



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

25 October 2023

Report Title	St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023–2028
Cabinet Portfolio	Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage
Cabinet Member	Councillor Anthony Burns
Exempt Report	No
Reason for Exemption	N/A
Key Decision	Yes
Public Notice issued	26 September 2023
Wards Affected	All
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Borough Priorities	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	x
	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	x
	Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all	x
	Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	x
	Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	x
	Be a responsible Council	x

1. Summary

- 1.1 At its meeting of 26 April 2023, Cabinet agreed to consult on the draft St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023–2028. This report provides details of responses received during the 12-week consultation period and presents a final version of the St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023-2028 for adoption by Cabinet.
- 1.2 The final strategy sets out the drive to improve the services provided by libraries and ensure they are targeted to those most in need. It outlines how the Council intends to transform the Library Service into a modern forward-thinking service that contributes to the delivery of the borough's priorities. It sets out the intention to deliver the statutory Library Service across the borough through direct provision, alongside outreach work with partners and a community managed offer. The strategy focuses on the service rather than buildings to ensure library provision is provided that will make the most difference to people's lives.
- 1.3 The views of stakeholders, residents, library users and library staff have been integral to the development of the St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023-2028. Engagement and consultation have been conducted using online and paper-based surveys, meetings and focus groups and feedback has informed and shaped the final strategy.
- 1.4 The Equality Impact Assessments recognise that some residents with protected characteristics will be negatively impacted by the closure of some library buildings; the report outlines mitigation to address negative impacts where a cost-effective solution can be identified but it is recognised that this has not been possible in all circumstances.
- 1.5 The strategy sets out how we will transform and modernise the Library Service to attract new customers, reach new individuals and communities, tackle inequalities, improve outcomes, whilst delivering more efficiently.

2. Recommendation for Decision

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1) Note the outcome of the public consultation on the draft St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023–2028, details of which are provided at Appendix A.
- 2) Note the fifteen related Equality Impact Assessments at Appendix B.
- 3) Approve the St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023–2028 at Appendix C.
- 4) Endorse the proposal within the St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023–2028 to retain library provision in the following areas: St Helens

Town Centre , Chester Lane, Thatto Heath, Newton-le-Willows, Moss Bank, Haydock and Eccleston.

- 5) Endorse the proposal within the St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023–2028 to:
 - i. Close Parr Library and declare the building surplus to operational requirements
 - ii. Close Rainhill Library and declare the building surplus to operational requirements
 - iii. Close Rainford Library and declare the building surplus to operational requirements
 - iv. Confirm that Billinge Library, which closed on 27th March 2020, will not reopen and declare the building surplus to operational requirements
 - v. Close Garswood Library and surrender the lease for the building
 - vi. Note the closure of Peter Street Library on 31st March 2023 and the surrender of the lease for the building.
- 6) Endorse the proposal within the St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023–2028 to move away from a building focussed service to an enabling service that addresses borough priorities through partnership working.

3. Purpose of this report

- 3.1 This report provides details of the responses received during a 12-week consultation on the draft St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023–2028 and demonstrates how those responses have shaped the final strategy to which Cabinet approval is sought having regard to the related Equality Impact Assessments.

4. Background / Reason for the recommendations

- 4.1 Under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, local councils in England have a statutory duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' Library Service for all people working, living, or studying full-time in the area who want to make use of it. In providing this service, councils must encourage both adults and children to make full use of the Library Service and lend books and other printed material free of charge. The statutory duty referred to above is not prescriptive in how local authorities should provide library services; therefore, the delivery mechanisms and geographical spread of service provision is discretionary in nature.
- 4.2 The Borough Strategy highlights the need for the Council to focus its efforts and resources on tackling the inequalities that exist within the borough. There are communities in the borough where life expectancy, good health and educational attainment are significantly lower than others. The Borough's

priorities seek to tackle these inequalities and build a fairer and more sustainable borough for the benefit of current residents and future generations.

- 4.3 The St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023 - 2028 has been designed to align to the principles of the Council's adopted localities model:
- To deliver the Borough Strategy Priorities
 - To ensure the service is outcome focused with indicators to measure impact.
 - To encourage behaviour change.
 - To ensure resources are delivered in the most appropriate method and in the right place to address need.
 - To ensure services are cost effective and efficient.
 - To ensure services are customer focused
 - To maximise digital technology opportunities.
 - To ensure the workforce is productive, empowered and solution focused.
- 4.4 The Council is committed to ensuring long-term financial stability, and with regard to its statutory responsibilities, constantly seeks to manage, minimise or mitigate financial risks and ensure that it operates within a sound, sustainable financial environment. In that context, the challenge faced by the Council is to deliver a modern, local, borough wide accessible service, within a reduced budget.
- 4.5 At its meeting on 26 April 2023, Cabinet approved the draft St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023 – 2028 and also approved a 12-week statutory consultation period and Consultation Delivery Plan. Consultation ran for 12 weeks between 2 May and 31 July 2023 and the following consultation methods were used to capture views:
- A dedicated webpage displaying the draft Strategy and inviting comments.
 - Dedicated social media messages via Council platforms signposting to the consultation webpage and survey.
 - Engagement with residents via social media channels, website, as well as through drop-in consultation sessions in all Libraries.
 - Direct liaison with local groups and users in order to encourage feedback.
 - Open Survey
 - Representative sample survey (On-street Survey)
- 4.6 There was a significant response to the consultation, with 5,983 people taking part, through a variety of different methods that included on-street interviews (2,003), drop-in sessions (408), and an open survey questionnaire available online and paper (3,572). This represents circa 1 in 25 of the St Helens adult population and a significant representation of people from those communities whose libraries are proposed to close.

- 4.7 Adults aged under 25 years were slightly over-represented amongst respondents to the on-street survey, accounting for 14% of all responses. Although the proportion of open survey responses from this age group is less, it should be noted that the interests of younger adults and children under 16 years have also been captured through the responses from other age groups (including from parents, grandparents and teachers) almost 60% of whom visit the libraries with a child or children at least occasionally. The consultation exercise also obtained responses from every adult age group and each gender, including those with protected characteristics associated with health and disability, race, sexual orientation, religion and gender reassignment.
- 4.8 As might be expected, there has been a significant representation of regular library visitors responding to the self-selected, open survey, demonstrating the considerable interest in the Library Service and its future. The full details of the consultation feedback are attached at Appendix A.

Summary of Consultation Findings

- 4.9 Of residents who use libraries the responses provided a clear picture about their use:
- The findings indicate that many library users visit more than one library, with 1 in 4 visiting 2 or more libraries frequently.
 - Most visitors currently walk to their local library and of the remainder, the majority use a car. Use of public transport is limited.
 - For the majority it takes less than 15 minutes to get to their library (door to door).
 - Half of visitors visit with a child or children at least some of the time.
 - Visitors with children are twice as likely to attend an event or activity than those without.
 - The most popular services are to borrow books, followed by use of the IT services.
 - At least a quarter of users visit the library for social purposes.
- 4.10 What people said about the proposals within the strategy:
- There is mixed opinion about the rationale for targeting greatest needs, with those who were consulted in person more likely to agree with that approach and those whose libraries were planned to close being more evenly split on the matter.
 - The significant majority of respondents disagreed with the proposed closures, most notably those whose local library was being proposed to close.
 - There was more agreement regarding the proposed opening hours, particularly amongst those consulted in person and older adults. Working age adults were more likely to disagree with closures on Saturdays.
 - As might be expected, there is a clear correlation between the levels of agreement with the proposals for each library with whether the library will

close or not. The significant majority (84% and above) of visitors to Garswood, Rainhill, Rainford and Parr and who visited Billinge Library in the past strongly disagreed with the proposals.

- Asked about their preferred alternative, proximity is a clear factor, albeit that those consulted in person were more certain about what they would visit another library. 2 in 3 respondents to the open survey did not know or indicated none.
- There is likely to be a significant reduction in the proportion walking to their library.
- Also, many did not know how they would get to an alternative library, highlighting an information/communication need.
- The majority indicated it unlikely that they would visit St Helens Library, many citing access (car parking, proximity to the town centre) as a barrier.
- There is mixed opinion on the likelihood of visiting a Community Managed Library (CML) with those whose nearest library is planned to close, more likely to do so.

4.11 Two questions were asked of those responding to the on-street and open survey to establish and compare the impact of the proposals on different respondent groups; what course of action they would take because of the proposals and how this would impact on them personally:

- Over a third of those whose libraries were proposed to close said they would stop using the service, with a further 1 in 5 stating that they would use the service less frequently than they do currently.
- At least three quarters indicated that the proposals would have an impact on them, with well over a quarter indicating they would be significantly impacted. (figures are much higher amongst the open survey respondents).
- The main reason for being impacted was access and/or lack of transport, including lack of/limited bus service, not being able to use public transport/drive, the extra distance, cost or time this would involve.

4.12 Respondents to the consultation exercise identified several longer-term negative social impacts of the proposals within the strategy on:

- The education of their children.
- The impact on local communities.
- IT and book access among households who cannot afford them.
- Socialisation needs among certain demographics such as young people and older adults.
- The alienation of non-town centres residents regarding the perception of the Council's ability to provide services local to them.

4.13 The Drop-in sessions provided the community with the opportunity to question officers in person and air their views which have been fed into the consultation. The key messages were:

- The potential of reinvesting any capital receipts into other community buildings should a library site be disposed of was raised in Billinge, Rainford and Rainhill.
- Interest in the community managed model was particularly strong in Rainford.
- A number attending the Rainhill session were keen that the Trials Exhibition remained in the village and accessible.
- Interest has been lodged by a number of charities who would be keen to occupy specific library buildings should they become available, and this may or may not include them offering elements of a library service.

Post Consultation Strategy Amendments

4.14 Following the consultation, the feedback has resulted in amendments being made to the Strategy. These amendments are summarised below and have been incorporated into the final St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023–2028 presented in Appendix C:

- Increase capacity within the Home Delivery Library service.
- Introduce Click and Collect to allow friends and family to collect books for library users unable to travel to a library in person.
- Explore the viability of delivering a book loan service to care settings within the borough.
- Provide an outreach offer targeting schools and community settings which serve communities affected by Library closures, to ensure the continued engagement of young people in initiatives such as the Summer Reading Challenge.
- Review the digital offer to improve accessibility and focus on demand.
- Identify locations in communities served by libraries that will close, where the service can deliver Digital and Information Literacy workshops and training.
- Increase the range of IT devices, particularly touch screen, available to the public within Libraries.
- Ensure the website is clear on which libraries are open on a Saturday and after working hours.
- Work with city region partners to deliver the LCR Digital Inclusion Plan.
- Continue to work with community groups and interested parties to develop Community Managed Libraries in areas where a building will close. This can be done in the existing building or within another location in the area.

5. Consideration of Alternatives

5.1 During the development of this Strategy several delivery methods have been considered and discounted. The table below sets out the alternatives considered:

Options Considered	Brief Summary of Considerations
Do nothing	The current library service delivery model is neither efficient nor effective. Some libraries are open as little as 8 hours a week and consequently are unable to deliver an effective service, this is also an inefficient use of the Council's buildings. The way residents access the service has also changed with a 10% reduction in visitor numbers. This option is not considered feasible as it will not contribute towards the achievement of the Borough priorities, nor can it be delivered within the available budget.
Focus delivery at sites where footfall is highest.	Focusing delivery at libraries where the footfall is highest would limit the service's ability to tackle inequalities in the borough.
Introduce Community managed libraries as an alternative to a Council managed service.	<p>Extensive work has been undertaken with existing groups to explore the potential of a Community Managed Library offer. Some progress has been made but at the time of this report no firm agreements have been reached.</p> <p>Following adoption of the St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023 - 2028, officers will continue to explore this option. Where no partner can be identified to operate a Community Managed Library, buildings will be declared surplus to requirements and the future of the buildings will be determined in accordance with the Corporate Asset Management Strategy 2023-26</p>
Increase income generation via rental of space within libraries to increase resources available to the service.	Opportunities to let space in library buildings to reduce operational costs have been explored. Market testing via Halton and St Helens VCA between June 2021 and May 2022, and the Northwest Procurement Portal between 25 th April and 9 th May 2022, did not identify any interest. Direct approaches to the Post Office and branded coffee outlets also resulted in no expressions of interest. During the Consultation between May and July 2023, no commercial outlets approached the service to enquire about renting space.
Closing more than six libraries.	As part of the budget consultation in January 2023 the option to consider further savings from the library service was considered. Following strong budget consultation feedback, the Cabinet chose not to consider any additional financial savings to minimise the number of library closures.
Retain all libraries but reduce the	This option was identified during the consultation period between May and July 2023. It has been discounted as it is not an effective or efficient use of buildings, nor does it provide a

length of time they are open.	quality service. Focusing delivery on a smaller number of buildings allows the Council to better target its finite resources.
To retain a single library.	To meet its statutory obligation the Council could elect to just have one single library in St Helens town centre. It was clear from the previous consultation that this option was not supported by the community, nor would it enable the outcomes from the library service to be maximised nor would it help to tackle inequalities at a local level. For all these reasons this option was discounted.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The final St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023–2028 provides a framework to deliver a modern and inspiring Library Service. Libraries will become central to tackling inequalities and support the achievement of priorities in Our Borough Strategy.
- 6.2 The final St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023-2028 sets out proposals to deliver a revised statutory library provision across the borough with the retention of the following seven libraries: St Helens, Chester Lane, Thatto Heath, Newton- le-Willows, Moss Bank, Haydock and Eccleston.
- 6.3 The final St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023-2028 sets out proposals to close four library buildings at Parr, Rainhill, Garswood and Rainford with effect from Friday 26 January 2024. It also notes that the two libraries of Billinge and Peter Street (which were already closed) will not re-open.
- 6.4 Library membership enables those who currently use these buildings to access any library in the retained network, to borrow and return items and to access computers and information. The buildings owned by the Council will be declared surplus to requirements and the Council will determine their future. Existing lease agreements for non-council owned buildings will be surrendered.
- 6.5 The final St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023-2028 has been revised to make provision for the introduction of a click and collect service, expansion of the Home Delivery Service and an outreach service that will target engagement in community settings, which have been informed by the findings of the consultation. The Strategy sets out a service that will target resources to areas of greatest need, be less dependent on buildings and reach out into communities both physically and digitally.
- 6.6 The Council would like to explore the creation of a Community Managed Library offer and welcomes contact from prospective partners. Officers will offer support, advice and assistance to help bring a community managed

offer forward, especially in areas where it has been necessary to close library buildings. At its meeting of 13 September 2023, Cabinet approved a Community Asset Transfer Policy that will enable and support the development of Community Managed assets should a group come forward to request this.

- 6.7 In considering the recommendation to approve the final St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023-2028, Cabinet must consider that even though the consultation findings and the Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) have identified that the proposed library closures will have a negative impact on age, race, disability and sex (women and girls), it is accepted that the impact on some residents who share protected characteristics cannot be fully mitigated.
- 6.8 In making its decision Cabinet must weigh the desirability of the achievement of these equality objectives against its financial obligations, reduced financial envelope as detailed in paragraph 17.10 and the Borough's priorities to build a fairer and more sustainable borough for the benefit of current residents and future generations. There is a need to also prioritise the delivery of other statutory duties to vulnerable residents' services such as Childrens and Adults SocialCare.
- 6.9 Whilst the strategy will be to the detriment of some residents who share protected characteristics, this must be balanced against the benefits of retaining those libraries best placed to tackle inequalities. There are communities in the borough where life expectancy, good health and educational attainment are significantly lower than others. The priorities of the Borough Strategy seek to tackle these inequalities and build a fairer and more sustainable borough for the benefit of current residents and future generations. The proposed St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023-2028 recognises how libraries can contribute to addressing inequalities.
- 6.10 Whilst Cabinet acknowledges that the majority of respondents to the consultation did not support the proposed closures of libraries, the benefits of having a geographical spread of seven libraries across the borough which can deliver library services and assist in tackling inequalities, alongside the need to prioritise the delivery of statutory services to vulnerable children and adults has been determined to outweigh the detrimental impact of the closure of six libraries.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty under Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons who wish to use the service; provided that although a local authority shall have power to make facilities for the borrowing of books and other materials available to any persons it is not under a duty to make

such facilities available to persons other than those whose residence or place of work is within the library area of the authority or who are undergoing full-time education within that area.

- 7.2 In fulfilling its duty, a local authority shall, in particular, have regard to the desirability of securing facilities that are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other materials, sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children; and of encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and of providing advice as to its use and of making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required by patrons.
- 7.3 Case law provides that a local authority must undertake a proper analysis of the library related needs, both specific and general, of all persons desiring to make use of its library service before reaching a judgment as to what services would meet those assessed needs. Such an assessment of needs can rely on the expertise and experience of its professionals and on information gathered from a variety of reliable sources, including consultations.
- 7.4 Case law has established that a “comprehensive service” cannot mean that every resident lives close to a library. A “comprehensive service” has therefore been taken by the Courts to mean delivering a service that is accessible to all residents using reasonable means, including digital technologies. An “efficient service” must make the best use of the assets available in order to meet the services’ core objectives and vision, recognising the constraints on Council resources. Decisions about the service must be embedded within a clear strategic framework which draws upon evidence about needs and aspirations across the diverse communities of the borough.
- 7.5 In drawing up and delivering library strategies and plans, local authorities must consider several legal obligations, including the Equality Act 2010, the Localism Act 2011, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Best Value Duty (duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness). In particular, the Council must carefully consider the Public Sector Equality Duty imposed on it under s149 of the Equality Act 2010.
- 7.6 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the public sector equality duty) states:
- (1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- (2) A person who is not a public authority but who exercises public functions must, in the exercise of those functions, have due regard to the matters mentioned in subsection (1).
- (3) Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
 - (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
 - (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- (4) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.
- (5) Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, the need to:
- (a) tackle prejudice, and
 - (b) promote understanding.
- (6) Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.
- (7) The relevant protected characteristics are:
- age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race
 - religion or belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation
- (8) A reference to conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act includes a reference to:

- (a) a breach of an equality clause or rule
- (b) a breach of a non-discrimination rule.

- 7.7 Case law has established that the public sector equality duty is an integral and important part of the mechanisms for ensuring the fulfilment of the aims of anti-discrimination legislation. Its key purpose is to identify adverse discriminatory impacts and to identify the mitigation measures that will be taken to ameliorate those impacts. The duty of “due regard” requires public authorities to be properly informed before taking a decision and if relevant material information is not available there is a duty to acquire it.
- 7.8 An important element in the demonstration of the discharge of the Council’s duty is the recording of the steps taken by the Council in seeking to meet its statutory requirements. In that regard, detailed Equality Impact Assessments have been prepared (at Appendix B) following extensive public consultation and are the subject of analysis at Sections 8 and 12. Cabinet, in consideration of the officer recommendations contained in this report, must consciously and carefully consider the Equality Impact Assessments and assess the risk and extent of any adverse discriminatory impact and the ways in which such risk may be eliminated before taking a decision to adopt the proposed Strategy and not merely as a “rear-guard action”, following a concluded decision. Cabinet is reminded, therefore, that they are taking a fresh decision on the proposed Strategy and any views they formed when making their earlier decisions should not override their duty to approach the decision afresh, and in light of all the material factors and relevant information presented. The duty of “due regard” requires public authorities to be properly informed before taking a decision and if relevant information is not available there is a duty to acquire it.
- 7.9 Case law has established that public sector equality duties must be “exercised in substance, with rigour, and with an open mind” rather than a “box ticking” exercise. Therefore, a conscious and considered approach to the statutory duty must be undertaken by members.
- 7.10 Case law has also established that the concept of ‘due regard’ requires the Council to ensure that there has been a proper and conscientious focus on the statutory public sector equality criteria, but if that is done, the Courts may not seek to interfere with a decision simply because they would have given greater weight to the equality implications of the decision than did the decision maker.
- 7.11 In short, Cabinet, in determining whether to adopt the Strategy, must be clear precisely what the equality implications are when they are put in the balance, and must recognise the desirability of achieving them, but ultimately it is for Cabinet (as the relevant decision maker) to decide what weight they should be given in the light of all relevant factors.

7.12 Decisions to reduce library services in other local authority areas have been the subject of judicial review proceedings. In order to act in accordance with public law principles it is important that any decision taken is reasonable, rational and procedurally correct. It is important that all relevant factors are considered, especially with regard to the need for effective consultation and the application of the Public Sector Equality Duty mentioned above.

8. Equality Impact Assessment

8.1 The detailed Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) produced to inform the draft strategy have been reviewed and updated to reflect the findings of the public consultation and are attached at Appendix B.

8.2 It is worth careful consideration of each of these assessments before considering the recommendations set out in this report. The EIAs have identified that there will be a negative impact in areas where libraries close on people who share the following protected characteristics: sex, age, race, and disability. These impacts include:

- difficulty travelling to other libraries- cited by 40% of respondents to the street survey and 70% of those who completed the on-line and paper-based versions. Of those with protected characteristics it was those over 55 years old and or with a disability who would be most affected.
- potential loss of social interaction and the impact on mental health and wellbeing.
- Reduced access to free Wi-Fi and public access PCs.

8.3 Mitigations have been proposed to lessen or remove the negative impacts identified. Despite these mitigations it is likely that a negative impact will be experienced by some people who share the protected characteristics of age, race, disability and sex (women and girls) thus reducing their opportunity to engage in public life through the library service. Below is a list of identified negative impacts and mitigations.

Potential negative impact	Action required to mitigate the potential negative impact
<p>The closure of Libraries will impact on groups with protected characteristics who are current users, and any person who wishes to access its library provision, whether they live in the community or elsewhere within the Borough. The groups most likely to be affected are disabled people, older people, young children and</p>	<p>The library website has been updated with bus and train information, as well as car parking arrangements and disabled parking bays for each library.</p> <p>Library Light. Library Light means any customer with a library card can access libraries across the Liverpool City Region.</p> <p>Digital support: This will be targeted at those who most need it, including older people, users</p>

<p>those from Black and Ethnic Minority Communities.</p>	<p>with a disability (e.g., visual impairment). Better marketing and promotion of the e-library service offer is needed, as some people may be able to download books, audio, newspapers, magazines and comics to their own devices.</p> <p>Familiarisation visits: The Library Service will offer familiarisation visits to other libraries for older people and families with young children who may feel anxious about visiting new libraries. This could help them to feel welcome to visit other libraries, encourage them to continue to attend groups and activities that promote social, emotional, and wellbeing support, and to help with the adjustment to the loss of their familiar library space.</p> <p>Home Delivery Library Service: The consultation results will be analysed to assist with the referrals process onto the Home Delivery Library Service, providing people meet the referral criteria as a reasonable adjustment to mitigate any barrier to library service access that they might experience as a direct result of the proposed closures.</p> <p>The consultation exercise has reinforced the importance and need for this service and consequently it is now proposed to double its capacity.</p> <p>Click and Collect: The consultation exercise has identified an opportunity to develop a further reasonable adjustment, a click and collect service where residents can call or email the service requesting books which can then be collected by a friend, relative or neighbours.</p>
<p>Changes to Library opening hours may impact on people who share different protected characteristics.</p>	<p>Signposting: As a mitigation to age impact, alternative library provision will be signposted to service users to inform them that both St Helens and Newton Libraries will be open 10am to 7pm on Mondays and 10am to 1pm on Saturdays and that library provision is available after school/work and at weekends. The digital library</p>

	<p>service is also available 24/7, with access to e-books/audio/newspapers/magazines</p>
<p>Some disabled people, older people and families with young and disabled children may find it difficult to travel to other libraries. There is a potential impact for people who share these protected characteristics where their local library will close. Some may find it difficult to travel to other libraries if they are required to walk certain distances, travel lengthy routes, or take a journey which requires them to change bus or train to get to a library. There may also be a financial barrier to accessing alternative travel methods.</p>	<p>Signposting to alternative library provision: The library website has been updated with bus and train information, as well as car parking arrangements and disabled parking bays for each library.</p> <p>Home Delivery Library Service: The consultation exercise has reinforced the importance and need for this service and consequently it is now proposed to double its capacity.</p> <p>Click and Collect: The consultation exercise has identified an opportunity to develop a further reasonable adjustment, a click and collect service where residents can call or email the service requesting books which can then be collected by a friend, relative or neighbours.</p> <p>Digital Support: Digital support will be targeted at those who most need it. Better marketing and promotion of the e-library service offer will take place as some people may be able to download books, audio, newspapers, magazines and comics to their own devices.</p>
<p>Some disabled people, older people, children and people with younger children rely on regular visits to their library to socialise and establish friendships and experience social and emotional support. User feedback suggests that many people who share different protected characteristics feel the library is a safe, familiar place in which they are comfortable, included, and respected. There is a potential impact for people who share these protected characteristics where their local library will close.</p>	<p>Familiarisation visits to other libraries: These will be offered to disabled people, older people, and people with young families who may feel upset and angry that their library is closing and/or anxious about visiting other libraries. This will help them to feel welcome to visit other libraries, encourage them to continue to attend groups that promote social, emotional and wellbeing support and to help with the adjustment to the loss of their familiar library space.</p> <p>Staff will sign post vulnerable residents to additional support agencies.</p>

<p>The Library Service currently only collects data related to the protected characteristics of age, disability, and race when someone joins the library, providing they complete the membership form fully. Therefore, there may be users visiting the library who are not library members but have one of the protected characteristics.</p>	<p>Data Collection: Library Membership Form to be updated to seek to capture all data in relation to members protected characteristics.</p>
<p>Local schools and nurseries who visit Libraries that will close to look at books and find out about the services on offer.</p>	<p>Engagement and Signposting: Staff will sign post to other libraries and ensure take up and use of the Schools Library Service.</p> <p>Staff will look to find alternative locations to deliver an outreach offer as has occurred during the summer in Billinge where staff used the Billinge Village Hall to provide a book exchange offer for children doing the Summer Reading Challenge.</p>
<p>Local interest groups which use a closing Library will be negatively impacted when the library closes</p>	<p>Engagement and signposting: Gather and utilise information from the consultation/discussion process/approach taken with community groups potentially displaced by library closures to assist with offering alternative places to meet.</p> <p>Specific engagement with groups in each closing library to support, if necessary, with the relocation of their exhibitions and displays.</p>
<p>The closure of Libraries may result in an increase in referrals from disabled people onto the Home Delivery Library.</p>	<p>Expand Home Delivery: Develop a reasonable adjustment checklist to determine eligibility to the service for future self-referrals from disabled people.</p> <p>The consultation exercise has reinforced the importance and need for this service and consequently it is now proposed to double its capacity.</p>
<p>The closure of Libraries may result in an increase in usage of the Digital</p>	<p>Promote Digital Library Service: Better promotion/awareness of the Digital Library Strategy. Providing training for customers so</p>

Library Service if the Strategy is adopted.	they can access the digital library offer at any time of the day. Supporting customers to download books and offering tablet/device loan to access on-line provision
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- 8.4 To address and attempt to minimise the impact of libraries closing, a number of specific mitigations have been identified:
- Signposting to alternative library provision in the borough and across Merseyside region.
 - Providing travel information to other libraries (bus routes, active travel routes etc.).
 - Promotion of online e-services.
 - Identifying alternative locations for outreach delivery.
 - Improvements to the Website.
 - Provision of digital literacy training
 - Introduction of click and collect service
 - Expansion of Home Delivery capacity

9. Social Value

- 9.1 The Library Service delivers significant social value; it reduces isolation and loneliness, develops literacy skills for children, young people and adults, improves wellbeing for both adults and children and provides social networks through its libraries.
- 9.2 Free public access PCs and Wi-Fi in libraries enable residents to access online banking, universal credit and job seeking opportunities and other support and development resources available on-line.

10. Net Zero and Environment

- 10.1 Most library buildings are over 50 years old and have poor energy efficiency. Over the life of the Library Strategy 2023- 2028 the service will seek to relocate to more energy efficient buildings or improve the efficiency of the current buildings. This will be subject to future reports and approval processes.
- 10.2 The Home Delivery and Schools Library Services currently use diesel fuelled vehicles. These will be replaced with hybrid or electric vehicles as part of the Council’s wider fleet replacement programme.

11. Health and Wellbeing

- 11.1 Libraries offer a wide range of health information, both online and through quality assured reading lists dealing with the more common health conditions. In their role as community hubs, libraries also offer non-clinical

spaces in localities where health and wellbeing partners can collaborate with the community in a trusted and non-threatening venue.

- 11.2 Libraries are also places where people can come together to meet others. Reducing social isolation is a critical issue in the context of improving wellbeing. In the current cost of living crisis, libraries have become warm hubs. Research suggests there are significant associations between frequent library use and reported wellbeing and between improved access to health information through libraries, with reduced calls on services such as GPs. In areas where we propose to close libraries residents will be sign posted to other community venues operated by the faith and wider voluntary sector which offer socialization opportunities.
- 11.3 Through the arts and books on prescription service, GPs can refer patients into the Arts in Libraries offer, thus supporting improved wellbeing.
- 11.4 A study on the economic value of the health and wellbeing benefits of public libraries found that using the library has a positive association with general health. The predicted medical cost savings associated with library use is £1.32 per person per year, based on reductions in GP visits due to improved access to health information and social interaction.

12. Equality and Human Rights

- 12.1 The St Helens Borough Library Strategy and Delivery Plan 2023 – 2028 will reduce the number of library buildings and adjust the opening hours of those that remain open. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the public sector equality duty) states:
 - (1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
 - (2) A person who is not a public authority but who exercises public functions must, in the exercise of those functions, have due regard to the matters mentioned in subsection (1).
 - (3) Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
 - (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.

- (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
 - (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- (4) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.
- (5) Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, the need to:
 - (a) tackle prejudice, and
 - (b) promote understanding.
- (6) Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.
- (7) The relevant protected characteristics are:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race
 - religion or belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation
- (8) A reference to conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act includes a reference to:
 - (a) a breach of an equality clause or rule
 - (b) a breach of a non-discrimination rule.

12.2 The public sector equality duty has been considered in numerous cases and the principles to be applied are very clearly established. In essence, the analysis of the adverse impacts on the protected characteristics defined in s149(7) is onerous and prescriptive. Its key purpose is to identify adverse discriminatory impacts and to identify the mitigation measures that will be taken to ameliorate those impacts. The public duty under s149 is to give equality impact assessments “due regard”. Case law has established that decision makers must assess the risk and extent of any adverse impact and the ways in which such risk may be eliminated before the adoption of a proposed policy and not merely as a “rear-guard action,” following a

concluded decision. Case law has also established that, with regard to the public sector equality duty, the following principles are relevant:

- i) The public authority decision maker must be aware of the duty to have “due regard” to the relevant matters.
- ii) The duty must be fulfilled before and at the time when a particular policy is being considered.
- iii) The duty must be “exercised in substance, with rigour, and with an open mind.” It is not a question of “ticking boxes;” while there is no duty to make express reference to the regard paid to the relevant duty, reference to it and to the relevant criteria reduces the scope for argument.
- iv) The duty cannot be delegated to another body.
- v) The duty is a continuing one.
- vi) It is good practice for a decision maker to keep records demonstrating consideration of the duty

12.3 Equality Impact Assessments have been carried out and consideration has been given to mitigating and minimising the adverse impact on some people with protected characteristics as outlined at 8.3. Despite these mitigations it is probable that negative impact will be experienced by some people who share the protected characteristic of age, race, disability and sex (women and girls).

12.4 The Human Rights Act requires the Council not to act incompatibly with Convention rights. Convention rights include the right of respect for private and family rights, freedom of expression and the prohibition against discrimination. Extensive case law established that any interferences with these rights can be justified if the interference is proportionate: (i) whether the Council’s objective of meeting its financial obligations are sufficiently important to justify the limitation of a fundamental right; (ii) whether it is rationally connected to the objective; (iii) whether a less intrusive measure could have been used; and (iv) whether, having regard to these matters and to the severity of the consequences, a fair balance has been struck between the rights of the individual and the interests of the community.

13. Customer and Resident

13.1 The aim of the St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023–2028 is that by 2028 customers and residents will see:

- An increase in the number of people using libraries.
- An increase in the loan of physical and digital books
- An increased outreach programme.
- Further development of partnerships to provide library services and activities where they are most needed and attracting a wider customer base.

- More people using the Digital Library Service, with increased opportunities for library staff to offer training and support for people to download e-books and access digital technology.
- Improved and modernised physical library spaces
- Co-location with other services and partners
- Opening hours aligned to meet community needs.
- Retention of Archive Service Accreditation and increased number of visits to the Archive and increased access to archive materials within community settings
- An increased number of arts, heritage and cultural activities and events
- The Schools Library Service will continue to develop its services to more schools and educational settings.
- Increased use of the Home Delivery Library Service where appropriate
- Increase opportunities for volunteering.
- An increase in the number of community managed libraries
- Customer feedback and insight is used to improve and develop the service offer.
- Funding and investment secured to improve access and diversify services.
- Commercial opportunities explored to further improve the customer offer.

13.2 Residents are free to use any library across the borough as well as any library within the Liverpool City Region via the Library Light model. Library Light enables residents to:

- borrow up to six books from any neighbouring local authority library.
- reserve up to six books from any library in the Liverpool City Region by contacting them directly.
- access library computers and printers in other libraries across Liverpool City Region (charges may apply for printing).

13.3 To ensure the views of residents were considered and where possible reflected in the final strategy an extensive 12-week consultation exercise was undertaken between 2nd May and 31st July 2023. There has been a significant response to the consultation with 5,983 people taking part in on-street interviews, drop-in sessions or completing the open survey questionnaire online or on paper. The findings of this exercise are detailed in section 4 of this report.

13.4 Recognising the need to ensure that the interests of children and younger people were captured, the consultation engaged with; local schools, college students, teenagers, the LGBT community, and family members of library users was delivered. Primary, Secondary and Specialist schools were contacted and encouraged to highlight the consultation amongst pupils, parents and carers; to display QR code posters; and, to encourage sixth form and college students to complete the survey forms. Free book give-aways, QR codes and hard copy forms were distributed to teenagers attending Pride

events; and a number of partners such as Young Carers, St Helens Chamber, the Music Service and Youth Justice Service were contacted. Library staff were also briefed to actively encourage family members, particularly younger people, to complete the survey and to ask parents/carers to complete it on their child/children's behalf.

14. Asset and Property

14.1 The Library Strategy and Delivery Plan 2023 – 2028 proposes a reduction in the number of Library buildings. The buildings will be declared surplus to operational requirements and their future use will be determined in accordance with the Council adopted Corporate Asset Management Strategy 2023-26.

14.2 The table below provides an outline of the impact of adopting the St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023-2028 on each library building:

Library / (Ward)	Impact
Billinge Library (Billinge and Seneley Green)	This library closed in March 2020 due to Health and safety concerns. It is in a poor state of repair, with the condition of the floor and roof of particular concern. The building will be declared surplus to requirements
Chester Lane Library (Bold and Lea Green)	This building accommodates Chester Lane Library, the Library Support Unit, Home Delivery and Schools Library Services. Work has commenced to investigate the creation of a Locality Hub at this location for a range of co-located services. Opening hours will be adjusted to reflect customer usage.
Eccleston Library (Eccleston)	This library will remain in its current location, opening hours will be adjusted to reflect customer usage. As part of the Council estates review, options for co-locating other Council partners together in a new locality hub building in this locality will be explored.
Garswood Library (Billinge and Seneley Green)	It is proposed to close this library. The current lease from the Liverpool Diocese will be surrendered.

<p>Haydock Library (Haydock)</p>	<p>This library will remain in its current location, opening hours will be adjusted to reflect customer usage.</p> <p>Following a successful application to the Libraries Improvement Fund it is proposed to invest £276,000 in the building and by 2025, Haydock Library will be the first fully sensory library for children and young people with SEND in the borough.</p>
<p>Moss Bank Library (Moss Bank)</p>	<p>This library will remain in its current location, opening hours will be adjusted to reflect customer usage.</p> <p>The viability of co-locating within Moss Bank Children’s Centre / Family Hub is being explored.</p> <p>The current building is leased from Torus. Once a new location is identified the lease will be surrendered.</p>
<p>Newton Library (Newton le Willows West)</p>	<p>This library will remain in its current location, opening hours will be adjusted to reflect customer usage.</p> <p>Options will be explored to relocate the service as part of the Earlestown Town Centre Regeneration plans. Any options will be explored in consultation with the community.</p>
<p>Parr Library (Parr)</p>	<p>It is proposed to close this library.</p> <p>The current building will be declared surplus to requirements.</p>
<p>Peter Street Library (Town Centre)</p>	<p>This library closed on 31st March 2023.</p> <p>Peter Street Community Centre’s management committee served notice on the Council to terminate the lease from 31st March 2023 as they had secured a tenant prepared to sign a long lease and who wished to occupy the space where the library was located.</p>
<p>Rainford Library (Rainford)</p>	<p>It is proposed to close this library.</p> <p>The building will be declared surplus to requirements</p>
<p>Rainhill Library (Rainhill)</p>	<p>It is proposed to close this library.</p> <p>If required Council Officers will help relocate the Rainhill Railway and Heritage Society’s Trials Exhibition to another location within the Ward. The exhibition is currently housed in a railway carriage. Removing it from</p>

	<p>site will require it to be dismantled at a cost to be determined.</p> <p>The building will be declared surplus to requirements.</p>
<p>St Helens Library (Town Centre)</p>	<p>This library will remain in the World of Glass until the refurbishment of the Gamble Building is complete, at which time it will move back to be accommodated alongside the St Helens Archive.</p> <p>The Council currently uses space within the World of Glass.</p>
<p>Thatto Heath Library (Thatto Heath)</p>	<p>This library will remain in the current building, opening hours will be adjusted to reflect customer usage.</p> <p>The building condition will be reviewed and improved.</p>

15. Staffing and Human Resources

- 15.1 The St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023–2028 sets out a network of seven libraries, a proactive and targeted outreach offer, a Home Delivery Library Service, Schools Library Service, Archive Service and Arts in Libraries programme, as well as dedicated resource to support Community Managed Libraries. This will require the current workforce to be reduced, reshaped and trained. The proposals will result in a reduction in the number of staff employed in the service with potential staff redundancies. Staff and the trade unions will be consulted on the proposals and dealt with and supported in accordance with the Council’s Policies and Procedures. Every effort will be made to avoid compulsory redundancies.
- 15.2 As the number of library buildings will be reduced, a small number of facilities management staff (including cleaners) may be affected by the changes. Given demands within the Council, it is anticipated that redeployment opportunities will be offered to all staff involved.

16. Risks

- 16.1 The table below provides an outline of the impact of adopting the St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023 – 2028.

Risk	Mitigation
Any decision made by the Council about its Library Service may be subject to legal challenge via judicial	Decisions to reduce library services elsewhere have been the subject of judicial review proceedings and to act in accordance with public law principles it is important that any decision taken is reasonable, rational and procedurally

<p>review or Local Inquiry by the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) who provide the superintendence of Library Services.</p>	<p>correct. It is important that all relevant factors are considered, especially about the need for effective consultation and the application of the Public Sector Equality Duty.</p> <p>Independent legal advice has been sought to ensure that the process to support the decision has been robust.</p> <p>Officers have met regularly with the Libraries Superintendence Team within the DCMS, they have provided critical friend advice on the approach the Council has adopted.</p> <p>Fifteen Equality Impact Assessments have been completed to inform the development of the strategy.</p> <p>A 12-week public consultation has been completed to inform the decisions with the strategy.</p>
<p>Community groups do not come forward to take on the running of libraries.</p>	<p>The buildings owned by the Council will be declared surplus to requirements.</p>
<p>Should the Library Service vacate a building it rents from other organisations this may have an impact on their financial viability.</p>	<p>Advance notice of any changes will be provided along with support to identify new tenants.</p>
<p>The reduction in the number of library buildings may reduce the number of people accessing and benefiting from the service</p>	<p>The Library Service will be proactive in working with the users of those libraries that are proposed to close, identifying suitable alternatives within the remaining Library network, holding familiarisation events and activities to ease the transition and provide training and support for residents to access the digital offer.</p>

<p>The condition of some of the buildings that are proposed to be retained is poor. Should investment in these sites not be secured there is a risk further closures could occur due to poor building conditions.</p>	<p>Scheme will be developed to address the condition issues within the library buildings to be retained, these will be subject to separate decision-making processes.</p>
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17. Finance

- 17.1 The Council continues to operate in a challenging environment, with repeated cuts in central government funding since 2010 having materially diminished Council budgets and ongoing uncertainty around future levels of settlement. In addition, demand for Council services continues to grow and the current economic environment has introduced yet more financial pressures.
- 17.2 The Council annually agrees a Medium-Term Financial Strategy that provides an overarching framework which sets out the context in which decisions on resource allocation and budgeting will be taken. The primary purpose of this Strategy is to provide an indication of the future financial position of the Council and, in turn, inform the annual budget setting process. It quantifies the likely level of resources that are available to deliver the Council's statutory and non-statutory services and achievement of its core strategic objectives.
- 17.3 The aim of the annual Budget is to provide, within the overarching constraints that exist, the most appropriate balance of resources to deliver the Council's statutory responsibilities and to set a foundation for, and facilitate, the delivery of the Council's statutory responsibilities, key ambitions and its existing and emerging corporate priorities and borough level strategic objectives.
- 17.4 Given the continued shortfall in available resources there is an ongoing corporate need to review how all services are delivered to identify efficiencies and reduce overall costs - including changes to how services are delivered or supported or driving change through technology and/or more efficient commissioning. Reviews also need to consider the cessation or reduction of discretionary services or moving to provide minimum levels of statutory services. Although these are unpalatable and challenging options, such actions are essential in ensuring that the necessary levels of savings are achieved, the Council sets a legally balanced budget, continues to remain financially sustainable, and provides vital front-line services.

- 17.5 Significant service reconfiguration will, out of necessity, therefore, need to continue to take place, delivered through transformed services, working in partnership, where appropriate.
- 17.6 In setting the budget for 2021/22 and having regard to a projected gap in excess of £33m for the period 2021/22 to 2023/24, Directorates were required to propose potential savings options to address the forecast gap for the period. The approved budget required £13.440m of savings in relation to 2021/22, the vast majority of which fell within Adult, Children's, Public Health and other Place-based services.
- 17.7 This sum included a budget reduction of £0.496m within the Culture and Heritage portfolio, relating to the Library Service and the implementation of a Localities model, with the strategic objective of delivering a modern, localities based, borough wide accessible service, within a level of reduced resources.
- 17.8 In not implementing actions to deliver the cost reductions, further pressure is placed on the Council's financial position. Members will be aware that this is regularly reported to Cabinet and Council via the regular Financial Monitoring Reports.
- 17.9 The Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-2026 and Revenue & Capital Budget 2023/24 report approved by Cabinet and Council in February and March 2023 reported on the ongoing budget gaps and the imperative that agreed savings options (including a further £7.445m of savings for 2023/24) are progressed and delivered in 2023/24 and over the medium term in order to provide a balanced budget for 2023/24 and to reduce the forecast future funding gaps.
- 17.10 The proposed Delivery Plan has been modelled and it is estimated that the revised costs will result in an ongoing net cost reduction of £0.338m. This sum excludes savings from business rates, repairs and maintenance, and residual overheads as these will only be achieved once the future use of the buildings is determined in accordance with the terms of the Corporate Asset Management Strategy.
- 17.11 Capital investment to upgrade the public computer offer, self-serve kiosks for book loans and Wi-Fi printing, scanning, and copying, library building refurbishment and/or relocation will be the subject of future Cabinet and/or delegated decisions.

18. Policy Framework Implications

- 18.1 The investment will support all Our Borough Strategy priorities and also contributes to the delivery of several Council Strategies and Plans including:
- Children's and Young People's plan
 - School Readiness Strategy
 - Early Years Strategy

- St Helens Closer Together: Bridging the Inequalities gap.
- Town Deal Investment Plan
- Integrated Care Partnership Priorities
- St Helens Together: Our strategy for the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector 2021-2026
- Arts Strategy
- Heritage Opportunities Plan
- St Helens Borough Commercial Strategy 2021-2026
- Community Asset Transfer Policy 2023 - 2026

19. Impact and Opportunities on Localities

- 19.1 The final St Helens Borough Library Strategy and Delivery Plan 2023–2028 will deliver the intended outcomes of the Council localities approach by ensuring that through data analysis, the Council is targeting its resources at those areas with highest needs, whilst empowering and enabling residents to manage and deliver services in areas where there is capacity and community support to do so.
- 19.2 Libraries provide an ideal location for co-location with other services and will be the start of the Council’s Locality hub model. They are well placed to play a role as locality hubs because of their existing position of trust within local communities as demonstrated through the consultation as well as the contribution they make across a range of agendas, and their ethos of partnership working.

20. Background Documents

- 20.1 Draft Library Strategy - Cabinet Report - 26 April 2023
- 20.2 Community Asset Transfer Policy - Cabinet Report - 13 September 2023
- 20.3 Library Strategy and Delivery Plan Consultation Plan - 26 April 2023
- 20.4 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-2026 – Cabinet - 22 February 2023
- 20.5 Revenue and Capital Budget 2023/2024 – Cabinet - 22 February 2023.
- 20.6 The Gamble Building Creative & Learning Hub - Cabinet - 11 January 2023
- 20.7 Asset Strategy & Asset Management Plan 2023-2026 - Cabinet -11 January 2023
- 20.8 St Helens Borough Library Service Strategy and Delivery Plan 2022-2027 Cabinet report–13 July 2022.
- 20.9 St Helens Borough Library Strategy Update - Cabinet Report – 1 December 2021

- 20.10 St Helens Borough Libraries Strategy Consultation draft - Cabinet Report – 26 May 2021
- 20.11 Introduction of Locality Management - Cabinet Report – 24 March 2021
- 20.12 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-2025 and Revenue and Capital Budget 2022/23- Cabinet Report – 23rd February 2022
- 20.13 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-2024 and Revenue and Capital Budget 2021/22 - Cabinet Report – 24 February 2021
- 20.14 Budget Report - Cabinet Report – 6 January 2021
- 20.15 Budget Strategy 2021-2022 - Cabinet Report– 7 October 2020
- 20.16 St Helens Borough Library Service – Library Buildings Fact Sheet

21. Appendices

- 21.1 St Helens Borough Library Strategy Consultation report – Appendix A
- 21.2 Equality Impact assessments – Appendix B
- 21.3 St Helens Borough Library Strategy 2023–2028 - Appendix C