



The State of Growth in St Helens

A State of Growth Report by Growth Flag

Autumn 2024



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Growth Flag has been developed by Red Flag Alert, a data intelligence platform, and the Growth Company, a social enterprise with 30+ years' experience of delivering economic and business growth. The analysis in this report is designed to facilitate data-led strategic interventions for positive change in local economies. Growth Flag data is currently used by a variety of councils, combined authorities, universities and private sector organisations. Find out more at growthflag.com



WELCOME

The State of Growth in St Helens

St Helens is a metropolitan borough home to around 185,000 people, located in Merseyside and the Liverpool City Region. This State of Growth Report provides a comprehensive outlook on business growth potential in St Helens over the next year.

This report is based on data from Growth Flag, an innovative, first-of-its-kind, online tool that provides a forward-looking outlook on growth in individual businesses and local economies throughout the UK. Our objective and evidence-based systems take comprehensive firm-level datasets that are constantly updated to create a powerful Growth Propensity Model (aka a Growth Score). The higher the score, the more likely a business is to achieve 20% growth in the next financial year. Businesses that are likely or very likely to achieve this growth are said to have 'high growth potential'. This growth is based on multi-variate analysis calculations, so the actual financial measure showing growth will differ depending on the best predictor by size of each enterprise.

In changing times, being able to find growth potential is more important than ever. Information in this report will be used to help inform local activities in St Helens, including providing effective and targeted business support.

Growth is everywhere, Growth Flag can help you find it.

Headline Statistics



5,935
businesses

There are nearly 6,000 businesses with a registered or trading presence in St Helens (not including sole traders)



18%
businesses

Over 1,000 businesses are located in St Helens Town Centre - more than in any other ward of St Helens



10%
businesses

600 businesses in St Helens have high growth potential and are either likely or very likely to achieve 20% growth in the next year



15%

businesses

Rainford has the highest percentage of high growth potential businesses in St Helens - while Haydock has the highest number



30%

businesses

Over 1,800 businesses in St Helens are newly incorporated over the last 12 months



82

businesses

More than 80 businesses in St Helens have high growth potential but simultaneously show early signs of financial distress

Where are businesses located in St Helens?

The map on the next page provides a view of businesses across St Helens, including all incorporated businesses that are either registered or have a filed trading address in the borough. Businesses are displayed through the shapes below, with businesses demonstrating signals of risk and high growth potential highlighted in particular.

The map shows clusters of businesses in some urban areas, and these are mapped in greater detail on the following pages.



BUSINESSES WITH HIGH GROWTH POTENTIAL

These are business with a Growth Score of 'Likely' or 'Very Likely', meaning they are forecast to achieve 20% growth in the next year.



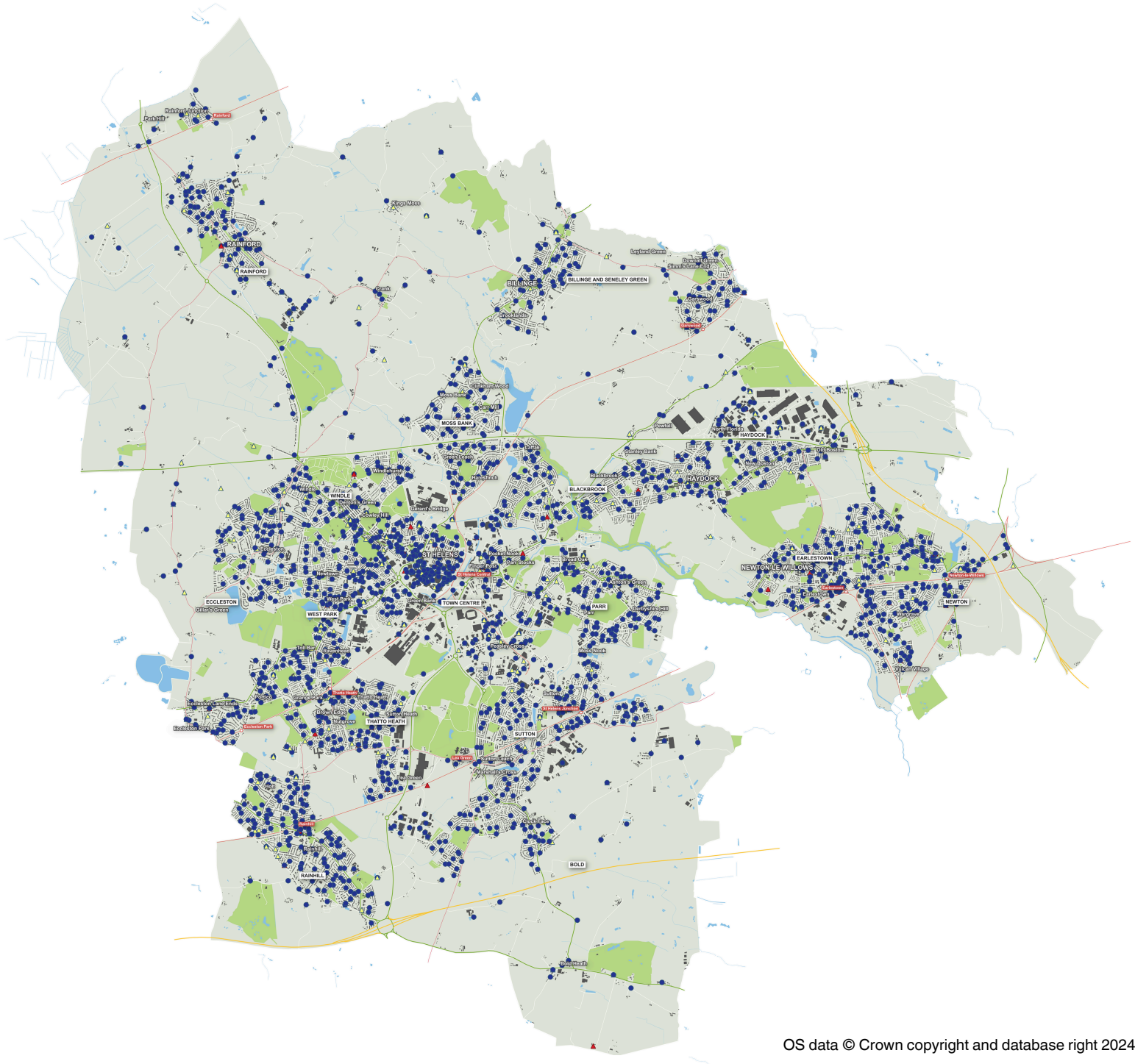
BUSINESSES IN THE GROWTH FLAG RISK COHORT

These businesses simultaneously show signals of high growth potential and early signs of financial distress.



ALL OTHER BUSINESSES

All incorporated businesses (not sole traders) that are not including in either of the other categories.



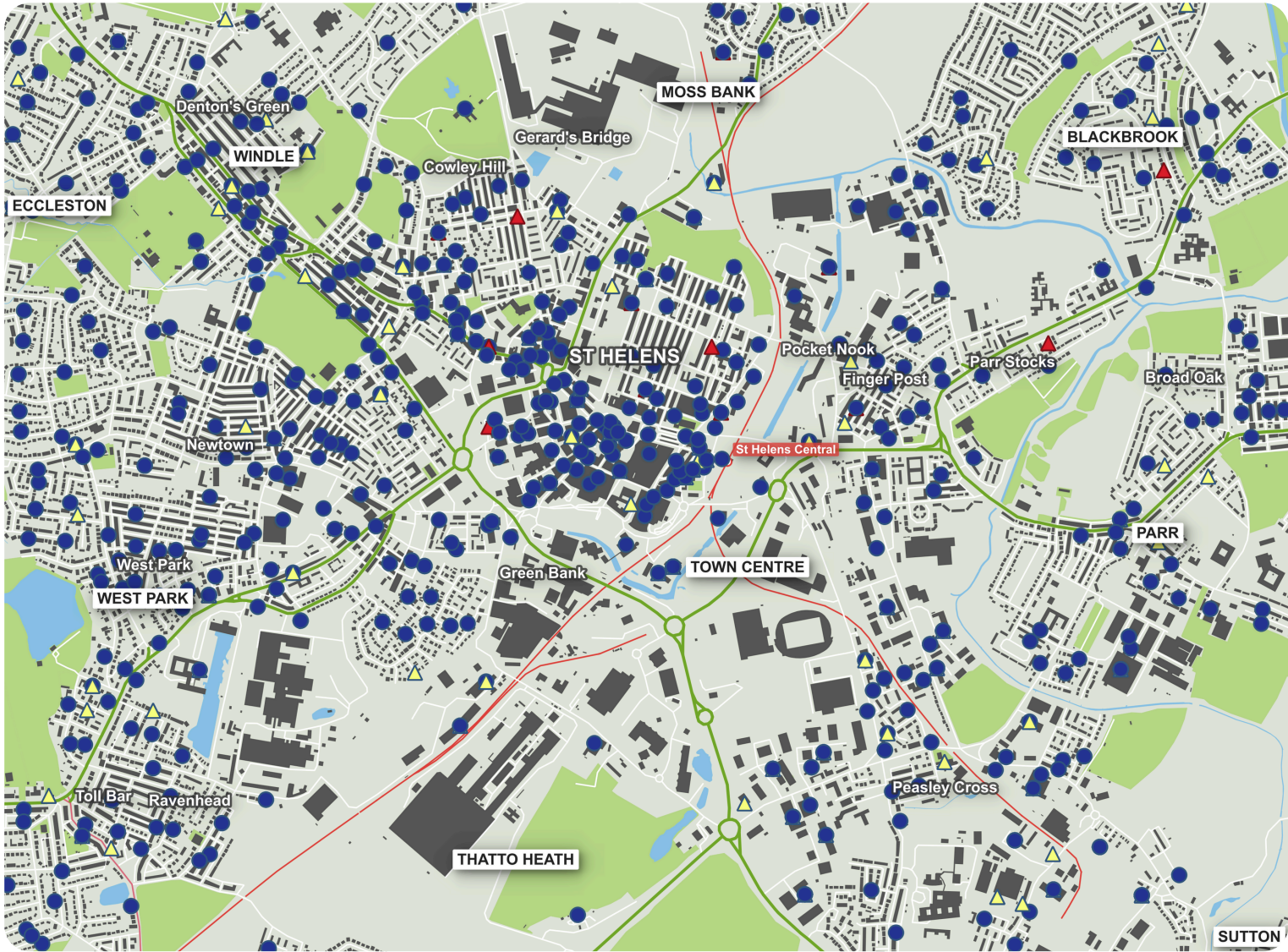
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ZOOMED MAP

St Helens Town Centre

Map Key:

- All Other Businesses
- ▲ Businesses with High Growth Potential
- ▲ Businesses in the Growth Flag Risk Cohort



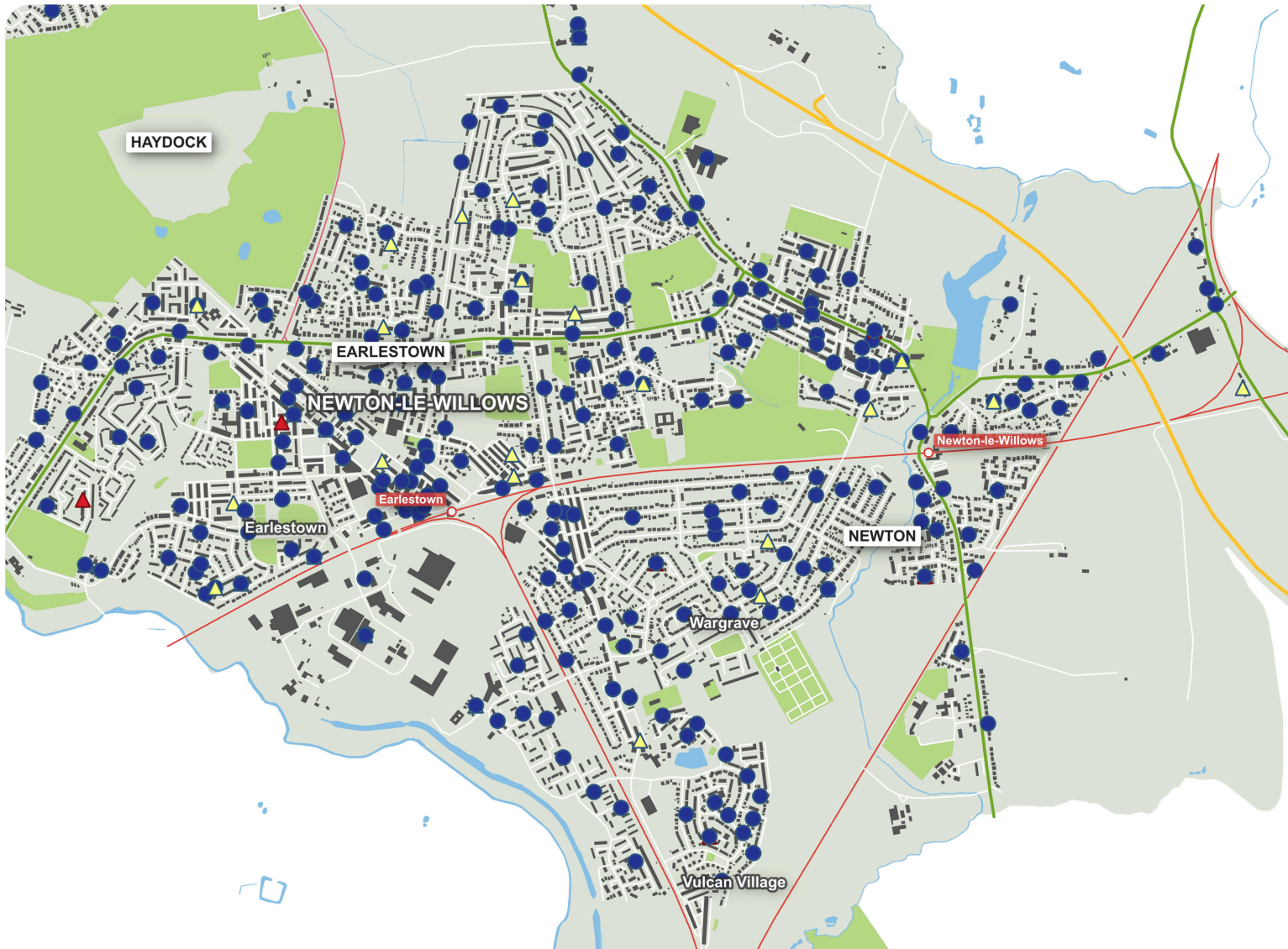
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ZOOMED MAP

Earlestown and Newton-Le-Willows

Map Key:

- All Other Businesses
- ▲ Businesses with High Growth Potential
- ▲ Businesses in the Growth Flag Risk Cohort



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Evidence of Growth Potential





Distribution of High Growth Potential

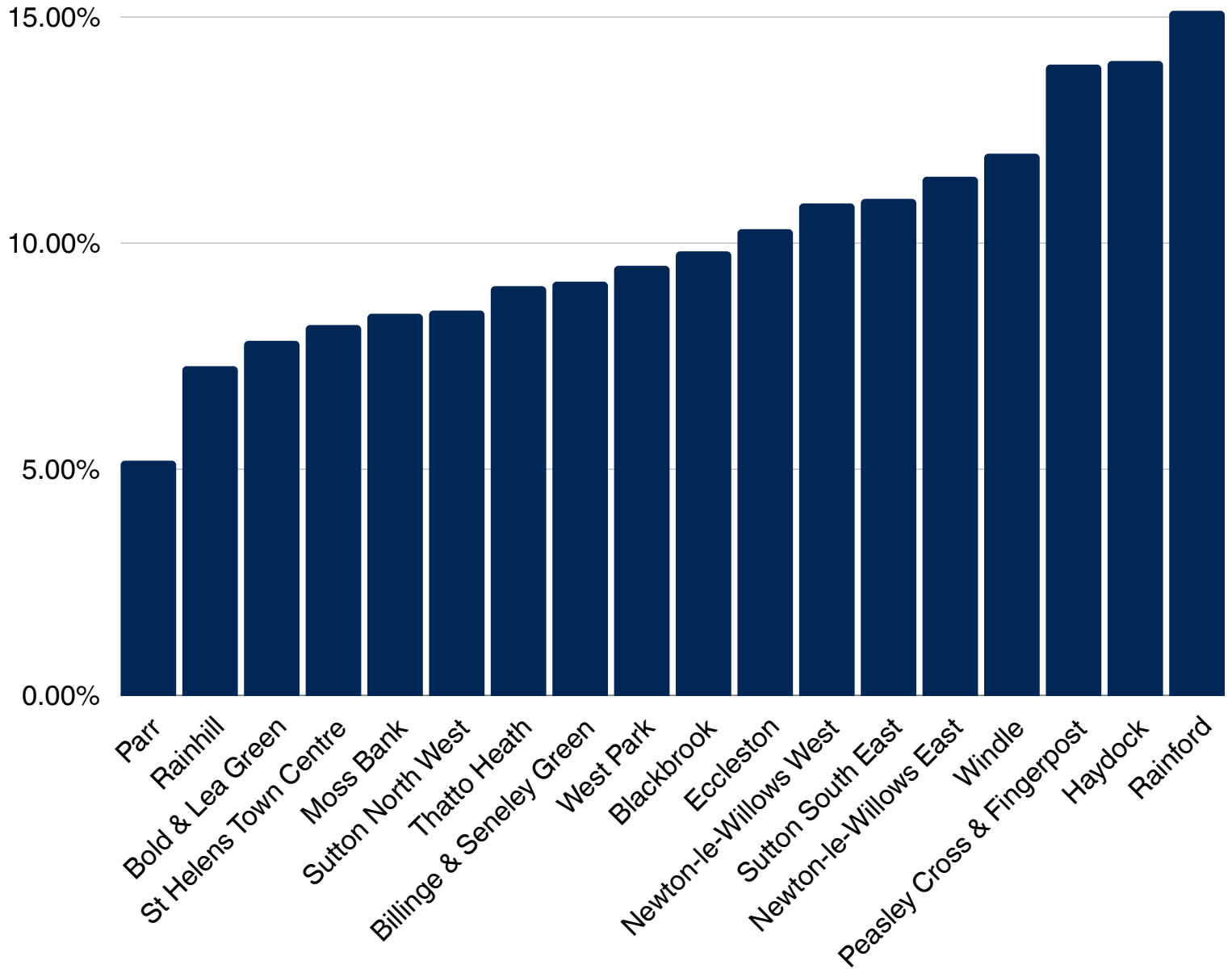
Using the innovative Growth Score technology, Growth Flag is able to forecast with high accuracy which businesses will achieve 20% growth over the next year.

Across St Helens, 10.1% of businesses have a 'Likely' or 'Very Likely' Growth Score, meaning there is a strong likelihood of these businesses achieving 20% growth. However, growth potential does though vary throughout St Helens with some places having a significantly different proportion of businesses that are expected to go on to achieve this high growth.

Wards of St Helens including Rainford, Haydock, and Peasley Cross & Fingerpost have significantly higher proportions of high growth potential businesses than the St Helens average - while Parr, Rainhill, Bold & Lea Green have significantly lower proportions of these businesses. St Helens Town Centre also has a low proportion of high growth potential businesses, though the second highest absolute number of these businesses in St Helens.

These insights on the spatial spread of growth potential across St Helens can be key to directing business support and informing work to further grow the local economy.

Percentage of Businesses with High Growth Potential by Ward



Distribution of High Growth Potential

Growth Flag analyses the total assets of businesses with high growth potential in order to provide context on how valuable business growth may be to local economies.

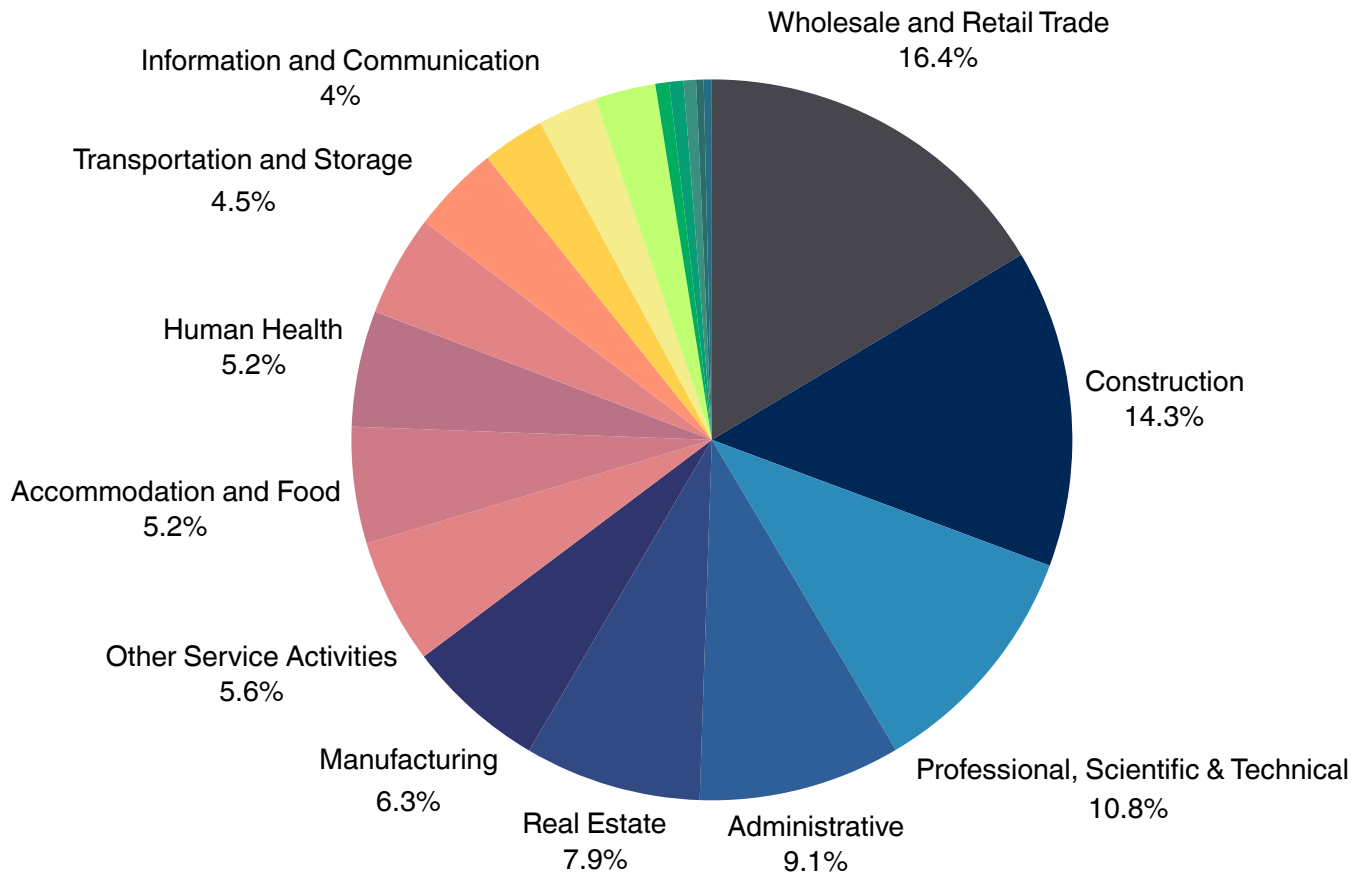
Across St Helens, high growth potential businesses have total assets of £2.2bn – while the total assets of all businesses in the borough stands at £8.4bn. This analysis demonstrates the significant value of businesses locally, and the potential financial rewards if growth on this was achieved.

The total assets of high growth businesses in each ward of St Helens has also been calculated and these figures are included in the Wards Analysis on page 19. The figures vary throughout the borough and could be used to facilitate further investigation into business bases as part of targeted support and scale-up programmes.



Sectors

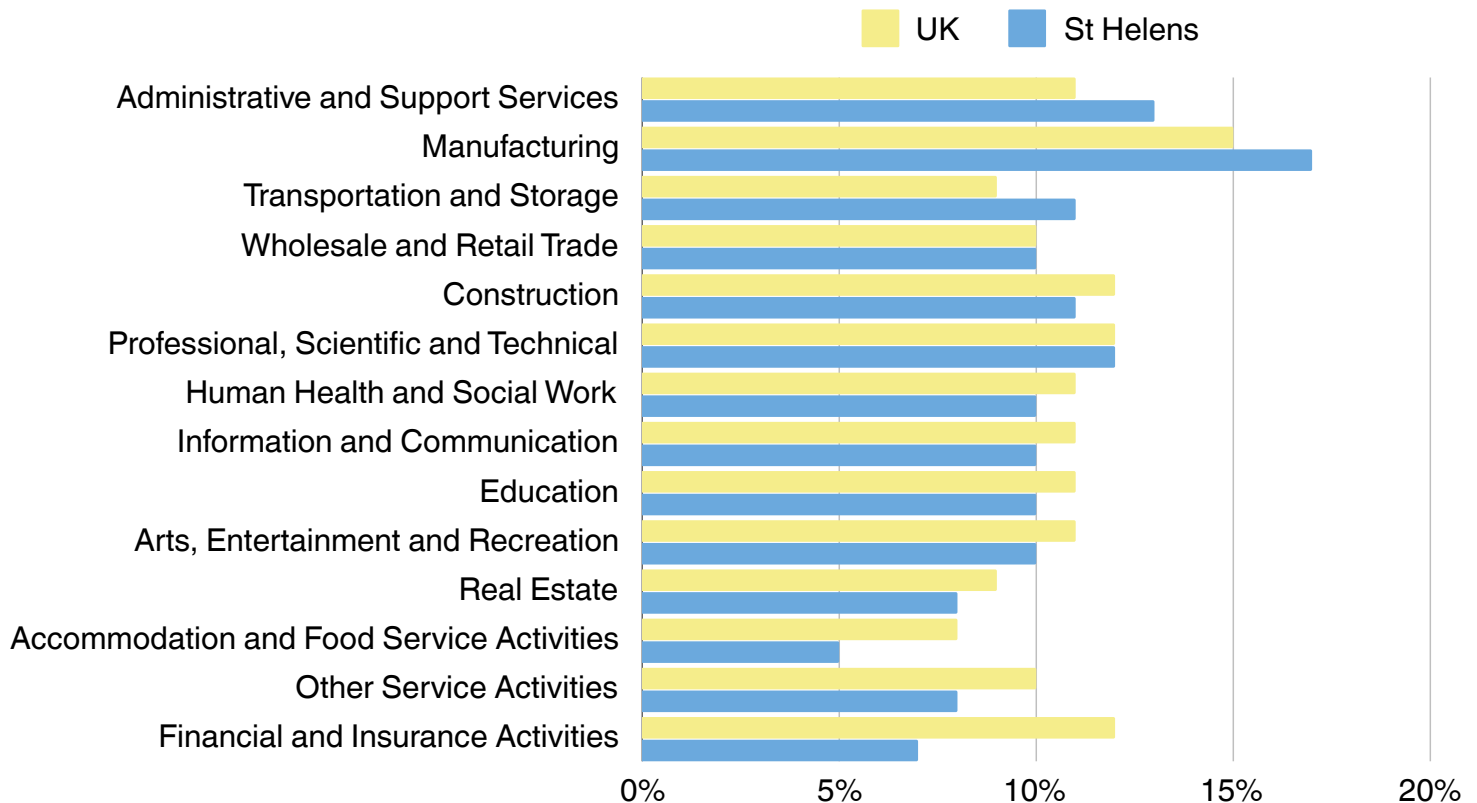
The pie chart below shows the main sectors in St Helens by the total number of active businesses. This shows Wholesale and Retail Trade, Construction, and Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities as the largest sectors.



EVIDENCE OF GROWTH POTENTIAL

Sectors of Growth

The graph below shows the percentage of businesses specifically with high growth potential in each sector in the St Helens business base, compared to the UK overall. St Helens has higher proportions of high growth potential businesses than the UK average in some sectors including administrative services, manufacturing, and transportation and storage, but lower proportions in other sectors.



The Growth Flag Risk Cohort

The Growth Flag Risk Cohort tracks companies which are likely or very likely to grow 20% in the next year, but at the same time have one Red Flag which means that they are showing distinct signs of financial ill health.

As of August 2024, there were around 45,000 businesses in this cohort throughout the UK. In total, 482 businesses in St Helens are showing One Red Flag, indicating early signs of financial distress (33% of such businesses fail within two years), while 82 of these businesses also show signals of high growth potential.

These numbers are included as a call to action, as these businesses may need urgent support in order to achieve the forecasted growth. Focusing business and economic development support efforts on these businesses is recommended to secure growth in the economy that may otherwise be lost.

82 businesses

**currently in this cohort
spread across St Helens**



Wards Analysis

The table shows information on businesses in each of the wards in St Helens and demonstrates the differences throughout the borough. A strong spatial understanding of the business base in different parts of St Helens is important for driving forward business support and informing local priorities.

For each column of the table, the top three wards are highlighted. Some key findings from this analysis include:

- There is particularly strong activity in the Haydock area, though a higher number of businesses showing both growth and early distress signals.
- St Helens Town Centre has the highest number of businesses overall, and the second highest number of businesses with high growth potential, however, these businesses only make up a small proportion of the business base.
- The business bases in Rainford and Peasley Cross & Fingerpost have high proportions of high growth potential businesses - though these areas only have medium sized business bases compared to the rest of St Helens

| Ward | Number of Active Businesses | Number of Businesses with High Growth Potential | Percentage of Businesses with High Growth Potential | Total Assets of Businesses with High Growth Potential | Number of Businesses in the Growth Flag Risk Cohort |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Billinge & Seneley Green | 328 | 30 | 9.2% | £4.5m | 4 |
| Blackbrook | 112 | 11 | 9.8% | £2.4m | 2 |
| Bold & Lea Green | 523 | 41 | 7.8% | £151.2m | 8 |
| Eccleston | 223 | 23 | 10.3% | £4.1m | 3 |
| Haydock | 620 | 87 | 14.0% | £546.2m | 15 |
| Moss Bank | 154 | 13 | 8.4% | £1.5m | 2 |
| Newton-le-Willows East | 375 | 43 | 11.5% | £788.2m | 5 |
| Newton-le-Willows West | 340 | 37 | 10.9% | £56.7m | 3 |
| Parr | 212 | 11 | 5.2% | £2.2m | 0 |
| Peasley Cross & Fingerpost | 294 | 41 | 14.0% | £109.5m | 4 |
| Rainford | 317 | 48 | 15.1% | £211.4m | 5 |
| Rainhill | 426 | 31 | 7.3% | £5.8m | 2 |
| St Helens Town Centre | 1,050 | 86 | 8.2% | £229.9m | 13 |
| Sutton North West | 94 | 8 | 8.5% | £32.9m | 1 |
| Sutton South East | 173 | 19 | 11.0% | £22.1m | 5 |
| Thatto Heath | 210 | 19 | 9.1% | £2.0m | 3 |
| West Park | 242 | 23 | 9.5% | £11.7m | 3 |
| Windle | 242 | 29 | 12.0% | £21.6m | 4 |

Strategic Focus and Comparative Performance





How does St Helens compare to the Liverpool City Region?

The table below compares St Helens to the rest of the Liverpool City Region. While wider differences between the boroughs should be noted, analysis shows that the percentage of businesses in St Helens with high growth potential is in line with the City Region average.

| Ward | Number of Active Businesses | Number of Businesses with High Growth Potential | Percentage of Businesses with High Growth Potential | Number of Businesses in the Growth Flag Risk Cohort |
|-----------|-----------------------------|---|---|---|
| Liverpool | 28,072 | 2,445 | 8.7% | 278 |
| Halton | 4,522 | 542 | 12.0% | 50 |
| Knowsley | 4,255 | 414 | 9.7% | 32 |
| Sefton | 11,799 | 1,233 | 10.5% | 116 |
| Wirral | 13,642 | 1,340 | 9.8% | 131 |
| St Helens | 5,935 | 600 | 10.1% | 82 |

How does St Helens compare to the UK?

Growth Flag conducts annual analysis to directly compare each upper tier local authority in the UK by considering the distribution of growth potential in their business bases, as well as the average asset values of these businesses.

This analysis, presented as the Growth Flag Power Outlook in the Growth Flag Annual Report, allows an overview of the whole UK economy and suggests strategic focuses for each local authority.

In 2024, St Helens was listed in the 'Reviewing Growth' category

This means that St Helens has a reasonable base of businesses with growth potential relative to the rest of the UK, and an asset base on which to build. The suggested strategy for these areas is to review current growth plans and secure intelligence to identify where to prioritise and how to maximise local growth.

More information on the Growth Flag Power Outlook can be found at growthflag.com.

Implications

The findings of this report show a positive outlook for business growth potential in St Helens over the next year. The report contains insights for every part of St Helens and can be used to develop local business support and economic development activities. Two particularly key implications to note from this report include:

••• There are over 80 businesses in St Helens that have high growth potential but are displaying early signs of financial distress. Without support, the growth potential of these businesses may be lost, and some of these businesses may cease trading. Many of these businesses are located in St Helens Town Centre and Haydock in urban centres.

••• 10% of businesses in St Helens are forecast to achieve 20% growth in the next year, but this is not evenly spread throughout the borough. Rainford and Haydock have much higher proportions of high growth potential businesses, while Parr, Rainhill and other areas are significantly below average. Understanding this distribution will be key to supporting further growth in the economy.

The data and findings in this report offer a comprehensive but high-level summary of the growth potential in the St Helens economy. More detailed analysis can be provided by Growth Flag's team of expert analysts – find out more at growthflag.com.

NOTES

NOTES

Growth is everywhere,
Growth Flag can help you find it.



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growthflag.com



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Data as of August 2024. Data is based on live business data and is subject to change.

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