchange
- A new ticket office
- 400 space car park and drop on/off area
- Improved passenger waiting facilities
- Cycle access and storage

The improvements were funded by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's Growth Fund, Merseytravel and St Helens Borough Council.

The new station will play a crucial part in supporting potential future plans for the development of nearby former Parkside Colliery into a 1 million sq ft industrial and logistics park, providing an estimated 1,330 jobs.



# FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE DRAFT ST HELENS BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN 2020-2035

For further information and to read the full version of the draft St Helens Borough Local Plan, please visit the St Helens Borough Council website on:

[www.sthelens.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.sthelens.gov.uk/localplan)

All supporting documentation for the Local Plan and up-to-date Frequently Asked Questions are also available.



**ST HELENS**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL