

## Draft Proposed Modifications

Chapter 2, p10:

### 2.8 Town Centres

2.8.1 St.Helens Town Centre plays an important sub-regional role as the Borough's principal town centre providing a range of retail and other services for the Borough. This is complemented by the roles played by Earlestown Town Centre (within the town of Newton-le-Willows) and a range of smaller district and local centres. A key challenge is for the town and other centres to diversify their role in response to changing economic circumstances, including competition from retail parks and internet shopping. **The Council has successfully secured an initial £173,029 capacity funding grant to support the development of a Town Deal Board and Investment Plan from the Governments Town Deal fund to help with projects around land use and regeneration, connectivity, skills and employment for St Helens Town Centre.**

**2.8.2 In addition, the Council is entering into a strategic partnership agreement with the English Cities Fund (ECF) to ensure the delivery of a Borough wide regeneration strategy initially starting with St Helens Town Centre.**

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LPA02 - Policy Amendments, p17-78:

### Policy LPA02

#### Policy LPA02: Spatial Strategy

1. The sustainable regeneration and growth of St.Helens Borough through to 2035 and beyond will be focussed (as far as practicable, having regard to the availability of suitable sites) on the Key Settlements, namely St.Helens Core Area, Blackbrook and Haydock, Newton-le-Willows and Earlestown, Rainford, Billinge, Garswood and Rainhill.
2. New development will be directed to sustainable locations that are appropriate to its scale and nature and that will enable movements between homes, jobs and key services and facilities to be made by sustainable non-car modes of transport.
3. The re-use of previously developed land in Key Settlements will remain a key priority. A substantial proportion of new housing throughout the Plan period will be on such sites. This will be encouraged by setting lower thresholds for developer contributions on previously developed sites to reflect the higher costs and lower sales values typically associated with redeveloping such sites.

**4. Comprehensive regeneration of the wider Borough will be delivered by the English Cities Fund Regeneration Partnership, through the provision of quality housing, new commercial activity, upgraded infrastructure and the overall improvement of the social and economic viability of the Borough on a phased basis.**

**54.** This Plan releases land from the Green Belt to enable the needs for housing and employment development to be met in full over the Plan period from 1 April 2020 until 31 March 2035, in the most sustainable locations. Other land is removed from the Green Belt and safeguarded to allow for longer term housing and / or employment needs to be met after 31 March 2035. Such Safeguarded Land is not allocated for development in the Plan period and planning permission for permanent development should only be granted following a full review of this Plan. Within the remaining areas of Green Belt (shown on the Policies Map) new development shall be regarded as inappropriate unless it falls within one of the exceptions set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (or any successor document). Inappropriate development in the Green Belt shall not be approved except in very special circumstances.

**65.** Substantial new employment development (set out in Policy LPA04 and excluding town centre uses) will take place on large sites that are capable of accommodating large employment buildings (over 9,000m<sup>2</sup>) and are close to the M6 and M62. High quality road, public transport and active travel links will be required between existing and proposed residential areas, particularly those with high deprivation levels, and areas of employment growth. Existing employment areas will be retained where they are suitable and viable for this use in order to maintain a diverse portfolio of accessible employment opportunities across the Borough. Suitable development that would diversify the rural economy will also be supported.

**76.** Parkside West and Parkside East form transformational employment opportunity sites that will make a major contribution to the economic development of St.Helens Borough, the Liverpool City Region and beyond. Development that prejudices their development in accordance with Policies LPA04 and LPA10 will not be allowed.

**87.** The preferred locations for new town centre development shall be within St.Helens Town Centre (as the Borough's principal town centre), Earlestown Town Centre, and the Borough's network of district and local centres, in line with Policies LPB01, LPB02 and LPC04.

**98.** The quality of life, health and wellbeing of St.Helens Borough's residents,

workers and visitors and the quality of the natural environment will be supported by:

- a) taking steps to maintain, enhance, connect and / or expand the Borough's network of ecological, open space and recreational sites and greenways in accordance with Policy LPA09;
- b) seeking improvements to the quality of open space within and around new development;
- c) requiring new development proposals to mitigate their contribution to climate change and to adapt to its impacts;
- d) supporting the delivery of landscape reclamation and improvement projects in locations such as the Bold Forest Park and Sankey Valley Park; and
- e) requiring development to support healthy lifestyles in accordance with Policy LPD11.

**109.** The provision of a convenient, safe and sustainable transport network, and the delivery of improvements to the network, will be required in line with Policy LPA07.

**1110.** New development that would deliver regeneration within the key settlements and accord with other Plan policies will be supported. Regeneration in these settlements will also be promoted by (in addition to the measures set out above) focussing available resources on its effective delivery and preventing development that would adversely impact upon or jeopardise the delivery of regeneration proposals.

LPA02 – Reasoned Justification Amendments, p24:

### Supporting regeneration

4.6.19 As a priority, the Council will continue to work to support the redevelopment of brownfield sites in the urban area. ~~It is also pursuing opportunities to enhance town centres in the Borough, for example through the creation of the St. Helens Town Centre Strategy. In addition, the Council intends to work pro-actively with partner organisations where necessary to secure the suitable regeneration of other town, district and local centres and of existing housing and employment areas, particularly in less affluent areas. The Council will prepare Supplementary Planning Documents covering specific areas~~

where this is considered necessary to help implement their regeneration.

**4.6.20** **The Council is entering into a formal partnership agreement with the English Cities Fund as the Council's preferred strategic partner to ensure the delivery of a Borough wide regeneration strategy, including economic regeneration and housing. The Council has recognised that a new approach to growing the economy of the Borough is required that seeks to work pro-actively with the private sector and establish a strategic partnership maximising the opportunities presented to deliver significant future growth in St. Helens and deliver key priorities including Town Centre regeneration, social wellbeing and providing appropriate infrastructure to support future development.**

**4.6.21** **Furthermore, as part of the 'Town Deal' initiative established by the Government in 2019, the Council are seeking to secure significant investment of up to £25 million. This funding will be used to help increase economic growth with a focus on land use and regeneration, improved connectivity (both transport and better broadband connectivity), skills and employment, and heritage, arts and culture for St. Helens Town Centre.**

**4.6.22** **The Council will prepare Supplementary Planning Documents covering specific areas to help implement regeneration where this is considered necessary.**

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LPA04 – Policy Amendments: p29

#### **Policy LPA04: A Strong and Sustainable Economy**

1. The Council will work with partner organisations to:
  - a) help meet the Liverpool City Region's needs for economic growth, job creation and skills development;
  - b) maximise the economic opportunities presented by St.Helens Borough's location in relation to strategic road and rail routes;
  - c) ensure the necessary infrastructure is provided to support business needs (see [Policy LPA\\_08](#)); and
  - d) support the creation of and expansion of small businesses; **and**
  - e) support businesses and organisations in the economic recovery and renewal from the COVID-19 pandemic.**

LPA04 – Reasoned Justification Amendments, p32:

#### **4.12 Reasoned Justification**

4.12.1 The Council's City Growth Strategy (2008-18) and Council Plan 2017-2020 recognise the need to work in partnership with local communities and businesses to deliver economic growth, to strengthen the local business base, and to increase aspiration, skills and employment in the Borough.

**4.12.2 The Local Plan’s vision, still stands true as we plan for recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic: By 2035, St. Helens Borough will provide through the balanced regeneration and sustainable growth of its built-up areas, a range of attractive, healthy, safe, inclusive and accessible places in which to live, work, visit and invest. Key to this is a continued focus on the economy, so that St. Helens residents can access good quality jobs that raise their living standards, whilst also improving physical and mental health.**

**4.12.3 It is anticipated that the English Cities Fund Regeneration Partnership and the Council’s successful Town Deal funding bid will also assist in the post COVID-19 economic recovery.**

4.12.24 The provision of new well-located employment land and floorspace is essential to the Borough's future economic prosperity. Policy LPA04 therefore allocates sufficient land to meet anticipated development needs within the B1 (business), B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution) use classes during the Plan period. The NPPF requires the Council to plan for and accommodate all foreseeable types of economic growth. Policy LPA04 therefore identifies a range of locations, types and sizes of employment sites to meet the needs of specific sectors of the business community and to protect existing areas where employment continues to be the most appropriate use.

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LPB01 – Policy Amendments, p73:

### **Policy LPB01: St.Helens Town Centre and Central Spatial Area**

1. The Council will promote the Central Spatial Area as an accessible and welcoming destination for new development that accords with paragraphs 2 to 9 of this Policy and that would help create a high-quality built environment. Development that would support the delivery and implementation of the Council-led strategy for the future regeneration and development of St.Helens Town Centre will be supported.

**2. The English Cities Fund Regeneration Partnership will help deliver a comprehensive redevelopment of the Town Centre and Central Spatial Area, including new commercial activity, upgraded infrastructure, the provision of quality housing, and the overall improvement of the social and economic viability of the area.**

32. Proposals for retail and leisure development will be directed to suitable locations within the Town Centre and then other sequentially preferable sites in line with Policy LPC04 and national policy. A town centre ‘area of opportunity’ for future retail, leisure and cultural development is shown indicatively on the Policies Map. Development that would result in significant harm to the Town Centre’s vitality and viability or prejudice planned investment within it will be resisted.

43. Proposals for change of use of units in the Primary Retail Frontages in

St.Helens Town Centre will be refused unless they would be to Class A145 retail use or another main town centre use or uses that would contribute positively to the overall vitality and viability of the centre. Development proposals within the Primary and Secondary Frontages that would not result in an active ground floor use with a window display frontage will be refused.

**54.** New development proposals will be required, where appropriate having regard to their location, nature and scale, to facilitate linked trips between the Primary Shopping Area and other existing and proposed developments within the St.Helens Central Spatial Area, including Asda on Kirkland Street; The Range on Chalon Way; St.Helens and Ravenhead Retail Parks; Linkway West; Tesco Extra on Linkway; and St.Helens RLFC Stadium.

**65.** Regular health checks will be undertaken to monitor the vitality and viability of St.Helens Town Centre.

**76.** Proposals for housing or a mix of housing and other suitable use(s) within or on the edge of the Town Centre will be supported where they would avoid prejudicing the retail and service role of the Town Centre.

**87.** New development in the vicinity of St.Helens Canal will be required to, as appropriate, improve the public realm by retaining and enhancing the existing waterway, positively integrating with the canal and securing improvements to Green Infrastructure in line with Policy LPA09.

**98.** Pedestrian and vehicular accessibility within and around the Town Centre will be managed in line with the road-user hierarchy set out in the Liverpool City Region: Transport Plan for Growth in order to:

- a) maintain pedestrian priority within the Town Centre and extend pedestrian links to adjacent areas;
- b) make suitable provision for cyclists;
- c) support the Town Centre as the hub of the public transport network in St.Helens Borough; and
- d) make appropriate provision for cars and service vehicles.

LPB01 – Reasoned Justification Amendments, p75:

### 5.3 Reasoned Justification

5.3.6 A Town Centre Strategy<sup>46</sup> to provide a comprehensive approach to the future of St.Helens Town Centre underwent public consultation during August – October 2017. The Strategy set out a vision for the future of the town centre detailing thematic initiatives to deliver this. **In January 2020 the Council successfully received an initial £173,029 capacity fund as part of the Governments Town Deal initiative. The Council are now seeking to secure significant investment of up to £25 million. This funding will be used to help increase economic growth with a focus on land use and regeneration, improved connectivity (both transport and better broadband connectivity), skills and employment, and heritage, arts and culture. A Town Investment Plan will be developed and will sit alongside the Town Centre Strategy.**

5.3.7 The Council's future aspirations to improve the offer of St.Helens Town Centre as set out within the Strategy include the provision of new retail and leisure floorspace, subject to the appropriate policy tests. It is considered that this approach, along with steps to encourage the reuse of vacant floorspace, will address the identified quantitative and qualitative needs of residents in the Borough.

5.3.8 The Council will support initiatives and schemes that will help to implement the Strategy by revitalising and enhancing the Town Centre's retail, leisure and cultural offer. The 'Area of Opportunity', referred to in the Strategy, has been identified due to the potential to reconfigure and / or redevelop land and premises close to Church Square and Chalon Way for suitable town centre uses. **To support this initiative and to assist in the regeneration of the area, the Council is entering into a regeneration partnership with the English Cities Fund to deliver a comprehensive redevelopment of the Town Centre (and wider borough on a phased basis).**

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LPB02 – Policy Amendments, p77:

### **Policy LPB02: Earlestown Town Centre**

1. The Council will seek to safeguard and enhance the function and role of Earlestown Town Centre as the second town centre within the Borough.
2. Main town centre uses will be directed to suitable locations within the defined Town Centre first and then other sites in accordance with the sequential approach set out in Policy LPC04 and national policy. The preferred location for new retail development shall be within the defined Primary Shopping Area.
3. Development that would result in a significant adverse impact on the Town Centre's vitality and viability or planned investment within it will be resisted in accordance with Policy LPC04 and national policy.
4. The delivery and implementation of a Council-led strategy to provide a framework for the future regeneration and development of the town centre will be supported. **The English Cities Fund Regeneration Partnership will help deliver a mix of residential, leisure, business and retail development all centred around the Town Centre.**

Reasoned Justification Amendments, p78:

## **5.6 Reasoned Justification**

5.6.3 The Council will seek to safeguard **and build upon** this important role and function by applying the 'town centre first' approach to ensure that Earlestown remains the Borough's second centre providing a highly sustainable location

for retail and other services. **Through its partnership with the English Cities Fund the Council will work towards creating a mix of residential, leisure, business and retail development all centred around the Town Centre.**

- 5.6.8 To provide a focus for future development of the town centre and positively promote Earlestown as a location to live, **through the English Cities Fund Regeneration Partnership** the Council, intend to bring forward a dedicated Town Centre strategy, which may form the basis for a Supplementary Planning Document. This will include initiatives to:
- enhance the Town Centre as a shopping destination and increase the vibrancy of the town's market;
  - protect and enhance the town's-built heritage;
  - promote Earlestown as a key commuter settlement with direct rail connectivity to Liverpool, Manchester and Chester;
  - increase the number and variety of residential units by encouraging mixed use development that makes a positive contribution to the economic role of the town centre; and
  - link the town centre with the new homes to be provided through the residential redevelopment of Deacon Trading Estate and other housing developments.

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Glossary – Add

### **Covid19**

**The Coronavirus disease (COVID19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. The disease became a global pandemic and led to a complete lockdown for many countries in 2020. The outbreak of COVID-19 had a significant impact on businesses, leading to the onset of a recession and affecting the economic and social lives of the entire nation.**

### **English Cities Fund (ECF)**

**The English Cities Fund (ECF) is a joint venture development company, set up by three partners – Homes England, Legal & General and Muse Developments. ECF was originally established by the Labour Government in 2001 to drive greater institutional and private investment in English towns and cities. The ECF work with councils, landowners and communities to regenerate areas, typically where there has been market failure in the past.**

### **Town Deals**

**The Town Deals initiative was established by the Government in 2019 and saw the launch of a £3.6 billion Towns Fund. It allows communities, businesses and local leaders to develop their own ambitious proposals for growth through the creation of a Town Deal Board. Boards can submit bids for funding up to £25 million. The funding is intended to help increase economic growth with a**



**focus on regeneration, improved transport, better broadband connectivity, skills and culture.**