

PATHWAY TO NET ZERO BY 2040

OUR CLIMATE RESPONSE PLAN NOVEMBER 2021



FOREWORD

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT

As Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport for St Helens Borough Council I am delighted to introduce our climate response plan. Back in 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency in recognition of the existential threat posed by rising temperatures across the world. Ambitiously, we committed to achieve net zero by 2040. Despite the devastating impacts of COVID19 over the past 18 months our resolve and determination to achieve net zero by 2040 is unwavering. Our response to the climate emergency needs to be at the heart of all six of the Council priorities as laid out in 'Our Borough Strategy'

The impact and emergence from the pandemic has given us an opportunity to pause, reflect and reset. Now more than ever we recognise the need to protect our environment and the communities we are here to serve. We face unparalleled challenges to deliver all of our existing core services whilst simultaneously transforming them so that they have no detrimental impact on the environment. Whilst this is daunting it does also provide us with opportunities to do things differently and to be bold and brave.

Whilst this is a council owned document, the reality is that to make a real difference everyone must own

it, believe in it and support it. We have established the St Helens Climate Commission as delivery has to be done in partnership and we are grateful for the early engagement and eagerness of our communities and partner organisations who we know are equally committed to this hugely important agenda.

It has been an encouraging and heartening experience to reflect on the progress that the Council has made since declaring a climate emergency. We must however do so much more and the forward looking sections of this document is where our focus now needs to be. There are many imminent planned activities designed to ramp up, scale up and demonstrate our ambitions and commitment over the next 12 months and beyond.

We also wanted to highlight the innovation and creativity that is already happening. We are fortunate for example to be able to work closely with and support a number of unique and world first initiatives such as Glass Futures and Hynet – both of which are being progressed here in St Helens. Our role is to harness and encourage more of this and make St Helens the destination for pioneering green recovery and growth for the next generation.



*Councillor Andy Bowden
Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport*



CONTENTS

What is Climate Change?	6
Our Vision	8
About this document	10
Scale of the Change	12
Our Approach	14
Pathway to net zero – Council activities	16
St Helens Climate Change Commission / Youth Climate commission	24
Pathway to net zero – Borough activities	26
I Pledge to...	38

WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE?

Climate Change is a huge issue which impacts everyone, both now and in the future. It is crucial we take steps to tackle it and its effect, so we can all look forward to a greener future.

In November 2021 the UK hosted the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow, to unite the world to tackle climate change. The COP26 summit will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

What is Climate Change?

Climate Change refers to changes in the average weather experienced over a long period. This includes temperature and rainfall patterns.

Over the years, greenhouse gases have accumulated in the atmosphere, and their warming effect is now leading to rising sea levels and the breakdown of our climate.

It is likely to mean warmer wetter winters and hotter drier summers with more extreme weather events such as greater flooding and heatwaves.

It is identified as the single greatest threat humanity has ever faced.

What do we mean by net zero carbon?

The main greenhouse gas is carbon dioxide (CO₂), and it is responsible for over 80% of global warming.

Net zero carbon refers to achieving an overall balance between emissions produced and emissions taken out of the atmosphere.



An average person will emit

5.6 tonnes

CO₂ per year



Return flight from Manchester to New York will emit

1.59 tonnes

of CO₂ per passenger



Rail journey from St Helens to London will emit

31.8 kg

CO₂ per passenger

OUR VISION

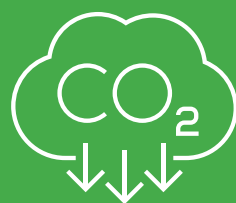
Together we will make St Helens a Net Zero borough by 2040

Our vision is a simple yet challenging one. In line with our climate emergency declaration **‘Together we will make St Helens a net zero borough by 2040’**.

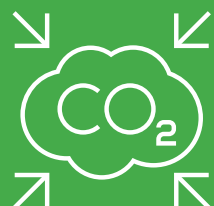
Achieving this vision will require The Council to take on a number of different roles. We must act and lead but also facilitate, encourage and support residents, communities and businesses to have confidence to transform St Helens into a climate resilient borough.

This strategy builds on the work that has been done so far and sets out our next steps towards achieving net carbon zero by 2040.

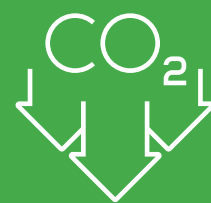
We will do this by...



Reducing emissions from our own activities, and embedding **‘climate thinking’** in to everything we do.



Working alongside residents, communities and businesses to help them to reduce their emissions



Helping St Helens to **mitigate and adapt** to the effects of climate change



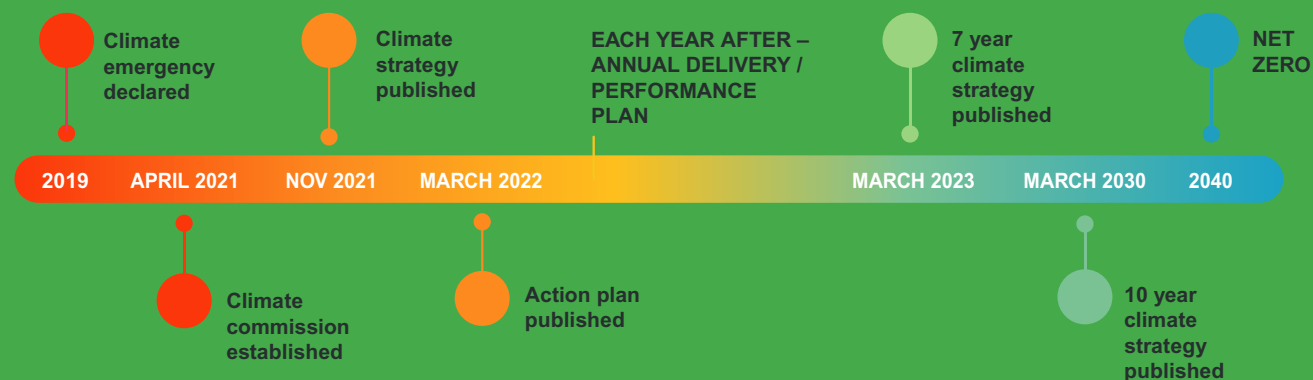
Working together with key partners make St Helens a net zero borough by 2040



ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

We are still at the start of our net zero journey and recognise that we have much to do and limited time to do it. However, this document reaffirms the Council's commitment to the net zero vision and sets out some of the immediate actions we are proposing to take. It highlights the breadth and scale of the challenge facing us and how the entire borough of St Helens must come together to collectively act and tackle the climate emergency facing us all.

Over the next 12 months we will develop a more detailed action plan to show the specific steps that we will take to edge closer to the net zero vision. This will contain a number of SMART measures to promote accountability and to allow our progress to be closely monitored. The Action Plan will need to be continually updated over the longer term, and be developed from a strong evidence base and to be fully costed.



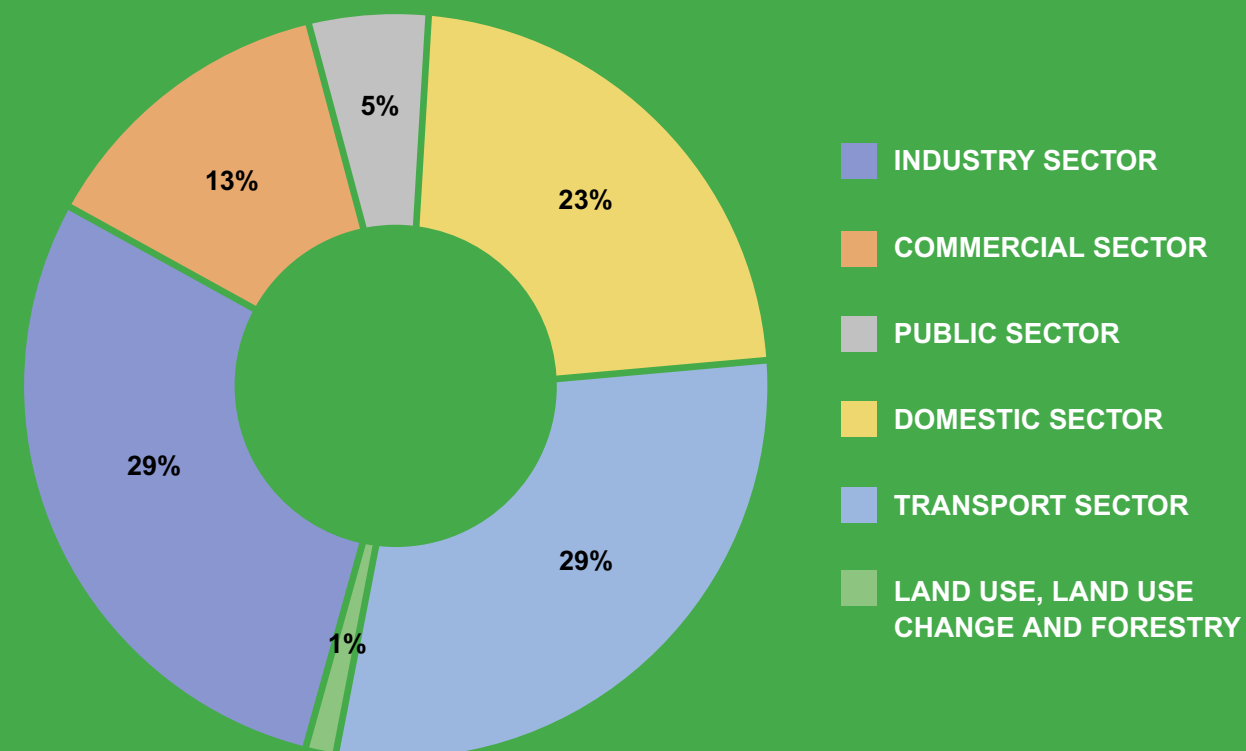
SCALE OF THE CHANGE

Before embarking on the journey to net zero, we need to know our starting point. Whilst there is still more data and information that we need to capture and analyse we do already know that:

The estimation is that as a borough we produce 1,132,800t of CO2 which equates to each resident in St Helens generating 5.6t of CO2 per year.

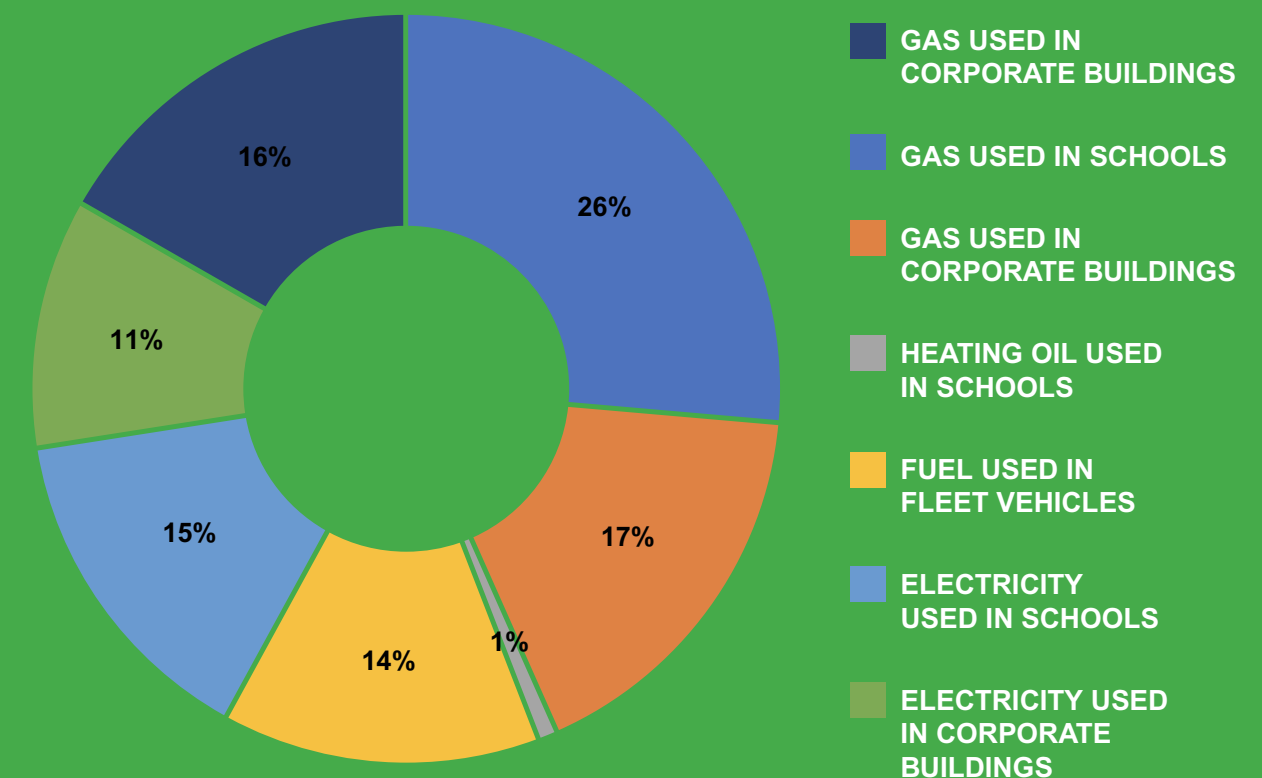
We also know that across the Liverpool City Region over £200bn of investment is needed to achieve net zero by 2040.

CO2 Emissions for St Helens Borough in kilotonnes - 2019



Our own buildings and assets generate 12,324t of CO2 emissions, however this does not include emissions for council activities such as business travel, commuting waste disposal or outsourced activities.

CO2 Emissions for St Helens Borough Council in tonnes - 2019



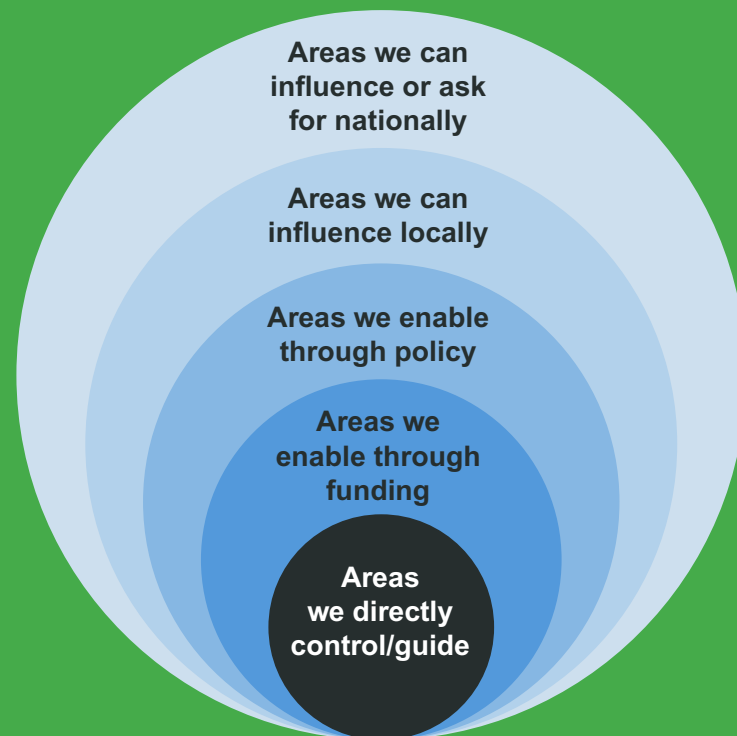
This data tells us that as a Council we account for less than 3% of the total emissions across the Borough. Whilst we clearly intend to lead by example and get our own house in order, our bigger focus has to be on supporting residents, communities, partners and businesses to reduce emissions in a managed, sustainable and expedient way. This is a big challenge, but one that we are prepared to tackle head on.

OUR APPROACH

At borough level we are aware that the Council plays a pivotal role in supporting, empowering, challenging and facilitating climate action.

The UK Climate Change Committee estimates that local authorities can influence one third of emissions in their area. This makes buy-in from other parties critical to tackling the other two thirds. The way we deal with challenges will affect future generations, the local economy, energy supplies as well as people's health and confidence in their communities and the future.

Local Authority Spheres of Influence

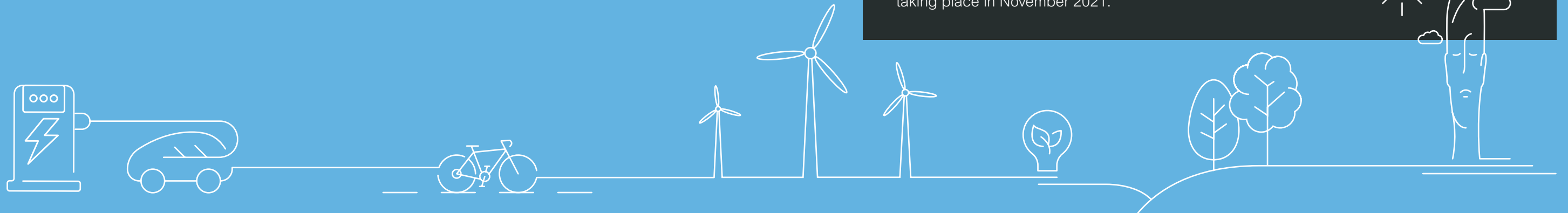


PATHWAY TO NET ZERO

COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

As an organisation we employ over 3,000 staff and have responsibility for dozens of different services. We care for the vulnerable and elderly, collect waste from 85,000 households, maintain more than 250km of road, and deliver library and leisure services at multiple locations across the borough.

All of these services generate carbon. We must fundamentally reassess how we deliver these services so that in the future they have little or no negative impact on the environment. This requires us to change the way we think, behave and work.



At a glance...

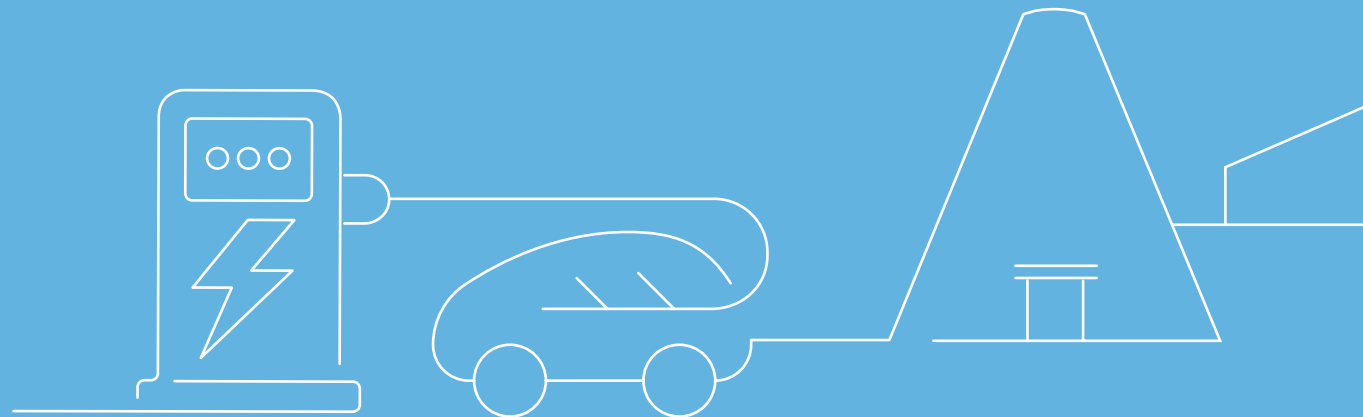
What have we already done since declaring a climate emergency:

Delivered

- Replaced 3,500 streetlights with LED lanterns across 833 streets.
- Started the process of decarbonising our transport fleet – acquiring electric vans, retiring old inefficient vehicles and trialling alternatively fuelled vehicles.
- Committed £1.2m of capital funding for specific carbon reduction projects -with more to come.
- Home Energy Schemes with 159 households are benefitting from high efficiency boiler replacements, 21 properties have benefitted from first time central heating and 33 houses benefitting from insulation.
- Held a green festival in St Helens and Earlestown to raise awareness of the climate agenda and to support the COP26 summit taking place in November 2021.
- Launched our dedicated climate change micro site to showcase what we are doing and so that we can be held accountable for our actions.
- Ran the inaugural “youth climate commission” meeting in November 2021.
- £340k active travel improvements delivered on Chester Lane/Jubits Lane and Clock Face Road in 2020, providing 3.2km of high-quality infrastructure including protective wand segregation.
- Developed a new local plan that shows how we will preserve and manage land use across the borough.

Enabled

- Awarded £120k of funding to local organisations through our climate emergency response fund. These projects will all be completed by March 2022.
- 159 households to benefit from highly efficient new boilers with funding secured from our affordable warmth team.
- The appointment of a dedicated climate change officer to lead the co-ordination of activities within the Council.
- 'Meat free Monday menu and achieved 'Food for Life – Bronze Award in 51 of our Schools.
- The formation of a Climate Commission to enable business and communities to have a voice and influence what happens in the borough.
- Commenced the process of embedding climate impacts into everything we do, including rolling out of training across the organisation.
- Supported the development of a digital super-spine network to improve connectivity across the borough.



Secured

- £19m redevelopment of Newton-le-Willows station completed in 2019, making it easier and more attractive to travel by sustainable modes to and from the station.
- £17.6m secured for development and delivery of active and sustainable travel infrastructure by March 2023, including major enhancements at Lea Green station and a supporting network of quality walking and cycling infrastructure.
- £150k feasibility funding to explore the potential of a low carbon heat network in St Helens Town centre. This pioneering project would be one of the first of its kind in the UK and could provide low carbon to benefit thousands of people and businesses.
- £3.25m from the Town Deal Fund for connected places integration.
- Fabric first suitability improvements funding of £189k in Heritage World at World of Glass
- Funding from the Mersey Forest Urban tree challenge for planting trees across the borough.
- £9m for Glass Futures from Get Britain Building Fund in partnership with Liverpool City Region.
- £6.9m for Glass Futures – Medical Glass Recycling.
- £500k to deploy modern energy efficient traffic signals across the borough.

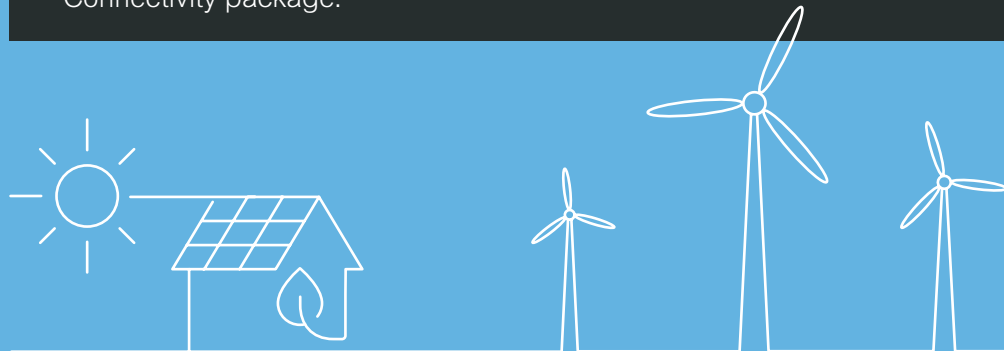


These achievements provide the catalyst and momentum for our future activities. As an organisation we must think big, act strategically and be responsive to any potential opportunities that emerge. To deliver net zero we must ensure that policy, commitment and funding streams all align.

At a glance...

Here are just some of the things we commit to do in the next 12 months:

- Ensure that all of the energy we purchase and use is generated from 100% renewable sources.
- Review our procurement processes so that anyone wanting to do business with the Council is committed to decarbonising their own activities.
- Ensure climate change is at the heart of St Helens and Earlstown regeneration proposals.
- Create a dedicated pedestrian and cycling route, connected to Lea Green Station as part of the Eastern Regional Interchange and Connectivity package.
- Position St Helens as the natural home for exponential growth in green jobs. We will do this by building on some of our existing partnerships and also creating new ones.
- Explore the demand and infrastructure needed to roll out EV charging across the Borough
- Engage with our communities to understand what else we and they can do to make progress towards net zero
- Deliver a new waste strategy with waste reduction at its heart



ST HELENS CLIMATE COMMISSION & YOUTH CLIMATE COMMISSION

The commission was established in March 2021 and is playing a key role in bringing together leaders from a range of different sectors to promote best practice, share learning and mutual challenge. We strongly believe that collective action will bring about the required changes more effectively and quickly.

netzero.sthelens.gov.uk

Over the next 12 months the commission has agreed to provide specific focus to the following six themes. Each theme will be led by a member of the commission and will result in a detailed review of key activities and interventions that need to be made to bring about positive change.

- Energy
- Transport
- Housing
- Land Use
- Industry & Economy
- Health

- The commission will be asked to support and monitor the delivery of this response plan as well as promote and champion it within their respective sectors.
- Building on the success of the Climate commission we propose to appoint a youth representative to sit on the commission. Our young people represent the future of St Helens and they must be given a strong voice to affect change and influence our decision making.
- Recognising the important role of Children & Young People in St Helens we will also establish a dedicated Youth climate commission to build on the success of the inaugural event. Schools and colleges from across the borough can nominate representatives. Topics of discussion, requests for action and funding can all be made by the youth commission and the Council will provide the necessary support to manage the events.



PATHWAY TO NET ZERO

BOROUGH WIDE ACTIVITIES

Remembering our Vision **‘Together we will make St Helens a net zero borough by 2040’.**

As a Local Authority we will work ever more closely with all of our partner organisations to decarbonise the entire borough. Whilst we may not be responsible for direct delivery we will offer support, guidance and challenge to our partners as they too help us to achieve our net zero vision.

- To listen, empower and support our partners so that they can play their part in achieving a net zero borough. Working together lots of progress has already been made, the following example provide more information.



INDUSTRY & BUSINESS

HYNET

The Council has supported many of its partners from various regions and different sectors to bring forward the exciting and ambitious Hynet project.

In October 2021, Hynet was selected as one of only two regions in the UK to be confirmed as a track 1 low carbon cluster. On the ground this exciting announcement will move the region a step closer to producing and storing hydrogen at an industrial scale. It will also enable Hydrogen to be transported across the region and will play a key role in “fuel switching” industry away from natural gas that emits carbon.

Due to go live in 2025, Hynet could reduce the regions carbon emissions by a quarter within 5 years. This is the equivalent of taking 4 million cars off the road.

Aside from the obvious environmental benefits Hynet will also provide a wealth of local economic opportunities for St Helens and the wider region. These include:

- Safeguarding existing jobs and creating over 6,000 new jobs.
- Creating around £17 billion of inward investment for the North West to 2050.

Businesses based in St Helens will be connected into Hynet and this will play a vital role in decarbonising industrial emissions across the region. We are delighted to support the project and will do everything we can to ensure St Helens businesses and communities benefit from this pioneering investment for generations to come.



INDUSTRY & BUSINESS

GLASS FUTURES THE GLOBAL CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

Glass Futures is working with the global glass industry and the supply chain to develop technologies to revolutionise glass manufacturing.

The new 160,000 sq. ft Centre of Excellence will be used to deliver industry and government backed research and development projects aimed at reducing the carbon footprint of glass production, and also provide a platform for industry to test and trial their own commercial ideas.

The project will be funded through a mix of public and private investment. Glass Futures has secured a £15m UKRI grant to support the installation of a globally unique, experimental

furnace and state of the art infrastructure capable of melting 30 tonnes of glass per day in a safe experimental space.

Network Space will secure private sector investment and has been awarded a £9m grant from the Liverpool City Region's 'Build Back Better' fund to support the construction costs. Glass sector companies will also contribute a further £20m in resource, time and equipment to support the project. St Helens Council will take a head lease of the building to facilitate the development and deliver a green recovery.



HOUSING

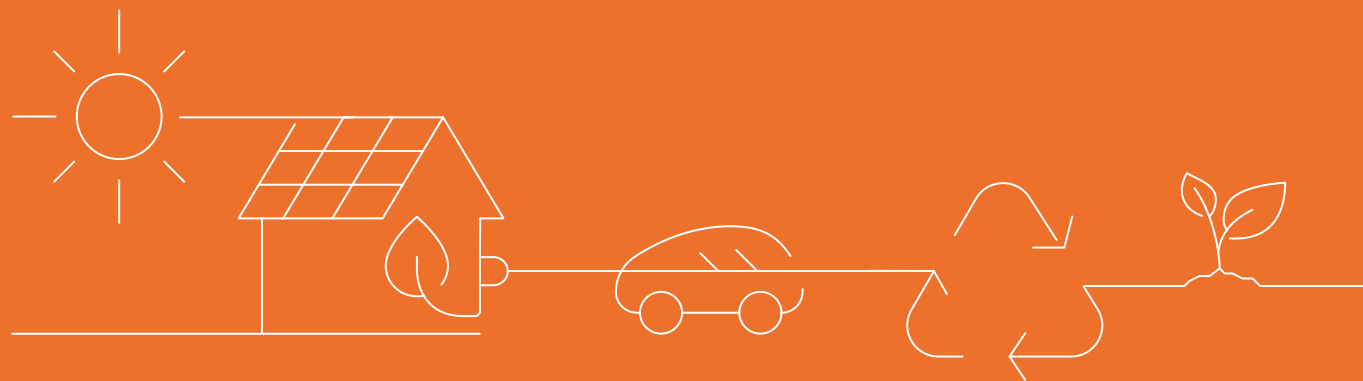
MAKING HOMES GREENER

In partnership we have accessed retrofit funding from Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy through a number of schemes including:- the Local Authority Delivery, Home Upgrade Grant (Sustainable Warmth Fund) and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. The details are as follows:

- £1.3 m from the Local Authority Delivery Fund for installation of external wall insulation and other retrofit measures 130 properties.
- With partners have submitted a bid from the Sustainable Warmth Fund for £2.4m to retrofit some 250 low energy efficiency properties in the borough.

- Working with Torus Housing we have submitted bids to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund for funding for external wall insulation and other retrofit measures to an estate of 150 homes all of the same archetype.

The St Helens Housing Strategy is under development for completion by end of 2021. This sets out five housing priorities for the Borough with the first of these being 'Towards Carbon Net Zero' to recognize the critical role housing will play in achieving the target to be net carbon neutral. This will set high level commitments in terms of local delivery against this national target and will directly connect with our climate response plan.



TRANSPORT

PROMOTING ACTIVE TRAVEL

Transport is a large contributor to St Helens greenhouse gas emissions, responsible for 29% of emissions in 2019. The majority of this can be directly attributed to private cars and taxis. Growth in the number of car trips taken has meant that, despite improved vehicle efficiency, transport emissions have been broadly flat for the last 30 years, even as those of other sectors have declined. Any efforts to decarbonise St Helens Borough will need to tackle this challenge head on.

The 2019 Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Transport Plan sets out plans to reduce the transport network's impact on our environment as part of a move to zero carbon by 2040. Similarly, our Borough Strategy sets out the commitment to invest in projects that promote active travel, improve air quality and reduce our carbon footprint. The vast majority of journeys made every day within the Liverpool City Region are short, and perfectly

suited for low-carbon modes. 66% of all trips are less than 5km in length, yet half are undertaken by car.

A net zero borough means making it easier, quicker, cheaper and safer to move around by low-carbon modes. It also requires more of us to choose to make those everyday local trips on foot, by bike or on public transport.

As a partner in the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, we will work to shape emerging policy such as the new City Region Local Transport Plan to ensure that reducing transport's contribution to climate change remains a strategic priority across everything we do. We will also work to ensure that our own journeys are more sustainable, engaging actively with our staff to incentivise active and sustainable travel modes and increasing access to electric vehicle charging infrastructure within the Council's vehicle fleet.



CLIMATE ADAPTION

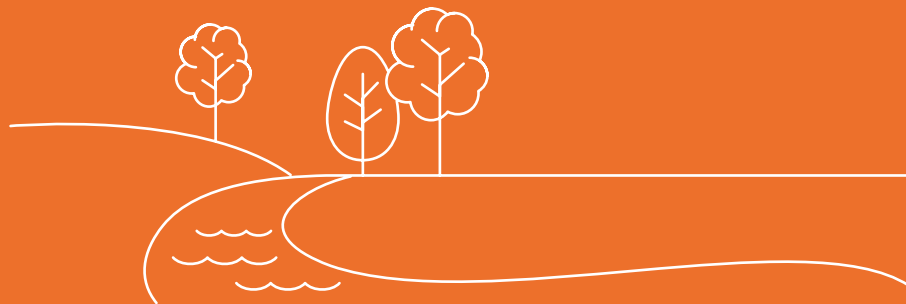
FLOOD MANAGEMENT

As we try to cut emissions and slow the pace of global warming, we must also adapt to climate consequences so we can protect ourselves and our communities.

After flooding in 2013 and 2015 at West End Road the Council investigated options to reduce flooding impacting several households and business in this area, however traditional engineering solutions were not possible to reduce the flood risk at this location. St Helens Council and the Environment Agency joined in partnership with the University of Liverpool and specialist consultants to undertake further assessment with the aim to investigate natural flood management opportunities. At the time Natural England were looking for opportunities to enhance local biodiversity areas and brought them on the project to trial potential log jams for both flood risk and pollution control. The trial works were then installed in 2016 following work with the partnership group.

The flood adaptation works included 4 'leaky dams' - natural dams made from tree trunks which were placed in series within the old mill dam area, attenuating 2,500 m³ of water (1 Olympics Swimming Pool). Leaky dams, will only let a certain amount of water through, slowing the flow of the watercourse even during heavy rain, gradually draining the trapped water to reduce the flood peak.

The £10,000 project was funded by Natural England, as it allowed improvement to the local biodiversity and SSSI in the area and installed via a combination of Groundwork St Helens, Work Training Initiatives (for unemployed youth) and Environment Agency Environmental Days. As part of the scheme a pollution control assessment was undertaken to see if these features helped reduce pollution in the watercourses. Further work is being investigated and developed to extend the measures further within the Sankey Valley.



I PLEDGE TO...

Together we will make St Helens a net zero borough by 2040.
To make this possible we will all need to take action to reduce our environmental impact.

Some residents have already got involved and given us their pledges.
Get in-touch and tell us yours at netzero@sthelens.gov.uk
or visit our us at netzero.sthelens.gov.uk





ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL