



ST HELENS  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# BUDGET CHALLENGE 2021/22

Tell us what you think



# OUR BUDGET CHALLENGE

## 2021/22

Your council provides a wide range of services to a growing population of more than **180,000 people in 84,500 properties**, some of which are required by law.

You will be aware that your council provides services like emptying your bins, fixing potholes, maintaining parks and open spaces and keeping the streets clean, but we also provide other important services including support for older people, people with disabilities and children who are in need of care. These services have a positive life changing impact on the most vulnerable residents of the borough.

Your council is legally required to deliver local services, but it must do so by balancing the budget each year. In order to pay for services, councils receive income from Council Tax, business rates, fees and charges and from Central Government by way of grants.

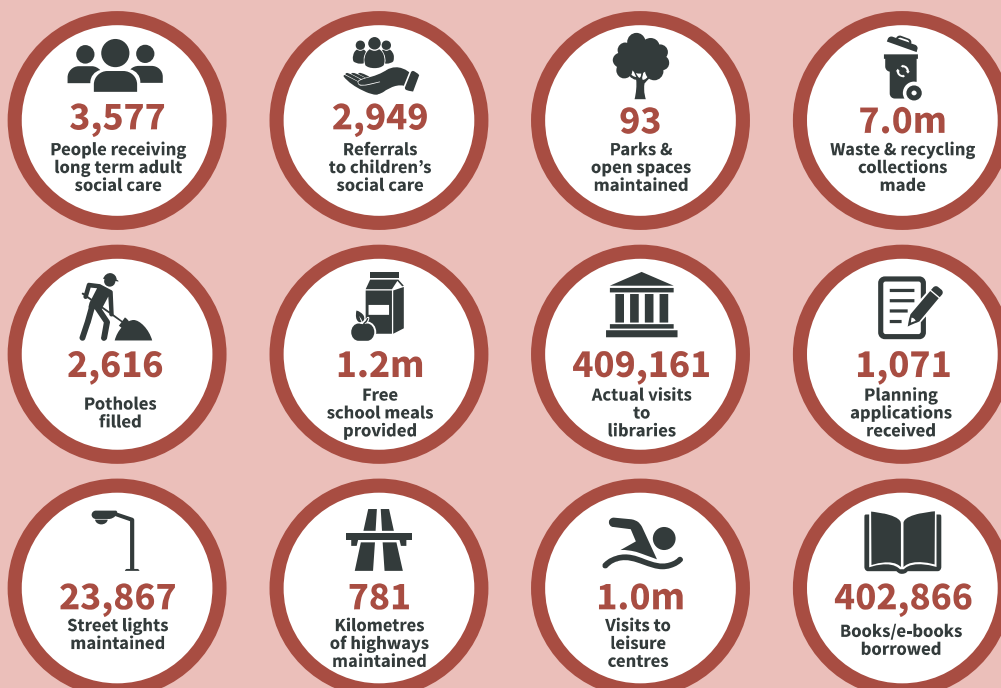
There are a number of statutory services we are legally required to provide including care services, where the cost of the services is driven largely by the number of people in need and environmental services, such as waste collection and road maintenance.

Some council services are discretionary, meaning they are services that a council can choose to provide but does not have to. These include, for example, leisure services and parking. The Council can charge for providing such services.

Balancing the budget for 2021/22 and future years will be a sizeable challenge. Since 2010 we have lost significant levels of Government funding, whilst at the same time continuing to protect the majority of front-line services. Delivering a balanced budget is set against supporting the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, attracting investment into our borough, and supporting you, our residents, and ensuring our borough and local economy thrives.

**We are committed to continue to address the financial pressures we face and remain a financially stable council in the future.**

**Here are just some of the services we provided in the previous financial year:**



# DEMAND FOR SERVICES

**St Helens has an ageing population causing pressure on health and social care services such as home care, respite provision and support to people with learning difficulties and long term health conditions such as dementia.**

Children and Young People's services also face demand pressures, offering support to children looked after or young people needing some form of protection, and also those services supporting children with disabilities and those experiencing severe learning difficulties.

Demand will continue to increase in the future.

In the next 15 years the number of people aged over 85 in St Helens is expected to increase by over 60% and the number of older people with complex and/or multiple conditions is likely to dramatically increase.

**“In the next 15 years the number of people aged over 85 in St Helens is expected to increase by over 60%”**

Simply, the Council is not in a position to continue to pay for all the services that we have traditionally provided. We must direct resources towards those services which we are legally required to provide. We will continue to care for vulnerable adults, protect children, maintain the highways and review how we offer them.

We have got some difficult choices to make about services which we know are important to you. We can only do that by listening to you - the people who live in our Borough.



# DEMAND ON ADULT SOCIAL CARE

**2020**  
4,238  
aged 85+



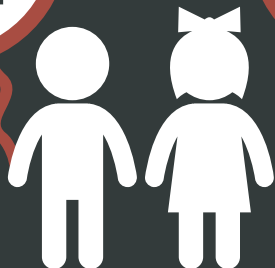
**2035**  
6,813  
aged 85+



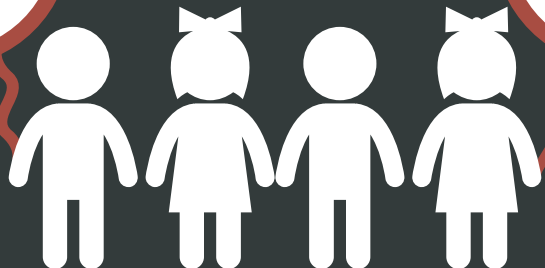
67% expected  
increase in people  
with dementia by 2035

# DEMAND ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

**2,949**  
referrals to  
children's  
social care in  
2019/20



**216**  
children on a  
child protection  
plan in December  
2020



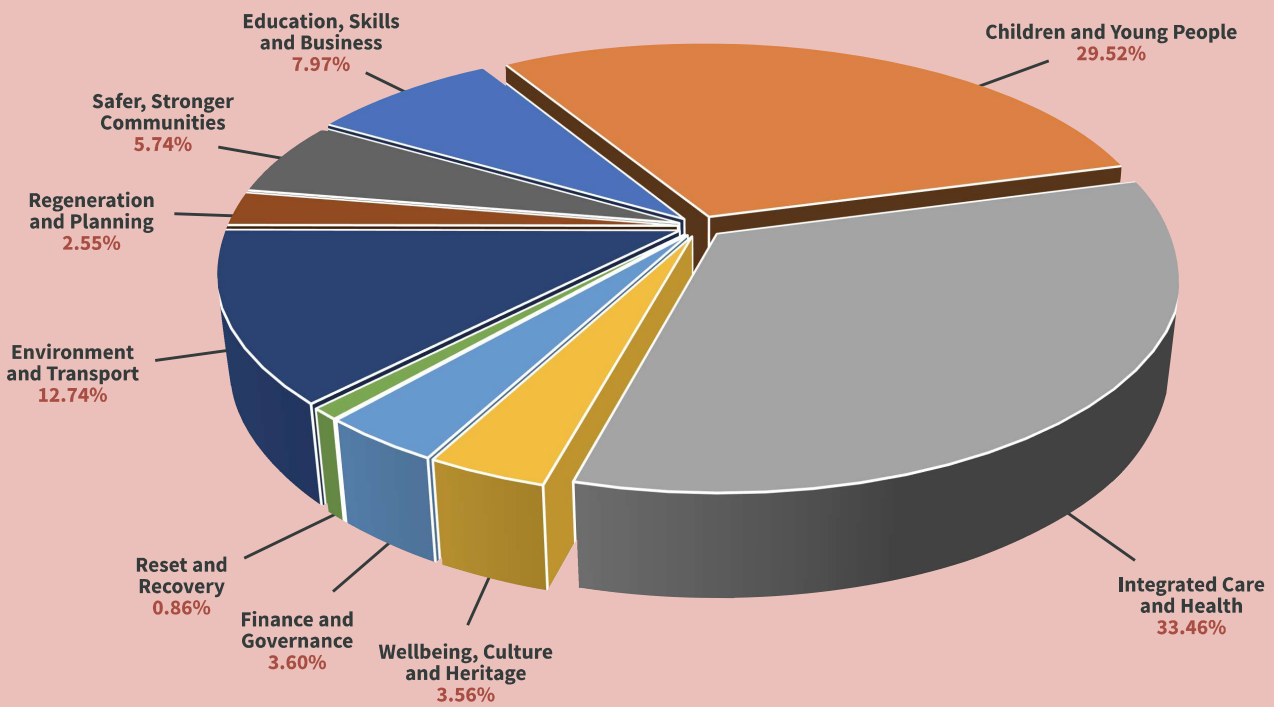
**470**  
children  
looked after in  
December  
2020



# COUNCIL BUDGET

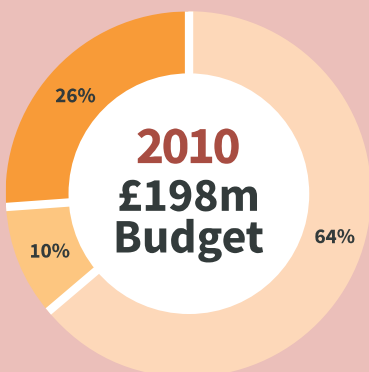
The approved net council budget at April 2020 is illustrated below:

## NET PORTFOLIO BUDGETS 2020/21

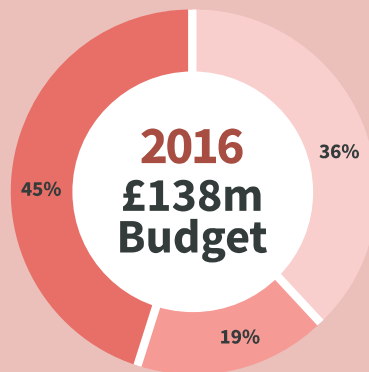


# COUNCIL FUNDING

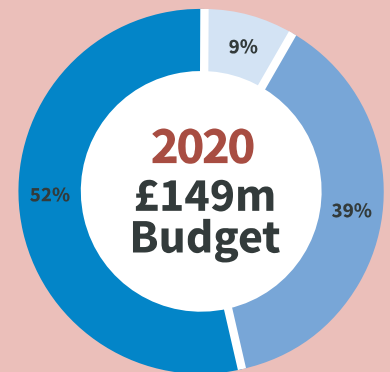
Funding from Business Rates, Council Tax and Government Grant is illustrated below:



**64%** Government Grant £127m  
**10%** Business Rates £19m  
**26%** Council Tax £52m



**36%** Government Grant £50m  
**19%** Business Rates £26m  
**45%** Council Tax £62m



**9%** Government Grant £13m  
**39%** Business Rates £58m  
**52%** Council Tax £78m



# IMPACT OF COVID-19

Your Council and its local communities provided an extensive response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the biggest challenge we have ever faced. We have acted swiftly in taking on new roles and responsibilities to support residents and businesses throughout lockdowns and restrictions. Our residents have played an important role.

**We have been prepared to innovate and modify our approach to service delivery.**

**Examples of this include:**



The Council has sought to put in place actions to control the COVID-19 infection rate, reduce the spread of infection and thus save lives. In doing so this will help to return life to as normal as possible, for as many people as possible, in a way that is safe, protects our health and care systems, protects the most vulnerable, and supports our economy.



# ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND EMPLOYMENT

**The pandemic has had an unprecedented impact, both nationally and locally on the economy. For St Helens this presents a significant challenge.**

In response to the economic impact of the pandemic the Council has provided crucial, additional support to residents and businesses. Examples include:

- Supporting people back into employment
- Helping businesses to adapt to new trading conditions and embrace innovation
- Providing recruitment support and advice to business looking to retain and expand their staff
- Working closely with partners to ensure availability of advice and guidance on employment and training opportunities
- Supporting safe reopening of the borough's town centres
- Providing additional grant support to retail, hospitality and leisure businesses

Key to the success of our recovery will be an Economic Recovery Plan, which at its heart will work closely with all stakeholders across the borough, including public and private sector partners and the community and voluntary sectors.

Central to this is the Town Investment Plan which, working in partnership with public and private sectors, will develop transformational projects to shape the future economy of the town.



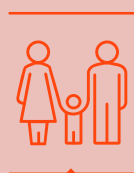
**key to our success is working closely with stakeholders**



# BALANCING THE BUDGET

**Like many councils across the country we have been hit hard by government cuts and had to make savings, year on year, for over a decade.**

This year is no different in that we must make further savings to enable us to balance the budget, and this is something that we are legally required to do. All this against a background of high demand and recovery from a worldwide pandemic which has impacted on our local communities, and the Council's desire to:



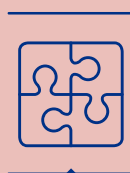
**ENSURE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A POSITIVE START IN LIFE**



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



**CREATE SAFE AND STRONG COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS FOR ALL**



**SUPPORT A STRONG, THRIVING INCLUSIVE AND WELL-CONNECTED ECONOMY**



**CREATE GREEN AND VIBRANT PLACES THAT REFLECT OUR HERITAGE AND CULTURE**



**BE A RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL**

The Council has some difficult decisions to make with regard to setting Council Tax for 2021/22 and also must consider a number of potential savings options to balance the budget and continue to provide services. We must review everything we do to ensure your Council is sustainable and meets the needs of residents.

## SETTING YOUR 2021/22 COUNCIL TAX

**St Helens currently has the lowest Council Tax in Merseyside.**

Given the financial position, and the size of savings necessary to arrive at a legally balanced budget, we are reluctantly considering increasing Council Tax by **1.99%**. In recognition of the demand for care services, the Government has confirmed that councils with adult social care responsibility can apply an adult social care precept of up to **3%** in 2021/22.

This brings the potential overall Council Tax increase to **4.99%** for 2021/22. This increase would raise **an extra £3.9m, and for approximately 85% of residents it would mean less than an additional 20 pence per day** to help maintain the vital services we all need and use.





# BUDGET OPTIONS

**A number of potential budget saving options have been brought forward for consideration in order to address the budget gap, and these include:**

## **Integrated Health and Social Care Income Generation & Grants - £1.2m**

Review of service user financial assessments and using additional grant income to fund increasing service demand.

## **Commercial Income Generation - £0.7m**

Fundamental reviews of sales, fees and charges and generating additional income.

## **Digitalisation and Review of Supplies and Services - £0.9m**

Reducing printing costs by switching to digital, and reviewing supplies/services, travel and training budgets.

## **Contract Management – Public Health Contracts - £1.0m**

Review of Public Health services, including those of 0-19 Services; Well-Being Services; Sexual Health Services and Substance Misuse Services.

## **Adult Social Care Services - £6.2m**

Review of contracted services, alternative models of care and care package provision, alongside stopping funding for some non-statutory services and staffing reductions. Also reviewing Learning Disability services and those for the frail and elderly.

## **Children’s Social Care Services - £7.7m**

Review of residential and foster care placements; family support services; arrangements for placement and support for young people leaving care; changing how Early Help and Children in Need Services are delivered and reviewing transport support arrangements.

## **Employee Terms and Conditions - £1.5m**

Modernisation of Council employee terms and conditions.

## **Other Service Reviews - £6.8m**

Other Service reviews including alternative delivery models and organisational redesign, reducing and/or stopping a number of non-statutory service areas. This would see potentially significant reductions in direct staff numbers.

## **Other - £0.5m**

Prepayment of employer pension contributions to generate savings and reviewing the Council’s level of self-insurance.



# WE'LL CONTINUE TO DO ALL WE CAN

**The Council will do all it can to support its residents and local business whilst remaining a strong, vibrant and financially sustainable council. We will continue to address this challenge by:**

- Transforming and modernising service delivery through organisational redesign and new ways of working
- Providing digital solutions and offering more online
- Further building the Council's relationships with local businesses and supporting existing businesses to grow and encouraging new businesses to start up in the borough
- Increasing partnership working through St Helens Together - delivering better outcomes and increased efficiencies for its residents and communities through working with all stakeholders
- Continuing to realise the benefits of having an integrated health and social care arrangement
- Taking a more commercial approach
- Supporting residents to be healthier for longer which keeps our communities well
- Maximising the opportunities of working as part of the Liverpool City Region and influencing the region's strategic direction

**In addition, the Council will:**

- Support the recovery of the borough and support its residents following the COVID-19 pandemic

**Moving forward...**

We will look to develop the delivery of services through engagement and proactive communication with you, our residents and customers. This includes getting your views on which services you consider to be priorities and building on the responses you provided through our Borough Strategy Consultation.



# TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

We have got some tough decisions to make. The choice of either potentially increasing Council Tax by **4.99%** or making further spending reductions on services to balance the budget.

**We want you, the people of St Helens, to tell us what your views are on:**

- Increasing Council Tax for 2021/22 by **1.99%**
- Applying a **3%** adult social care precept in 2021/22
- The potential savings options to balance the budget
- Any alternatives to address the budget gap

**How to respond:**

You can share your views online [here](#)

Or email your views to: **[budgetchallenge@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:budgetchallenge@sthelens.gov.uk)**

The deadline for responses is **5pm on Friday 12th February 2021**

Thank you for your participation in the Budget Consultation exercise. You can also help us to decide what services you would like us to prioritise for the next year, by using our service prioritisation simulator [here](#).

## We would like to thank you for taking the time to have your say on our budget challenge 2021/22



**ST HELENS**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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