St Helens Borough Council

COVID 19 - The council’s response and our ‘Reset’ blueprint

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ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE
The Covid-19 pandemic has been the most challenging emergency the Borough and the council has responded to in recent times. The nature of the pandemic saw the council react at speed to implement Government policy and national unprecedented guidance to limit the spread of the virus, protect the health of all our residents and ensure the most vulnerable in our communities are safe and cared for.

This has required a remarkable effort by our staff, partners and residents many of whom have worked tirelessly and acted with compassion and love to protect, support and care for others. Yet the financial, social and wider economic impact of the pandemic is the great test we now face and the scale of it cannot be underestimated.

How might our Reset Priorities be a focus for Scrutiny work programmes and Panels?
Our Strengths

- **A Growing Economy**
  - over 75% of working age adults are in work, almost 5,000 more than five years ago

- **A Growing Population**
  - more than 180,000 people living in the Borough, 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 2,800 new homes built over the past 5 years

- **A Safe Place to Live**
  - crime rates are generally lower than those of our statistical neighbours

- **A Green Borough**
  - well over half of our Borough is rural with many quality parks and open spaces

- **Integrated Health & Care**
  - a nationally recognised approach to delivering integrated health & care

Our 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 & 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; services need to improve
CV19 in St Helens

- Total deaths mentioning Covid-19 in St Helens – **193**
- Total Covid-19 deaths where place of death was recorded as Care Home – **80**
  - (NB – Total deaths of care home residents is likely to be higher due to residents who died in hospital)
  - Source – PHE from ONS data up to 12 June
- Total positive diagnoses of SARS-COV 2 in St Helens – **1115**
  - (Pillar 1 and 2 testing up to 26/06/20. This includes diagnoses from NHS, university and private labs. Source – NHS Digital)
Our Response

- **February 2020** is our baseline of Business as Usual
- We identified a set of principles to guide St Helens’ COVID-19 response:
  - St Helens will identify those made most vulnerable by the current situation & actively support them
  - St Helens services will guide people to the support they need
  - St Helens services will ensure all residents receive the essentials they need
  - St Helens will support the organisations, groups and businesses within our communities and maximise their impact
  - St Helens will prepare for the long-term now, beginning to think and plan for reset and the organisation we must become
- We worked to deliver immediate support where possible whilst the offer from central government became clearer, and continuity planning for our essential services.
Support for Residents & Community

#STHELENSTOGETHER
Supporting each other and our communities

Donate at spacehive.com/st-helens-together
Doing things differently

Council Services
Summary of action taken to support our communities
in response to COVID-19

- 16,665 requests to #StHelensTogether helpline
- 760 registered #StHelensTogether volunteers
- 500,000 items of PPE supplied across all care providers
- £24.6m of grants have been paid to businesses up to 22 May
- 892 food parcels delivered to vulnerable residents
- 35,475 calls to the Contact Centre
- 801,000 brown bins collected since lockdown
- 25,000 views of exercise videos uploaded to Go Active social media channels
- 2,000 online library membership increase since lockdown
Doing things differently - Community

- Creation of the Community Hub - delivered over 1,000 food parcels (1,275 between 30/3/2020 and 28/6/2020).
- The numbers of food deliveries are now gradually decreasing,
- Onboarded to a DEFRA programme, whereby Contact Centre staff can directly book weekly online supermarket delivery slots at Tesco and Iceland for residents (1,000 slots available)
- Future exit strategy being considered
- Lack of clarity re government funding
• Snapshot - 4,705 children and young people attended a school in St Helens on Wednesday, 24th June 2020 - equivalent to just under 18% of the total St Helens school age population (26,732 Pupils in St Helens)

• Total Pupils attending school: 4,705 (17.6%)
• Primary pupils: 3,820 (24.6%)
• Secondary pupils: 643 (6.0%)
• Special/PRU: 124 (27.3%)
• Total students of keyworkers attending school: 2,220
• Total pupils with an EHC Plan attending school: 215
• Total pupils with a social worker attending school: 342
Doing things differently - Council workforce

- PM announcement of 23 March – all staff except those in essential services were asked to work from home and not go into their workplaces until further notice.
- Changing to an organisation that predominantly works remotely is working well and will continue.
- The highest number of CV19 related absences was 446 (20th April) against a total workforce of 6045 employees (including schools).
- Staff who are unable to do their usual role (Libraries / Leisure centres etc) were redeployment on a temporary basis to other key services.
- Wellbeing of staff – virtual working - ongoing support, supervision and effective performance management for a more agile workforce.
• Our agile working philosophy “work is something we do, not somewhere we go, it’s an activity, not a place”.

• It is proposed that all employees, that were previously office based, become agile workers by default.

• The criteria that determines which employees are not in this category are:
  • the specific role requires a fixed office base/nature of the role
  • there is a statutory duty for full-time face to face resident contact
  • the employees home circumstances are such that they are unable to work from home

• From initial estimates around 90% of staff would be agile workers.

• This will influence our future accommodation strategy
Doing things differently – a selection

- delivering services in line with business continuity plans
- innovative ways of doing things differently
  - **Social Workers** - continuing to respond to child protection concerns and continue to visit children and families, including writing letters to children to help build and maintain relationships and embracing the use of technology – facetime, zoom etc.
  - **Care Leavers Team** - creative in how they continue to engage our care leavers, many of whom are socially isolated e.g. live streaming of key life skills sessions via Instagram - DIY, cooking & keep fit sessions.
  - **Music and Cultural Education Partnership** - continued to deliver music and cultural education on line providing schools with curriculum resources, lesson plans and online one to one tuition; played concerts in the grounds of Care Homes; established Song For St Helens which features performances from local young people and songs with a wellbeing theme and included a online performance viewed by 7,000 people.
Doing things differently – a selection

- **Youth Services** - continued to support young people including
  - distribution of weekly “COVID Survival Kits”,
  - Detached Youth Work in 5 areas across the borough
  - Launch of a virtual youth provision.

- **Sports Development** – moved to online only – huge increases in digital presence.

- **Library Service** - digital presence has been enhanced during COVID-19. As well as e-books etc, there is now digital development work on offer each week such as Read and Rhyme times, activities for teens and social media quizzes.

- Due to restrictions in number of attendees to ten per funeral service, we have facilities to stream a restricted and private live broadcast via the council website to invited family and friends only – this has now become an in-demand service.
Supporting the Local Economy Recovery
The St Helens Economy – an overview

• St Helens faces significant economic challenges. Against headline economic indicators, St Helen’s sits in the bottom half of all Local Authorities. It faces significant prosperity and productivity gaps which are greater than those recorded for the City Region overall.

• St Helens produces 25% less output per hour worked than the national average. Productivity, across all broad sectors is lower in St Helens than nationally. In addition its industrial structure is weighted towards lower productivity sectors.

• In St Helens the prosperity gap with the national average is even larger. Per capita, 46% less output is produced compared to national levels. This reflects both lower employment and economic activity rates and gaps could widen if the crisis leads to increased unemployment and higher inactivity.

• Whilst these gaps have persisted for many years, the effects of the last recession have been felt disproportionately in St Helens, which by the end of 2018 had not recovered GVA to its pre-recession peak.

• Economically, St Helens does not face the shock to economy caused by Covid from a position of strength.
Economic Impact

- projected to have the second largest economic slowdown out of all Liverpool City Region local authorities, with an anticipated 39% decline in output.

- a high concentration of sectors that are projected to decline - Education, retail, construction and manufacturing = sharp reductions in output in the short term.

- health and social care - the only sector projected to grow in the short term.

- St. Helens has the lowest concentration of health and social care output out of the 6 Liverpool City Region (LCR) local authorities
Local Economy and Business Support

- To date, we have made payments of over £25m which represent 93.2% of eligible business grant claims.

- Small Business Grant Fund

- Retail, Hospitality and Leisure

- Discretionary Top-Up Grant Programme - Aim to help those that haven’t received help before
  - St Helens allocation £1.5m
  - Demand will outstrip supply
  - Less than £51k rateable value
  - Pressure from Independent Pubs and Restaurants with rateable value over £51k
Local Economy and Business Support

- Supporting local businesses to diversify
- Local activity in opening up the High Street
- Distributing business grants
- Reopening specific areas such as waste and recycling
- Alignment with the City Region Economic Recovery Plan workstreams to develop more medium to long term local recovery.

### Evidence base

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<th>1: Business Ecosystem</th>
<th>2: People Focused Recovery</th>
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<td>Foster a strong, high value and innovative business ecosystem which is conducive to recovery and growth.</td>
<td>Ensure the health and wellbeing of LCR residents. Whilst minimising labour market impact.</td>
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### Impact analysis

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<th>3: Place &amp; Economic Infrastructure for Recovery</th>
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<td>Secure investment in the economic infrastructure needed for recovery and growth.</td>
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### Prioritisation of interventions

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<th>4: Opportunities to Improve</th>
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<td>Capitalise on the opportunities to do things differently and better in recovery and growth.</td>
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### Formal approvals

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<th>Get Ready to Respond</th>
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<td>Ensure the St Helens has an agreed set of priorities and fully worked up business cases so that we can respond swiftly to funding opportunities as they arise.</td>
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<th>Shape Existing Delivery</th>
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<td>Work with partners across the Borough and the City Region to ensure delivery is aligned towards recovery.</td>
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Test, Trace, Isolate & Contain
Test, Trace, Isolate, Contain

- Local Outbreak Management Plan and governance structures in place
- First Health Protection Board held
- Working on temp recruitment of EHOs to build on local capacity
- Working with businesses to retain the 2-meter distancing to prevent outbreak management and local lockdown, even if able to reduce to 1 meter in line with revised guidance
- Producing guidance around localised lockdowns –a focus on prevention
- Specialist plans for Care Homes and Schools
- Ongoing issue re: powers
Reset and Recovery
Challenges & Opportunities
St Helens Reset, Recovery and Remobilisation Architecture

- **MERSEYSIDE RESILIENCE FORUM**
  - Statutory response forum under Civil Contingencies Act

- **MRF STRATEGIC RECOVERY CO-ORDINATING GROUP**
  - Recovery Strategy & Planning

- **THEMATIC RECOVERY CELLS**
  - Community
  - Health & Social Care
  - Education
  - Business & Economy
  - Environment & Infrastructure

- **POLICY LEADS GROUP**
  - Leading opportunities to improve/reset

- **ST HELENS COVID-19 STRATEGIC GROUP**
  - Chief and Senior Officer Group

- **ST HELENS RESET & RECOVERY CO-ORDINATION GROUP**
  - Reset/Recovery Strategy & Planning Coordination & Leadership
  - Assess
  - Establish a New Normal
  - Review & Learn

- **ST HELENS TTT GROUP**
  - Leading Local Testing, Tracking & Tracing

- **DIRECTORATE RECOVERY PLANNING**
  - Reset & Remobilisation
  - Identifying opportunities
  - PEOPLE
  - PLACE
  - ORGANISATION
Reset and Recovery Principles

• Economic impact, support and recovery - stabilisation, stimulation, development of a more resilient, inclusive and green economy

• Support for vulnerable residents - addressing family poverty and worklessness

• Health and Social Care - transformation and further integration to a ‘new normal’; working with key partners and building on the successful integration (St Helens Cares)

• Relationships/Connections - with Liverpool City Region, other local authorities, national agencies and our communities

• The Council’s financial resilience - both revenue and capital

• The Council’s transformation - sustaining new ways of working developed during COVID-19; what this means for service delivery and future organisation

• Evidence base and analysis - closely monitoring impacts and the effectiveness of responses, and informing decision making on the above areas.
Reset & Recovery Planning

• We continue to progress Reset and Recovery Plans for our **people (residents), our place (the borough) and our organisation**.

• Directorates have completed impact assessments that will include recommendations on embedding new practices and system change, exploring and sharing good practice, and identifying where there have been significant impacts on service delivery due to Covid-19.

• We will take this unique opportunity to refresh our priorities, be clear about our longer-term ambitions and move into a phase of transformation where we can create a fairer and more secure future for all our residents.

• In addition, we continue to focus on ‘business as usual’, so far as possible and on actions and activity to move the organisation and the borough forward towards achieving our evolving ambitions for change.
Timelines and Phasing

• There will be several distinct phases to activity including work over the next few weeks and months as lockdown eases, the opening of the borough, including schools, the town centre, businesses, managing and influencing the behaviour of the public, ensuring effective Test & Trace capabilities, together with the medium- and longer-term reset required. Reset and Recovery will therefore be delivered in three phases.

• **Phase 1** – During and Release of lockdown (0 – 3 months)

• **Phase 2** - Transition (0 – 12 months)

• **Phase 3** - Reset and Transformation (0 –12 months and beyond)
Understanding crisis-response measures
Collective Sense-making

END
WE’VE DONE THESE THINGS TO RESPOND TO IMMEDIATE DEMANDS BUT THEY ARE SPECIFIC TO THE CRISIS

AMPLIFY
WE’VE BEEN ABLE TO TRY THESE NEW THINGS AND THEY SHOW SOME SIGNS OF PROMISE FOR THE FUTURE

NEW PRACTICE

LEGO
WE’VE BEEN ABLE TO STOP DOING THESE THINGS THAT WERE ALREADY / ARE NOW UNFIT FOR PURPOSE

RESTART
WE’VE HAD TO STOP THESE THINGS TO FOCUS ON THE CRISIS BUT THEY NEED TO BE PICKED UP IN SOME FORM

OLD PRACTICE

END – LET GO – RESTART – AMPLIFY?
**Transformation vs Responsibility**

**Innovation against the odds**
Central Government drives major national programmes for social and economic recovery. Local Authorities become more agile to deliver local transformation alongside other responsibilities, acting as coordinators to get the most out of combined local resources.

**Civic renewal**
Local Authorities are able to use learnings from the crisis response to embed new ways of working, engage residents in decision making, and form partnerships with health, local businesses, VCSE and communities. Opportunities for locally driven change abound.

**Central government leads the response**

**Local government leads the response**

**Central command and control**
Central initiatives take precedent and local authorities retrench to focus on delivering core services. The NHS and central departments expand their remit and community partners operate increasingly independently.

**Race back to normal**
Local Authorities focus on quickly getting services back up and running, returning to previous systems and making them as effective as possible in the new context. After a year of upheaval, staff and the wider public have little appetite for change.

**Return to pre-crisis ways of working**
Governance & Planning

- Define what constitutes a successful recovery for St Helens
- Ensure all planning and implementation remains agile to respond to a changing context;
- Ensure a cross-cutting focus on reducing existing or new inequalities;
- Ensure St Helens can mitigate impacts & take advantage of new opportunities arising from the ‘New Norm’;
- Effectively communicate to residents/other stakeholders progress towards recovery;
- Revised focus of the Council Plan and Priorities

**FOCUS**
- Economic impact, support and recovery
- Support for vulnerable residents
- Health and social care
- Relationships & connections
- The council’s financial resilience
- The council’s transformation
- Evidence base and analysis

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**PROMOTE GOOD HEALTH, INDEPENDENCE & CARE ACROSS OUR COMMUNITIES**

**ENSURE CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A POSITIVE START IN LIFE**

**CREATE SAFE AND STRONG COMMUNITIES FOR OUR RESIDENTS**

**SUPPORT A STRONG, DIVERSE AND WELL CONNECTED LOCAL ECONOMY**

**CREATE A GREEN, THRIVING AND VIBRANT PLACE TO BE PROUD OF**

**BE A MODERN, EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE COUNCIL**

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**COVID-19 STRATEGIC GROUP**

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**RESET & RECOVERY COORDINATION GROUP**
Questions??