

The local elections were held last week and I want to thank everyone who voted Labour and all those who sent messages of support in recent weeks. It was a strange election given the circumstances and council staff did an amazing job making sure it was done safely and securely.

I'm pleased to say Labour won the most votes and seats, increasing our vote share by 5% compared to the last elections in 2019.

Steve Rotheram was also re-elected as Metro Mayor and Emily Spurrell was elected Police and Crime Commissioner, and I look forward to working closely with both of them to get things done for St Helens.

We don't take any vote for granted and we never will. To those we couldn't convince this time, we'll continue to work hard in the months ahead to win your trust.

I'm also pleased to say that on Monday I was re-elected Leader by my Labour colleagues and I'm grateful to them all for their support and hard work.

Our Cabinet will be staying the same, and our whole group is determined to get back to work helping the borough recover from the pandemic. We're also fully focused on delivering on the commitments in our manifesto including the many exciting projects either underway or close to happening such as Parkside, Omega West, Glass Futures, transport improvements, the Local Plan, our Climate Action Plan, the Gamble and Earlestown Town Hall repairs, and of course our ongoing work with English Cities Fund to deliver significant redevelopment of our town centres.

It's an exciting time and my Labour colleagues and I are honoured to have the responsibility of working for you, your family and our great borough.

We've also all had the great news that the next stage of the lockdown exit roadmap will go ahead on Monday, allowing households to mix inside adhering to the rule of 6, hospitality venues to serve customers indoors, children's playcentres to reopen and more. One of the most exciting steps for many will be the return of fans to Saints, and I want to wish Mike Rush and all the staff at the club the best of luck – I know they're working really hard behind the scenes to welcome supporters back to the ground safely and like them I can't wait to hear the roar of 'Oh When The Saints' once again.

The infection and hospitalisation figures for St Helens are all heading in the right direction so it's excellent news and with vaccinations continuing at pace the coming months should bring more good news for us all.

You can check all the latest information regarding restrictions at [sthelens.gov.uk/coronavirus](https://sthelens.gov.uk/coronavirus).

Best wishes to all Star readers.