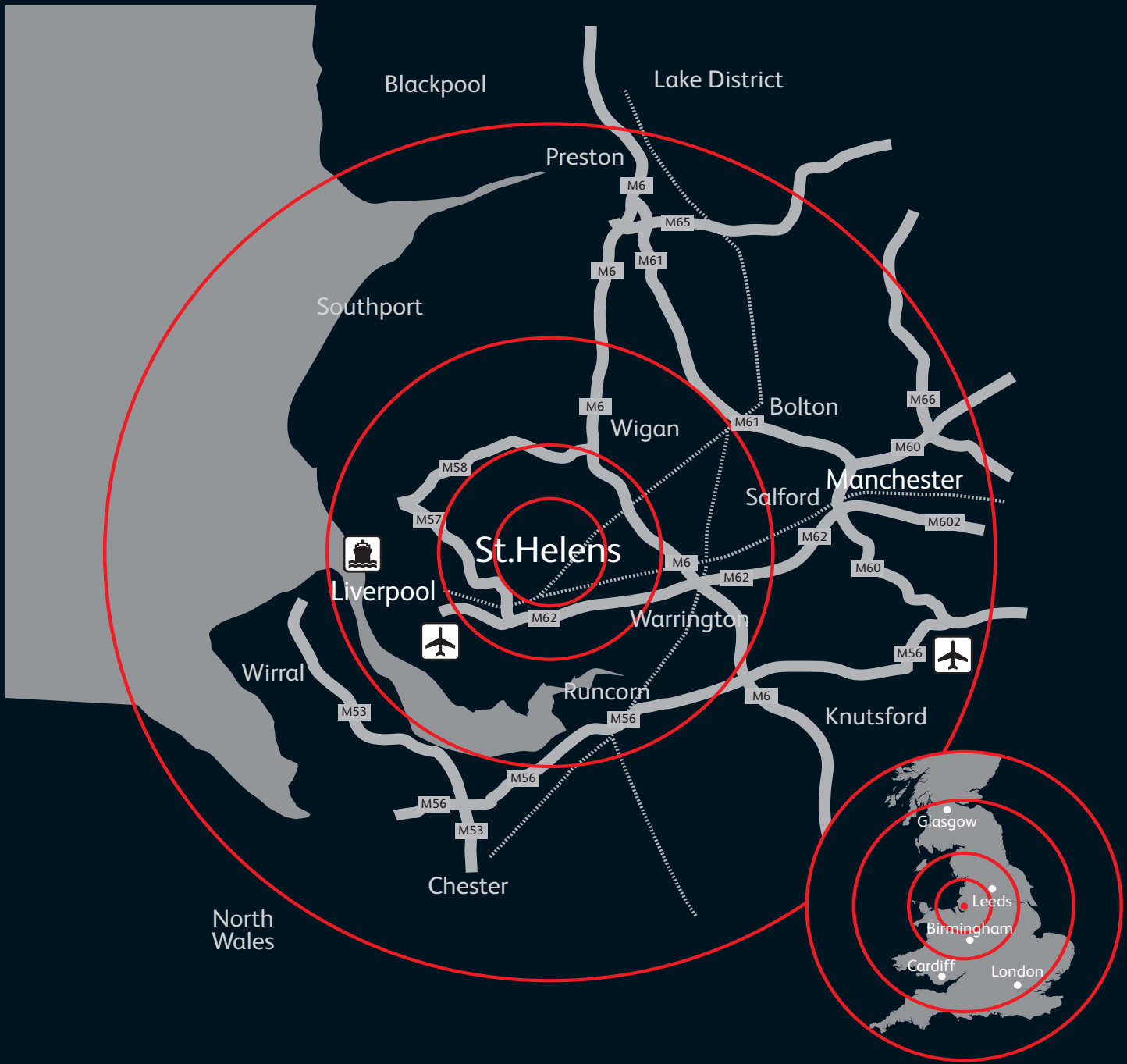


# ST.HELENS CITY GROWTH STRATEGY 2008-2018

st.helens

*The Heart of the Northwest*



“... a vibrant modern place for enterprise and a regional location of choice.”

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# 1. Introduction to the City Growth Strategy (CGS)

## Background

The City Growth Strategy model was developed by Professor Michael Porter of Harvard Business School during the 1990s. It set out a radical approach to local economic development that is based on maximising competitive strengths, actual or latent, and putting the private sector firmly in the strategic driving seat with regard to regeneration and development.

St.Helens was selected by the Government in 2002 as one of only four areas to pilot CGS in the UK. This was based on our successful track record of delivering innovative regeneration initiatives, and our distinctive and genuine commitment to public-private partnership working.

The development of the St.Helens CGS was driven forward by a private sector led Board created specifically for this purpose; of its 17 members, only 2 were from the public sector.

It was launched by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, in Autumn 2003, following substantial consultation and on the basis of very wide buy-in by the private sector and other key stakeholders.

The St.Helens CGS supplanted the Council's existing Economic Development Strategy and became rapidly acknowledged as **the de facto business plan for the growth of "St.Helens plc"**.

The responsibility for driving and monitoring CGS progress now lies with the **Enterprise Forum**, a private sector led sub-group of St.Helens Chamber Board that evolved out of the original CGS Board and is also responsible for overseeing the implementation of the St.Helens Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI).



Providing a sense of arrival: stunning new boundary markers

**“... a radical approach to local economic development that is based on maximising competitive strengths, actual or latent, and putting the private sector firmly in the strategic driving seat.”**

## The Original City Growth Strategy

The original CGS set out a clear 10-year vision for a transformed St.Helens - respecting the past but embracing the future - based on key aspirations to become:

- A more entrepreneurial and enterprising environment
- A model of post-industrial innovation and transformation
- A more diverse location with a wider business and social mix
- A key regional centre for commerce, leisure and tourism
- Perceived and recognised as all of the above.

The 10 year CGS vision was that St.Helens should become established and recognised as:

“A vibrant modern place for enterprise and a regional location of choice”.

- Vibrant – a dynamic, “buzzing” place for residents, businesses and visitors alike.
- Modern – forward looking, with up-to-date public realm and infrastructure, and, whilst retaining links to its traditional industries, having a diversified business base capable of being highly competitive within the challenging 21st Century context.
- Enterprise – at the heart of the vision was a desire to turn St.Helens into a “hotbed” of enterprise.
- Regional location – realising St.Helens’ potential to be regionally significant by capitalising on the Borough’s prime location at the heart of the Northwest, midway between the commercial and cultural hubs of Manchester and Liverpool, and directly on the region’s principal east-west and north-south motorway routes.

- Choice – a place people actively choose and/or aspire to live, visit, or work in and where firms choose to be based, in line with our aspirations to grow our business base, population and the economy as a whole.

The central tenet running through the original CGS was that of “transforming St.Helens”. The means to achieving this was via 50 (eventually 70) individual projects<sup>1</sup>, grouped within 14 Action Areas within four overarching themes:

- **A: Transforming the Business Base** - to increase the number of, and employment levels in, competitive local firms; also to increase the proportion of our economic base operating in sectors with the best long-term growth prospects.
- **B: Achieving a Cultural Transformation** - to substantially increase the participation rates of St.Helens residents (especially younger residents) in enterprise, both now and in the future, by investing in their skills and helping them to access wider employment opportunities.
- **C: Achieving a Physical Transformation** - to improve the physical appearance of St.Helens and its amenities, to make the Borough a much more attractive location for residents, investors and visitors alike.
- **D: Transforming Perceptions** - to shed our outdated industrial image and raise our profile, so that St.Helens is perceived and recognised as a dynamic, modern, vibrant place.

“... a clear 10-year vision for a transformed St.Helens - respecting the past but embracing the future.”

<sup>1</sup> The original CGS document identified 50 projects, however a further 20 projects were incrementally added and monitored under relevant action areas in the course of delivery.



The spectacular new façade of the refurbished Theatre Royal.

## Why a Revised CGS is Required

While the original CGS was a 10-year strategy, it became clear after only four years that a major review and refresh was required. The economic environment has moved on significantly and many of the projects and opportunities identified in 2002-03 have already been realised, while important new opportunities have emerged.

### Key strategic and contextual factors:

- **St.Helens now operates in a different strategic environment.** CGS projects seeking external funding will need to demonstrate consistency with priorities identified in the Northwest Regional Economic Strategy (2006-09), Northwest Operational Programme for EU funding, and the Merseyside Action Plan (2007-10) and City Region Development Plan.
- At the same time, actions relating to enterprise and business support need to be complementary to and consistent with the NWDA's business support simplification agenda and Business Link activities, plus with other relevant regional programmes such as the Northwest and Merseyside enterprise strategies.
- A critical element behind the development of CGS was strong leadership from the private sector, supported by St.Helens Council. The review of the role of local government undertaken by Sir Michael Lyons highlighted the importance of effective leadership across both the private sector and local authorities with regard to stimulating local economic development and creating a sense of place ("place-shaping").
- Meanwhile the Government's **Sub-National Review of Economic Development** has also been launched with far-reaching implications. With a top-rated four-star Council and officially the best Chamber in the country, St.Helens is well placed to deliver on this potentially radical agenda.
- In recent years **environmental and climate change considerations** have become much more prominent. There is now a greater identified need on the one hand to mitigate against the negative environmental impacts of economic development, and on the other to help businesses to identify and exploit the opportunities/threats arising from future environmental legislation and policies, e.g. by encouraging them to operate in a more efficient manner and to access new sustainable, technology-driven markets.
- And all this at a time of **general economic downturn** characterised and compounded on the one hand by reduced levels of private sector investment, and on the other by an increasing squeeze on public sector finance as a whole.
- It is further exacerbated by the **significantly reduced available public funding for regeneration activity**, notably in terms of EU funding for Merseyside up to 2013 compared to previous programming periods.

**“... the economic environment has moved on significantly and the majority of the projects and identified in 2002-03 have already been realised, while important new opportunities have emerged.”**

As highlighted by stakeholder consultation, CGS has helped deliver focus, clarity and coherence to policy making and investment decisions. Just as crucially, and probably the principal impetus to deciding to update the strategy, is the fact that, coupled with project changes and the number of brand new projects that have emerged, **CGS has delivered so successfully in project terms that the original list is no longer an accurate reflection of St.Helens' ambitious regeneration plans.**

**Thus, of the 70 original CGS projects<sup>2</sup>, 56 have already been completed in full or are progressing well, or a decision has been made not to pursue them after detailed study.**

Figure 1: Progress overview of original CGS Projects



Moreover CGS has already also had a significant positive impact to date beyond the delivery of individual projects:

- **A stronger economy:** there has been significant progress made in the performance of the St.Helens economy; over 4,000 jobs have been created, earnings are increasing, the business base has grown by over 9% and levels of business start-ups are dramatically improving<sup>3</sup>.

- **Greater strategic consensus and focus:** CGS has helped to shape different strands of policy into a cohesive business strategy so that partners are clear and agreed as to what steps are necessary to continue to shape and enhance the St.Helens economy going forward.
- **Better understanding of the St.Helens economy:** because of CGS, partners now know more about the St.Helens economy than they ever did before; this has been instrumental in fostering the strategic consensus noted above.
- **Securing LEGI funding:** this was a vital direct result of CGS in so far as CGS had established the detailed evidence base, identified the key challenges and opportunities facing the St.Helens economy, and made suggestions as to how these should be tackled, all of which were integral elements within the successful LEGI bid. LEGI provides £22 million of guaranteed funding to St.Helens up to 2011<sup>4</sup>.

This is enabling the Council and the Chamber to implement the majority of the enterprise-related projects identified in the original CGS but which previously had not had the requisite funding to be realised.

- **Enhanced partnership working:** prior to CGS, St.Helens already had an enviable track record of public-private working. This close working relationship, and in particular that between the Council, the Chamber and local businesses, has been strengthened further by engagement in CGS. As a result, meaningful private sector engagement in local economic development and regeneration initiatives is now a matter of course in St.Helens. This is epitomised by the delivery structure for LEGI and in part also accounts for its success.

These impacts are supported by detailed empirical evidence of progress achieved with regard to the economic development of St.Helens – this is set out in Chapter 2.

<sup>2</sup> While 50 or so projects were listed in the original CGS document, a further 20 projects were incrementally added and monitored under relevant action areas in the course of delivery.

<sup>3</sup> Annual Business Inquiry (2006), Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings (2007), and VAT Stocks and Registrations (2006), all produced by the Office of National Statistics.

<sup>4</sup> With the potential for a further £25million for the second half of the 10-year programme.





Specialised high tech bio-manufacturing at Bachem (UK) Ltd.

**“... over 4,000 jobs have been created, earnings are increasing, the business base has grown by over 9%.”**

## The CGS Revision Process & Outcome

Given so much progress and change, the Enterprise Forum decided in 2007 that a detailed review was both desirable and necessary in order to produce an updated CGS to effectively guide local economic development activities over the next 10 years.

Following a competitive tendering process, Regeneris Consulting was commissioned to undertake the review hand in hand with a detailed evaluation of the St.Helens LEGI programme, in order to maximise the complementarity between the two going forward.

The CGS review commenced in May 2007. This involved a detailed, evidence-based review of the performance of the St.Helens economy, coupled with a detailed review of the progress and status of the 70 identified CGS projects<sup>5</sup>.

Consultation on the strategy revision was carried out from 29th October to 14th December 2007. This involved the draft framework for the new, revised CGS to be produced, included a revised list of major forward projects, and was positioned to stimulate debate and discussion about the key challenges and opportunities facing St.Helens, and what needs to be done about them.

This was accompanied by online consultation (via [www.sthelenscgs.com](http://www.sthelenscgs.com)), two special events held at St.Helens Chamber, plus extensive general publicity, in order to maximise the opportunity for local businesses and residents as well as other stakeholders to help shape the future strategic direction of St.Helens and its economy.

In total, 41 consultation responses were received, of which 12 were businesses, 10 were from private individuals and/or voluntary groups, and 19 were from the public sector, including different St.Helens Council departments, the NWDA, The Mersey Partnership, Merseytravel, and Greater Merseyside LSC.

The clear general message, subsequently endorsed by the Enterprise Forum, was that that the fundamental challenges and opportunities facing St.Helens have not changed in the last 4 years and that the overall thrust of the original CGS remains a strong and valid platform.



The high quality new Council CVPS building - Atlas House



Centrix House: Langtree plc's HQ

<sup>5</sup> While 50 or so projects were listed in the original CGS document, a further 20 projects were incrementally added and monitored under relevant action areas in the course of delivery.

**The vision and four overarching themes have thus in essence been retained, as has the emphasis on transformation.**

By the same token, the fact that the vast majority of original projects have either been completed or are well underway, together with the emergence of a large number of new opportunities and potential initiatives, meant that the project list and action areas required a major overhaul.

The revised CGS identifies 90 projects with a collective value of over £1.86 billion<sup>6</sup>. The list combines existing but not yet completed projects (some as originally conceived, others in redefined form, and/or with spin off projects), plus a number of brand new schemes.

That the revised CGS contains so many projects and marks a significant advance on the original in itself highlights a series of important general messages:

- that CGS is regarded as just as vital a vehicle for the regeneration of the Borough as it was originally, perhaps even more so;

- that there remains a great deal still to be done in terms of transforming St.Helens;
- that local stakeholders remain at least as committed, ambitious, passionate, and determined about realising the CGS vision as ever.

The final point to reiterate is that, although very broad in scope, as one would expect from a large scale regeneration programme, like the original strategy **the revised CGS is not nor intended to be the St.Helens Community Plan**. Similarly, while it is an umbrella strategy, nor is it intended to replace any of the individual component strategies that it overlaps with, e.g. in the spheres of education, skills, housing, tourism, culture etc.

**Rather, in line with the ethos of the original CGS model, the revised CGS focuses on maximising the strengths and opportunities that may contribute to local wealth creation.**



St.Helens RLFC's future 18,000 capacity stadium

**“... the revised CGS identifies 90 projects with a collective value of over £1.86 billion.”**

<sup>6</sup> This figure has been derived on the basis of largely estimated costs for all identified projects, plus assumptions re. ongoing revenue projects post 2012. This overall total will clearly go up or down once the costs of individual projects are firmly up, and should be treated as purely indicative accordingly.

## 2. Evidence of Change

### Introduction

The Borough of St.Helens is strategically situated at the heart of Northwest England, midway between the commercial and cultural hubs of Liverpool and Manchester, to the eastern edge of Merseyside at the intersection with Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Lancashire.

St.Helens enjoys excellent connectivity, particularly in terms of road transport. This is thanks to its direct links onto the M62 to the south and the M6 to the east, plus its proximity to the M57 to the east, the M58 to the north and the M56 to the south, while the arterial A580 East Lancashire Road also traverses the north of the Borough.

The Borough provides easy access to both Manchester and Liverpool Airports and the Port of Liverpool, while being within a 1-hour drive time for more than 7 million people and 4.3 million employees.

The town of St.Helens and its surrounding settlements make up a Borough seen as primarily urban, but which enjoys significant countryside and green spaces, and is in fact predominantly rural (53 %).

Approximately 177,600 people<sup>7</sup> live in the Borough, primarily within the main settlements of St.Helens, Rainford, Newton-le-Willows, Haydock and Rainhill. This population has remained relatively stable since the last Census in 2001; indeed St.Helens is the only district on Merseyside to experience recent population growth. This compares to a -1 % decline over the decade to 2001 and -6 % from 1981-1991<sup>8</sup>.

Despite significant regeneration, investment and job creation, St.Helens remains in the 15 % most deprived local authority areas nationally<sup>9</sup> and is one of the 10 most deprived areas in the North West.

Local deprivation is concentrated in particular areas of the Borough, with some super-output areas classified in the top 2 % most deprived nationally. St.Helens' position in the Index of Multiple Deprivation has however experienced a positive recent shift - moving from England's 36th most deprived local authority in 2004 to 47th in 2007.

The local employment rate has improved 1.5 % since 2000, with over 69.2 % of working-age residents now in employment<sup>10</sup>. Nevertheless St.Helens still has a major challenge to overcome in terms of the 5.2 % gap in the local and national employment rate (74.4 %), which would require an additional 5,668 residents to be in work in order to redress this. A particular focus on boosting male employment levels will be important in tackling this gap, as this is currently 6.1 % below the national rate.

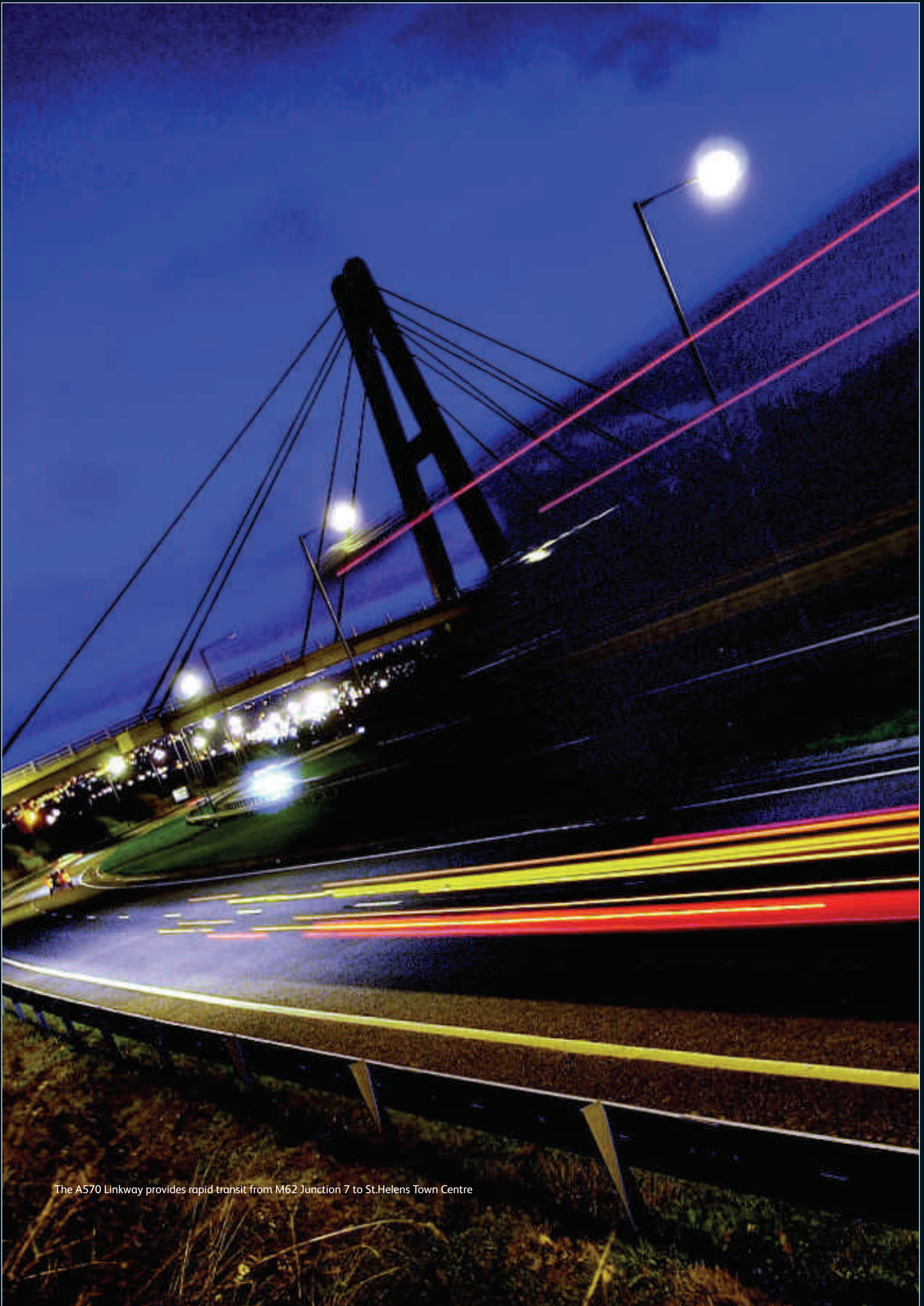
**“... St.Helens is the only district on Merseyside to experience recent population growth.”**

<sup>7</sup> ONS Mid-Year Estimates, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> ONS Census 1981, 1991, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Annual Population Survey (APS) 2000-2006, and January-March 2007.



The A570 Linkway provides rapid transit from M62 Junction 7 to St.Helens Town Centre

## Transforming the Business Base

St.Helens has seen its economy grow recently<sup>11</sup>, with increased employment opportunities, growth in wage levels (both resident and workplace), and increases in the number of businesses operating in the Borough<sup>12</sup>.

Overall employment rose +7 % across the Borough during 2000-2006 with around 4,500 new jobs being created<sup>13</sup>. The majority (around 70 %) of this employment growth has been in full-time positions. The positive message is that job creation rates are keeping pace with the rest of Merseyside, whilst they have been growing at a much faster rate than national levels.

Average local earning levels, measured by both residence and workplace, are increasing. Latest official statistics<sup>14</sup> show that annual earning levels for both measures have increased by over a fifth since 2002. Latest median earnings (2007) shows that average earnings in the Borough are approximately £22,000 per annum, up from approximately £15,000 in 2002 – an increase some 2 % faster than the national average during this period, highlighting the shift towards better paid employment opportunities in St.Helens.

However, despite this increase, average earnings in St.Helens are still low when compared to national earning levels underlining a significant challenge ahead in terms of closing what was an 11 % gap in 2007 for residence based earnings. The only up side of this is in terms of relatively low labour costs enhancing the appeal of St.Helens in terms of inward investment.

Another positive sign of St.Helens' improving economy is the growth in the business base. VAT registered businesses in the Borough have increased by over 9 % since 2002 to approximately 3,300 businesses by 2006<sup>15</sup>. According to other data that also captures firms below the VAT threshold, the business base in St.Helens has grown by just under 40 %, to 5,300 businesses in 2007 from 3,800 in 2001<sup>16</sup>. Meanwhile the LEGI Business Start-Up project has helped to create around 700 new businesses since April 2006<sup>17</sup>.

Nevertheless, the number of VAT registered local business per 10,000 working age residents is still just 62 % of the national average figure<sup>18</sup>, and the comparative rate of growth in the overall business base nationally has been higher. To close the gaps with national averages on VAT registrations by 2016 (a key long-term aim of our LEGI Programme), we need to add some 275 VAT registered businesses to our stock per year over and above current trends. This indicates the scale of the challenge that St.Helens faces.

**“ ... to close the gaps with national averages by 2016 (a key long-term aim of our LEGI Programme), we need to add some 275 VAT registered businesses to our stock per year over and above current trends. This indicates the scale of the challenge that St.Helens faces.”**

<sup>11</sup> NB. most main/meaningful data sources lag several years behind actuality. Most datasets used in the original baseline had a final year between 2000-2002.

<sup>12</sup> Annual Business Inquiry (2006), Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings (2007), and VAT stocks and registrations (2006).

<sup>13</sup> Annual Business Inquiry (2000-2006).

<sup>14</sup> Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings (2002-2007).

<sup>15</sup> VAT Stocks and Registrations (2002- 2006).

<sup>16</sup> BETA Model (2001-2007).

<sup>17</sup> St.Helens Chamber.

<sup>18</sup> VAT Stocks and Registrations (2006).

## The Original City Growth Strategy

The broad BETA Model measure indicates that year on year business start-up rates in St.Helens have been growing, increasing from 74 per 10,000 adults up from 51 in 2002<sup>19</sup>. Set against historic trends this upward trajectory is very welcome news<sup>20</sup>. Indeed a 2007 Barclays Bank survey rated St.Helens as one of the top 11th best local authority areas in the country and equal top in the North West in terms of the business start-up growth rate during 2006<sup>21</sup>.

While in absolute terms the volume of business starts has improved<sup>22</sup>, the gap between the local and national start-up rates has actually widened over the CGS period, reflecting the need for heavily resourced dedicated interventions as per the LEGI programme to tackle this issue. Only in the last year (2006 data) have we seen a narrowing of the gap between St.Helens and the national start-up rate, reflecting the tentative but positive progress being made.

New business survival rates have also been improving in St.Helens. Of those businesses which started-up in 2002, 79 % were still operational in 2005. This compares favourably with 63 % of businesses over the preceding three-year period – a 16 % increase<sup>23</sup>.

In the relatively short period since the original CGS was developed, there has been no major change in the overall St.Helens business structure. Manufacturing is still an important sector for the Borough employing almost 7,700 people<sup>24</sup>, despite ongoing decline across the manufacturing sector, both locally and nationally. The closure in recent years of Klaussner (2007) and St.Helens Glass (2006) led to the loss of over 400 jobs between them<sup>25</sup>.



The new Ramada Encore Hotel, just off M6 Junction 23

**“... a Barclays Bank survey rated St.Helens as one of the top 11 best local authority areas in the country in terms of the business start-up growth rate”.**

<sup>19</sup> BETA Model (2002-2007).

<sup>20</sup> Although business start-ups measured by VAT registrations have shown a marginal fall from 2000-2005.

<sup>21</sup> Barclays Bank Small Business Survey (2007).

<sup>22</sup> Measured by VAT Registrations.

<sup>23</sup> ONS Business Survival Rates (2002-2005).

<sup>24</sup> ONS, Annual Business Inquiry (2000-2006).

<sup>25</sup> St.Helens Council Economic Development Team.

Meanwhile there has been growth of almost 2,800 jobs in the logistics sector that in 2006 accounted for 5,900 jobs, equating to just under 10 % of all employment in the Borough. Employment has grown sharply in parts of the public sector (e.g. health and education), as well as in the leisure sector.

St.Helens' connectivity remains a key competitive advantage and asset in business terms. Within this context a 2007 Virgin Money survey<sup>26</sup> ranked St.Helens as the most car friendly town in the North West based on a range of indicators, highlighting the ease of access for visitors and commuters alike. In addition, businesses are increasingly looking for locations with good rail access. The Borough has good rail connectivity to the rest of the North West and the development of an iconic new St.Helens Central train station is now completed. However the lack of a direct rail connection from the Town Centre to Manchester remains an issue.

The local economy has also become more diversified and less dependent on a small number of major businesses. So far, however there is little firm evidence to suggest that St.Helens has yet to experience any significant growth in so-called 'knowledge-based industries'.

## Achieving a Cultural Transformation

Issues around culture and attitudes cannot be changed overnight, tending almost by definition to be deep-rooted and often embedded over several generations. Hence in part the reason that CGS is a 10-year strategy.

Although there is remains a long way to go, there is some evidence that St.Helens residents are increasingly becoming more entrepreneurial. As identified above, business start-up rates have been increasing over the last five years and there have been more start-up businesses surviving beyond three years.

There has been very good take up of the enterprise-related opportunities offered by many of the LEGI projects. These include "Get a New Start", which seeks to get people who are currently excluded from the labour market to consider employment as a realistic alternative to a life on benefits. The sudden jump in the number of residents approaching the Chamber for advice on how to get back into work does point towards a changing attitude amongst the residents of St.Helens.

Employment rates<sup>27</sup> reflect that increasingly more local residents are finding work. This has had a positive effect on lowering the number of both unemployment and incapacity benefit claimants since 2002<sup>28</sup>.

Nevertheless, severe concentrations of worklessness remain and need to be tackled. In 2007, there were still over 2,800 Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants in the Borough, almost half of whom resided in the most deprived Super Output Areas defined as the 20 % most deprived areas nationally and which contain 23 % of all of St.Helens' working age population<sup>29</sup>.

**“... St.Helens' connectivity remains a key competitive advantage and asset in business terms. Within this context a 2007 Virgin Money survey ranked St.Helens as the most car friendly town in the North West.”**

<sup>26</sup> Virgin Money Car Insurance (2007).

<sup>27</sup> Measured by the Annual Population Survey (APS).

<sup>28</sup> Claimant Count and Incapacity Benefit Counts (2002-2007).

<sup>29</sup> Claimant Count (2007).



More significantly however, although Incapacity Benefit claimant numbers have fallen 12 % since 2000, the Borough still has over 11,200 claimants (2007). The longevity of worklessness of some incapacity claimants is a key issue to be tackled, with over 60 % of recipients having claimed benefit for over 5 years<sup>30</sup>.

Overall levels of educational attainment have been improving in recent years across St.Helens. More local young people are gaining five or more GCSEs at A\*-C<sup>31</sup> is helping to narrow the overall performance gap with the national average to approximately 0.3 %. However attainment in core subjects of Maths and English, although improved, has not kept pace with national levels, and has actually been widening between 2003-07<sup>32</sup>.

Moreover, despite the improvements in qualifications attainment, there has been a rise in levels of youth disengagement in recent years. The number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) has been increasing (2004-2006) and now stands at 10.9 %<sup>33</sup>.

The evidence regarding increased levels of entrepreneurial activity, reduced levels of worklessness, and improving levels of educational attainment indicate that St.Helens residents are to some extent, becoming more entrepreneurial, aspirational and outward looking.

Despite these improvements there is still a long way to go to achieve the cultural transformation required to have a significant impact on the St.Helens economy.

This is exemplified by the results of a 2007 St.Helens People's Panel Survey, which posed questions regarding residents' views on business and entrepreneurship<sup>34</sup>. Approximately 40 % of respondents thought that owning one's own business was a more attractive proposition than working as an employee. One-fifth of respondents knew someone who had started a business in the last year, and of these, half said that knowing such entrepreneurial people had made some positive impact on their own perceptions of owning their own business.



Students at Carmel College, one of the best Colleges in the country and rated 'Outstanding' by OFSTED

<sup>30</sup> Incapacity Benefit (2002-2007).

<sup>31</sup> DCFS (2007).

<sup>32</sup> DCFS (2003-2007).

<sup>33</sup> Connexions, November 2007 – latest annual data.

<sup>34</sup> This was the first time questions on business & enterprise have been put to the People's Panel.

## Achieving a Physical Transformation

The overall physical appearance of St.Helens has improved markedly in recent years. There are fewer real “grot spots”, and the look and feel of key gateways and corridors into the Borough are much enhanced.

The development of an iconic new St.Helens Central train station is now completed, along with the provision of an improved park and ride service for commuters. The landmark Big Art Project close to M62 Junction 7 is at an advanced state of development, while the proposed new rugby stadium and retail development on the former United Glass site now has planning permission.

These, together with a myriad of other significant residential, commercial and leisure developments, demonstrate that the momentum for physical transformation in St.Helens continues apace.

St.Helens is developing a more vibrant Town Centre thanks to considerable public and private sector investment in recent years. Comprehensive public realm improvements via the Focal Point project have enabled the town to “catch-up” with other towns of a similar scale and offer, while the George Street Cultural Quarter has now won 18 regional and national urban design awards.

These initiatives, together with the redevelopment of brownfield land immediately adjacent to the Town Centre, have played and continue to play an important role in attracting new businesses and leisure uses, as well as significant new town centre residential development.

The regeneration of the Town Centre is helping to position St.Helens as a contemporary leisure and retail centre with a broader offer. ING Investments acquired Church Street Shopping Centre and St.Mary’s Arcade in 2006, and are keen to ensure that improvements in the quality of the retail offer continue.

Nevertheless, amid the global credit crunch and its ramifications, plus ever-increasing competition, this renaissance remains fragile and in recent years the number of small, independent outlets within the Town Centre has actually fallen<sup>35</sup>. It will be important that the momentum built up is sustained going forward to ensure that the Town Centre maintains its position.

Improvements in the Town Centre leisure offer, particularly in terms of new events and an exponential increase in bars and cafés, have helped an expanding visitor economy. Latest figures<sup>36</sup> show 19% growth in visitors to 7.5 million since 2002 plus growth in visitor expenditure from £114 million to £132 million over the same period. Meanwhile, it is estimated that the visitor economy directly and indirectly supports over 5,000 jobs<sup>37</sup>.

**“... the George Street Cultural Quarter has now won 18 regional and national urban design awards.”**

<sup>35</sup> St.Helens Council Economic Development Team.

<sup>36</sup> 2006 STEAM data.

<sup>37</sup> NB. this figure is based on the extensive original cluster research conducted during the development of the original CGS. Recent STEAM figures – the nationally accredited standard which employs a much cruder generic methodology with regard to producing employment estimates – put this figures at just 2,300.

The emergence of St.Helens as a credible regional day visitor destination is in part thanks to new infrastructure such as the Northwest Museum of Road Transport, the new Central Station, plus public realm improvements to facilitate hosting events. It is also thanks to the highly successful Tourism Development Initiative (TDI). Significant future investment is planned both in new facilities and in extending and continuing the TDI, which is now viewed as a central element of the Borough's economic development and placeshaping agenda.

The Borough's residential offer has substantially expanded and improved thanks to the completion of a large number of residential developments, the majority of which were not contained within the original CGS. The Development Review published in September 2007 highlighted over 50 residential developments that were either completed, were onsite, had secured planning permission but were not yet onsite, or had applied for planning permission<sup>38</sup>.

Indeed over 2,400 new dwellings were built from 2000-2007<sup>39</sup>, including a significant proportion of high quality family and executive housing. Progress has been made on the development of three Urban Villages, all of which are now onsite and will account for more than 2,200 new homes alone between them. Importantly, there has also been an emergence of a significant new Town Centre housing offer.

In the social-rented sector, Helena Partnerships, the Borough's Registered Social Landlord, which manages over 13,000 properties, is currently in the middle of a £270 million refurbishment programme across the Borough to bring all of their homes up to the Decent Homes standard by 2009<sup>40</sup>. The vacancy rate of the social housing stock has fallen markedly as a result.

Until the recent national economic downturn, St.Helens had experienced strong house price growth in recent years. This was fuelled by national trends of increasing house prices, and demand for housing in well-connected and accessible locations, whereby a change of job does not necessitate moving house.

Average house prices in the Borough increased by 110% from £57,900 in 2000 to £121,300 in 2007 - a faster rate than both regional and national house price growth<sup>41</sup>. However, it should be borne in mind that house prices in St.Helens started from a much lower base. A key strength for St.Helens remains the relative affordability of semi-detached and detached housing across the Borough compared to Warrington and the hot spots of South Liverpool.

An important aspect of St.Helens physical transformation includes the supply of sites and premises in the Borough. Relatively little significant new B1 office space has been developed in St.Helens in recent years. However the situation has been improving thanks to some good B1 commercial office developments underway on previously developed land. These include the Ketterer Court development that has created 10 commercial industrial/warehouse units ranging from 2,000 - 9,500 ft<sup>2</sup>, plus Mere Grange Business Park where construction is underway of Phase 1, involving 10 3,200 - 8,000 ft<sup>2</sup> units.

Nevertheless in the longer term there is a very limited supply of large, developer-ready sites available, plus a general shortage of employment land across the Borough. This situation will need to be monitored closely and if necessary redressed via the planning process, as it could act as a constraint on future indigenous expansion and inward investment.

**“... over 2,400 new dwellings were built from 2000-2007, including a significant proportion of high quality family and executive housing.”**

<sup>38</sup> St.Helens Council Development Review, 2007.

<sup>39</sup> CLG (2006-07).

<sup>40</sup> Helena Partnerships (2008).

<sup>41</sup> Land Registry (2000-2007).

## Transforming Perceptions

People’s perceptions of place matter. Lifestyle, leisure and housing considerations can be just as important as pure business location factors in determining individual and commercial investment decision-making. As identified earlier however, it is notoriously difficult to change embedded perceptions and attitudes, and to do so take significant time and resource.

Since the development of CGS, the absence of any robust baselines to consistently measure perceptions changing over time has meant that it is not clear to what extent general external perceptions of the Borough have improved, if at all.

Having said that, business enquiries for commercial sites and premises have risen in recent years<sup>42</sup>, suggesting that there is a wider awareness of St.Helens and its appeal as a place to do business.

The Borough has also benefited from increases in the number of residential in-migrants from areas such as Liverpool, Halton, Warrington and further afield, while St.Helens is generally perceived by residents as a good place to live<sup>43</sup>. This is thanks to factors such as St.Helens’ connectivity, limited traffic congestion, relative affordability, good range of both new and older styles of properties, and ever-improving recreational and wider liveability assets, including a rural offer that affords residents easy access to plentiful open/green spaces.

One of the genuine success stories of CGS has been the transformation of activity with regard to developing the visitor economy thanks to the Tourism Development Initiative (TDI). CGS was pivotal in the creation of the TDI by providing the evidence base illustrating the existing and potential importance of the tourism sector to the St.Helens economy, identifying key projects, and providing significant impetus to the then fledgling Tourism Business Network.

Five years ago there were limited events, no dedicated resources, and minimal internal or external recognition of St.Helens as a visitor destination. By contrast, the Borough now has a thriving Tourism Business Network, dedicated industry support, a number of product development initiatives, and a year-round calendar of largely new events. Moreover St.Helens is an accepted key partner within the Merseyside and wider regional tourism development context, and is cited as a tourism development exemplar by the NWDA.

Despite the benefits to local people of new infrastructure and significant tourism development efforts, a recent study showed that the positive changes that have occurred throughout the Borough have not registered strongly in the perceptions of residents<sup>44</sup>. It is therefore reasonable to infer that local pride and internal perceptions have improved little if at all since the launch of CGS.

**“... connectivity, limited traffic congestion, relative affordability, good range of both new and older styles of properties, and ever-improving recreational and wider liveability assets, including a rural offer that affords residents easy access to plentiful open/green spaces.”**

<sup>42</sup> St.Helens Council Economic Development Team.

<sup>44</sup> Brand New St.Helens research, March 2007.

<sup>43</sup> Brand New St.Helens research, March 2007.

By the same token, the Autumn 2007 launch of “Brand New St.Helens” - the Borough’s first ever integrated branding and destination marketing initiative - marks a major step forward and augurs well. The branding, family of new websites and suite of promotional materials have been well received, and the four identified themes - “Connectivity, Catchment, Cost”, “Home of Champions”, “Discover Your Doorstep”, and “Be POSH!” – provide an excellent platform from which to build both external profile and local pride, if investment and momentum can be sustained.

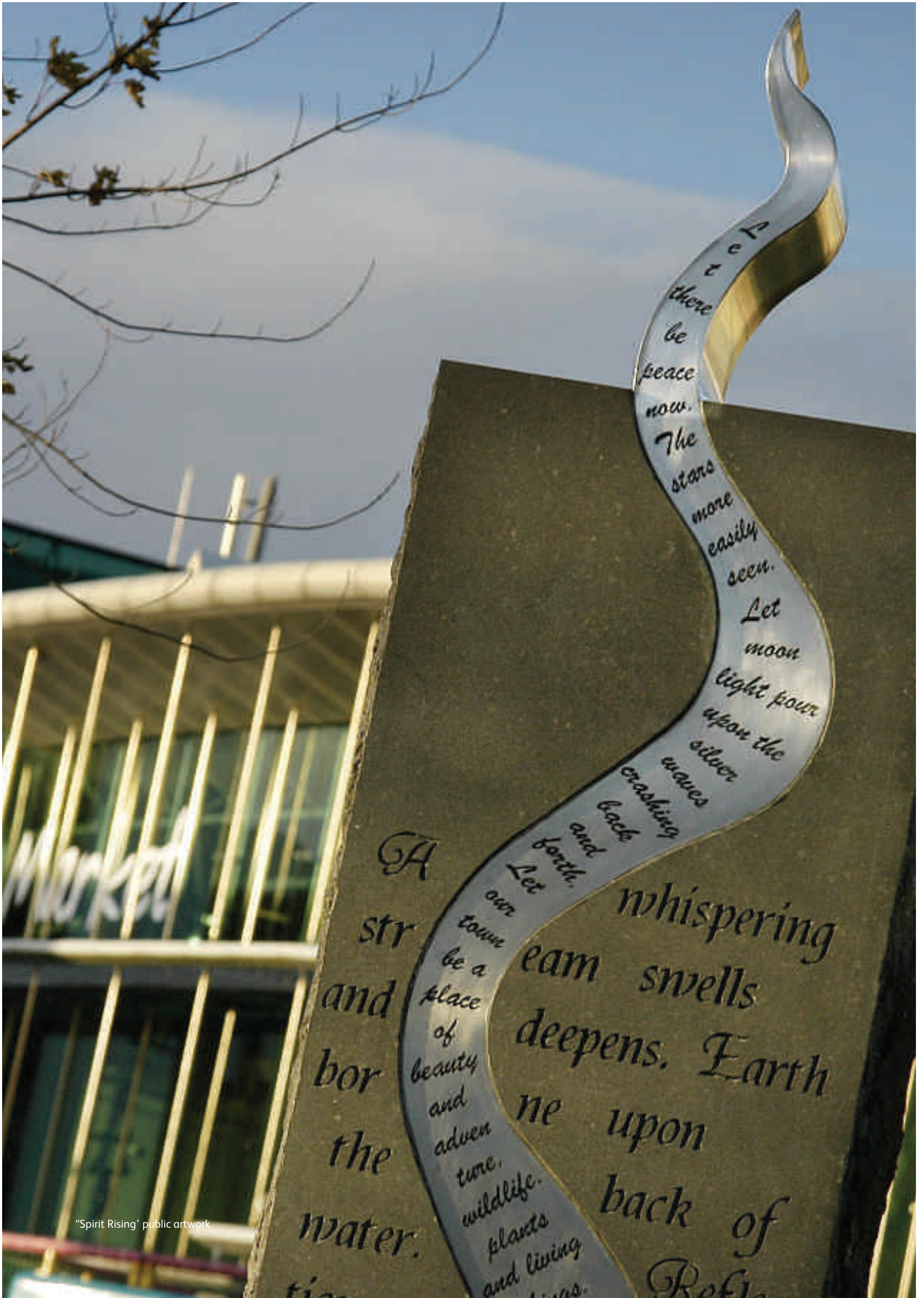
Similarly the new boundary markers, with their striking asymmetrical design and replaceable vinyls promoting major events, are a useful medium to readily transmit positive messaging about St.Helens as a modern and dynamic destination.

Most significant of all however is the prospect of the Big Art Project - *Dream* by major international artist Jaume Plensa. Founded on the input of former local ex-miners, this landmark artwork is being delivered by St.Helens Council in association with Channel 4, the Arts Council Art Fund, and Liverpool Biennial. The combination of the artwork’s scale, aesthetics, and location, together with the prominence of the artist and the human heritage of the site, all make this project truly transformational and, once completed, lend it the capacity to put St.Helens on the map as well as to become a firm focus for local pride.



Live glass-blowing at the award-winning World of Glass

**“... St.Helens is cited as a tourism development exemplar by the NWDA.”**



"Spirit Rising" public artwork

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## Overall Messages

### *Many Positive Signs of Progress...*

There are many signs of progress in the St.Helens economy since CGS came on stream. Key successes include:

- A growing business base, with more firms being created and more surviving
- St.Helens has demonstrated a strong record on job creation over past five years
- Employment has increased, and the number of people out of work has fallen
- Wage rates and average earnings have grown rapidly (for both residents & workers)
- Educational attainment of schoolchildren is improving
- The increased vitality of the Town Centre – with an improved public realm, an expanding evening economy, a major year-round events programme, completed apartment complexes, a good mix of retailers, and an increase in overall floorspace.
- Significant growth in house prices, while maintaining relatively affordability
- Wider awareness of St.Helens as a good place to do business
- The establishment of St.Helens as a genuine, regional (day) visitor destination.

### *...but Significant Challenges Remain*

There is still a lot of work to be done before we can be confident that there has been a transformation in the business base, culture and physical characteristics of St.Helens, and that perceptions of St.Helens as a place to live, visit and do business match the reality.

All of the challenges that St.Helens faced when CGS was originally developed are still relevant today, driven in many cases by long-standing economic and social factors. These cannot be overcome in a few years and, whilst CGS has done an excellent job in laying the foundations, it is far too early to say “job done”.

The overall macro-economic climate and ramifications of the global credit crunch on public and private investment, funding and spending are clearly also concerns, that, although outside the sphere of influence and control of local partners, nevertheless need to be factored into forward planning and activities.

The key challenges that remain are:

- Low relative business density
- A lack of knowledge-based businesses in St.Helens
- High overall levels and particular local concentrations of worklessness
- Low aspirations and ambition, as particularly reflected by too many young people leaving school at 16 years and not engaging in employment, education or training
- Limited supply in the future pipeline of large, developer-ready sites and other employment land
- Limited recognition by local people of change in St.Helens, and low levels of local pride
- Low media profile and external awareness of St.Helens
- Growing and advancing the economy at a faster rate than elsewhere in order to improve St.Helens’ relative position in the face of heightened competition and a difficult economic climate.

**“... whilst CGS has done an excellent job in laying the foundations, it is far too early to say ‘job done’.”**



*Dream* by Jaume Plensa - the landmark Big Art Project being created on Sutton Manor



### 3. The Revised CGS at a Glance

The original vision - for St.Helens to become established and widely recognised as a “vibrant modern place for enterprise and a regional location of choice” has been retained as it remains entirely appropriate in terms of capturing the Borough’s realistic aspirations.

The four original transformational themes have also been carried forward, however the subordinate action areas and projects have been substantially revised to reflect the progress and new priorities and opportunities that have arisen since 2003.

Figure 3:  
Outline of updated St.Helens City Growth Strategy

<h2>Theme A</h2> <p>TRANSFORMING THE BUSINESS BASE</p> <p><i>Objective:</i></p> <p>“To grow, strengthen &amp; diversify the business base”</p>	<h2>Theme B</h2> <p>TRANSFORMING AMBITION</p> <p><i>Objective:</i></p> <p>“To raise aspirations towards enterprise &amp; work among St.Helens residents &amp; workers”</p>	<h2>Theme C</h2> <p>PHYSICAL TRANSFORMATION</p> <p><i>Objective:</i></p> <p>“To create a high quality physical environment for residents, businesses &amp; visitors”</p>	<h2>Theme D</h2> <p>TRANSFORMING PERCEPTIONS</p> <p><i>Objective:</i></p> <p>“To increase recognition of St.Helens as a regional location of choice for residents, businesses &amp; visitors”</p>
<p>ACTION AREAS</p> <p>A1: Increasing Business Start-Ups &amp; Competitiveness</p> <p>A2: Strengthening Key Sectors</p> <p>A3: Developing an Enterprise Hotspot</p> <p>A4: Business Locations for the 21st Century</p>	<p>ACTION AREAS</p> <p>B1: Encouraging Enterprising &amp; Ambitious People</p> <p>B2: Inspiring Young People</p> <p>B3: Skills Infrastructure for the Future</p>	<p>ACTION AREAS</p> <p>C1: Leisure Destination of Choice</p> <p>C2: Continued Town Centre Renaissance</p> <p>C3: Residential Location of Choice</p> <p>C4: Maximising Connectivity</p>	<p>ACTION AREAS</p> <p>D1: Visually Exciting St.Helens</p> <p>D2: Brand New St.Helens – Building Local Pride</p> <p>D3: Brand New St.Helens – Destination Marketing</p> <p>D4: Happening St.Helens</p>

**Vision: “A vibrant modern place for enterprise and a regional location of choice.”**

Identified key projects, whether existing, redefined, or brand new include:

## Theme A

### A1: 1. Business Start-Up

Intensive, ongoing start-up programme to redress St.Helens' business density deficit and generate greater self-employment.

### A1: 2. Business Winning Business

Helping local firms to win more business and increase productivity, e.g. through supply chain activity.

### A2: 8. Tourism Development Initiative

Dedicated industry support, coordination, and product development to maximise St.Helens' visitor economy potential, also linked to delivering Big & Speciality Events (D4: 89 & 90).

### A3: 14. Chalon Way Enterprise Park

A new two hectare enterprise park for high-tech companies to be located on the former British Lead Mill site in the town centre, next to the St.Helens Enterprise Centre (A3: 13.) - a.k.a. the Graduate Greenhouse - serving as the new Chamber HQ building together with managed workspace for high-growth start-ups.

### A4: 16 & 21. Mere Grange

Provision of new commercial floorspace in 6 phases along the Linkway from M62 J7 to the Town Centre.

### A4: 23. Parkside Colliery Rail Freight Distribution Centre

An ambitious, long-term development of a 6+million ft<sup>2</sup> strategic rail freight interchange as part of the Liverpool City Region "Superport" concept. If approved, this will be the largest single CGS project and could potentially provide up to 10,000 new jobs. Activities to link these to local residents (Parkside Skills Foresight B1: 26.) particularly in more deprived areas will be critical.

## Theme B

### B1: 24. Get a New Start

Aims to enhance the integrated service provided by Starting Point in order to help people back into work, with a particular focus on those areas with the highest concentrations of worklessness.

### B1: 27. Omega Skills Foresight & C4: 66 Transport Linkages to Jobs

Now that planning permission has been granted to develop this 140 hectare site adjoining south-east St.Helens, providing local people with the skills and transport to be able to access the new job opportunities created is vital for future local employment growth.

### B2: 28. Enterprising St.Helens

Changing attitudes to entrepreneurship and seeding the businesses of tomorrow by raising awareness of enterprise in schools.

### B3: 35. Building Schools for the Future

Comprehensive revamp of the Borough's entire secondary school stock to revolutionise educational provision & attainment.

## Theme C

### C1:41 & 46. Destination St.Helens

Phase 1 involves the creation of a state of the art 18,000 capacity rugby stadium and retail development on the former United Glass site, while the 10 hectares of land available under Phase 2 is intended for additional leisure use.

### C1: 42. St.Helens Forest Park

Creation of a major new regional recreational attraction.

### C2: 54. Town Centre Retail Development

Major private investment in the core retail offer to increase spend and visitor numbers and catalyse additional town centre investment.

### C3: 56 & 58. St.Helens & Whiston<sup>45</sup> Hospitals

Twin schemes worth £338million that are major regeneration projects in their own right and will significantly enhance the liveability of St.Helens in terms of the quality of public health services.

### C3: 60, 61, 62. Urban Villages

The completion of the three new urban villages already onsite to attract higher earners to live in St.Helens and help grow the population.

### C4: 66. Public Transport Connectivity Promotion & 71. Park & Ride Schemes

Both aimed at enhancing St.Helens rail connectivity to complement its excellent road links.

## Theme D

### D1: 75. Big Art Project & 79. Industrial Alchemy

A landmark public artwork together with a legacy initiative à la Emscher Park in Germany, both of potentially international significance and intended to put St.Helens on the map.

### D2: 81-83 & D3: 85-88 Brand New St.Helens

Delivering and ultimately refreshing our integrated destination marketing initiatives and ancillary campaigns.

**The revised programme now encompasses 90 projects, whose combined value is more than £1.86 billion<sup>45</sup>.**

<sup>45</sup> Although located in the neighbouring Borough of Knowsley, Whiston Hospital is included in the CGS as it is only just over the Borough boundary, the two authorities are served by the same joint NHS Trust, and it is the primary hospital serving St.Helens residents in terms of offering full facilities, including A&E.

<sup>46</sup> This figure has been derived on the basis of largely estimated costs for all identified projects, plus assumptions re. ongoing revenue projects post 2012. This overall total will clearly go up or down once the costs of individual projects are firmed up, and should be treated as purely indicative accordingly.



The attractive and strategically located Woodlands Business Park, close to M6 Junction 23 and home to Autotrader and Nichols plc

**“... grow, strengthen and diversify the business base.”**

## 4. Theme A: Transforming the Business Base

### Overview

The overall objective of Theme A remains to “grow, strengthen and diversify the business base”.

If St.Helens is to continue to generate greater levels of wealth and compete more effectively, it needs to continue to restructure its business base. Theme A therefore aims to ensure that St.Helens has more successful businesses competing in higher value markets, via support for new starts, existing businesses, and inward investment alike, at the same time as seeking to provide a portfolio of available business locations and premises.

### CGS Progress to Date<sup>47</sup>

A defining characteristic of the original CGS approach was an explicit focus on cluster development, and a Cluster Action Team was set-up accordingly to drive forward each of the target clusters identified by the in-depth 2003 CGS research: Building Materials & Construction, Distribution & Logistics, Furniture & Furnishings, High-Technology, Tourism & Leisure. In the 5 years since, not all clusters have been a success, and overall progress has been mixed.

There has however been strong growth in both the Distribution & Logistics and Tourism & Leisure. The growth in the tourism and leisure has sector been particularly impressive, to the extent that from an original position of no coordination, resource, or even reputation as a visitor destination, St.Helens is now regularly cited by the NWDA as a model of best practice in terms of tourism development. The Enterprise Forum believes that there is value in continuing to support activity in these two sectors accordingly.

Many of the business support projects identified in the original CGS are now being delivered, albeit in a slightly different guise from previously conceived. This is thanks to the LEGI programme, which gave us the opportunity to rethink the projects and mechanisms to deliver the required outcomes, and, crucially, also provided the funding to put these into practice.

The Business Start-Up LEGI project being delivered by the Chamber was born of three original CGS projects<sup>48</sup> and is the key measure to redress the shortage of business stock and low levels of self-employment in St.Helens that were at the heart of the original CGS

and are pivotal to the LEGI programme. Take-up to date has far exceeded expectations, with more than 700 new business starts assisted since the project started in Spring/Summer 2006.

CGS has also helped to enhance wider business competitiveness via the Business Winning Business LEGI project, also delivered by the Chamber and derived from two original CGS projects. The aim is to grow local businesses, reduce their failure rate and create more jobs. Success to date has been impressive, with over £5million of extra business secured.

Three interlinked projects originally focused on the 140-hectare Omega Park adjacent to St.Helens' southeastern boundary. This included a major programme of awareness-raising, skills training, and improved transport links to enable the benefits of one of Europe's major new business locations to be accessed by local people and firms. Delays in securing planning permission meant no progress was made, however now that planning permission has been received<sup>49</sup>, Omega once again represents a significant focus and opportunity for CGS.

### Future Focus

**Move away from clusters** - despite the centrality of the cluster-focused approach to the original CGS model, a significant rethink has been required. This has been due both to mixed local performance in practice, plus their waning prominence on the national policy.

**A good case for some sector-specific support** – notwithstanding the move away from a cluster focus towards more general business support, there remains a convincing case for dedicated resource to be made available to specific key sectors to further boost performance. Distribution & Logistics and Tourism & Leisure have performed strongly in recent years, and will continue to receive targeted support accordingly. The rural economy is a new area of focus following the innovative Rural Economy Action Plan completed in 2007.

**Provision of new business space** – this was an existing CGS priority but was contained within the “Transforming Ambition Theme”. It has been moved into Theme A because of its obvious importance to transforming the business base and facilitating enterprise and investment.

<sup>47</sup> Since the launch of the original CGS.

<sup>48</sup> NB. where projects in the revised CGS have been derived from original CGS projects, this is detailed in the full project list provided in Appendix A.

<sup>49</sup> For B8 warehousing on Omega North and office development on the Omega South site.

## Action Areas

### A1: Increasing Business Start-up & Competitiveness

– although more firms are being created and more are surviving in St.Helens, this is equally the case elsewhere in England and the local rate of improvement must be maintained if St.Helens is to close the gap with other areas.

Intensive support for new starts (including knowledge-based businesses and social enterprises) remains a key plank of efforts to restructure the economy, building on the excellent work of LEGI. There will be a focus on creative industries as an identified potential growth sector, and on female start-ups, given the comparative dearth of female entrepreneurs setting up businesses in St.Helens.

While the business base needs to continue to diversify over the long term, all businesses need to improve their productivity and competitiveness on an ongoing basis. Central to this is helping businesses to become more innovative and exploit knowledge, the key drivers of growth and opportunity in all sectors and all markets. Although some progress has been made, more can be done, especially around linking business to the region's University base.

We will do this by strengthening supply chains, helping businesses to access the regions R&D institutions, and encouraging them to develop new products and services. We will also seek to strengthen businesses' capacity to win business by helping them to meet standards, increasing their tendering capabilities, and by increasing take-up of new technologies.

This Action Area will also help St.Helens businesses to exploit the opportunities arising from future environmental legislation and policies, and to explore business opportunities emerging from aspects of environmental improvement. New forms of energy production (e.g. bio-fuels) and environmental technologies will be areas of particular focus given the Borough's ongoing strength in niche manufacturing.

Meanwhile measures to support business recovery in the harsh current economic climate are also seen as important.

**A2: Strengthening Key Sectors** - as noted above, some form of sectoral emphasis is still required in St.Helens for those sectors that have the strongest likelihood of growing.

Tourism & Leisure has been by far the most successful cluster to date, with the last 5 years having seen the establishment of St.Helens as a bona fide visitor destination. As an important economic driver as well as a vanguard element of the Borough's placeshaping efforts, Tourism & Leisure remains a key CGS focus moving forward.

**“... intensive support for new starts (including knowledge-based businesses and social enterprises) remains a key plank of efforts to restructure the economy, building on the excellent work of LEGI.”**

Logistics is also an obvious sector to support, in so far as the Borough's location, skills and cost base give St.Helens a strong competitive edge, but also in view of increasing cost pressures due to rising fuel costs and "green" taxes. This also ties in with the emerging Merseyside "Superport" concept seeking to link together all the sub-region's primary transport infrastructure to gain competitive advantage.

This Action Area will similarly support general inward investment activity, and encourage economic diversification into value-added activity in the rural economy, based on the findings of the 2007 State of Rural St.Helens baseline study and attendant Rural Economy Action Plan (REAP). The fact that St.Helens is now the designated lead for Merseyside with regard to rural economy development highlights our competitive advantage in this sphere.

**A3: Developing an Enterprise Hotspot** - whilst the rate of new starts is increasing, if St.Helens is to retain (and attract) new growing businesses, it needs to make sure that there is a suitable business space offer for starter businesses. This Action Area will include specialist business premises, including incubation-type facilities and managed workspace.

**A4: Business Locations for the 21st Century** - St.Helens needs a larger stock of high-quality sites and premises fit for modern businesses if economic growth is to be sustained. Whilst there are a number of B1 office developments in the pipeline, there remains a very limited supply of large, developer ready sites available, and this constraint on future investment needs to be removed. This Action Area contains eight key commercial developments in strategic locations across the Borough together with a critical land and employment needs gap analysis.



**“...St.Helens needs a larger stock of high-quality sites and premises fit for modern businesses if economic growth is to be sustained”**

## Key Projects

A number of CGS projects under themes A and B are being taken forward in the LEGI programme, including the Business Start-Up and Business Winning Business which between them account for almost 50% of annual LEGI programme spend.

**Business Start-Up** (a.k.a. Entrepreneur Kick Start) is the key means to addressing the shortage of local business stock and low levels of self-employment. The project will continue to stimulate the formation of new businesses by providing a comprehensive support package with an added focus on mentoring, to increase the quality and durability of business start ups.

The **Business Winning Business** project seeks to help local businesses to win more business and increase productivity, with a strong emphasis on supply chain linkages and use of ICT.

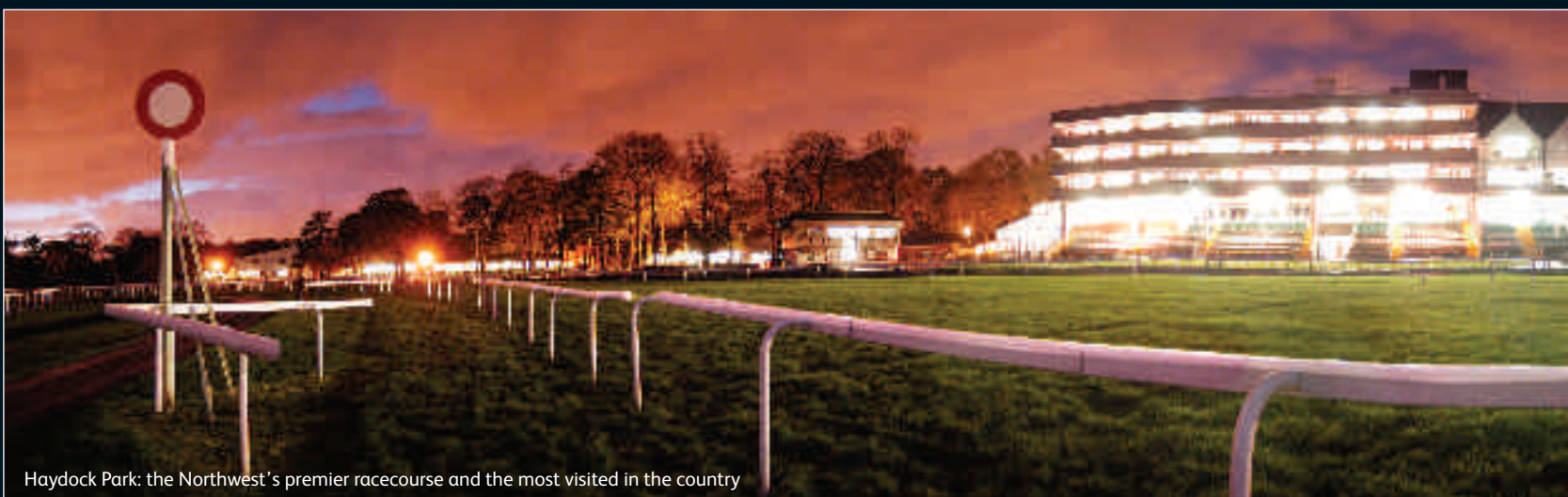
**St.Helens Enterprise Centre:** the original Graduate Greenhouse project is now part of the Enterprise Centre, which seeks to stimulate the formation of higher value new business starts in St.Helens through the provision of incubator-style serviced work accommodation. The centre will also house St.Helens Chamber and provide conference and training facilities, and is hoped to catalyse the creation of a new **Chalon Way Enterprise Park** for high-tech companies on the adjoining site.

**Mere Grange** will provide over 300,000 square feet of new commercial floorspace in 6 phases along the arterial Linkway from M62 Junction 7 to the Town Centre. This will facilitate both the inward investment and indigenous business growth required if the St.Helens economy as a whole is to expand.

**Parkside Colliery Rail Freight Distribution Centre** is the single biggest individual CGS project, estimated at £400 million, and particularly important in the longer term. It is potentially politically sensitive due to environmental impact, but if approved will create a very substantial number of jobs. To capitalise on this opportunity, there would be a need to upskill residents, via a range of public and private training initiatives. It also has a clear linkage to the logistics sector support initiative and is an explicit element of the intended Merseyside “Superport”.

The **Tourism Development Initiative** will provide dedicated industry support, coordination, and product development to maximise St.Helens’ visitor economy potential, and is also linked to delivering Big & Speciality Events in Theme D.

“... one of the key gaps in the original CGS was a lack of emphasis on the innovation agenda.”



Haydock Park: the Northwest’s premier racecourse and the most visited in the country



## Challenges and Opportunities

**Supply chains:** there is a need to improve the performance and sustainability of supply chains and improve linkages between SMEs in St.Helens and firms both up and down the supply chain. This is a core aim of Business Winning Business under Action Area A1.

**Links to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs):** one of the key gaps in the original CGS was a lack of emphasis on the innovation agenda and, in particular, initiatives supporting firms in St.Helens to link up to the main HEIs in Liverpool and Manchester. We will work to identify opportunities for St.Helens firms to work with University research departments, where there is a clear commercial benefit to the business, with the Chalon Way Enterprise Park being a potential joint venture with one of the region's universities.

**Changing the attitudes of firms:** St.Helens has too high a proportion of firms operating in low value added market segments and local markets. There is a need to tackle the underlying causes of low productivity in relation to innovation, markets, use of ICT and skills by stimulating the commitment of employers and employees alike to invest in workforce training and development.

**The supply of business premises:** a number of commercial premises developments are in the pipeline, be they onsite or at varying stages of planning permission/approval, e.g. Mere Grange, Lea Green Farm East, and the Triplex site (part residential). While this means that St.Helens has a good supply of B1 office space likely to come on stream over the next 3-5 years,

there are concerns about longer-term supply. Planning constraints mean that there is likely to be a shortage of suitable brownfield sites for development, and this may increase pressure for greenbelt land release. There is therefore a case for commissioning research to build the evidence base on projected demand for land and labour, and potentially support the need to release green belt land, prior to the next Green Belt Land Review.

**The availability of commercial premises to purchase:** in addition to the above constraints, many businesses cite a lack of suitable commercial premises for purchase as a major constraint re their further expansion and investment in St.Helens. We need to work with owners of employment sites and business premises to identify opportunities for firms to purchase, rather than lease, their premises to encourage them to stay, invest and grow.

## Making it Happen

Theme A contains a mixture of support to existing businesses, new starts and inward investment, coupled with major physical investment in sites and premises. St.Helens Chamber is primarily responsible for delivering the key business support and enterprise projects, funded by the LEGI Programme. Meanwhile, new sites and premises activity will be co-ordinated in the main by St.Helens Council but delivered by the private sector, with significant commercial investment required to bring identified projects to fruition.





Advanced construction industry training at St Helens College

**“... raise aspirations towards enterprise and work among St.Helens residents and workers.”**

## 5. Theme B: Transforming Ambition

### Overview

The overall objective of Theme B is to “raise aspirations towards enterprise and work among St.Helens residents and workers”.

Transforming the St.Helens economy depends not only on assisting new or established firms, but also on increasing the numbers of people considering setting up a business and raising their career ambitions. This will be achieved by stimulating a cultural change in attitude to enterprise and work, in part via the education system, along with more targeted support to develop fledgling ideas and improve the skills that individuals may need if they are to become successful entrepreneurs.

For employers, the absence of people with the right skills – especially basic/key/core skills plus customer service – remains a key issue. Extending employment opportunities and developing a skilled and adaptable workforce are key objectives of our Local Area Agreement and the Merseyside City Employment and Skills Strategy.

There is already a wide range of projects, programmes and investment aimed at getting people back into work and in improving their skills, funded by the LSC, Jobcentre Plus, Connexions, and other bodies. We need to build on and influence rather than duplicate these.

Theme B activity will therefore interface with the large and complex area of mainstream wider support for skills development and help to tackle worklessness. It is not the aim of CGS to cover these areas in any detail, but rather to focus on the theme of ambition and to add value in certain areas, building on the good work of many agencies operating in the Borough.

Theme B also has an explicit focus on investing in key infrastructure in order to provide first rate learning facilities for future generations at both school and further education levels.

### CGS Progress to Date<sup>50</sup>

Theme B contained a variety of different types of projects, including support for start-ups and existing businesses, small-scale workspace schemes, and activities to embed a culture of enterprise and learning among residents. A number of projects are now fully embedded in the LEGI programme, and are being expanded. These include:

- **Get a New Start** - this provides a range of support for residents of St.Helens who are out of work, with a focus on those living in the more deprived parts of the Borough, acting as a ‘bridge’ to make them aware of the opportunities available and help remove the barriers which stop them moving onto employment or training. In its first year, the project helped over 200 people back into employment.
- **Sowing the Seeds of Enterprise** - a large scale, co-ordinated programme to raise awareness of the potential of local enterprise and self-employment, being taken forward as part of the LEGI Business Start-Up and Enterprising St.Helens projects;
- **Business Partners and Business Buddies** - two projects targeted at better linking business to support agencies, being taken forward under the LEGI Streetwalkers and Business Winning Business projects.

A number of commercial developments and workspace schemes to support enterprise originally contained within the original CGS Theme B have now been completed. These include **Centrix House** - providing 20,000 sq ft of managed workspace including Langtree Group’s HQ; **Catapult Too** – small business space for creative and other industries in the **George Street Quarter**; and Growing On Space at **Old Boston**.

Other high profile developments are well underway and have now been transferred to Theme A within the revised CGS. These include new office space at **Mere Grange** on the Lea Green Farm West site alongside the arterial M62 Linkroad; and the **St.Helens Enterprise Centre** (a.k.a. the Graduate Greenhouse), providing a micro living and working environment for graduates wishing to start their own businesses, plus a new HQ for St.Helens Chamber complete with training and conference facilities.

<sup>50</sup> Since the launch of the original CGS.

## Future Focus

**Need for more people focused activity** - a number of the Action Areas and the types of projects contained in the original CGS did not appear to directly support the objectives of the Theme, i.e. a number of workspace projects which are now contained in Theme A. Theme B is now primarily people focused, with the exception of an Action Area dedicated to new skills/learning infrastructure projects.

**Embedding enterprise and business acumen in young people** - there is a real need to embed and raise the profile of enterprise and business in the education system. Similarly, young people need to be encouraged to set ambitious goals for their adult lives, and to embrace the potential for self-employment as well as employment. This is a key aim of the Enterprising St.Helens LEGI project, which has successfully linked businesses with all secondary schools in St.Helens.

**Tackling deep-seated worklessness** - we need to raise the aspirations of people living in the most deprived parts of the Borough, and to increase their awareness of the opportunities available to them. This is to be achieved through:

- Raising awareness of, and stimulating increased interest in, enterprise among people living in deprived communities, and encouraging them to view enterprise as a viable and attractive labour market option.
- Preparing people for future identified employment opportunities, building on the work being done by the “Get a New Start” project. This up-skilling should be combined with efforts to increase willingness to travel outside the Borough for work, and improvement to public transport linkages where necessary (e.g. LEGI Transport Linkages project).
- In the medium and longer term, preparing people for the jobs that are likely to emerge at the regionally significant Omega Park and Parkside Colliery developments. These are potentially very important employment areas for St.Helens residents, albeit they will face competition from residents of other Boroughs and migrant workers.

## Action Areas

**B1: Encouraging Enterprising and Ambitious People:** too many residents in St.Helens still lack the ambition and drive to start a new business. Although there are very promising signs of improvement, as evidenced by LEGI, turning this around remains a major challenge.

We will raise awareness of, and stimulate interest in, enterprise among St.Helens residents. The focus here will be both on people out of work, as enterprise is increasingly being recognised as a route back into work, as well as on those already in employment who may already have the skills to start a business of their own.

Skills are important to individuals, to employers and to the local economy alike. For individuals, possessing higher-level skills increases the probability not only of being in employment, but also of earning more. We will raise demand for training by both unemployed and employed people, encouraging them to set challenging but achievable goals, and make them more aware of the wider support that is on offer.

**B2: Inspiring Young People:** young people are the economic lifeblood of the future, yet despite great improvements in recent years, too many young people continue to leave school without progressing into jobs, education or training, whilst too many high-skilled young people leave the Borough to live and work elsewhere.

We will tackle these issues by raising the ambitions of young people so that they want to train, work and become entrepreneurs, allowing them to achieve their potential. We will make highly skilled young people in the Borough aware of the high quality jobs that are available locally, linking them to local employers (which may necessitate a change in employer attitudes), and to opportunities for enterprise and entrepreneurship.

**B3: Skills Infrastructure for the Future:** this action area encompasses three large projects all seeking to provide state of the art learning facilities for those in secondary and further education. They are all also major regeneration projects in their own right in terms of the employment and expenditure generated in the local economy, as well contributing to the wider liveability appeal of St.Helens as a quality place in which to live and learn.

## Key Projects

**Enterprising St.Helens:** aims to raise the aspirations of young people around enterprise and work by fostering greater partnership working between businesses and schools, and by providing positive role models to young people.

**Get a New Start:** aims to enhance the service provided by Starting Point in order to help workless people back into work, with a particular focus on those areas of St.Helens with the highest concentrations of worklessness (i.e. the target SOAs contained in the LEGI bid document).

**Omega Skills Challenge:** Omega Park is potentially the single most important future employment area for St.Helens residents, both for those already in jobs and also as a route back into employment for those currently without work. Now that planning permission has been granted, the three originally identified Omega Park CGS projects will be taken forward in order to address the skills and transport provision necessary for local residents to be able to benefit from the opportunities created.

**Parkside Skills Foresighting:** if realised, this major rail freight logistics and warehousing development will provide very substantial numbers of new job opportunities. To capitalise on these opportunity, there will be a need to upskill residents once we have a clearer view of timescales and specific skills needs.

**College Campus Redevelopment:** the comprehensive rebuild of the Town Centre Campus of one of the country's leading Colleges will not only provide excellent new facilities for students but also contribute to the wider regeneration of the Town Centre.

**Building Schools for the Future:** one of the highest value initiatives in the revised CGS, this reshaping of the Borough's entire secondary education infrastructure will enhance school learning facilities for generations to come.

## Challenges and Opportunities

**Tackling deep-rooted issues:** tackling issues around culture and attitudes cannot be done overnight, being by definition deep-rooted and embedded over several generations. This is compounded by greater relative local concentrations of worklessness and disadvantage than was the case 3 to 4 years ago.

**Government policy:** some workless residents face a well-documented 'benefits trap' (i.e. they stand to gain little if at all in financial terms by leaving state support to enter employment). Efforts to generate opportunities and support capacity, as well as to change attitudes are extremely costly and will take a long time, with the best results in the short term likely to come from targeting people who are 'job-ready' or 'job-willing'.

## Making it Happen

At present, a number of projects highlighted for inclusion in Theme B are at the embryonic stage. We will need to work closely with the LSC, training providers - particularly St.Helens College - Jobcentre Plus, and Connexions to develop and deliver the activities proposed, and to avoid duplicating existing activity, in order to ensure that the CGS projects proposed will make a real difference to local people.

St.Helens Chamber has a key role to play in raising aspirations through Starting Point, and in inspiring young people, through Enterprising St.Helens. Meanwhile, the Council's role will significantly increase post-2010 when it takes over some of the responsibilities currently performed by the LSCs, which are to be dissolved.

By contrast, the infrastructure projects identified under B3 are all already underway, being delivered by private contractors on behalf of the educational establishment or authority concerned.

**“... the infrastructure projects identified under B3 are all already underway, being delivered by private contractors.”**



**“... create a high-quality physical environment for residents, businesses and visitors.”**

## 6. Theme C: Achieving a Physical Transformation

### Overview

The overall objective of Theme C is to “**create a high-quality physical environment for residents, businesses and visitors**”.

All businesses and residents have a stake in the creation of a more attractive St.Helens, and quality of place is becoming an increasingly important factor in people’s decisions about where to live, work and spend leisure time, and re. business decisions about whether and where to (re)invest. The same applies to transport links and accessibility.

Enhancing and creating a vibrant, attractive, and varied town centre, leisure, retail and residential offer is vital if St.Helens is to attract high income earners, benefit from greater spending power, and maximise the Borough’s competitive advantages in terms of connectivity as the economy continues to grow.

By the same token, amid harsh economic climes and increasing fuel prices, providing first rate leisure/visitor facilities on people’s proverbial doorstep also makes sense to be able capture a greater share of potentially increasing domestic day visits and tourism.

Many parts of St.Helens are almost unrecognisable compared to 10 years ago, and the theme of Physical Transformation is undoubtedly where the most significant achievements have been made with regard to realising the overall CGS vision in recent years. Nevertheless, more remains to be done.

### CGS Progress to Date<sup>51</sup>

Theme C included a number of the most ambitious original projects, and the widest variation in performance.

St.Helens’ recent record of attracting new residential development – exemplified by the three new **Urban Villages** currently being constructed – is a major success story that reflects the Borough’s increasing attractiveness as a place in which to live, and also inspires confidence about achieving our target of increasing the local population base.

Of particular significance with regard to driving economic growth through the housing market is the July 2008 approval by Government of the **Mid Mersey Growth Point** submission jointly prepared by St.Helens, Halton and Warrington Councils. This will collectively deliver 18,756 new dwellings over the period 2008 to 2016/17, which represents a 43% increase above Regional Spatial Strategy requirements. Of these, 6,156 new dwellings will be created in St.Helens.

A number of other developments encouraged by CGS are now coming on stream. These include:

- **Town Centre Focal Point** – the comprehensive renovation of the Town Centre’s public realm is now completed.
- **St.Helens Central Station** – this iconic new rail gateway is completed and has won its first design award.
- **Town Centre Events** – a significantly enhanced events calendar has now been in operation for 3 years, including high profile annual music and comedy festivals, and in 2008 the exhibition of Antony Gormley’s Turner Prize-winning Field for the British Isles originally created by local residents.
- **Duke Street Masterplan** - completed and seeking funds for implementation.
- **Leisure Gap Analysis and Strategic Council Leisure Review** – both completed.
- **Town Centre Housing** – the construction of a first phase of 250 apartments is complete.
- **West Point retail/leisure development** – due to start onsite Autumn 2008.

The centrepiece **Destination St.Helens** development of a 18,000-capacity rugby league stadium and convenience shopping superstore<sup>52</sup> has now received planning permission. This is important not just in terms of providing a new showcase for the most successful Rugby Super League club of all time, but because of the associated housing development of the Club’s existing Knowsley Road site, plus the prospect of a new retail development on the existing Town Centre Tesco site.

A number of major original CGS projects have been shelved following extensive individual feasibility studies that reported significant logistical and funding issues. These were the proposed “**Kew of the North**” attraction, **Sherdley Park Regional Outdoor Events Venue, Canal Linkages** (aimed at digging a new canal link to the Leeds-Liverpool Canal as well as restoring the full length of the Sankey Canal), and the **Haydock Helipad** scheme to establish an aerodrome at Haydock Park Racecourse.

While it is regrettable that these projects will not be going ahead in the foreseeable future, there remains scope to reinstate them as and when funding conditions change. Moreover the decision to put these on hold indefinitely illustrates the realism and pragmatism that characterise St.Helens’ impressive track record of delivering ambitious regeneration initiatives.

<sup>51</sup> Since the launch of the original CGS.

<sup>52</sup> See <http://www.sthelensstadium.com/pages/vision.htm> for further information.

## Future Focus

**Further expanding the leisure offer** – having made exponential progress in terms of tourism and leisure development, it is important to further enhance St.Helens' offer in order to be able to consolidate our position as an emerging day visitor destination and take advantage of our accessibility. The development of new and existing products is vital to achieving this. Key areas include sport, via infrastructure enhancements to the Borough's prime rugby league and horseracing assets; industrial heritage given St.Helens' proud history; and rural recreation given our wealth of hitherto under-exploited natural assets.

**The appearance and vitality of the Town Centre** is critical – and will be a significant focus of activity accordingly. A key issue within the current difficult retail environment is the fact that the existing offer is not of sufficient quality or breadth to remain competitive in the longer run. There are too many units that do not fit the requirements of modern retailers in terms of a mix of large units for the big chains and smaller units for specialist, niche market retailers.

Similarly, while there has been a boom in the evening economy over the last 5 years, a more diverse and higher value food/drink offer is required if St.Helens is to capture the increased spending power of St.Helens residents as employment and incomes rise and as more new residents arrive. Some gap analysis may be required in order to better understand the locational and market drivers of higher value retail and food/drink outlets, as a precursor to identifying and targeting opportunities for new investment.

**Residential offer** – this continues to expand in terms of both quality and quantity, as evidenced by the development of three new Urban Villages and the emergence of a Town Centre residential area. Much of

the emphasis is on developing new semi-detached and detached family housing in the south of the Borough, while a number of mixed-use commercial/leisure/residential schemes are also expected to come forward, which will equally contribute to generating local population growth, one of the stated aims of CGS.

**Delivering the Mid Mersey Growth Point** initiative will provide the main impetus and strategic vehicle for new residential provision over the period 2008 – 2017. The joint vision of St.Helens and the other two local authorities involved is *“To make the mid Mersey area a key economic driver for the North West with a balanced, good quality housing market with a strong focus on affordability. Our aim is to link areas of future opportunity with those of need to strengthen existing regeneration and deliver sustainable communities. We will work in partnership to deliver this vision while reducing overall environmental impacts and minimising our contribution to Climate Change.”*

Within this context, the importance of maintaining the existing private and social housing stock must not be overlooked, given that new developments account for only a small proportion of the overall housing stock. The fact that the housing stock transfer to Helena Partnerships has resulted in dramatic improvements to former Council estates is a very positive development.

**Connecting St.Helens to the wider North West economy** – maximising the Borough's accessibility and connectivity to Manchester and Liverpool is crucial, especially if St.Helens is to continue to attract higher-skilled workers, many of whom may work in the larger business centres. There is also a need to connect people with jobs. Enhancing the integration of public transport, and improving rail links via park-and-ride schemes, will also be important, as will improving wireless and broadband technology and infrastructure.

**“... maximising the Borough's accessibility and connectivity to Manchester and Liverpool is crucial, especially if St.Helens is to continue to attract higher-skilled workers.”**



## Action Areas

**C1: Leisure Destination of Choice** - St.Helens' location is a key asset, lying at the heart of the Northwest motorway network and with around 7 million people living within an hour's drive. We will exploit this potential by broadening the range and quality of the visitor offer, to make St.Helens a full and repeat day visitor destination. In the longer term, the intention is not only to continue to increase overall visitor numbers but also to raise overnight stays given the added visitor spend this will generate.

**C2: Continued Town Centre Renaissance** - The Town Centre is the commercial, cultural and leisure hub of the Borough, and its quality will be one of the defining impressions of St.Helens that visitors will retain and residents will enjoy. The Town Centre has become more vibrant in recent years, and we will implement a number of key enhancements to enable it to fulfil its potential as a true asset in generating additional economic and image benefits.

**C3: Residential Locations of Choice** – This action area also includes major investment in hospital infrastructure. This is in part due to the massive direct regeneration benefits in terms of employment and expenditure generated, but also given that health is a key determinant of quality of life plus the direct relationship between economic opportunity and improving the health and well being of local residents<sup>53</sup>, a key objective of the Sustainable Communities Plan. This is particularly important in view of profound ongoing demographic change linked to the ageing population which in itself will have a significant impact on economic activity.

**C4: Maximising Regional Connectivity** - St.Helens' location is a prime competitive strength, however, the quality, availability, integration and information regarding public transport needs to be improved. We also need to maximise ICT connectivity, so local firms can take advantage of the opportunities afforded by new technology to increase productivity and competitiveness.

## Key Projects

**Destination St.Helens** - The Phase 1 development of the flagship 18,000 capacity rugby stadium plus a major retail superstore is a major project. This will not only bring significant new visitors, spend, and image benefits to the Town Centre, but will also open up 10 hectares of land for Phase 2 leisure development.

**South St.Helens Forest Park** – this is intended as a major new regional centre for outdoor pursuits with the Big Art Project in its midst as an inherent draw. Spread over 350 hectares in a highly accessible location, the Forest Park will provide facilities for mountain biking, bouldering, orienteering, horse riding, diving, canoeing and hiking as well as facilities for walking, cycling and family days out, to attract 100,000 new visitors a year to St.Helens and Merseyside, while providing a valuable local recreational amenity.

**Town Centre development (various)** - the projects identified are key to increasing further the vibrancy and attractiveness of the Town Centre in order to help attract higher income earners and to benefit from greater spending power as the economy continues to grow.

**Urban Villages** - in addition to contributing to the quantity and quality of the local residential offer, the very nature of Urban Villages and their associated amenities is intended to re-establish a real sense of place and community.

**Public Transport Connectivity & Park and Rides** – St.Helens' locational advantages are primarily road-related. However with increasing petrol prices, dwindling fossil fuel supplies, and the prospect of road pricing, in the longer term firms may begin to look for locations with good rail connectivity and cluster more activity around well-networked stations. Improved and faster links to Liverpool and Manchester (and better quality trains) may equally encourage high earners to live and work in the locality. Communicating our public transport links and service provision to Manchester in particular, plus the provision of new park and ride stations are vital accordingly.

<sup>53</sup> NB. A number of studies have shown the correlation between unemployment and increased: consumption of tobacco (Wilson & Walker 1993); alcohol (Janlert & Hammerstrom 1992); sexual risk taking (Hammerstrom & Janlert 1997); GP services

(Jin et al 1995); use of medication (Studnicka et al 1991); admissions to psychiatric hospital (Agerbo et al 1998).

## Key Challenges and Opportunities

**Future land supply** – the predicted shortfall in the future supply of sites and premises from around 2012 is a major challenge, in so far as it will constrict the investment and commercial development necessary for the St.Helens economy to continue to grow. In addition to securing gap funding to bring remaining strategic brownfield sites back into productive use, this issue will need to be addressed via the planning system.

**Competition from other locations/destinations** – most major towns and cities in the UK are also in the process of upping their game just to remain competitive, while the bulk of public funding as well as private investment tends to be directed to the larger city centres and/or “attack brand” locations. In view of this, our challenge and opportunity is to effectively use our location midway between Liverpool and Manchester to our advantage.

**Changing spending habits and capturing greater local spending power** – regardless of the “credit crunch” and year on year growth of internet sales transactions, having a strong retail offer is important if St.Helens is to capture the increased spending power of St.Helens residents as employment and incomes rise and as more residents move to the Borough.

## Making it Happen

The public and private sectors will work closely together to drive forward highlighted projects. St.Helens Council has a particularly important role to play via its economic development and statutory planning functions, as both a lead delivery body and in terms of facilitating continued private sector investment in our housing, business, transport, and tourism and leisure assets.



**“ ... having a strong retail offer is important if St.Helens is to capture the increased spending power of St.Helens residents as employment and incomes rise and as more residents move to the Borough.”**



Fine dining at Colours restaurant



Antony Gormley's Turner Prize winning *Field for the British Isles* created in St.Helens in 1993

**“... to increase recognition of St.Helens as a regional location of choice for residents, businesses & visitors.”**

## 7. Theme D: Transforming Perceptions

### Overview

The prevalence of general advertising and proliferation of destination marketing initiatives highlight the degree to which perceptions of place to live, work, spend leisure time and to do businesses influence the decision-making of individuals and businesses. The stated aim of “increasing the recognition of St.Helens as a modern, vibrant, regional location of choice” is not simply about creating or propagating an image without substance; rather it is about showcasing St.Helens and its many assets, new and established, to both local residents and further afield.

This theme is therefore vital to realising the overall aims of CGS by ensuring that the transformation taking place under the other CGS themes is properly communicated and understood. For without being recognised as a vibrant, modern place for enterprise and regional location of choice, St.Helens will never be able to fully maximise its economic potential.

### CGS Progress to Date<sup>54</sup>

Much of the work undertaken to date has been in preparation for major transformational “place shaping” initiatives soon to be delivered and conducted under the auspices of the LEGI funded ‘Business Location of Choice’ project.

These aims are being realised via a family of new branding, websites and materials all promoting “St.Helens plc”.

The originally conceived “Beacons of Merseyside” is now being taken forward in the form of the **Big Art Project**. Linked to Channel 4’s most ambitious ever arts series, this involves the commissioning and construction of a landmark sculpture – *Dream* by world-renowned artist Jaume Plensa – overlooking the M62 close to Junction 7. The location, prominence, design and scale of what will be a nationally significant artwork will put St.Helens on the map virtually overnight. Subject to securing planning permission, the Big Art Project will be delivered by Spring 2009.

An extensive programme of **art-related community engagement, education and involvement** projects is also being delivered in tandem with the main commission, in part to form the basis of a significant Big Art Project legacy initiative.

Based on significant market research, “Brand New St.Helens” - the Borough’s first integrated destination marketing initiative – was launched in late 2007<sup>55</sup>. This positions St.Helens as:

# “the Heart of the Northwest”

and has four main aims:

- to raise St.Helens’ overall profile
- to enhance St.Helens’ image
- to deliver economic benefits in terms of additional investment and tourism
- to help increase local pride.

<sup>54</sup> Since the launch of the original CGS.

<sup>55</sup> To a greater or lesser extent this umbrella initiative will deliver much of what was conceived in the original CGS projects D1.1 CGS Dissemination, D1.2 Borough Tours, D2.3 Challenge Your Perspective II, and D2.4 St.Helens Ambassadors, plus more besides.

St.Helens has seen an **exponential enhancement of our tourism offer and profile** since 2003, in part as a direct result of the cluster research conducted as an integral part of the development of the original CGS. This is typified by the significantly enhanced events calendar that has been developed and now includes established music and comedy festivals, plus the North West Racing Masters.

Indeed 2008 saw the exhibition and first homecoming of Antony Gormley's world famous, Turner Prize winning *Field for the British Isles*, created in St.Helens by local residents 15 years earlier, to capitalise on Liverpool's year as European Capital of Culture. This attracted more than 22,500 people over 9 weeks (42 % local, 43 % from the Northwest, 12 % from elsewhere in the UK, and 3 % from abroad) and elicited rave reviews from international visitors and locals alike.

Unique and innovative new **"Welcome to St.Helens" boundary markers** have been installed at the five primary gateways into the Borough. To complement their striking asymmetric design and ensure they remain up to date, the signs incorporate special vinyl panels that promote major events to the 1,000s of passing motorists and are regularly replaced. It is thought that St.Helens is the first area in the country to use replaceable vinyl panels in this novel and practical way.

## Future Focus

**Attracting identified external target audiences** – for both investment and visitor economy purposes based on the Borough's locational advantages, excellent business support mechanisms, wealth of existing successful investors, and prime sporting assets, to promote St.Helens more widely as a place to live, work, visit and invest.

**Harnessing latent local pride** – to create a self-sustaining "feel good" factor and cultivate residents as ambassadors in order to will raise aspirations and aid external promotion.

**Imbuing a positive sense of arrival** – building on the success of the primary boundary markers and creating highly visible new landmarks at key gateways, capitalising on the Borough's location and throughput of commuters, differentiating St.Helens from competing locations, and using quality to underline the Borough's positive transformation.

**Providing new and added reasons to visit and reside in St.Helens** – via new and enhanced cultural and other events and attractions.

## Action Areas

**D1: A Visually Exciting St.Helens** - first impressions are important, and the quality of the built and natural environment is recognised as an important asset in attracting residents and businesses, particularly alongside the major gateways into St.Helens. Through a combination of iconic artwork, attractive signage and improvements to the natural environment, both within the town and along the key routes into St.Helens (M62, M6 and A570) the sense of arrival into the Borough will be improved, and will help to put St.Helens 'on the map'.

**D2: Brand New St.Helens** – Building Local Pride – developing identified key themes within "Brand New St.Helens" targeted at and celebrating local businesses and people.

**D3: Brand New St.Helens** – Destination Marketing - developing identified key themes within "Brand New St.Helens" to promote the Borough's existing and emerging locational, business and leisure assets to external audiences, in order to drive preference and generate direct economic benefits.

**D4: Happening St.Helens** - We will further consolidate existing events and develop and market new ones, particularly of a speciality/niche events. This will make St.Helens and its Town Centre even more vibrant at the same time as increasing "brand recognition" of St.Helens as a happening place by residents, businesses and visitors, linked to established product development areas - sport, heritage, rural recreation, and business tourism.

**"... 2008 saw the exhibition and first homecoming of Antony Gormley's world famous, Turner Prize winning *Field for the British Isles*."**

## Key Projects

**The Big Art Project** – this is undoubtedly the most significant single project within this Theme, on account of its ability to literally put St.Helens on the map in one fell swoop, and in so doing symbolise the Borough’s revitalisation while generating new visitors and enhancing local pride and aspirations.

Indeed it represents a “Holy Grail” in UK regeneration terms – a transformational, innovative and high impact initiative in a strategically important, prominent former colliery, developed with the active, direct involvement of the local community, delivered via a broad-based partnership, and the subject of a prime time national television series.

Over and above its physical installation, ensuring that the project has a lasting legacy in terms of community involvement and further public art is also critical.

**Industrial Alchemy** – using art to assign new cultural/leisure functions and spectacular visual appeal to current industrial relics, including the illumination of key industrial landmarks. This is modelled on the Emscher Park regeneration programme in the Ruhr Valley in Germany - one of the most heavily industrialised parts of Europe - that has resulted in the area’s designation as the European Capital of Culture in 2010.

Delivering the 4 main **Brand New St.Helens** themes – and associated branding, websites and materials promoting “St.Helens plc”:

“**Connectivity, Catchment, Cost**” - selling the Borough’s prime investment location

“**Home of Champions**” – showcasing our winning companies and business environment

“**Discover Your Doorstep**” – profiling our unique and varied tourism assets

“**Be POSH!**” (Proud of St.Helens) – building and harnessing local pride.

## Key Challenges and Opportunities

**Changing people’s perceptions of place** tends to take a long time, and St.Helens needs to shout louder than other areas to make its voice heard and get the key messages across. While we now have an unprecedented vehicle for reinventing perceptions of St.Helens via the Brand New St.Helens branding, themes and materials, two key associated challenges remain:

- Changing some deep-seated attitudes and perceptions of St.Helens among local residents;
- Externally, too many people still have an outmoded perception of St.Helens as an old industrial town, or simply do not know where St.Helens is at all.

A key opportunity here is that high expectations are easily confounded, while low pre-conceptions make it easier to make a positive impression.

**Competition from other locations/destinations** – as with Theme C this is a serious challenge for all major towns and cities. The answer to this is to build on existing strengths, be “smart” in what we do, and never compromise in terms of quality, e.g. materials or events.

**Securing greater commercial support** – at a time when comparatively limited public/external funding is available for tourism, marketing and promotion, securing greater private sector financial and other support is essential in being able to sustain and further develop the major strides St.Helens has made in recent years in terms of its promotion as a business location and its events and wider visitor economy offer.

## Making it Happen

While the key catalytic and vanguard role will continue to be performed in the main by the Council, it is vital that more elements within the private sector play a more direct and active role in supporting the promotion of St.Helens, be it via providing commercial sponsorship for events or spearheading specific investment campaigns.

**“... a transformational, innovative and high impact initiative in a strategically important, prominent former colliery site, developed with the active, direct involvement of the local community, delivered via a broad-based partnership, and the subject of a prime time national television series.”**

## 8. Measuring Achievement

### High Level Indicators

The overall vision is for St.Helens to become “a vibrant modern place for enterprise and a regional location of choice”. We have identified three high level indicators that we will monitor in order to be able to gauge the progress and success of CGS.

Firstly, **the overall size of the St.Helens economy.**

This will be measured in practice by:

- The increase in business density towards the regional average
- The increase in the rate of self-employment towards the regional average
- The increase in employment rate towards the regional average.

Secondly, **the level of economic prosperity.** This will be measured in practice by:

- The increase in average wage rates
- An improved position within Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

Thirdly, **population increase,** in so far as this will be driven both by the strength of the economy and St.Helens’ perceived liveability appeal. This will be measured in practice by:

- The increase in the number of people of working age resident in St.Helens.



The all-conquering Saints with the 2008 Challenge Cup



## Performance Metrics

We do not intend to set specific targets with regard to CGS. Nevertheless, there are a number of relevant indicators that we will track in order to monitor progress within each theme, which in turn will provide an insight into the overall success of CGS and the health of the St.Helens economy.

### Theme A

#### Measure A1

Increase the business stock in St.Helens relative to the population (i.e. increase business density) towards the regional average

#### Measure A2

Increase the annual business start-up rate towards the regional average

#### Measure A3

Increase in businesses with more employees (Beta model)

#### Measure A4

Increase the self-employment rate towards the regional average

#### Measure A5

Employment growth in certain sectors (ABI)

#### Measure A6

Increase in the square metres of business floorspace coming on stream and/or taken up

### Theme B

#### Measure B1

Improvement in attitudes to enterprise (People's Panel)

#### Measure B2

Increase in GCSE attainment, measured by number of students achieving 5 'Good' grades (A\* to C)

#### Measure B3

Increase employment rate towards the national average, particularly by reducing worklessness in the most deprived areas

#### Measure B4

Reduce the proportion of young people in the NEET group (via % of 16-24 with NVQ4 if cannot be measured directly)

### Theme C

#### Measure C1

Increased vitality and vibrancy of the Town Centre, measured by occupancy rates

#### Measure C2

Maintain rate of house building at recent levels

#### Measure C3

Public transport usage (number of journeys made by bus and rail)

### Theme D

#### Measure D1

Improve residents' perceptions of St.Helens as a place to live (People's Panel)

#### Measure D2

Improve visitors' perceptions of St.Helens (Destination Benchmarking & visitor satisfaction surveys)

#### Measure D3

Increase in annual rate of investment enquires (Council Economic Development Team).

#### Measure D4

Increase in annual visitor numbers and spend (STEAM)

#### Measure D5

Annual increases in unique users for all five Brand New St.Helens websites<sup>56</sup> (Google Analytics)

## Consistency with Local Area Agreement (LAA) Target Setting

St.Helens has negotiated a Local Area Agreement with Government Office for the Northwest for the period 2008-11, which sets out a framework of agreed targets and priorities to be delivered in return for performance-based reward funding.

It is vital that CGS is delivered in tandem with the Local Area Agreement, and CGS will directly contribute towards achievement of the following LAA targets accordingly:

- N005: General satisfaction with the local area
- N117: 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET)
- N151: Overall employment rate (as % of working age population)
- N153: % of working age people claiming out of work benefits in worst performing neighbourhoods
- N154: Net increases in dwelling stock provided
- N163: Proportion of population aged 19-64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least Level 2 or higher
- N166: Median earnings of employees in the area
- N170: Proportion of the area of previously developed land that is vacant or derelict for more than 5 years;
- N171: Number of VAT registrations per 10,000 residents
- N176: Working age people with access to employment by public transport (and other specified modes)
- LAA 127: Number of VAT registered businesses
- LAA 128: Number of new business start-ups per annum
- LAA 131: Percentage of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training.
- LAA 138: Square metres of newly developed commercial floorspace suitable for SMEs
- LAA 140: Square metres of existing floorspace taken up by SMEs.

In addition, CGS project delivery will contribute indirectly to achieving a number of other LAA targets:

- N006: Participation in regular volunteering
- N072: % of children achieving 78 points across all 13 Early Years Foundation Stage profile scales
- N073 Achievement at level 4 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2
- N074 Achievement at level 5 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 3
- N075 Achievement of 5 or more A\*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths at Key Stage 4
- N079: % of young people in the cohort that have passed the level 2 threshold by the academic year in which they turn 19
- N083: % of young people achieving at least level 5 in Science at the end of Key Stage 3
- N092: Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20 % in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest
- N093: % Progressing by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
- N094: % Progressing by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
- N095: % Progressing by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3
- N096: % Progressing by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3
- N097: % Progressing by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4
- N098: % Progressing by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4
- N120a: All age, all cause mortality rate per 100,000 population (male)
- N120b: All age, all cause mortality rate per 100,000 population (female)
- LAA 031: Number of Green Flag awards
- LAA 083: Percentage of 15 year old pupils in schools maintained by the LEA achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\*- C or equivalent including English and Maths.



Modern business accommodation at Catapult Too

## 9. Making It Happen: CGS Delivery

### Introduction

This major overhaul of the CGS, less than half way through the original 10 year timeframe and in the main thanks to greater than anticipated success, marks another important milestone in St.Helens' radical ongoing renewal process. We have already made great strides towards becoming, and being recognised as, a vibrant, modern, regional location of choice, however much remains to be done.

Whilst the main challenges that St.Helens faces are similar to those besetting many other post-industrial areas across the Northwest and indeed the UK, our solutions and approaches to tackling them must be different if we are to succeed in truly transforming the Borough. They must continue to be more innovative, more imaginative, and ultimately "smarter" than elsewhere, in terms of generating greater positive impacts for our businesses, our communities, our image, and our economy without having to necessarily invest greater resources than is already the case.

All stakeholders in St.Helens are keen to deliver this ambitious change programme as soon as possible. This impatience is nevertheless tempered with realism, not least given the current economic climate, compounded by greater competition for the public funding and private investment that are already in shorter supply than at anytime during the past decade.

We are equally under no illusions that the challenges associated with endemic worklessness, low levels of aspiration, and cultural attitudes to enterprise that have become engrained over generations can be resolved overnight. These will almost certainly take more than a decade and probably a generation to overcome in practice.

In short, the complexity and cost of the CGS programme, plus the inherently drawn out nature of regeneration, means that its implementation will not be rapid, nor will we achieve everything.

By the same token, all of the projects identified are realisable, all stakeholders involved are in it for the long haul, we have an excellent track record of successfully delivering large, challenging and innovative regeneration initiatives, plus the requisite commitment, partnerships and mechanisms to be able continue to do so. In other words, looking to the future, there remain grounds for confidence and optimism.

### Funding CGS Delivery

The CGS action plan set out in Appendix A contains 90 projects, each with a brief description, lead delivery body, indicative cost, and target completion date. The combined volume of this programme is approximately £1.86 billion<sup>57</sup>, which means that securing the funding for implementation will self-evidently be a major challenge in its own right.

The same applies to capacity – having the right people with the right experience and expertise to deliver the projects identified.

Having said that, funding for 20 of the capital schemes – the St.Helens Enterprise Centre, Mere Grange Phase 1, Carmel College, St.Helens College, Building Schools for the Future, Queens Park Leisure, Destination St.Helens Phase 1, Haydock Park Racecourse Enhancement, the Northwest Golf and Country Club, Stanley Bank Triangle, West Point, the Town Centre Arriva and Shaw Street projects, the three Urban Villages, the two Hospitals redevelopments, the Big Art Project, Secondary Boundary Markers and Town Centre Signage - is already in place. The combined total of these secured project costs is around £1.12 billion, all have planning permission, and most are onsite.

Similarly, we have already secured around £13million of LEGI, Working Neighbourhoods Fund, and other revenue funding for a further two financial years (2009-10 and 2010-11). Subject to approval via the Council's Area Based Grant mechanism, these funds will enable us to deliver significant ongoing as well as new activities, particularly within Action Areas A1, A2, B1, B2, and across the whole of Theme D.

Taking Parkside Rail Freight Interchange out of the equation - as the current outline cost of this one project is around £400 million and accounts for over 20 % of the entire CGS programme - nevertheless leaves a notional deficit of around £328 million to deliver all the remaining projects.

Of this figure around £261 million represents capital costs, the majority of which is expected to come from the private sector. This leaves a shortfall of around £32 million in revenue funding for identified projects, plus a further £36 million assumed costs for ongoing revenue projects post-2012, virtually all of which will be required from public funding streams.

<sup>57</sup> This figure has been derived on the basis of largely estimated costs for all identified projects, plus assumptions re. ongoing revenue projects post 2012. This overall total will clearly go up or down once the costs of individual projects are firmed up, and should be treated as purely indicative accordingly.

This is a very large volume of both capital and revenue investment that needs to be found from a variety of public and private sources; our ability to secure this will clearly have profound implications for the delivery of CGS overall. Key target funding streams are identified below:

- Private sector investment - private sector capital will be vital for the sustained growth and expansion of the St.Helens economy. In many cases, the requisite investment in physical infrastructure will be driven by private developers, albeit with significant facilitating public financing. The private sector also has a significant contribution to make in terms of time and advocacy, e.g. via the Enterprise Forum, other public/private partnerships, and through the sponsorship of events.
- NWDA – as the government-designated development agency for the region, the NWDA equally has a vital role to play in the future regeneration of the Borough. The St.Helens LEGI programme and several other local priorities/areas of activity are specifically referenced in the North West Regional Economic Strategy, however no explicit NWDA Strategic Investment Plan funds are identified for supporting these or other CGS projects going forward<sup>58</sup>.  
  
The Merseyside Action Plan (MAP) will be a key vehicle for securing future NWDA funding for projects, as will direct dialogue in specific areas, e.g. re. rural economic development for which St.Helens is the identified lead for Merseyside as a whole.
- European Structural Funds - around £400 million – comprising £250 million ERDF and £150 million ESF, all of which requires match funding - is ring-fenced for Merseyside over the period 2007-13. These funds are also managed via NWDA, albeit with input from the Merseyside Phasing-In Committee, so the MAP will again be important, as will the particular mechanisms identified for allocating resources within each of the individual Investment frameworks.
- Tapping into the main ESF co-financing channels provided by the Learning and Skills Council, and by the Department of Work and Pensions/Jobcentre Plus is also critical. ERDF and ESF need to be committed quickly (85 % by the end of 2010) due to decommitment and specific ‘phasing in’ rules, making early funding applications imperative.

- The newly formed Homes and Communities Agency, integrating a range of housing and regeneration bodies including English Partnerships, and with an annual budget of £5billion, is also a key potential funding body.
- Government and other public funding – it is important that St.Helens maximises future new government funding, as well as making the most of relatively small but significant current initiatives such as the Deprived Area Fund, which complements mainstream ESF funding, and the Rural Development Programme for England, which comprises pre-matched government, and EU funds.
- Area Based Grant (ABG) – the ABG pools government resources allocated to a variety of specific education, health, social care and economic development activities. Controlled by the Council, funds must be re-bid for and are primarily directed towards delivering targets and outcomes negotiated as part of the Local Area Agreement.
- Importantly for CGS, the ABG pool includes the St.Helens LEGI programme – amounting to around £14 million for 2008-11 (with the potential for further funding up to 2016). It also incorporates the Working Neighbourhoods Fund for which St.Helens has been allocated £15.5 million during the period 2008-11 to address issues around worklessness and deprivation<sup>59</sup>.
- St.Helens Council funding - the Council is identified as the lead body for many CGS projects. The Council’s limited discretionary funding including via its Capital Programme is another source of potential finance, while contributions from revenue budgets and in terms of staff costs will play an important role in facilitating project delivery. The role of the Council in terms of delivering education, skills and training will become even more significant when it takes over certain responsibilities from the LSC post-2010.
- There are a host of other available funding streams relevant to the implementation of specific projects – these include the National Lottery funding programmes, plus the resources available via organisations such as the Arts Council for England, and Forestry Commission.
- Last but not least, “bending” other mainstream public programmes and resources from a variety or regeneration-related bodies will also be vital to facilitate CGS project delivery.

<sup>58</sup> Other than for the Destination St.Helens Stadium project during 2008.

<sup>59</sup> The WNF has been designed to replace the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) and is intended to have a more economic focus than NRF, e.g. reducing the emphasis on social/community type interventions unless there is a clear link to employment creation.

## Delivery & Monitoring Arrangements

The list at Appendix A identifies the lead organisation responsible for the delivery of each of the 90 individual projects. This responsibility encompasses project development, advocacy, coordination, securing the requisite funds and human resources for implementation, plus monitoring, promotion and reporting functions.

St.Helens Council (37) and the Chamber (16) between them are the identified lead bodies for more than half of all the projects, while the remaining 37 schemes are spread across a very broad range of public and private sector organisations.

In practice however, the implementation of virtually all the projects will rely to a greater or lesser degree on multiple bodies and/or some form of partnership, both local and external. Partners' contributions will inevitably take a variety of forms, from direct delivery to facilitation and management, to the provision of information, support and/or funding whether actual or in kind etc.

As both the Local Authority and the organisation responsible for delivering the largest number of individual projects, St.Helens Council<sup>60</sup> is the lead body with regard to the day to day coordination, management, monitoring, reporting on and promotion of CGS overall.

CGS remains in essence a private sector driven approach, and the Enterprise Forum will therefore retain responsibility for overseeing the implementation of CGS and reviewing progress. To this end, the Council will prepare a Progress Report for the Enterprise Forum to consider on a quarterly basis.

The Enterprise Forum, will in turn, report to St.Helens Chamber's main Board. The same report will also be taken to the Economic Development and Enterprise Group, a sub-group of the Local Strategic Partnership and which is responsible for monitoring progress against the fourth block of the Local Area Agreement. The Council will also circulate progress reports via its own internal executive and management structures.

Depending on the scale and nature of progress made with the projects and strategy overall, the intention is to conduct another in-depth review of CGS at its midway point around 2012-2013. This will be in addition to less formal annual progress reviews and publicity.

## Leadership & Buy-In

As the highly ambitious regeneration business plan for St.Helens plc, CGS requires consistent leadership and buy-in from all quarters if it is to be delivered effectively.

In terms of the public sector, this means the highest level backing and advocacy by St.Helens Council as the designated lead body, not least in order to be able to secure support, buy-in and indeed funding via other key organisations such as St.Helens College, LSC, Jobcentre Plus, Connexions, The Mersey Partnership, and NWDA.

Given that CGS was originally introduced by the Government as a pilot initiative, retaining the recognition and support of central government departments is also seen as both desirable and necessary.

To have maximum impact, particularly in view of its private sector driven ethos, CGS will equally need continued and significant business buy-in. This will require continued leadership on the part of both St.Helens Chamber and the individual members of the Enterprise Forum, as those best placed to galvanise the interest and enthusiasm of key local businesses/employers so that they can in turn drive, "sell", and benefit from CGS projects and the programme as a whole.

The principles of partnership are well established<sup>61</sup> and enshrined within the Local Area Agreement, Comprehensive Area Assessment, and Multi-Area Agreement processes that St.Helens has actively embraced.

In terms of leadership, partnership and delivery, the fact that St.Helens boasts not only one of the country's top Local Authorities<sup>62</sup> but also the best Chamber in the UK<sup>63</sup> is a major advantage in its own right. It is also a reflection of the renowned, close and joined-up public-private sector partnership working that characterises the Borough's approach to regeneration, as epitomised by CGS itself.

Finally, it will be crucial to ensure that CGS-related successes and benefits are widely and consistently publicised and promoted, not just to secure buy-in and funding but as an integral element of CGS delivery per se linked to Theme D and the "Brand New St.Helens" campaigns.

<sup>60</sup> via its Economic Development Team.

<sup>61</sup> E.g. combining and sharing ideas, information and resources in order to provide more inclusive, creative, efficient and sustainable solutions to common challenges than would otherwise have been possible.

<sup>62</sup> in terms of its 4-Star CPA rating by the Audit Commission, 2008.

<sup>63</sup> as designated by the British Chambers of Commerce, 2008.



Eco and the Bunny Men headlining the fantastic annual *Eclectica* music festival

# Appendix A: Full list of Revised CGS Projects

## Theme A: Transforming the Business Base

**Objective:** Growing, strengthening & diversifying the business base

Action Area	Projects	Description	Lead Body	Project Cost	Completion
A1: Increasing Business Start-Up & Competitiveness	1. Business Start Up <sup>1</sup>	Stimulation of the formation of new businesses by providing comprehensive support package.	St.Helens Chamber	£1.6 million p.a.	Review 2012
	2. Business Winning Business <sup>2</sup>	Helping local businesses to win more business & increase productivity.	St.Helens Chamber	£900,000 p.a.	Review 2012
	3. Streetwalkers <sup>3</sup>	Team of advisers out supporting local small businesses, delivering low level advice & guidance across a broad spectrum of issues.	St.Helens Chamber	£400,000 p.a.	Review 2012
	4. Inspiring Leaders & Managers	Provide local SMEs with formal & informal development opportunities to inspire & motivate.	St.Helens Chamber	£60,000 p.a.	Review 2012
	5. Business Recovery	Supporting businesses in difficulties by bringing in turnaround experts, insolvency practitioners etc to improve survival prospects and protect jobs, and other initiatives to minimise business failures.	St.Helens Chamber	£100,000 p.a.	Review 2012
	6. Development of New Products	Increasing innovation & new product development through better use of IT & more effective exploitation of intellectual property legislation.	St.Helens Chamber	£200,000 p.a.	Review 2012
	7. Environmental business opportunities	Helping local businesses to exploit opportunities in environmental technologies & to exploit opportunities in low-carbon emitting energy production.	St.Helens Chamber	£100,000 p.a.	Review 2012
	8. Tourism Development Initiative <sup>4</sup>	Maximising the Borough's visitor economy within the wider regional context via intensive industry support, plus product development & packaging.	St.Helens Council/TLBN	£160,000 p.a.	Review 2012
	9. Distribution & Logistics Forum <sup>5</sup>	Support for distribution & logistics sector.	St.Helens College	£10,000 p.a.	Review 2012
	10. High Growth Sector Business Location Support	An integrated service to facilitate inward investment & business relocation & retention.	St.Helens Council	£180,000 p.a.	Review 2012
	11. Rural economy development	Dedicated support to develop enterprise, unlock economic opportunities in the Borough's rural areas, & deliver the Rural Economy Action Plan (REAP).	St.Helens Council	£175,000 p.a.	Review 2012

<sup>1</sup> Original CGS projects B1.4, B1.5 & B1.6 – Business Red Tape Busting.

<sup>2</sup> Developing Social Enterprise Opportunities, & General Enterprise Awareness.

<sup>3</sup> Original CGS projects A3.1 & B1.3 – Business Partners Team & Business Mentoring.

<sup>4</sup> Original CGS project A3.2 – Business Buddies.

<sup>5</sup> Original CGS project A2.1 – Developing Local Clusters.

<sup>6</sup> Original CGS project A2.1 – Developing Local Clusters.



Action Area	Projects	Description	Lead Body	Project Cost	Completion
<b>A3: Developing an Enterprise Hotspot</b>	12. Starter Units & Removing Impediments to Growth	Support for infrastructure work & other intervention to facilitate the development of new floorspace & premises for SMEs.	St.Helens Council/ private sector	£250,000 p.a.	Review 2012
	13. St.Helens Enterprise Centre (& Graduate Greenhouse) <sup>6</sup>	Incubator-style serviced work accommodation & St.Helens Chamber headquarters.	St.Helens Chamber	£6 million	2008
	14. Chalon Way Enterprise Park	High-technology business location including facility for the University of Liverpool.	Langtree Group plc	£4 million	2014
<b>A4: Business Locations for the 21st Century</b>	15. Economic Land & Employment Needs Gap Analysis	To review & quantify employment needs & land within the context of anticipated future developments.	St.Helens Council	£45,000	2008
	16. Mere Grange Phase 1 <sup>7</sup>	52,000 sq. ft. of high specification office buildings in within 31 landscaped acres aside the arterial Southern Corridor from M62 J7.	Langtree Group plc	£8 million	2008
	17. Gerard's Bridge Industrial Park	New workspace development close to the Town Centre.	Northern Trust Group	£6 million	2010
	18. Growing on space: Lea Green Farm East	New workspace development in the Southern Corridor.	Private sector	£9 million	2011
	19. Shaw Street Workspace	Office provision close to St.Helens Central railway station.	Private sector	£6 million	2011
	20. Former St.Helens Glass Site	Redevelopment for employment purposes.	Nexdom Ltd.	£3.5 million	2011
	21. Mere Grange – Phases 2 to 6 <sup>8</sup>	An additional 250,000 sq ft. of high spec. office buildings aside the arterial Southern Corridor from M62 J7.	Langtree Group plc	£45 million	2015
	22. Former Ravenhead Glass Site (Phase 1)	Redevelopment for employment purposes.	Private sector	£4 million	2018
	23. Parkside Rail Freight Distribution Centre	Nationally significant strategic Rail Freight Interchange; part of the wider Merseyside "Superpart".	Prologis	£400 million	2018
<b>THEME A: INDICATIVE TOTAL COSTS</b>				<b>£512 million</b>	
(Total individual project costs plus, for ongoing projects, per annum costs multiplied by up to 5 years, i.e. until 2012 when they will be reviewed. No post-2012 costs for per annum projects have been included.)					

**PLEASE NOTE:**

- Projects identified in **bold** are continuations or modifications of existing CGS project, while those in *italics* are successor or brand new projects.
- The costs & target completion year for the majority of the identified projects are estimated & indicative only.

<sup>6</sup> Original CGS project B1.2 – Graduate Enterprise Greenhouse.

<sup>7</sup> Original CGS project B2.3 B – Growing On Space: Lea Green West.

<sup>8</sup> Original CGS project B2.3 B – Growing On Space: Lea Green West.

## Theme B: Transforming Ambition

**Objective:** Raising aspirations towards work & enterprise among St.Helens residents & workers

Action Area	Projects	Description	Lead Body	Project Cost	Completion
<b>B1: Encouraging Enterprising &amp; Ambitious People</b>	24. Get a New Start <sup>9</sup>	Integrated information & guidance on jobs, education & training.	St.Helens Chamber	£1.3 million p.a.	Review 2012
	25. Challenge Yourself <sup>10</sup>	Encouraging people to continue to train & learn whilst in employment.	St.Helens Chamber & College	£100,000 p.a.	Review 2012
	26. Parkside Skills Foresight <sup>11</sup>	Skills development programme linked to likely job opportunities at Parkside.	St.Helens Chamber & LSC	£250,000 p.a.	Review 2012
	27. Omega Skills Foresight	Skills development programme linked to likely job opportunities at Omega.	St.Helens Chamber & LSC	£250,000 p.a.	Review 2015
<b>B2: Inspiring Young People</b>	28. Enterprising St.Helens <sup>12</sup>	Encourage & inspire young people to develop enterprise & employability skills, & to see their future in the context of work & enterprise.	St.Helens Chamber	£500,000 p.a.	Review 2012
	29. Schools Jobs Challenge <sup>13</sup>	Awareness-raising of future local employment opportunities – majoring on Omega & Parkside.	St.Helens Chamber	£50,000 p.a.	Review 2012
	30. Graduate Enterprise	Competition for graduates to design their own business idea, with the winner receiving a cash prize & a guaranteed tenure in the Enterprise Centre.	St.Helens Chamber	£50,000 p.a.	Review 2012
	31. Young Entrepreneurs Network	Develop the use of IT as a community of interest & social networking amongst entrepreneurs.	St.Helens Chamber	£50,000 p.a.	Review 2012
	32. My Place St.Helens	A government funded programme of music, sports & arts activities targeted at enhancing the ambition & engagement of young people.	St.Helens Council/YMCA	£5 million	2011

<sup>9</sup> Original CGS projects B3.2 & 3.3 – Invest in Yourself Campaign & SME Awareness Raising.

<sup>10</sup> Original CGS projects B3.2 & 3.3 – Invest in Yourself Campaign & SME Awareness Raising.

<sup>11</sup> Original CGS project B4.2 – Rising to the Omega Skills Challenge.

<sup>12</sup> Original CGS project B1.1 – Sowing the Seeds.

<sup>13</sup> Original CGS project B4.1 – School/Omega Links.

Action Area	Projects	Description	Lead Body	Project Cost	Completion
<b>B3: Skills Infrastructure for the Future</b>	33. Carmel College Redevelopment	Extensive modernisation that will almost double the campus size, including a new Centre for Art & Design.	Carmel College	£17 million	2009
	34. College Campus Redevelopment	Construction of new state of the art Town Centre campus for St.Helens College	St.Helens College	£63 million	2011
	35. Building Schools for the Future	Rebuilding, remodelling or refurbishing all 10 of St.Helens' secondary schools to transform them into world class learning environments as part of a nationwide scheme	St.Helens Council	£179 million	2015

**THEME B: INDICATIVE TOTAL COSTS**

(Total individual project costs plus, for ongoing projects, per annum costs multiplied by up to 5 years, i.e. until 2012 when they will be reviewed. No post-2012 costs for per annum projects have been included.)

**£276 million****PLEASE NOTE:**

- Projects identified in **bold** are continuations or modifications of existing CGS project, while those in *italics* are successor or brand new projects.
- The costs & target completion year for the majority of the identified projects are estimated & indicative only.

## Theme C: Achieving a Physical Transformation

**Objective:** Creating a high-quality physical environment for residents, businesses & visitors

Action Area	Projects	Description	Lead Body	Project Cost	Completion
<b>C1: Leisure Destination of Choice</b>	36. North West National Golf & Country Club	Creation of a state of the art new championship golf course & country club facility on the Rainford Bypass.	NWNGCC	£15 million	2009
	37. Queen's Park Leisure Centre	Redevelopment of Queen's Park Leisure Centre.	St.Helens Council	£4 million	2009
	38. St.Helens Soccer Centre	Major new 5-a-side football facility utilising 3G Astro turf.	St.Helens Council	£1.8 million	2009
	39. Heritage Trails	Developing heritage trails at suitable locations across the Borough.	St.Helens Council	£105,000	2010
	40. Rainhill Trials Realisation	Virtual online museum, multi-media depiction, & permanent commemoration of the Rainhill Trials, building on existing feasibility work.	St.Helens Council	£300,000	2010
	41. Destination St.Helens Phase 1 <sup>14</sup>	<b>Strategic regeneration scheme for ex-United Glass site (phase 1 includes new St.Helens RLFC stadium &amp; new Tesco).</b>	Langtree Group plc	£50 million	2011
	42. St.Helens Forest Park (Phase 1)	Transforming the area around Sutton Manor into a major new regional outdoor recreation centre, catalysed by the Big Art Project.	The Mersey Forest/ St.Helens Council	£4.25 million	2011
	43. Haydock Park Racecourse Enhancement	Further development of ground infrastructure to be able to accommodate even more annual fixtures.	Haydock Park Racecourse	£2.4 million	2011
	44. Region of Sporting Excellence	State of the art sports facilities linked to Saints RLFC to provide an innovative approach to increasing participation in sport & educational attainment.	Cowley Language College	£2.3 million	2011
	45. Stanley Bank Triangle	Enhance the Sankey Valley Visitor Centre, improve paths, hold events, & conserve the Stanley Bank Slitting Mill and a SSSI.	St.Helens Council	£865,000	2011
46. Destination St.Helens Phase 2 <sup>15</sup>	<b>Phase 2 will include services access, infrastructure, abnormal site costs, &amp; remediation; the precise leisure usage is yet to be determined.</b>	Langtree Group plc	£15 million	2015	

<sup>14</sup> Original CGS project C2.1 – Destination St.Helens Sports & Leisure Village.

<sup>15</sup> Original CGS project C2.1 – Destination St.Helens Sports & Leisure Village.

Action Area	Projects	Description	Lead Body	Project Cost	Completion
<b>C2: Continued Town Centre Renaissance</b>	47. Town Centre Design Masterplan	Masterplan to identify development opportunities & maximise the quality of the public realm.	St. Helens Council	£20,000	2008
	48. Town Centre retail, leisure & franchise market gap analysis	Research to identify market gaps in the retail & leisure offer in terms of locational drivers for major chains, ideally in niche sectors.	St. Helens Council	£20,000	2009
	49. West Point Development	New mixed used development on the edge of the town centre.	Grantmaster Ltd	£25 million	2010
	50. St. Mary's Arcade Enhancement	Investment in the shopping centre market to improve its offer, increase occupancy & attract more shoppers.	St. Helens Council	£1 million	2011
	51. Ravenhead Retail Park Phases 5 & 6	Further expansion of retail park on edge of town centre.	Hammerson Group	£8 million	2012
	52. Duke Street Development	Environmental improvements to unlock the potential of key Duke Street gateway area & surrounding development sites.	St. Helens Council	£3 million	2015
<b>C3: Residential Locations of Choice</b>	53. Town Centre Canal Reinstatement <sup>16</sup>	Masterplanning & delivery of missing canal link reinstatement in the town centre.	Private sector & St. Helens Council	£10 million	2015
	54. Town Centre Retail Development	ING redevelopment of main Town Centre retail precinct.	ING	£75 million	2016
	55. Town Centre Canal Quarter	Developing and delivering a new quarter alongside the reinstated canal.	Council/private sector	£25 million	2018
	56. St. Helens Hospital	Massive PFI redevelopment including a new 25,000m <sup>2</sup> building to house diagnostic facilities, plus state-of-the-art operating theatres and outpatient amenities.	Taylor Woodrow/ St. Helens & Knowsley NHS Trust	£90 million	2008
	57. Town Centre Living: Arriva Complex <sup>17</sup>	Expanding Town Centre residential offer at the Arriva complex.	Dylan Harvey Property Development	£6.25 million	2009
	58. Whiston Hospital <sup>18</sup>	Comprehensive PFI redevelopment to provide 92,500 square metres of state of the art new and refurbished clinical, research & patient facilities, including A&E	Taylor Woodrow/ St. Helens & Knowsley NHS Trust	£248 million	2011
	59. Town Centre Living: Shaw Street <sup>19</sup>	Expanding Town Centre residential offer at Shaw Street.	Countryside Properties	£8 million	2012

<sup>16</sup> Original CGS project C1.1 – (Town Centre) Canal Reinstatement.

<sup>17</sup> Original CGS project C1.2 – New Town Centre Housing.

<sup>18</sup> Although located in the neighbouring Borough of Knowsley, Whiston Hospital is included in the CGS as it is only just over the Borough boundary, the two authorities are served by the same joint NHS Trust, and it is the primary hospital serving St. Helens residents in terms of offering full facilities, including A&E.

<sup>19</sup> Original CGS project C1.2 – New Town Centre Housing.

Action Area	Projects	Description	Lead Body	Project Cost	Completion
	60. Lea Green Urban Village <sup>20</sup>	Development of the Lea Green Urban Village.	Morris Homes	£100 million	2012
	61. Vulcan Urban Village <sup>21</sup>	Development of the Vulcan Urban Village.	St.Modwen	£100 million	2013
	62. Worsley Brow Urban Village <sup>22</sup>	Development of the Worsley Brow Urban Village.	Banks Group	£200 million	2014
	63. Triplex Site Redevelopment	Redevelopment of this site for housing.	Pilkington	£6 million	2014
	64. Knowsley Road Redevelopment	Redevelopment of Rugby League ground for new housing.	Taylor Wimpey	£10 million	2015
<b>C4: Maximising Connectivity</b>	<b>65. Transport Linkages To Jobs<sup>23</sup></b>	<b>Supporting linkages to key employment sites (e.g. Haydock, Lea Green, Omega) through new services.</b>	Merseytravel	£200,000	Review 2012
	66. Public Transport Connectivity Promotion	Dedicated information & marketing campaign to raise awareness of integrated public transport services to & from Manchester.	Merseytravel	£20,000 p.a.	Review 2012
	<b>67. Car Park Improvement Programme<sup>24</sup></b>	<b>Improving Town Centre car parks.</b>	St.Helens Council	£3 million	2011
	<b>68. Wi-Fi Provision<sup>25</sup></b>	<b>Provision of enhanced Borough-wide Wi-Fi service.</b>	St.Helens Council	£2 million	2012
	69. Linkway Gateway Capacity	Infrastructure enhancements to maintain access to Town Centre & employment sites along arterial Linkway, e.g. increasing traffic flow / capacity at major roundabouts.	St.Helens Council	£2.5 million	2012
	70. Town Centre Coach Parking Facility	The creation of a Town Centre coach park linked to the delivery of a concerted group travel tourism marketing plan.	St.Helens Council	£1 million	2013
	71. Park & Ride Schemes	Delivering Park & ride schemes at identified local stations.	Merseytravel	£3 million	2013

#### THEME C: INDICATIVE TOTAL COSTS

(Total individual project costs plus, for ongoing projects, per annum costs multiplied by up to 5 years, i.e. until 2012 when they will be reviewed. No post-2012 costs for per annum projects have been included.)

**£1,019 million**

#### PLEASE NOTE:

- Projects identified in **bold** are continuations or modifications of existing CGS project, while those in *italics* are successor or brand new projects.
- The costs & target completion year for the majority of the identified projects are estimated & indicative only.

<sup>20</sup> Original CGS project C4.1 – Implementing the Urban Villages.

<sup>21</sup> Original CGS project C4.1 – Implementing the Urban Villages.

<sup>22</sup> Original CGS project C4.1 – Implementing the Urban Villages.

<sup>23</sup> Original CGS project B4.3 – Omega and Wider Bus Links.

<sup>24</sup> Original CGS project C1.5 – Car Park Improvement Programme.

<sup>25</sup> Original CGS project C5.3 – Broadband Lobbying.



The spectacular modern façade of the World of Glass

## Theme D: Transforming Perceptions

**Objective:** Increasing recognition of St.Helens as a modern, vibrant & exciting place

Action Area	Projects	Description	Lead Body	Project Cost	Completion
<b>D1: Visually Exciting St.Helens</b>	72. Secondary Boundary Markers <sup>26</sup>	Provision of boundary markers at 25 secondary gateways into St.Helens.	St.Helens Council	£60,000	2008
	73. Town Centre Visitor Info & Signage <sup>27</sup>	Implementation of better quality information & signage in the town centre.	St.Helens Council	£40,000	2008
	74. UK's 1st Essential Oils Farm & National Wildflower Farm	Co-location at a key Northern gateway (Rainford bypass) of Phytobotanica's Essential Oils Farm with a new wildflower farm to supply the existing National Wildflower Centre in Knowsley, together with visitor & learning facilities.	Phytobotanica & Landlife	£100,000	2008
	75. Big Art Project – Dream <sup>28</sup>	Creation of a landmark new public artwork overlooking the M62, in association with Channel 4's Big Art Project.	St.Helens Council	£1.94 million	2009
	76. The Carbon Footprint	Creation of a new piece of public artwork at the Mere Grange office development on the Linkway.	Langtree Group plc	£250,000	2009
	77. Industrial Alchemy – Illuminating St.Helens <sup>29</sup>	Night-time artist-designed illumination of key industrial landmarks as the initial pilot for a transformational public art programme to enhance St.Helens' visual appeal.	St.Helens Council	£300,000	2011
	78. Town in the Forest <sup>30</sup>	Connecting the urban centre with the Mersey Forest & community woodlands via improvement to the natural environment along key road gateways into St.Helens.	St.Helens Council	£2.62 million	2015
	79. Industrial Alchemy Programme	Roll out of wider transformational public art programme aimed at redefining St.Helens' industrial monuments as leisure/tourism assets, modelled on Emscher Park, Germany.	St.Helens Council	£10 million	2018
<b>D2: Brand New St.Helens – Building Local Pride</b>	80. Big Art's Little Art & Community Engagement Project	Delivery of a Borough-wide public art-related community engagement & involvement programme, as well as individual little art projects, linked to the main Channel 4 Big Art Project.	Helena Partnerships	£170,000	2008

<sup>26</sup> Original CGS project D2.2 – Strategic Signage.

<sup>27</sup> Original CGS project C1.6 – (Town Centre) Signage & Navigation Improvements.

<sup>28</sup> Original CGS project D2.1 – Beacons of Glass.

<sup>29</sup> Original CGS project C3.4 – Projection Art & Illuminating St.Helens.

<sup>30</sup> Original CGS project C3.1 – Town in the Forest.



Action Area	Projects	Description	Lead Body	Project Cost	Completion
	81. Be POSH	Develop & deliver the Proud of St.Helens (POSH) campaign.	St.Helens Council	£45,000 p.a.	2012
	82. Discover Your Doorstep	Develop & deliver the local element of the Discover Your Doorstep campaign to get residents to appreciate local assets.	St.Helens Council	£20,000 p.a.	2012
	83. Home of Champions <sup>31</sup>	Develop & deliver the Home of Champions campaign showcasing successful local businesses & assets.	St.Helens Council	£15,000 p.a.	2012
	84. Big Art Project Legacy Programme	Development of a public arts strategy for St.Helens & public art community & economic regeneration programme.	Helena Housing/ St.Helens Council	£70,000 p.a.	2012
<b>D3: Brand New St.Helens – Destination Marketing</b>	<b>85. Business Location of Choice<sup>32</sup></b>	<b>Develop &amp; deliver investment focused materials &amp; the Connectivity, Catchment &amp; Cost campaign, incl. using major existing investors (e.g. ING) to front campaigns/ events.</b>	St.Helens Council	£50,000 p.a.	2012
	86. Visitor Destination of Choice	Develop & deliver tourism & leisure materials & the Discover Your Doorway day visitor/group travel campaign.	St.Helens Council	£35,000 p.a.	2012
	87. Re- Brand New St.Helens Development	Full evaluation of Brand New St.Helens & its constituent elements, plus development of successor branding, campaigns & materials.	St.Helens Council	£120,000	2012
	88. Re- Brand New St.Helens Delivery	Ongoing roll-out & delivery of associated branding campaigns & materials from 2013.	St.Helens Council	£200,000 p.a.	2018
<b>D4: Happening St.Helens</b>	89. Big Events	Develop & deliver a programme of regionally significant events.	St.Helens Council	£360,000 p.a.	Review 2012
	90. Speciality Events	Develop & deliver a programme of speciality markets & other niche events.	St.Helens Council	£75,000 p.a.	Review 2012

#### THEME D: INDICATIVE TOTAL COSTS

(Total individual project costs plus, for ongoing projects, per annum costs multiplied by up to 5 years, i.e. until 2012 when they will be reviewed. No post-2012 costs for per annum projects have been included.)

**£19.7 million**

#### PLEASE NOTE:

- Projects identified in **bold** are continuations or modifications of existing CGS project, while those in *italics* are successor or brand new projects.
- The costs & target completion year for the majority of the identified projects are estimated & indicative only.

<sup>31</sup> Original CGS project D2.3 – Challenge Your Perspective II.

<sup>32</sup> Original CGS project D2.3 – Challenge Your Perspective II.

## Appendix B: Key Strategic Linkages

The revised City Growth Strategy does not operate in isolation, but rather interacts with a number of strategies, policies and initiatives at a variety of spatial levels.

This presents both restrictions and opportunities that will help and guide us in seeking to achieve our goals. This complex, constantly changing and often confusing policy landscape makes it essential to stay up to date with thinking emerging from central government and other organisations. A good example of this is the potentially far-reaching Sub-National Review of Economic Development, the practical ramifications of which remain unclear at time of going to print

Key, relevant strategies/policies are summarized below, although the list is by no means exhaustive:

### Regional Policy

#### North West Regional Economic Strategy (2006)

The RES sets out the agreed regional economic development priorities and principles for the next 20 years, and provides detailed actions over a three-year period. The RES contains many actions that are directly relevant to the challenges faced by St.Helens, including a need to boost enterprise and raise skill levels, develop important employment sites, and bring about image enhancements.

St.Helens is specifically referenced as a priority location under three of the 122 RES actions:

- RES Action 3, which includes targeting of business start-up and survival provision in five specific local authority areas (of which St.Helens is cited as one);
- RES Action 26, which includes targeting for delivery of basic skills support for those individuals without qualifications, with emphasis on eight districts (of which St.Helens is cited as one).
- RES Action 80: Deliver the designated Strategic Regional Sites as regional investment sites, knowledge nuclei or intermodal freight terminals (the former Parkside Colliery is one of the 25 specified sites).

#### North West (Spatial) Plan

The North West (Spatial) Plan sets out the scale, priorities and broad locations for future development across the region, and provides a framework for where and how much development should take place. It covers a broad range of issues including housing, retail, transport and the environment, and forms part of the Statutory Development Plan, which means that it will have to be taken into account in planning decisions made by Local Authorities. It will also influence the content and development of Local Development Frameworks. The Plan highlights the importance of improving a number of town and retail centres, including St.Helens, in order to ensure a sustainable distribution of high-quality retail centres outside the main regional centres, and to enhance the provision of town centre community facilities. It also notes the need to upgrade the nearby A58.

#### Business Support Simplification

All publicly funded business support, whether designed and delivered at the regional, sub-regional or local level must be consistent with the Government's business support simplification agenda. This aims to eradicate duplication of activities, make it easier for businesses to find out what support is on offer, and to reduce the number of business support delivery mechanisms. CGS delivery must therefore be consistent with the emerging regional business support framework and conform to the principles underpinning the simplification agenda, not least as this will be a key requirement of funding partners, particularly the NWDA and in drawing down European Structural Funds.

#### North West Operational Programme

The ERDF Operational Programme for the North West covers the period 2007-13, which has enterprise, competitiveness and business growth, particularly in high value sectors, at its heart. Particular attention will be paid to the low level of enterprise in deprived communities, and activities may include the provision of specialist business advice and business premises. LEGI is specifically identified as an eligible match funding source.

## North West Enterprise Strategy

The North West Enterprise Strategy aims to raise understanding and awareness of the importance of developing an enterprise culture and to align key stakeholders' policies and initiatives to support the growth of enterprise, as well as providing a rationale for the allocation of public sector resources. It sets out a framework for action and delivery, which includes measures to monitor performance and improve individuals' and businesses' access to tailored enterprise support.

## North West Tourism Strategy

The revised (2007) North West Tourism Strategy seeks to strengthen the region's focus on offering some of the best visitor destinations in the UK and to connect with the growing place-shaping role assigned to Local Authorities. It also recognises the need for the visitor economy infrastructure to be improved and for all activity related to tourism and the visitor economy to be based on the principles of sustainable development.

## Sub-Regional Policy

### Merseyside Action Plan (MAP)

The MAP produced on behalf of Merseyside partners by the Mersey Partnership, sets out the investment priorities and projects that will bring about the continued renaissance of the sub-region. An initial MAP covered a three-year period between April 2006 and April 2009, in line with the three-year RES programming period, highlighting how NWDA and other investment will be delivered in the sub-region. The MAP contains 16 economic development priorities covering skills, employment, enterprise, innovation, physical infrastructure, inward investment, tourism, sustainable development and health, and is now revised on an annual basis.

### City-Regional Development Plan

The Merseyside City-Region Development Plan sets out a number of strategic priorities for the city-region under five themes: The Premier Destination Centre; the

Well Connected City Region; the Creative and Competitive City Region; the Talented and Able City Region; and the City Region of Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Communities. The plan highlights the important linkages that exist between St.Helens and the city-region core and recognises St.Helens as a strategically important business location and centre for employment growth.

### The Liverpool/Merseyside City Employment Strategy (CES)

The CES supports the vision of a premier European Liverpool City Region by 2025, with an internationally competitive and sustainable economy, outstanding cultural offer and quality of life, and vibrant and inclusive communities contributing to and sharing in sustainable wealth creation. The ambition is for an area of productive, leading edge, innovative businesses, with economically sustainable, skilled, working communities providing a highly skilled and flexible workforce. The CES will contribute to this by strengthening skills and employment services for employers across the travel to work area and for workless people in the most severe concentrations of deprivation. The CES Delivery Plan also provides the basis for delivering the 2007-13 ESF programme plus complementary strand activity across Merseyside, on the basis of the clear match between the activities proposed in the CES and those of both the National ESF Plan and the Regional Skills Priorities.

### Merseyside Tourism Strategy

The Merseyside City Region Tourism Strategy is currently in the process of revision. A central objective of the updated version will clearly be to maximise the legacy of Liverpool's success as the 2008 European Capital of Culture, as well as exploit other inherent product strengths and major developments. It is anticipated that even greater emphasis will be accorded in the new strategy to potential tourism development activities in St.Helens given the massive strides made in the last few years with regard to developing the visitor economy and leisure offer within the wider (sub-)regional context.

## Merseyside Enterprise & Business Growth Strategy

This was completed in June 2008 and identifies the enterprise goal for the Liverpool City Region as increasing its rate of economic growth via three strategic aims: growing the business base through increased business start-ups and improved survival rates; supporting local business growth and expansion; increasing local business productivity levels. The eleven attendant action areas are:

- Enhance enterprise education and raise awareness levels
- Graduate enterprise and retention
- Business creation
- Local community business coaching/support
- Getting the most from FDI
- Business collaboration networks and priority sector development
- Preparing to export/investigating new markets
- Access to business expertise for growth
- Skills solution for business
- Innovation collaboration
- Leveraging key knowledge/technology assets<sup>1</sup>

## Local Policy

### St.Helens Local Area Agreement (LAA)

At the heart of the LAA approach is a strategic focus upon those issues and priorities against which it is necessary to achieve significant progress in the coming years in order to improve the quality of life of the Borough's residents and the performance of the local economy as a whole. This in turn will contribute to achieving the aims and objectives of the Community Plan and other key local strategies. The LAA outlines a proposed outcomes framework and a set of 35 (including 16 mandatory) indicators negotiated with GONW. Economic Development and Enterprise is a key block of activity in its own right, while the three strategic drivers of Health, Worklessness and Liveability remain key cross-cutting issues. Building upon the success of the original LAA there will continue to be an emphasis on narrowing the gap between the most deprived communities and the rest of the Borough.

### St.Helens Sustainable Community Plan

This document combines local and national aims and objectives for the period 2008-2018, setting out the priorities agreed between national government, St.Helens Council, the wider Local Strategic Partnership, and local people, in order to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area. The vision, objectives and targets describe what we want and expect St.Helens to be in 2018 - a sustainable, thriving, harmonious and inclusive Borough fit for the 21st Century.

### St.Helens Council Corporate and Performance Plan

St.Helens Council's Corporate and Performance Plan 2008-11 is intended to help everyone (employees, partners, and members of the public alike) gain a wider understanding of the Council's aims, objectives and priorities, the services it provides, and how it is performing. As well as listing the key corporate priorities, the plan also specifies aims, objectives and priorities under each of the seven portfolios. It provides an estimate of performance against the targets set in 2007/08 for all national indicators and sets future targets over the next 3 years. The document also contains spending plans, demonstrating how resources are specifically targeted towards delivering the Council's priorities.

### Local Development Framework (LDF)

St.Helens, like all local planning authorities, is preparing a Local Development Framework. This is a folder of documents that sets out how the local area may change over the next few years. The new planning system of Local Development Frameworks has been designed to streamline the local planning process and promote a proactive, positive approach to managing development. Among the key aims of the new system are strengthening community and stakeholder involvement in the development of local communities. Equally critically for CGS however is the fact that the LDF will replace the existing Unitary Development Plan in defining and regulating prospective land usage across the Borough, be it for employment, residential, leisure or agricultural etc. purposes.

## Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI)

The St.Helens LEGI programme is a joint venture between the Council, as the managing body ultimately accountable to government, and St.Helens Chamber, which is charged with the majority of day-to-day delivery. The programme consists of 11 projects across the three broad LEGI themes: Enterprise Culture, Business Growth, & Business Environment. Nine of these projects are being delivered by the private sector via the Chamber on behalf of the Council, with the other two being delivered by the Council itself.

These projects have been designed as a package - from increasing aspirations and promoting entrepreneurial activity, to creating new businesses and supporting the growth and productivity of existing businesses, to creating the right physical environment and image in order to increase inward and indigenous investment.

The three key LEGI targets aimed at reaching at least national average levels by 2016:

- To increase by 2,000 our self-employment rate, particularly among women
- To increase our VAT registered business stock by 2,200
- To increase our employment rate by 5,000.



The rural economy - skyline at sunset



Former United Reform Church - a unique residential development that fuses the old - a listed church building - with the new - a modern annex.

## Appendix C: Bibliography

Over and above the 2003 St.Helens City Growth Strategy and ancillary studies/research, the principal strategic and policy documents reviewed in developing this consultation draft are:

- Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform - Business Support Simplification: A Consultation (2007)
- Government Office North West - North West Operational Programme for the European Regional Development Fund (2007)
- Government Office North West - North West Framework for the European Social Fund (2007)
- HM Treasury - Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (2007)
- North West Regional Assembly - The North West Plan: Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (2006)
- Northwest Regional Development Agency - Northwest Regional Economic Strategy 2006-09 (2006)
- The Mersey Partnership - Merseyside Sub-Regional Action Plan 2006//07-2008/09
- St.Helens Council - LEGI Bid Submission (2005)
- St.Helens Council - LEGI Business Plan (2005)
- St.Helens Council - Rural Economy Action Plan for St.Helens (2007)
- St.Helens Council - Brand New St.Helens documents & research (various, 2007)

## Appendix D: Enterprise Forum Members

**Steve Gange** (Chair)

*HR Director, Pilkington Group Ltd.*

**Kath Boullen**

*Chief Executive, St.Helens Chamber*

**John Downes**

*Managing Director, Langtree Group plc*

**Cllr. Richard Ferry**

*Executive Member for Urban Regeneration,  
St.Helens Council*

**Karl Hart**

*Financial Director, Templo Recruitment Services Ltd.*

**Bob Hepworth**

*Chief Officer, Local Strategic Partnership*

**Aidan Manley**

*Head of Regeneration, St.Helens Council*

**Julie O'Brien**

*Owner, Team Enterprises*

**Alistair Poole**

*Production Manager, NGF Europe*

**Barrie Potter**

*Managing Director, Ena Shaw Ltd*

**Mike Riley**

*Managing Director, Tyresave*

**Grace Tabern**

*Director, Tabern Home to Home Ltd*

**Dickon White**

*Managing Director of Haydock Park Racecourse & Chair  
of the St.Helens Tourism & Leisure Business Network*



## Appendix E: Consultation Questions

The Enterprise Forum initiated consultation on the draft CGS framework on 29th October 2007, which lasted until 14 December. It urged all St.Helens businesses, residents and other agencies to become involved in shaping the future economic direction of St.Helens, highlighting what they see as the key challenges and opportunities facing St.Helens, and what needs to be done about them.

Consultation responses were invited via attending one of the two special consultation events hosted by St.Helens Chamber or responding to the following questions online at [www.sthelenscgs.com](http://www.sthelenscgs.com)

### Section 1: General Questions

1. *Does the Strategy accurately identify the key changes in St.Helens in recent years, and the opportunities and challenges that the Borough faces?*
2. *Do you agree with the Vision and the four Themes that we have identified?*
3. *What other key things do we need to do in order to:*
  - a) *Transform the business base of St.Helens*
  - b) *Transform the ambitions of people in St.Helens*
  - c) *Transform the physical appearance of St.Helens*
  - d) *Transform perceptions of St.Helens*

### Section 2: Residents Questions

4. *Which ward of St.Helens do you live in?*
5. *What key improvements are needed in your local neighbourhood?*
6. *What key improvements are needed in St.Helens town centre?*
7. *What key improvements are needed elsewhere in the Borough?*
8. *What is your overall view of St.Helens as a place to live?*
9. *What key changes to St.Helens would provide most benefit to you personally?*

### Section 3: Business Questions

10. *What is the main focus of your business?*
11. *What are the key challenges facing your business generally?*
12. *What are the key advantages to your business of being located in St.Helens?*
13. *What are the key disadvantages to your business of being located in St.Helens?*
14. *What key changes to St.Helens would provide most benefit to your business?*

### Section 4: Wider Stakeholder Questions

15. *What are your organisations' key priorities for St.Helens?*
16. *To what extent do the revised CGS objectives align with those of your own organisation?*
17. *Is there anything missing in the revised CGS from the perspective of your organisation/priorities?*
18. *What role could your organisation play in achieving the objectives of City Growth?*

## Contact Information

For further information on St.Helens CGS and associated projects and initiatives, please contact:

- **John Whaling**, Economic Development Manager, St.Helens Council, via **01744 456 047** or **johnwhaling@sthelens.gov.uk**, and see [www.theheartofthenorthwest.com](http://www.theheartofthenorthwest.com)
- **Kath Boullen**, Chief Executive, St.Helens Chamber, via **01744 742 000** or **kath.boullen@sthelenschamber.com**, and see [www.sthelenschamber.com](http://www.sthelenschamber.com)

## Notes



Church Square public realm



Houghwood Golf Course



HQ Apartments in the Town Centre



NGF Europe - market-leading glass cord manufacturing



Picturesque Rainford



New high quality housing at Scholars Way

st.helens

*The Heart of the Northwest*

→ [www.heartofthenorthwest.com](http://www.heartofthenorthwest.com)



St. Helens Council

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CHAMBER

