St. Helens Council Plan
2018/2020
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Welcome to St.Helens Council Plan 2018/20 which sets out our response to the challenges we face, our objectives as an organisation and the actions we will take to deliver them.

St.Helens Council continues to grapple with the impact of significant cuts to public sector investment and ever growing demand for its services. As a council we are not unique in this position, and with pressures reaching critical limits across the whole of the local public service system, a new collaborative approach was recognised as being urgently required if the needs of the community are to continue to be met.

Our response in relation to health and social care has been both unique and transformational. In ‘St. Helens Cares’ we are developing a sustainable health, well-being and social care system that sees us working collaboratively with a wide range of partners to integrate services in order to effectively manage demand and reduce costs. ‘St. Helens Cares’ will invest in promoting people’s independence and resilience whilst addressing long-term health and care needs. Its launch later this year will provide a single point of contact for all residents, so that if people do need help and care then the right support can be made available to them.

Integral to ensuring the ongoing effective delivery of key services such as adults and children’s health and social care is our ability to encourage greater economic growth within St. Helens. Along with the benefits of future job opportunities this also brings financial gains, enabling us to become self-supporting.

As an effective and financially well managed council we remain better off than many others; a position that is now allowing us to invest in a bold and ambitious plan for the rejuvenation of the town centre and the wider economic regeneration of the borough. Over the course of the coming year, we will continue to work with our partners to develop these plans and seek further opportunities for strategic investment in support of our strategy for growth. To compliment this approach there will be a renewed partnership focus on raising attainment and skill levels.

Whilst recognising the opportunities before us, the further reductions in funding and growing demand for services cannot be ignored, reinforcing the need to deliver our budget strategy and savings plans. We must be realistic. Although difficult decisions about the services we can afford to provide and how they are provided cannot be avoided, we will continue to do all in our power to ensure that the decisions taken have the best interests of local people at heart and that the most vulnerable in our communities continue to be effectively supported and protected. At the same time we will look to further modernise the way we work, becoming more adaptable and agile in order to continue to deliver cost effective high quality services.

Although there are uncertainties ahead we are determined to grasp the opportunities before us and it is fitting in the 150th anniversary of our borough, whilst we celebrate our past history and heritage, that we are now also able to look ahead with a growing sense of confidence and aspire to deliver a future vision for St. Helens that instils pride amongst us all.

We would like to thank all staff, Members and partners for their continued hard work and commitment over the past year and look forward to our continued collaboration to allow the successful delivery of this ambitious plan.

Barrie Grunewald  
Leader of St.Helens Council

Mike Palin  
Chief Executive,  
St.Helens Council
ST HELENS - THE PLACE

Strengths

A Growing Economy
A high growth rate, a resilient manufacturing sector and increasing numbers of business developments.

A Growing Population
Approximately 178,000 people live in St. Helens with growing internal migration.

Well Connected
St. Helens lies at the heart of the North West with strong and growing strategic road and rail access.

More Homes
Over 2,300 new homes built since 2013/14.

A Safe Place to Live
Crime rates are generally lower than those of our statistical neighbours and people reportedly feeling safe.

A Green Place
Over half of our Borough is rural with many quality parks and open spaces.
Key Messages

- At the heart of the North West and well connected
- Strong economic growth prospects
- A good place to live
- Some challenges we are determined to overcome

Challenges

An Ageing Population
Our population is ageing faster than many other areas, creating high demand for health and care services.

Deprivation
There are relatively high levels of deprivation and inequality to be found in areas of the borough.

Poor Health
Average levels of life expectancy are lower than they are regionally and nationally, and vary significantly within the borough.

Worklessness
There are still lower numbers of people in work, higher numbers of people on out of work benefits and less economic activity than the national average.

Low Attainment and Skill Levels
Although having shown improvement, school attainment and adult skill levels lag behind the national averages, particularly higher level skills for specialist sectors.

High Demand for Children’s Services
There are high numbers of children in the care system and children and families requiring social care support.

For a detailed profile of St. Helens and its communities, please visit our local information site which provides information, data and statistics on a wide range of themes: https://info4.sthelens.gov.uk/
St. Helens has strong partnership foundations going back many years which has brought together public services, businesses and the voluntary and community sector to plan and work jointly to regenerate the borough, tackle crime and disorder, improve health and wellbeing and deliver better outcomes for children and young people.

In order to address the significant issues we now face there has been a need to redefine ways of joint working with a view to taking a truly collaborative approach to meeting the challenges of cost and demand and transforming and further integrating services to deliver the best possible outcomes to the people and communities of St. Helens. In 2016/17 the Council lead a review of pre-existing arrangements and established a new framework for collaboration.

This new structure is supported by the twin pillars of a People’s Board, taking on the statutory responsibilities of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Community Safety Partnership, and a new Economy Board to drive economic growth within St. Helens. Over the coming year these new governance arrangements and their supporting strategies will continue to be developed and embedded to fulfil our aim of being the most effective borough based partnership in the country.
The Council Plan is structured around 3 key ambitions with a series of goals that detail our contribution to the delivery of 4 borough level strategic objectives. During 2018 these will be defined within a visioning document that sets out the full extent of our ambition and aspiration for the borough.

Sustainable Health and Social Care

Growing the Economy

Improving People’s Lives

Creating a Better Place

An Adaptive Innovative Council

Being Better Connected

Raising Aspiration and Ambition
In aspiring to this new way of working we will build on our existing strengths as a well-managed effective, efficient, caring council, whilst carefully considering how we best bring about this programme of cultural change and transformation.

To assist us in working towards these attributes, we have developed a set of key principles which are reflective of the key programmes of work set out within this plan and will underpin everything that we do.

- The Council will increasingly become an **Enabler** of services.
- Services will be **integrated** and **personalised** around our customers.
- The Council will be **digital** by default.
- There will be greater public sector **integration**.
- Our workforce will become increasingly **agile**.
- **Innovation** will pervade everything we do.

Moving towards 2020 we will continue to refine and communicate the development of our new operational model, fully engaging and empowering employees and Members as best we can, to ensure it is central to our future values and the driver for our long-term ambitions.
In working towards our 2020 vision and programme of transformational and cultural change we have reshaped the council and put in place a revised organisational structure based around 3 key departments overseen by 3 Strategic Directors and led by our Chief Executive.

Our organisational structure is aligned with our political structure led by our Leader and a Cabinet consisting of 10 portfolio areas that hold responsibility for the delivery of our Council plan and its 3 key ambitions: Improving People's Lives, Creating a Better Place and Becoming an Adaptive Innovative Council.
In St. Helens our aim is to provide the best possible services to improve the lives of our communities and residents. In doing so we face many complex, sensitive and challenging issues with rising costs, fewer resources and increasing demand. Yet we remain determined to deliver sustainable services that are capable of meeting future needs and improving outcomes. In doing so we will continue to work collaboratively with partners, further the greater integration of services, promote independence, champion prevention and personal responsibility, raise ambition and prioritise those most in need.

**Our Objectives**

- Ensuring the best possible outcomes for children, families and vulnerable adults.
- Ensuring people have a voice and are listened to.
- Improving the effectiveness of schools and education services.
- Improving health and wellbeing outcomes for people.
- Supporting people and communities to feel safe and resilient, particularly children and vulnerable adults.

**What We Will Do**

- Work through St. Helens People’s Board to launch and develop ‘St Helens Cares’, our Accountable Care Management System to bridge the budget gap, address current demand pressures, ensure the sustainability of integrated health and care services, promote self-care and deliver the best possible outcomes for individuals and communities.
- Continue to work collaboratively to deliver high quality cost, effective adult social care services that meet the needs of all eligible vulnerable adults, focussing on enabling independence and building self-reliance, whilst offering choice and control for service users and carers.
- Deliver a successful Early Help service working collaboratively with other agencies to effectively engage and work with families in order to safely reduce the need for referral to statutory social work intervention.
- Develop the new Edge of Care Service to ensure children are protected from harm, working with families and providing the intensive support required to minimise the risk of families breaking down and children and young people becoming looked after.
- Work within the new Regional Adoption Agency ‘Together for Adoption’ and establish an improved Fostering Service with effective recruitment and support arrangements for carers.
- Ensure the success of a revised model for the borough-wide Children’s Social Work service, providing greater consistency of support and improved outcomes for families.
- Further develop services to improve outcomes for children in care, including placement stability, health, educational attainment and more care leavers in education, employment and training.
- Embed a new performance framework for children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and their families, working across agencies to fully meet statutory requirements and ensure the quality of its support and impact.
- Lead and further develop the effectiveness of the multi-agency Adult and Children’s Safeguarding Boards to meet all statutory responsibilities and ensure the highest possible standards of safeguarding are delivered.
• Deliver a range of initiatives to ensure that children, young people, vulnerable adults and carers are empowered to have a voice and that this consistently underpins all aspects of social care practice and the decisions that affect their lives.

• Work with the family of schools within the borough to agree and implement a ‘learning partnership’ to deliver school effectiveness services. We will continue to review and deliver the School Effectiveness Strategy to ensure further improvement in achievement and aspiration for all children and young people across all key stages.

• Work to sustain improvements in health and reduce health inequalities, whilst promoting personal responsibility to prevent ill health. Members of the People’s Board will work collaboratively to deliver the 3 People’s Plan health priorities of reducing Self-harm, Falls and Alcohol misuse. Public Health will continue to focus on key risk factors and commission, deliver and review a broad programme of health improvement services.

• Progress the emerging options for St. Helens Youth Zone and develop the facility for a fun, safe and inclusive environment to support and deliver a wide range of positive experiences and outcomes for local young people.

• Work effectively with partners to increase perceptions of community safety within St. Helens. We will implement our new strategy for tackling domestic abuse and respond to the proposals of the Taylor Review to systematically address youth offending.

**What Success Will Look Like**

Strong satisfaction with Adult Care Services.
More self-directed support and direct payments.
Fewer admissions to permanent residential or nursing care.
Fewer delayed transfers from hospital.
Safely reduced numbers of children in need and children in care.
Children, young people and adults are safeguarded.
Children and young people can express their views, feel heard and are actively involved in decisions that affect their lives.
Pupil performance at Early Years, KS2 stages and KS4 is, as a minimum, in line with national averages.
More schools are graded ‘Good’ or ‘Excellent’.
Key public health outcomes targets are met.
Fewer young people becoming involved in the criminal justice system.
Fewer incidents of domestic abuse.
Creating a Better Place

Economically and environmentally St. Helens has made significant progress over a sustained period, although there are still challenges that we are required to overcome. The promotion of increasing growth and development in the borough is critical not only for the jobs and investment that it brings but also to ensure the Council can afford to continue to deliver the essential services it provides for the people of St. Helens. Our ambitions for a strong, well connected, sustainable St. Helens to prosper at the centre of a northern economic powerhouse come at a time of increasing opportunity, which we are determined to open up and make the most of.

Our Objectives

- Supporting growth and investment in a vibrant place.
- Increasing aspiration, skills and employment.
- Creating well-connected, safe and accessible transport and digital networks.
- Creating an attractive and sustainable environment.

What We Will Do

- Work through St. Helens Economy Board to develop and implement an approach to promoting greater economic development activity and growth within the borough.
- Prepare and gain approval for a new Local Plan for St. Helens that will establish the borough’s future planning priorities for the next 15 years and allocate sites for housing, employment, retail and green space development.
- Progress and implement, with landowners, retailers and a range of other partners, an ambitious vision that will transform our town centre into a vibrant and vital place that thrives and prospers.
- Work through a growth focussed planning and development service with landowners and developers to increase economic development, growth and investment. Promote the borough as a northern hub for logistics, maximising the potential of the M6 growth corridor, the immediate focus of which includes the development of Parkside strategic employment site.
- Successfully deliver the £4.9 million ‘Ways to Work’ programme to reduce worklessness, in particular youth unemployment, engaging over 3,700 people and creating over 800 jobs through a series of apprenticeship and employment support schemes.
- Work collaboratively to maximise the borough’s transportation assets and further establish St. Helens reputation as a well-connected location for national road and rail, whilst delivering a safe and sustainable transport offer. Key projects to be delivered include access to Parkside, national road network improvement to the M6 and A580, the redevelopment of Newton-le-Willows rail station and improved accessibility to the Town Centre.
- Work with partners locally and regionally through ‘Merseyside Connected’ to promote digital inclusion and ensure that residents and businesses in the borough have access to fast reliable internet services.
- Work to increase the range, choice and quality of housing provision, supporting private sector developers to continue to develop high quality housing for all, both aspirational and affordable, whilst continuing to work with partners to deliver growth and improvement in the social housing and private rented sector.
• Support delivery of the Joint Merseyside Waste Strategy and Waste Development Plan, encouraging greater participation in recycling and a reduction in waste, whilst delivering an efficient and affordable collection service.

• Work to deliver sustainable development and maintain the environmental quality of the borough. A key focus will be the delivery of the recently approved Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan to promote outdoor recreation and attract investment in the rural visitor economy. Targeted action to improve air quality and carbon emissions will continue to be delivered.

• Collaboratively create an Arts and Cultural Partnership to develop our reputation as a centre of excellence for socially accessible art and cultural practice, bringing people together to help create positive change in the way people live their lives and view St. Helens as a place.

• Co-ordinate and contribute to the delivery of a year of celebratory events over the course of 2018 to mark the 150th anniversary of the founding of the borough to commemorate St. Helens history and heritage, whilst looking ahead and showcasing our ambitions and aspirations for the future.

What Success Will Look Like

Increased newly constructed industrial floor space.
More people in work.
More young people, including the most vulnerable in education, training and employment.
St. Helens Local Plan adopted.
An increased number of new homes.
Higher retail occupancy rates.
Increased levels of recycling.
Fewer people killed or seriously injured on our roads.
Compliance with national standards of road maintenance.
Reduced carbon emissions year on year.
Becoming an Adaptive Innovative Council

Building on our strengths as an effective well managed council, we will maintain our focus on ensuring the highest possible standards of service whilst delivering a programme of transformation that will see us realise our 2020 vision of being an adaptive innovative council. Whole scale change within the public sector will see us increasingly become an enabler rather than a provider, collaborating with partners and the community to deliver integrated personalised services that meet expectations and bring about the best possible outcomes. The extension of digital services and the latest technology will bring new ways of working and together we will ensure that our employees are fully supported to meet this challenge and communities and residents are helped to be resilient and successfully adapt to change.

Our Objectives

- Managing finances sustainably and business processes effectively.
- Supporting empowered and adaptive employees.
- Working collaboratively to enable customer focussed innovative services.

What We Will Do

- Deliver a Budget Strategy 2018/20 and approved programme of savings that result in a balanced budget and savings of £13.1 million delivered between 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- Work through the Council’s Investment Panel to oversee a new approach to public sector strategic investment in support of the borough’s Growth Strategy, whilst supporting the maintenance of the Council’s overall financial stability.
- Successfully embed the new borough wide partnership arrangements, providing leadership and the extension of sound governance to ensure the effectiveness of collaborative working across St. Helens. A long-term shared vision will be agreed and adopted to drive future partnership working across the borough.
- Deliver a strategy to provide and maintain a sustainable asset base in line with resource limitations that is driven by service delivery needs in support of an enhanced environment and quality of life for residents.
- Maintain the strength of the Council’s Governance Framework by continuing to effectively maintain clear decision making processes, financial and performance management, and internal control and risk management, thereby supporting the Council to adapt to new circumstances, build on existing strengths and continue to meet all statutory requirements.
- Further refine and effectively implement a number of workforce strategies and development plans to compliment new ways of working, focussing on the new Accountable Care Management System ‘St Helens Cares’ and its impact on the Council’s structure.
- Establish a new Corporate Communication framework that sets the direction for internal and external communication with all stakeholders. The strategy will continue to promote strong mutual links with residents and the community, provide consistent messages about the outcomes the Council is seeking and how they will be achieved, and continue to promote a positive image of the Council and the borough.
• Further extend the range of digital services as a means of increasing self-service, improving the customer experience and reducing the cost of delivery, whilst ensuring that alternative access methods still exist for residents who wish to speak to someone. Greater on-line service use will be encouraged though the development of a safe and secure customer portal for customers to conduct many aspects of business with the Council.

• Invest in a programme of technology, IT systems development and business intelligence, whilst enhancing the digital skills and confidence of staff to enable greater flexibility of working that brings service delivery efficiencies and improved outcomes for customers and service users.

• Complete a series of service reviews linked to the Council’s 2020 Vision and programme of savings which secure the best possible outcomes in terms of sustainability and quality of services.

What Success Will Look Like

Approved programme of budget savings delivered.
Positive external assessment judgements.
Increased rateable values of business premises.
Increased levels of customer satisfaction.
Increased take up of Council on-line services.
A workforce fit for purpose, supporting a smaller and different organisation matched to requirements and budgets.
Whilst adopting new ways of working the Council will continue to maintain its existing strong governance and management arrangements. The diagram below shows the planning and reporting cycle for the Council Plan.

Further detail of our financial position and key performance indicators can be found in the Appendix to this plan. Further budgetary and performance information is available on the relevant pages of the Council website.
Please contact us to request translation of Council information into Braille, audio tape or a foreign language.