

## St Helens Art in Libraries 2024 Environmental Plan – V5 05/03/25

### 1. Introduction

The St Helens Arts in Libraries programme is delivered by the St Helens Borough Council Library Service, one of only sixteen library services in England granted National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status by Arts Council England (ACE).

Since its inception the programme has engaged over 20,300 people. We collaborate with arts organisations across the region, host various works, and commission and partner with artists from St Helens and beyond. At the core of this is involving communities in a range of positive arts and cultural activities and events.

Our mission is to provide diverse creative opportunities for audiences and participants within library spaces, online and in the community; to collaborate with artists and communities for the mutual benefit of all, and to share best practice with other library services across England. In 2024/25 we will deliver the following:

- 40+ Performances
- 150+ Writers and Arts Workshops
- 12+ Community Programmed Events

As part of the NPO programme, we are committed to improving and reporting our environmental impact, aligning with the council's own plans.

This document outlines the principles, plans, and actions we will undertake in 2024/25 to meet these obligations, ensuring that the environmental impact of our activities is minimised and that we have a future plan for continuous improvement.

### 2. Principles:

In undertaking this work the Arts in Libraries Team will use these 7 principles to underpin its work:

1	Endeavour to deliver environmentally friendly events.
2	Communicate our agenda and encourage our staff, partners and audience/customers to be environmentally friendly.
3	“Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” wherever possible.

4	Make the most of local suppliers to reduce the environmental footprint caused by travel.
5	Lobby and make the case for capital improvements to buildings and equipment that will reduce the environmental impact of our services.
6	Include a percentage of budget that makes provision for improvement of environmental impact.
7	Use the above actions to set a benchmark for future improvement.

### 3. ACTIONS

#### 3.1 Delivering Environmentally Friendly Events:

The Arts in Libraries Team will ensure that the environmental impact of our projects and events is considered during the planning stage by including a formal section in all planning documents and agendas for meetings related to event planning. We will strive to work with artists and suppliers who are conscious of the environmental impact of their activities, providing this guidance and requesting evidence of intent during the tendering, contract, and monitoring stages of projects. For example, supporting low energy alternatives where possible, for example using battery or grid power instead of generators, and purchasing recycled products.

#### 3.2 Communication

We will communicate this policy online and through interactions with artists, suppliers, and the public. We will prioritise digital communications and use the most environmentally friendly physical marketing materials when necessary for accessibility, include the use of recycled printing and publicity materials. We will promote the use of public transport, providing information and links to travel suppliers' websites and public transport routes to our events and activities. We will appoint a Green Champion to facilitate communications and engender further support amongst staff and public.

#### 3.3. Reduce Reuse Recycle

The principles of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle form a waste hierarchy aimed at minimising waste and its environmental impact. A sustainable approach to waste management, reduces the strain on natural resources, lowers greenhouse gas emissions and minimises pollution.

- Reduce: minimising the amount of waste generated. Achieved by purchasing products with minimal packaging, choosing durable and long-lasting goods, avoiding single-use items, and planning purchases and consumption to prevent overbuying and waste.
- Reuse: Extending the life of items and reduce the need for new products. This includes repairing and maintaining products to prolong their usefulness, repurposing items instead of discarding them, donating or selling items that are no longer needed, and using reusable containers, bags, and other items.
- Recycle: Converting waste materials into new products. This involves sorting and cleaning recyclable materials. We will aim to encourage participation in local recycling programmes, and educating others about the importance and methods of recycling using existing council resources at: <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/RecyclingA-Z>

### **3.4 Local Suppliers**

We will prioritise local procurement and purchasing to reduce travel impacts and support local businesses.

We will actively encourage collaboration with local suppliers to improve the environmental impact of their services and products. This collaboration will involve regular communication, feedback, and the sharing of best practices to ensure both our operations and those of our suppliers align with these principles.

### **3.5 Buildings and Capital Developments**

We will aim to improve the sustainability and environmental impact of the venues we use. This involves collaborating closely with venue suppliers and internal council departments. This will include:

- Prioritising venues with superior energy efficiency, for example using Display Energy Certificate (DEC) ratings.
- Promoting responsible practices within buildings, such as discouraging simultaneous window opening and heating operation to conserve energy.

Facilitating the sharing of spaces and resources to maximize efficiency and minimize wastage. Engaging with council building management to ensure that forthcoming capital developments prioritise energy efficiency and low carbon improvements. This will include the prioritisation of sustainable materials, eco-friendly options like recycled or locally sourced materials and incorporating energy-efficient design. We will request renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, or other low carbon technologies and seek to foster biodiversity and green spaces with features like green roofs, natural landscaping and water conservation measures such as water-efficient fixtures and rainwater harvesting.

### **3.6 Budgets**

We will allocate budget towards improving our environmental performance and consider the holistic environmental costs of products and services while prioritising Best Value. When faced with similarly priced options, we will choose the most environmentally friendly choice. We will invest in staff training, specific events, and monitor activities to ensure effective implementation. We will seek further funding opportunities to support ongoing improvement efforts and expand activities.

### **3.7 Benchmarking**

We will establish a framework for monitoring and evaluation that is straightforward to implement while providing robust assessment benchmarks. This will encompass the monitoring of key areas such as energy consumption, water usage, waste management, and travel practices. To facilitate this, we will provide guidance and online forms to our stakeholders and suppliers, ensuring consistency and ease of reporting. By doing this we aim to gain insights into our environmental impact and progress over time.

The information collected will serve as the foundation for our annual reporting, enabling us to communicate our environmental performance and demonstrate our commitment to sustainability.

**Benchmark Plan for 2024/25 – RED/AMBER/GREEN**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Principle</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Who Responsible</b>	<b>Progress /Potential Ideas to progress</b>
Sustainable element to be included in Artist Commission application forms	Delivering Environmentally Friendly Events	June 25	AiL Team	To look at our new standard contract for all contracted artists in 25/26. <i>This work will now take place in June before our larger contracts for the year are drafted.</i>
Encourage audience to arrive to venue by walk, bike, public transport.	Delivering Environmentally Friendly Events	Autumn 25	AiL Team / Library Team	Aim to identify any Libraries that require (improved) facilities to improve Cycling and then purchase bike racks as appropriate. <i>Underway – Kate Stephenson has surveyed sites and we have identified Haydock as a possible site. There is possible money in the SPF funding that could cover environmental spend such as bike racks; to go back to Steven Berlyne once site confirmed.</i>
Promote these principles via our webpages	Communication	May 25	AiL Team	Aim is to add these principles via a link on our website, put a blog on the website for World Earth Day and then add appropriate information on an ongoing basis. <i>Underway - We now have the New Council Net Zero Site here <a href="https://netzero.sthelens.gov.uk/">https://netzero.sthelens.gov.uk/</a> and we will be putting together a blog on the site.</i>
Increase library staff awareness of the environmental action plan via AiL Champions to increase the focus across the service	Communication	May 25	AiL Team	Aim is to have a training session to our Arts in Libraries Champions about the new Plan and then cascade this down to front line staff across all Library Teams.

				<p><i>Underway The training session in April had to be cancelled due to the lack of supervisors in work at the moment so we have pushed this back to the next session on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May Andy is chasing up with Rose Hanes about the Leisure service training template for use later in the year.</i></p>
<p>Raise sustainability awareness to residents during events with environmental themes, book displays and signage on whiteboards or chalkboards</p>	<p>Communication</p>	<p>April and October 25</p>	<p>AiL Team Artists AiL Project Team Library venues</p>	<p>We will be kicking off this activity on 22<sup>nd</sup> April World Earth Day with two library activities themed crafts plus the schools Writing session with Kevin – all Libraries will be doing a themed read and rhyme within this week. Additionally, we have identified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Story Garden Events in Summer in our outdoor Library spaces (including the side garden at Chester Lane) as locations for outdoor eco-themed story telling events</li> <li>• The St Helens Potato Festival in September and</li> <li>• Green Libraries week 27<sup>th</sup> October to 2<sup>nd</sup> November</li> </ul> <p>As opportunities for eco-themed events.</p> <p><i>Underway – As per the above we are having a soft launch via the World Earth Day activity and then planning further events over the year.</i></p>
<p>Look for opportunities to collaborate with other organisations who share the commitment to sustainability</p>	<p>Reduce Reuse Recycle</p>	<p>Summer 25</p>	<p>AiL Team AiL Project Team</p>	<p>We have being invited as a team to attend the future yard conference later in the year and will be looking for other opportunities to team up with local organisations to collaborate on specific projects.</p>

				<i>There is no update for this action yet, but we will be looking for opportunities once we start commissioning work in 25/26.</i>
Purchase equipment which can be utilised and reused by artists	Reduce Reuse Recycle	April 25	AiL Team Artists AiL Project Team Library venues	<p>We will be looking where we can to buy items such as Library Craft kits from reputable sources and will be looking to set up the Artist Equipment Lending Library this summer.</p> <p><i>Underway - We have tried where possible to purchase sustainable craft equipment for three upcoming spike day events and have pulled together leftover materials from previous events rather than disposing of them. This is created enough for one activity in itself. The equipment for the artist lending library funded through UKSPF has been purchased our work will be starting very soon to put the items into the library lending system and then we will publicise how people can access them. This is a great example of our specialist items can be reused rather than purchased specifically for one type of task and then put away.</i></p>
Avoid, when possible, the purchase of single use resources including plastic	Reduce Reuse Recycle	Summer 25	AiL Team Artists AiL Project Team Library venues	<p>we will be undertaking a stop take of our equipment and replacing plastic/single use items with more sustainable alternatives.</p> <p><i>Underway - as an example we've stopped using one use cutlery/cups within our event packs I'm replacing these with washable alternatives.</i></p>
Recycle any waste materials from the audience/event - paper flyers, plastic bottles	Reduce Reuse Recycle	April ongoing 25	AiL Team Artists	We have set up a paper and bottle recycling at St Helens and Chester Lane libraries.

			AiL Project Team Library venues	<i>Underway – As these are our main performance venues we have made special effort to sort waste and ensure that these are recycled properly. As an example on the storybook project because of the large numbers of people in attendance we ensure that the catering was provided in recyclable all sustainable containers/plates etc and that these were sorted immediately after the event.</i>
Research trusted local suppliers with a sustainable commitment to match AiL values	Local Suppliers	Winter 25	AiL Team AiL Project Team	This is a relatively low priority because most of our delivery spend this year will be on fees for delivery of activity rather than capital or equipment spend. However time has been diarised to review this later in the year. <i>No update, work will commence later in the year.</i>