

ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL

At the Meeting of the St Helens Borough Council held on
3 March 2021

(Present) **The Mayor (Councillor McQuade) (Chair)**
Councillors Baines, Banks, Bell, Bond, Bowden, Burns,
Charlton, Clarke, Cunliffe, Fulham, Gill, Gomez-Aspron,
Greaves, Groucutt, Grunewald, Hattersley, Haw, J Jackson,
P Jackson, Johnson, Jones, D Long, T Long, Lynch,
Maloney MBE, McCauley, McDonnell, Murphy, Mussell, O’Keefe,
Osundeko, Pearl, Pearson, C Preston, L Preston, Quinn,
Reynolds, Smith, Sweeney, Tasker, Uddin, van der Burg, and
Wiseman.

(Not Present) **Councillors Pritchard and Sims**

37 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Pritchard and Sims.

38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

No Declarations of Interest from Members were made.

39 MINUTES

* **Resolved that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2021 be
 approved.**

40 THE MAYOR’S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor offered condolences following the death of Alderman Leon McGuire and acknowledged the imminent one-year anniversary of the first Covid-19 lockdown. He offered condolences to all those who had lost their lives during the unprecedented times and announced that St Helens Borough Council would plant a cherry blossom tree in each Ward and the Steve Prescott Bridge would light up on the evening of 23 March 2021 where everyone will be encouraged to pause and reflect not only on the lives lost but thoughts and thanks to colleagues and partners battling everyday to fight the virus.

**41 TO HEAR AND RESPOND TO ANY QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS IN
 ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 9**

The Mayor reported that there were no questions submitted in accordance with this Procedure Rule.

**42 TO HEAR AND RESPOND TO ANY QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF
 THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10**

The Mayor reported that there were no questions submitted in accordance with this Procedure Rule.

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43 TO HEAR ANY DEPUTATIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 11

The Mayor reported that no requests to hear a deputation had been submitted in accordance with this Procedure Rule.

44 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2021-2022

A report was submitted which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 24 February 2021.

Council were asked to approve the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2021-22. The Scheme would apply for the financial year commencing 1 April 2021 and would replace the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme (2020-21).

* **Resolved that:**

- (1) **the Council Tax Reduction scheme for 2021-2022 be approved; and**
- (2) **the Executive Director of Corporate Services be delegated authority, should it become necessary, to amend the scheme if the Chancellor of the Exchequer announces further changes to social security benefits following the Budget held on 3 March 2021.**

45 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2021-2024 AND REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET 2021/22

A report was submitted which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 24 February 2021

The report provided an update on the latest budget position and sought approval for a 2021/22 budget which was affordable, met the needs of the residents of St Helens, and complied with the agreed priorities and budget strategy of the Council.

The report also sought approval for the capital programme and associated strategy and the Treasury Management Policy Statement and the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 (incorporating the Annual Revenue Provision Statement) and the associated Treasury Limits and Prudential Indicators.

The report provided a forecast budget position for the financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24, including details of the potential budget gap and to sought approval of the Strategy for addressing the potential budget pressures identified.

A recorded vote was taken in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 and the provisions of the Council's Constitution.

For:	Councillors:	Baines, Banks, Bell, Bond, Bowden, Burns, Charlton, Clarke, Cunliffe, Fulham, Gill, Gomez-Aspron, Greaves, Groucutt, Grunewald, Hattersley, Haw, J Jackson, P Jackson, Johnson, D Long, T Long, Lynch, Maloney MBE, McCauley, McDonnell, McQuade, Murphy, Osundeko, Pearl, Pearson, C Preston, L Preston, Quinn, Smith, Sweeney, Tasker, Uddin, van der Burg and Wiseman.
Against:	Councillors:	None

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Abstained:	Councillors: Jones, O' Keefe, Mussell and Reynolds.
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* **Resolved that:**

- (1) the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-2024, contained within Appendix A;**
- (2) a 2021/22 Band D Council Tax of £1,578.78, which equates to a Council Tax increase of 4.99%, inclusive of the application of a 3% Adult Social Care Precept, as detailed within the Revenue & Capital Budget 2021/22 section of Appendix A be approved;**
- (3) a Council Tax Requirement of £82.223 million for 2021/22 as provided within the Revenue & Capital Budget 2021/22 section of Appendix A be approved;**
- (4) the Revenue Budget for 2021/22 as provided within the Revenue & Capital Budget 2021/22 section of Appendix A be approved;**
- (5) the Capital Programme and associated strategy, summarised within the Revenue & Capital Budget 2021/22 section of Appendix A and detailed / provided in Appendices 3 & 4(b) be approved;**
- (6) the in-principle addition of a number of strategic capital investment schemes to the capital programme for 2021/22, subject to approval following detailed feasibility and design work, as detailed in Appendix 5 of Appendix A be approved;**
- (7) the creation of a new Earmarked Reserve, the Funding Reform Volatility Reserve, and the rationalisation of reserves as detailed in the Revenue & Capital Budget 2021/22 section of Appendix A be approved;**
- (8) the Treasury Management Policy Statement as detailed in Appendix 2 of Appendix A be approved;**
- (9) the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 (incorporating the Annual Revenue Provision Statement) and the associated Treasury Limits and Prudential Indicators, as detailed in Appendix 2 of Appendix A be approved; and**
- (10) the Executive Director of Corporate Services be delegated authority to determine the profile of credit liabilities within the Prudential Indicator "Authorised Limit for External Borrowing", and to amend the criteria by which the Council's lending list is compiled for its internally-managed investments.**

46 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021/22

A report was submitted which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 24 February 2021 which informed Council that the Localism Act 2011 section 38 (1) required all Councils to prepare an annual pay policy statement. These pay statements must articulate a Council's own policy towards a range of issues relating

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to the pay of its workforce, particularly its senior staff (or chief officers) and its lowest paid employees. Pay policy statements must be prepared for each financial year and must be approved by full Council.

The Pay Policy Statement agreed by Cabinet included reference to the Exit Payment Cap Regulations 2020. As the Regulations had now been revoked, this reference had been removed from the Pay Policy Statement for approval by Council.

* **Resolved that the Pay Policy Statement 2021/2022 be approved.**

47 **COUNCIL TAX 2021/22**

A report was submitted which set out the Council Tax Requirement for 2021/22 and sought approval for the levels of Council Tax for the Borough in accordance with relevant legislation.

The report also provided confirmation of the precepts notified by major Precepting Authorities and the relevant Parish Councils, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, for the forthcoming financial year.

A recorded vote was taken in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 and the provisions of the Council's Constitution.

For:	Councillors:	Baines, Banks, Bell, Bond, Bowden, Burns, Charlton, Clarke, Cunliffe, Fulham, Gill, Gomez-Aspron, Greaves, Groucutt, Grunewald, Hattersley, Haw, J Jackson, P Jackson, Johnson, D Long, T Long, Lynch, Maloney MBE, McCauley, McDonnell, McQuade, Murphy, Osundeko, Pearl, Pearson, C Preston, L Preston, Quinn, Smith, Sweeney, Tasker, Uddin, van der Burg and Wiseman.
Against:	Councillors:	Jones, Mussell and Reynolds
Abstained:	Councillors:	O' Keefe

* **Resolved that:**

(1) **it be noted that on 6 January 2021 the Council's Cabinet calculated and approved the following Tax Base amounts for 2021/22 in accordance with the Regulations made under Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011:**

(a) **52,080 for the whole Council area.**

(b) **For dwellings in those parts of its area to which a parish precept relate:**

Bold	1,094
Rainford	2,886
Eccleston	3,916
Windle	975
Rainhill	3,709
Billinge	2,006
Seneley Green	1,367

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(2) it be noted that following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2021/22 in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended):

(a) **£474,510,779** being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by parish Councils (Gross Expenditure).

(b) **£391,959,368** being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act (Gross Income).

(c) **£82,551,411** being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax Requirement for the year (including Parish Precepts).

(d) **£1,585.09** being the amount at (c) above, divided by the amount at 2.1(a) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the Basic Amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish Precepts).

(e) **£328,548.69** being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act, as detailed in Appendix 1.

(f) **£1,578.78** being the amount at (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (e) above by the amount at 2.1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance With Section 34(2) of the Act, as the Basic Amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item (i.e. parish precept) relates.

(g) <u>Parts of the Council's Area</u>	£
Bold	1,590.85
Rainford	1,604.78
Eccleston	1,593.72
Windle	1,591.23
Rainhill	1,597.21
Billinge	1,604.84
Seneley Green	1,614.66

being the amount given by adding to the amount at (f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above, divided in each case by the amount at 2 i) (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the Basic Amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a parish precept relate.

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(h)

Parts of the Council's Area	Valuation Band							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Bold	1,060.56	1,237.32	1,414.08	1,590.85	1,944.37	2,297.89	2,651.41	3,181.70
Rainford	1,069.85	1,248.16	1,426.47	1,604.78	1,961.39	2,318.01	2,674.63	3,209.56
Eccleston	1,062.48	1,239.56	1,416.64	1,593.72	1,947.88	2,302.04	2,656.20	3,187.44
Windle	1,060.82	1,237.62	1,414.43	1,591.23	1,944.84	2,298.44	2,652.05	3,182.46
Rainhill	1,064.80	1,242.27	1,419.74	1,597.21	1,952.14	2,307.08	2,662.01	3,194.42
Billinge	1,069.89	1,248.20	1,426.52	1,604.84	1,961.47	2,318.10	2,674.73	3,209.68
Seneley Green	1,076.44	1,255.84	1,435.25	1,614.66	1,973.47	2,332.28	2,691.10	3,229.32
All other parts of the Council's area	1,052.52	1,227.94	1,403.36	1,578.78	1,929.62	2,280.46	2,631.30	3,157.56

being the amount given by multiplying the amount at (f) and (g) above by the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, which is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings in different valuation bands.

(3) it be noted that for the year 2021/22 the major precepting authorities have stated or indicated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown in the following table.

Precepting Authority	Valuation Band							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Police & Crime Commissioner for Merseyside	151.31	176.53	201.75	226.97	277.41	327.85	378.28	453.94
Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority	54.67	63.78	72.89	82.00	100.22	118.44	136.67	164.00
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	12.67	14.78	16.89	19.00	23.22	27.44	31.67	38.00

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- (4) it be noted that having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 2 ii) (h) and above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of council tax for the year 2021/22 for each of the categories of dwellings:

Parts of the Council's Area	Valuation Band							
	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Bold	1,279.21	1,492.41	1,705.61	1,918.82	2,345.22	2,771.62	3,198.03	3,837.64
Rainford	1,288.50	1,503.25	1,718.00	1,932.75	2,362.24	2,791.74	3,221.25	3,865.50
Eccleston	1,281.13	1,494.65	1,708.17	1,921.69	2,348.73	2,775.77	3,202.82	3,843.38
Windle	1,279.47	1,492.71	1,705.96	1,919.20	2,345.69	2,772.17	3,198.67	3,838.40
Rainhill	1,283.45	1,497.36	1,711.27	1,925.18	2,352.99	2,780.81	3,208.63	3,850.36
Billinge	1,288.54	1,503.29	1,718.05	1,932.81	2,362.32	2,791.83	3,221.35	3,865.62
Seneley Green	1,295.09	1,510.93	1,726.78	1,942.63	2,374.32	2,806.01	3,237.72	3,885.26
All other parts of the Council's area	1,271.17	1,483.03	1,694.89	1,906.75	2,330.47	2,754.19	3,177.92	3,813.50

48 CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

A report was submitted which updated Council on the recent approval of the Land & Property Acquisition Strategy by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 24 February 2021, and sought authority to incorporate the changes set out in the Recommendation into the Constitution of the Council.

As part of the Strategy, it was necessary to put in place an Acquisition Protocol which would enable the Council to move quickly in order to take advantage of commercial opportunities. The Acquisition Protocol considered by Cabinet involved the establishment of a Land & Property Acquisition Group. The report set out the terms upon which the Group would operate under a revised Constitution of the Council.

* **Resolved that:**

- (1) the addition of Article 6.08 into the Constitution of the Council be approved, the Article to state:

Article 6.08 - Land & Property Acquisition Group - This Group shall comprise the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Finance & Governance, Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Planning, Executive Director, Place Services and the Executive Director, Corporate Services. This Group shall have delegated to it all relevant powers of the Council in order that it may carry out the aims and objectives of the Land & Property Acquisition Strategy. Further the Group shall operate in full accordance with the terms and safeguards set out in the approved Land & Property Acquisition Strategy.

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49 REVIEW OF POLLING ARRANGEMENTS

A report was submitted which outlined proposed permanent changes to polling stations in several wards for all future elections and some temporary polling station changes for the May 2021 Borough, Police & Crime Commissioner and Metro Mayor elections only.

* **Resolved that:**

- (1) **the changes to the polling stations in the wards of Billinge and Seneley Green, Blackbrook, Eccleston, Rainford, Town Centre and Windle be approved as outlined; and**
- (2) **the Chief Executive be delegated authority to agree any further necessary changes to polling stations, following consultation with the relevant Ward Councillors and Group Leaders.**

50 NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12

The following Notice of Motion was moved by Councillor Bowden and seconded by Councillor Charlton:

Within the UK we are witnessing a crisis in food poverty, caused by a combination of political choices and failures within how we as a country manage the food economy. We have now reached a tipping point and the levels of food poverty are devastating. This is an unacceptable situation for one of the richest nations in the world and highlights the inequalities to be found in the UK in 2021.

We have seen significant increases in the need to access food parcels and support over the last year as the consequences of the pandemic continue to be felt by many within the community.

The National Food Strategy is the first independent review of the country's entire food system for over 75 years. Its purpose to set out what kind of food system we should be building for the future.

Food poverty should be central to this strategy and enshrining the right to food into law would clarify Government's obligations on food poverty and enable government bodies to be held to account on this vital issue.

This Council resolves to:

1. **call on the 'right to food' to be incorporated into the National Food Strategy and asks that the Chief Executive writes to Henry Dimbleby, the Independent Lead on the Strategy, with such a request; and**
2. **note and give thanks for the superb efforts by many within our community on their work to fight food poverty, from those making donations to foodbanks, volunteers, businesses large and small, individuals and groups all working as St Helens Together to support one another.**

* **Resolved that the Motion be approved.**