

What a week!

Our greatest ambassadors, the mighty Saints, won both the men's and women's Grand Finals, completing a historic Three-peat and League and Cup double, and a treble of everything on offer respectively.

As I wrote last week, we really do need to appreciate just how special these squads are and how incredible this current era for the club really is. The players are terrific role models and the club is something we should all be very proud to support.

And this was followed on Tuesday by the unveiling of plans which will significantly transform St Helens and Earlestown town centres in the coming years.

These draft plans have been developed by St Helens Borough Council and our partners at English Cities Fund (ECF), who have a proven track record of delivering regeneration.

As previously reported, the council and ECF signed a partnership agreement in March 2020 and since then we have been working on these masterplans to deliver the major regeneration we all want to see. You can read the plans in full at [www.sthelenstowncentre.co.uk](http://www.sthelenstowncentre.co.uk) and [www.earlestown.co.uk](http://www.earlestown.co.uk).

The plans will go to a special meeting of the council's Cabinet next week, and if agreed they will go out to public consultation from November 1st.

The first phase of development in St Helens town centre will see a new market hall, new bus station, new modern retail units, modern office accommodation, a hotel and family homes, and in Earlestown we will see a new covered market, transport hub and significant investment in public spaces.

We want our town centres to be a source of pride. A child and family-friendly place, home to thriving local businesses, quality homes, leisure and outdoor spaces, with great transport links, digital connectivity and future-proof to address the climate emergency.

That's what our partnership with ECF and these plans will deliver.

With the £25m we've already won from the Town Deal Fund and the confirmation this week that we are looking for a box park operator for the former Chalon Way site, this is a really exciting time for the borough!

Our borough has a rich heritage, one of glassmaking, the railways, chemicals and coal, hard work, strength and innovation. If we all work together, then these plans give us the opportunity to build the future our past deserves.

Best wishes to all Star readers.