Preface

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1 Introduction

**Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document**

1.1 The Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) expands on the policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (Adopted June 2006) relating to the issues of nature conservation and biodiversity, and seeks to ensure that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of how those policies should be implemented and their desired outcome.

1.2 Specifically, the SPD supplements the following policies of the UDP (Adopted June 2006):

- ST13 Natural Environmental Assets
- DES9 Landscaping
- EN6 Nature Conservation Sites of International Importance
- EN7 Nature Conservation Sites of National Importance
- EN8 Nature Conservation Sites of Local Importance
- EN9 Wildlife Corridors
- EN10 Protected Species
- EN11 Mosslands

1.3 The overarching goal of the SPD is to ensure that there is no net loss of nature conservation assets, and where appropriate there is an improvement in them. Therefore the document will be important in supporting a sustainable future for Salford.

1.4 This SPD has been produced in accordance with the advice contained in PPS12: Local Development Frameworks and the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

**Appropriate Assessments**

1.5 One requirement of the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive) 92/43/EEC is to determine whether any SPD needs an “Appropriate Assessment (AA)” to assess whether its policies would adversely affect the integrity of any site designated as being of European importance in nature conservation terms (i.e. one of the Natura 2000 sites). Although there are no such sites in Salford, there is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (based on Astley and Bedford Mosses) in Wigan [see Para 3.6 and 3.7]. That site has been identified because it is considered to be one of the best areas in the UK of degraded lowland raised bog, which is still capable of natural regeneration. Such a habitat requires specific conditions for its survival and restoration, two of the most important of which are the retention / provision, both of an acidic water supply, and of a high water table throughout the year.

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i PPS12: Local Development Frameworks HMSO, 2005,
1.6 The types of development and activities that could potentially impact on the Astley and Bedford Moss, SAC, are mineral extraction, and extensive areas of tree planting adjacent to the site, either of which could potentially draw down the water table in the local area. In terms of any adverse impacts from any tree planting (as provision of a landscaping scheme or local priority habitat in accordance with Policy NCB3 of the SPD) in Salford, because the majority of the SAC lies well over 750 metres away from the council boundary, it is not thought that there will be any. Therefore, it is considered that the provisions of this SPD would be very unlikely to have an adverse effect on the SAC, and an AA is not thought to be necessary in this case.

Sustainability Appraisal

1.7 The document has been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) at all stages. The SA considers the implications of the SPD from social, economic and environmental perspectives by assessing options and the draft SPD against available baseline data and sustainability objectives.

1.8 A copy of the SA is available on the council’s website: [www.salford.gov.uk/spdconsultation]

Consultation and Public Involvement

1.9 A Consultation Statement is available on the council’s website (see Para 1.8 above), which sets out who has been consulted in the preparation of this SPD, how they have been consulted, a summary of the main issues raised, and how those issues have been addressed.

1.10 The formal consultation on the draft SPD took place between 17th February 2006 and 30th March 2006. The City Council has had regard to all the comments received during the consultation period in the production of this final version of the SPD. A schedule of the comments received during the consultation period and how the council has responded to them, is also available on the council’s website (see Para 1.8 above).

Equality Impact Assessment

1.11 In accordance with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, a first stage Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the draft SPD. This concluded that a more detailed appraisal was not required, as the SPD has no significant differential impact on any group.

1.12 The assessment is also available on the council’s website.

ii Nature Conservation and Biodiversity SPD: Sustainability Appraisal
www.salford.gov.uk/spdconsultation

iii Nature Conservation and Biodiversity SPD: Consultation Statement
www.salford.gov.uk/spdconsultation
Importance of Biodiversity

2 Importance of Biodiversity

2.1 Biological diversity (or biodiversity for short) refers to the degree of variety of all living organisms. It can be seen at a number of levels, in terms of the diversity within species, the diversity between different species, and the diversity of different ecosystems (i.e. the environments within which species live).

2.2 All life on earth is interrelated in some way, and a reduction in the numbers of one species can have a detrimental impact on other species, for example that may be reliant on it for food. Similarly, the loss of habitats can reduce the population numbers of species, which depend on it for food and shelter.

2.3 High levels of diversity often make individual habitats and species more robust and able to cope with changes in the environment, both in terms of natural fluctuations and those caused by human activity, supporting their long-term survival. A habitat that has already lost a number of species of which it would normally be composed, may be more vulnerable to other additional changes because it lacks the diversity of seeds and plants with which to replenish the original loss. Species that lack genetic diversity can be completely wiped out by small changes in their environment, whereas those that are more genetically varied are generally able to adapt more effectively.

2.4 The speed of climate change may mean that even genetically diverse species may not have sufficient time to adapt to changes in their environment but at least their chances of survival are likely to be greater if their own diversity and that of their habitats is retained.

2.5 The UK’s Sustainable Development Strategy (Securing the Future – March 2005) sets out five guiding principles for achieving sustainable development:

   - Living within environmental limits;
   - Using sound science responsibly;
   - Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society;
   - Achieving a sustainable economy; and
   - Promoting good governance.

2.6 The first two of these principles are particularly relevant to biodiversity. Living within environmental limits means ensuring that natural resources needed to support life can be passed on unimpaired to future generations. Biodiversity is one of those key natural resources, and it is therefore vital that it is protected in order that the ability of future generations to live their lives successfully is not compromised.

2.7 The concept of “using sound science responsibly” is also important in relation to nature conservation and biodiversity. The relationships between different species and between species and their environment are often complex and not always well understood. In order that biodiversity is successfully protected and enhanced, decisions need to be made on strong scientific evidence wherever possible, and scientific uncertainty needs to be taken into account.

2.8 The council recognises the importance of biodiversity in contributing to the economic and social health of an area. It therefore believes that by working to conserve biodiversity, it is not simply fulfilling international and national obligations but is also improving the quality of life for Salford’s residents, now and in the future.
3 Salford’s Biodiversity Resources

Physical Characteristics of Salford

Topography

3.1 Topographically the city is formed of a ridge of higher land lying between a stretch of the River Irwell to the north east, and the low lying Chat Moss area to the south west. The ridge of high land (which nowhere reaches more than 115 m above sea level) extends from the north-western boundary of the city with Bolton / Wigan, eastwards for 6 -7 miles, before dropping down to meet the start of the lower reaches of the River Irwell [sections of which were developed to form the Manchester Ship Canal]. A narrow strip of higher land also runs northeast to southwest along the side of the Ship Canal.

Geology

3.2 Coal measures underlie the higher land, and are covered by deposits from the Ice Age. These glacial deposits provided the materials from which most of the soils were formed and on which the natural habitats of the area developed. In the low lying areas of land adjoining the lower reaches of the River Irwell [now the Manchester Ship Canal], where drainage was impeded following the Ice Age, substantial layers of peat were laid down which gradually developed into extensive peat bogs raised above the level of the surrounding land. Between the River Glaze and Worsley / Eccles, these peat bogs became known as Chat Moss (moss is the local name for lowland peat bog).

Landscape

3.3 Historically Salford itself developed adjacent to the Irwell, but outlying settlements such as Worsley, Irlam, Cadishead and Pendlebury gradually developed on the higher land, avoiding the lower land and the extensive peat bogs. Later however more development took place in the Irwell flood plain and as the mosslands were drained on Chat Moss. This development has led to an open landscape on Chat Moss of regular shaped fields in agricultural production, bounded by deep ditches and interspersed with blocks of mature woodland. In the more heavily degraded urban landscape, built development straddles key transport routes, but there is a narrow corridor of open grassland and pockets of semi natural habitats extending along the Irwell valley.

Land Use

3.4 Despite the extensive development of the higher land, the 2000 Phase 1 Habitat Survey estimated that of the 9,721 ha making up the total area of the city, some 4,130 ha [or 42.5%] was composed of open land and water. Of the open land in the city, 1,118 ha are covered by arable crops [largely on Chat Moss] and 681 ha by amenity grassland [largely within recreation grounds, parks and playing fields in the urban areas]. Of the open water 36 ha were composed of standing water such as reservoirs, lakes and ponds and 92 ha by running water, such as rivers and canals.
Auditing Biodiversity

3.5 The biodiversity assets of Salford have been identified from a number of sources, primarily:

- The Register of Sites of Biological Importance (managed by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) and updated on a regular basis);
- 1989 Phase 1 Habitat Survey of all open land and water in Salford;
- 2000 Phase 1 Habitat Survey of all open land and water in Salford;
- 2000 Greater Manchester Biodiversity Audit, which systematically reviewed the information available up to the year 2000;
- 2003 ecological appraisal of major sites considered for allocation through the UDP review process;
- 2005 Phase 1 Habitat Survey of all areas identified as Key Areas of Search for Wildlife Corridors in the UDP (Adopted June 2006); and
- Incidental records held by GMEU of where different types of species have been found in the past, often obtained from ecological organisations in the voluntary sector (e.g. The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside) or from specialist surveys undertaken to support development proposals.

Habitats

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

3.6 The Habitats Directive requires member states to designate a network of sites that will collectively ensure the maintenance or restoration of the natural habitats and species of EU interest at a favourable conservation status. The network of habitats is known as Natura 2000. The sites which make up this network contain habitats and / or species which are considered to be of importance within the EU. The sites are designated either as SPAs or as SACs. [See Appendix A for an explanation of SPAs and SACs].

3.7 At present, there are no internationally important nature conservation sites within Salford. However, the Astley and Bedford Mosses in Wigan, and the Risley and Holcroft Mosses in Warrington have all been designated as the Manchester Mosses, Special Area of Conservation. Development within Salford could potentially impact on the Astley and Bedford Mosses element of that SAC. [See Appendix B for a definition of the lowland raised bog habitat of which this SAC is composed].
**Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)**

3.8 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) (originally designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, and modified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) are of national importance and represent the country’s very best wildlife and geological sites. They are considered to be of interest because of their flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical characteristics, and may support many characteristic, rare or endangered species, habitats or natural features. The purpose of designating SSSIs is to safeguard them for the future as well as the present. All SPAs and SACs (see above two paragraphs) are also SSSIs. The Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has a Public Service Agreement Target of bringing 95% of all nationally important sites into a favourable condition by 2010.

3.9 At present, there are no SSSIs within Salford. However it is understood that English Nature is considering the designation of a central part of Botany Bay Wood as a SSSI. Botany Bay Wood is located on Chat Moss in Salford, and is the largest area of woodland in Greater Manchester. However, the potential designation as a SSSI relates to a very large heronry within the middle of the wood, rather than to the importance of the wood itself.

**UK Priority Habitats**

3.10 The UK Government has identified 42 habitats that are national priorities, for all of which there are national habitat action plans. A list of these national priorities, which are now known as ”Habitats of Principal Importance in England”, is given in Section 74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and in Annex C of the ODPM Circular 06/2005. These national priority habitats were identified in line with the requirements of the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora 1992 (Habitats Directive) as those habitats for which at least one of the following criteria apply:

- The UK has international obligations relating to the habitat;
- The habitat is at risk or in decline; and/or
- The habitat may be essential for helping to support species, which inhabit a wider range of habitats; and/or
- The habitat supports UK Priority Species

3.11 The UK Priority Habitats found in Salford are:

- Lowland raised bog (readily restorable);
- Lowland acid grassland
- Lowland heathland;
- Wet woodland; and
- Eutrophic standing water.

3.12 The broad distribution of these habitats in Salford is shown in Map 1. Other pockets of the habitats may also be present in the city. The definitions of the above habitat types (which are based on the National Vegetation Classifications), and their favoured conservation status, are set out in Appendix B. *It should be noted that in Salford the areas of acid grassland and heathland are not found separately but are in a mixed mosaic. Please also see Para 3.17 below.*
Lowland Raised Bog

3.13 It is estimated that there were originally 2,650 hectares of lowland raised bog within Chat Moss, in the south west of Salford and extending into Wigan (1992 English Nature report “Distribution and Status of Lowland Peat in the Mersey Basin Area”). Around 1,900 hectares of this has been drained and fertilised to create agricultural land. Of the 2,101 hectares (ha) of mosslands lying within the area shown on the UDP Proposals Map (Adopted June 2006), 267.6 hectares is made up of four peat extraction sites, 160.8 ha is covered by planted / self sown woodland and the remaining 1,672.6 ha is agricultural land.

3.14 It is the bare peat deposits within the peat extraction sites that are thought to offer the best opportunity for re-establishing lowland raised bog within an area where it was formerly very common. However, two of the sites (105.9 hectares at Little Woolden Moss, and 8.3 hectares at Cadishead Moss) have conditions attached to their planning permissions that require restoration to agriculture rather than to a nature conservation habitat, which with the right type and depth of peat, and an acidic water supply could allow restoration to lowland raised bog.

Local Priority Habitats

3.15 In order to ensure that actions to meet national targets are undertaken in an integrated manner, and are translated into effective action at the local level taking into account local distinctiveness and the values of local people, a series of Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) are being developed across the country.

3.16 Salford does not have its own LBAP, but instead falls within the area covered by the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (GMBAP). Individual GM action plans have been produced (in March 2003) for the following habitats occurring in Salford (See Map 2 for the distribution of these habitats):

- Lowland raised bog (degraded) / mosslands
- Lowland dry acid grassland
- Marsh / marshy grassland
- Unimproved neutral grassland
- Lowland broadleaved woodland
- Ponds and lodges
- Canals
- Urban managed greenspace

3.17 It should be noted that although the “titles” of some of the GM BAPs, are the same as those of the national priorities (e.g. lowland dry acid grassland), the “quality” of the areas of habitat referred to, are not necessarily equivalent to that of a “national” standard – there is a different definition for each. Phase 1 Habitat Surveys are used to identify the presence of local priority habitats. (Please see Appendix C for a definition of these habitats)
Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)

3.18 Local authorities have the power to acquire, declare and manage areas as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) (under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949). LNRs should be managed for the purpose of preserving flora, fauna or geological or physiographical features of special interest in the area, and / or of providing opportunities for the study of those features and the habitats of the flora and fauna. English Nature must be consulted prior to the declaration of an LNR.

3.19 There are three LNRs shown on the Proposals Map of the UDP (Adopted June 2006):

- Blackleach Country Park;
- Clifton Country Park; and
- The Cliff/Kersal Dale.

3.20 A further two LNRs (i.e. Worsley Woods and Kersal Moor) have also now been designated. All five sites are owned by the city council, and are focused on Sites of Biological Importance.

Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs)

3.21 Sites of Biological Importance are a local nature conservation designation, and are identified from survey work undertaken by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit. SBIs are given one of three grades based on their ecological value:

- Grade A = County Importance
- Grade B = District Importance
- Grade C = More Than Local Importance

3.22 Identification of a site as an SBI is based solely on the attributes of the site relating directly to its biological / ecological content, primarily its:

1. Exemplification of a habitat type;
2. Diversity of habitats / species;
3. Rarity of species present;
4. Naturalness of the site / substrate (i.e. underlying rock and soil type); and
5. Fragility.

3.23 33 SBIs are identified under Policy EN8 of the UDP (Adopted June 2006). Regular reviews by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) may identify additional sites. [See Appendix D for the number and grade of SBIs at December 2005].

Ancient Woodland, Other Natural Habitats and Landscape Features

3.24 Ancient Woodland is also recognised as a valuable biodiversity resource, both for the diversity of species it supports, and its longevity as woodland. Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation advises that planning permission should not be granted for any development that would result in the loss or deterioration of this habitat, unless the need for and benefits of the development in that location outweigh the loss of the woodland habitat. In Salford there is a small area of Ancient Woodland in Clifton Country Park, which is currently protected by its designation as the Oakwood, SBI. [See Map 1 for its location].
Salford’s Biodiversity Resources

3.25 Although the above sections and paragraphs on national and local priority habitats refer to a range of semi natural and man made habitats that are very important for biodiversity, it should be noted that a number of other additional habitats and landscape features are also of importance. Examples of additional semi natural habitats and features include scrub, tall ruderal vegetation, plantation woodland, ditches, rivers and hedgerows.

Wildlife Corridors and Stepping Stones

3.26 The Habitats Directive also recognises the importance of wildlife on sites that may not be covered by statutory designations. It therefore requires member states to encourage the management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna. These features are those that, because of their linear and continuous structure or their function as "stepping-stones", are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species. Examples include rivers and their adjoining banks, ponds, and small woods.

3.27 The UDP Proposals Map (Adopted June 2006) identifies a series of Key Areas of Search for Wildlife Corridors, representing the main open land and water corridors that extend through the built up area and, where possible, link to the countryside beyond. They are considered to have the greatest potential to support the movement, feeding and reproduction of flora and fauna, and to function as wildlife corridors. However, “islands” and “stepping stones” of open land and water can also be beneficial to more mobile species such as birds, bats and flying insects, and these are also afforded protection by UDP (Adopted June 2006) Policy EN9.

Species

Wild Animals Protected by Legislation

3.28 The Habitats Directive, and associated Regulations provide protection to a range of animals (known as European Protected Species, and listed in Annex IV (a) of the Directive, Schedule 2 of the Regulations and Annex A, Table 2, column EPS, of the ODPM Circular 06/2005). It is an offence to deliberately kill or disturb such animals, or to destroy their eggs, without derogation from the provisions of the Regulations (i.e. without specific permission in accordance with the Regulations). It is also an offence to deliberately kill, disturb or destroy the eggs of such an animal. It is also an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such animals, without specific permission.

3.29 Certain wild animals (as listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended, and Annex A, Table 2, of ODPM Circular 06/2005) are protected from the following except in the same limited authorized circumstances:

- Being intentionally killed or injured;
- Having their places of shelter or protection intentionally damaged, destroyed, or obstructed, except in limited authorized circumstances relating to research, scientific purposes and re-introductions; and
- Intentional disturbance whilst they occupy their places of shelter.

3.30 Badgers are specifically protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.
The following wild animal species (excluding birds), protected by European and/or national legislation, are understood, to have occurred in Salford in the past, and most are still likely to be present:

**Mammals**

- Water vole (also a national priority species)
- Pipistrelle bat (also a national priority species)
- Daubenton’s bat (also a national priority species)
- Noctule bat (also a national priority species)
- Brown long-eared bat (also a national priority species)
- Whiskered bat (also a national priority species)
- Badger

**Amphibians / Reptiles**

- Great crested newt (also a national priority species)

Although no otters have been recorded recently in Salford, it is hoped that with continuing water quality and fisheries improvements on the River Irwell’s tributaries, and the expansion of otter populations in the surrounding areas, they may occur naturally once again.

**Wild Birds Protected by Legislation**

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended to incorporate the provisions of the EU Directives on the Conservation of Wild Birds and Habitats) restricts the unauthorised killing, or destruction of the nests and eggs, of all wild birds. Some species (as listed in Schedule 1 of the Act, and Annex A, Table 1, of ODPM Circular 06/2005) are also protected (except in limited circumstances relating to research, ringing and re-introductions) when they are constructing or near a nest containing eggs or young. Young birds, which are still dependant on their parents for feeding, are also protected.

The following wild bird species, protected by European and / or national legislation, are understood to have occurred in Salford in the past, and most (excluding nightjar) are still likely to be present:

- Little ringed plover
- Kingfisher
- Barn owl
- Peregrine
- Hobby
- Nightjar
- Quail
- Black Redstart
- Green Sandpiper
- Hen Harrier

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has a Public Service Agreement Target of reversing the long term decline in the number of farmland birds (such as Barn Owl) by 2020, as measured annually against underlying trends.
Salford’s Biodiversity Resources

**Wild Plants Protected by Legislation**

3.36 Certain wild plants (as listed in Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended, and Annex A, Table 3 of ODPM Circular 06/2005) are protected from being intentionally uprooted or destroyed by any unauthorised person. Other wild plants are protected from being uprooted by an unauthorised person.

3.37 The only two protected wild plant species known to exist in Salford are the Bluebell and Floating Water Plantain.

**Wild Animals and Plants of UK Priority**

3.38 The Government has identified 391 species that are national priorities. There are 9 national “grouped” action plans for these species, which have common policies, actions and targets for similar species. These national priority species (now referred to as “Species of Principal Importance in England” in both Section 74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and in Annex C, of the ODPM Circular 06/2005) were identified as those for which at least one of the following criteria apply:

- The numbers or range of a species have declined substantially in recent years;
- The species are endemic [i.e. found only in small restricted areas];
- The species are under a high degree of international threat; and / or
- The species are protected either by the EU Birds Directive, and / or the EU Habitats Directive.

3.39 According to the GMEU the national priority species likely to occur in Salford are:

**Mammals**

- Water vole (also a protected species)
- Brown hare
- Pipistrelle bat (also a protected species)
- Daubenton’s bat (also a protected species)
- Noctule bat (also a protected species)
- Brown long-eared bat (also a protected species)
- Whiskered bat (also a protected species)

**Amphibians**

- Great crested newt (also a protected species)

**Birds**

- Bullfinch
- Skylark
- Long eared owl
- Linnet
- Reed bunting
- Corn bunting
- Grey partridge
- Spotted flycatcher
- Tree Sparrow
- Song thrush

**Plants**

- Floating water plantain (also a protected species)
- Ribbon leaved water plantain
- Grasswrack pondweed

For farmland birds such as Corn Bunting, the DEFRA target referred to in Para 3.35 above also applies.

**Wild Animals and Plants of Local Priority**

3.40 The Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (March 2003) sets out individual action plans for the following species, which are known to have occurred in Salford in the past, and most are still likely to present:

- Bats
- Great crested newts
- Water voles
- Brown hare
- Song thrush
- Floating water plantain

**Red, Amber and Green Lists of Birds**

3.41 In addition to those bird species specifically protected by legislation, the EU Wild Birds Directive encouraged research to be undertaken as a basis for the protection of all EU wild birds. In the UK, three lists have been compiled by English Nature, (and other national nature conservation organisations), on the population status of wild birds. Seven quantitative criteria have been used to assess the population status of each species. These are:

- Global conservation status
- Recent decline
- Historical decline
- European conservation status
- Rare breeders
- Localised species
- International importance

3.42 The Red List (40 species) includes those species that are Globally Threatened; those whose population range has declined rapidly in recent years; and those that have declined historically and not shown a substantial recent recovery. *Examples of Red Listed birds, which occur in Salford, are Corn Bunting, Yellowhammer, Song Thrush, Starling, House Sparrow and Bullfinch.*
The Amber List (121 species) covers those species with an unfavourable conservation status in Europe; those whose range has declined moderately in recent years; those whose population has declined historically but made a substantial recent recovery; rare breeders; and those with internationally important or localised populations. *(Examples of Amber Listed birds, which occur in Salford, are Yellow Wagtail, Mute Swan and Pochard)*. All other species (86) are green listed.

*(It is worth noting that no other local authority in Greater Manchester has the numbers of Corn Bunting and Yellow Wagtails that occur in Salford).*

**Presence of Other Species**

The above lists of protected and priority species, and red / amber, listed birds found within Salford were obtained from the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit and "The Population Status of Birds in the UK" published by a range of nature conservation organisations. Appendix E indicates the type of landscape features and habitats potentially supporting protected species.

Difficulties associated with collecting information on the presence of particular species (especially relating to insects which are generally poorly recorded) within the city means that the lists in the text above, and in the appendices should not be taken as definitive, and individual ecological assessments may identify the presence of other protected and priority species.
4 Policy Context

International Requirements

4.1 In 1992, the UK Government signed the Convention on Biological Diversity at the Rio Earth Summit. This requires the government to “develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, or adapt for this purpose existing strategies, plans and programmes”.

4.2 The European Union Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna (known as the Habitats Directive 1992) requires member states, including the UK, to help ensure that biodiversity resources (i.e. natural habitats and wild species) within the European Union are respected and used in a sustainable way so that they remain unimpaired and available for future generations.

Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

4.3 PPS9 sets out six key principles that will help to ensure the impacts of potential development on biodiversity features are fully considered as part of the planning process:

- Policies and planning decisions should be based on up to date information about the environmental characteristics of an area, including a review of the potential to sustain and enhance its nature conservation resources;
- Policies and planning decisions should seek to maintain, enhance, restore or add to biodiversity, with appropriate weight being attached to sites of international, national and local importance;
- Development plan policies should take a strategic approach to the conservation, enhancement and restoration of nature conservation site, areas and features, both individually and in combination;
- Policies should promote opportunities for incorporating biodiversity features within the design of development;
- Development proposals where the principal objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be permitted; and
- Planning decisions should prevent significant harm to biodiversity, and if this is not possible, by locating the development elsewhere, then adequate mitigation / compensation measures should be provided, otherwise the development should be refused.

4.4 PPS9 also recommends that local authorities identify areas for the restoration or creation of priority habitats, and support this restoration / creation through appropriate policies.

Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (RSS13)

4.5 Policy ER5 (Biodiversity and Nature Conservation) of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (RSS13) affords the strongest level of protection to sites with an international or national conservation designation, and statutory species. However, it also seeks to ensure that there is no net loss in the value of other biodiversity resources in the region.
**Policy Context**

**4.6** It promotes the restoration and re-establishment of habitats and species populations in accordance with the targets set out in the UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans. Appendix 1 of RSS13 is clear that habitat maintenance targets take precedence over targets for restoration and expansion. This is because habitat creation is often very difficult and sometimes impossible – at least within a reasonable timescale.

**4.7** RSS13 Appendix 1 sets out the Habitat Restoration and Habitat Expansion targets for those national priority habitats found in the northwest. It also indicates those Natural Areas (as identified by English Nature) in which the priority habitats are found. Salford lies within the Urban Mersey Basin (Natural Area 26).

*(RSS13 is under review. For further information visit the website for the North West Regional Assembly).*

**The Salford UDP (Adopted June 2006)**

**4.8** Many of the Salford UDP (Adopted June 2006) policies support nature conservation objectives or have links to biodiversity issues. However, the SPD specifically supplements the following policies:

- ST13 Natural Environmental Assets
- DES9 Landscaping
- EN6 Nature Conservation Sites of International Importance
- EN7 Nature Conservation Sites of National Importance
- EN8 Nature Conservation Sites of Local Importance
- EN9 Wildlife Corridors
- EN10 Protection of Species
- EN11 Mosslands

**4.9** The table below sets out how those policies relate to some of the biodiversity features highlighted above in Section 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biodiversity Feature</th>
<th>Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Areas of Conservation</td>
<td>EN6 Nature Conservation Sites of International Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sites of Special Scientific Interest</td>
<td>EN7 Nature Conservation Sites of National Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Protected Species</td>
<td>EN10 Protection of Species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationally Protected Species</td>
<td>EN10 Protection of Species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK Priority Habitats</td>
<td>EN8 Nature Conservation Sites of Local Importance EN11 Mosslands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**i** Please note that from October 2006, English Nature, the Countryside Agency and the agricultural / environmental activities of the Rural Development Service are being merged to form a new organisation called “Natural England”
In addition to the above policies specifically relating to nature conservation and biodiversity, the UDP (Adopted June 2006) also has a number of policies, whose objectives indicate opportunities to “enhance” and make new provision for wildlife. A list of these policies is indicated in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biodiversity Feature</th>
<th>Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater Manchester Priority Habitats</td>
<td>EN8 Nature Conservation Sites of Local Importance \</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EN11 Mosslands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locally designated sites (Sites of Biological Importance)</td>
<td>EN8 Nature Conservation Sites of Local Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Nature Reserves</td>
<td>EN8 Nature Conservation Sites of Local Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other landscape features of major importance for wild flora and fauna</td>
<td>EN9 Wildlife Corridors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Opportunities for improving biodiversity**

- DES1 Respecting Context
- DES3 Design of Public Space
- DES6 Waterside Development
- EN2 Worsley Greenway
- EN5 Irwell Valley
- EN12 Important Landscape Features
- EN13 Protected Trees
- EN14 Derelict, Underused and Neglected Land
- EN23 Environmental Improvement Corridors
- CH7 Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal
- R1 Provision of Recreational Land and Facilities
- R3 Regional Park
- R4 Key Recreation Areas
- R6 New and Improved Recreation Land and Facilities
- DEV5 Planning Conditions and Obligations
- W1 Waste Management
- M2 Mineral Development
5 Issues and Objectives

Key Issues

5.1 Biodiversity resources are under constant pressure from human activity, and without specific consideration in decision-making they may suffer significant decline. New developments can result in damage to or the loss of habitats, both permanent and temporary. Mitigation may be made through the final form of development, for example through the incorporation of significant areas of open space and landscaping, but the construction phase may still result in major adverse impacts on biodiversity.

5.2 The fragmentation of habitats as a result of development activity is a problem both locally and worldwide. It impedes the movement of species both within areas of semi natural habitat, and with other areas. Generally, smaller parcels of habitat tend to be less robust and are consequently more vulnerable to adverse change than large ones. Climate change could increase this problem if existing areas of habitat shrink in size.

5.3 It is important to consider the indirect as well as the direct impacts of development activity on biodiversity. An example of an indirect impact may arise where a housing development is sited close to a woodland or other semi natural habitat, which may be damaged as a result of increased public pressure - for example through trampling on vegetation, dumping of garden refuse, predation of birds and animals by household pets, and the accidental spread of non native / invasive species.

5.4 There are a number of ways in which non native / invasive species can be detrimental, these include: habitat alteration / degradation; competition for resources between native and non native species; genetic pollution of native with non native; direct predation and the spread of disease. It would be unrealistic to expect every development proposal to be assessed in terms of its likely impact arising from any non native species that are intentionally proposed within it [e.g. as part of landscaping schemes], or which may accidentally arise from it. However, there should be a general awareness of these potential issues.

5.5 Activities that do not require planning permission, such as some types of land management, can also have significant impacts on biodiversity. In Salford, this is particularly the case on Chat Moss, where past agricultural activities such as the installation of drainage pipes, the construction of ditches and the application of fertilizer, have contributed to the loss of lowland raised bog habitat. In the future, it is understood that when applying for funding under the new Environmental Stewardship scheme [produced by Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs] to make substantial changes to uncultivated and semi natural areas, farmers and landowners will need to take account of impacts on biodiversity features. As well as adverse effects arising as a result of damaging land management measures, a lack of management can also be harmful to biodiversity.

5.6 As well as resulting in damage to habitats, development can offer opportunities for habitat enhancement [e.g. control of invasive species] and creation that would otherwise be difficult to achieve. Therefore, there is a need to recognise such opportunities. However, the extent to which developers are required to provide enhancement and re-creation needs to be commensurate with the policy guidance and the type, scale and impact of the proposed development, and the status of any biodiversity features concerned.
Clearly, as discussed above, an important issue for the city is the need to comply with national and international requirements and obligations relating to the protection of particular habitats and species, and to contribute to achieving agreed targets. It will also be important to support key strategies, particularly the various biodiversity action plans, to maximise the nature conservation benefits.

**SPD Objectives**

In the light of these issues, and the existing legislative and policy context, the following objectives have been identified for the SPD:

- To enhance the biodiversity and nature conservation interest of Salford;
- To support the maintenance, restoration, expansion and management of designated sites and priority habitats;
- To safeguard both protected and priority species;
- To protect and improve wildlife corridors and stepping stones as a means of enhancing the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species; and
- To promote where appropriate, biodiversity as a recreational and educational asset.
6 SPD Policies

Policy NCB 1

MAINTAINING AND ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY

Development proposals should seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity and the nature conservation interest of sites. Where possible and practicable, they should incorporate new wildlife habitat, landscaping and built features that attract wildlife.

Where significant negative impacts of development on biodiversity cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated, appropriate compensatory provision should be provided. Any compensatory provision should be made on or as near as practicable to the development site.

Planning conditions will be used to ensure that any avoidance and / or mitigation measures identified in ecological appraisals (see Policy NCB 2) are implemented, whilst legal agreements will be used to ensure management measures proposed as part of any habitat creation, landscaping (see Policy NCB 3) and / or compensatory provision are implemented.

Reasoned Justification

6.1 In accordance with Government guidance in Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (PPS9), and Policy ER5 of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (RSS13), the overall value of biodiversity resources should be maintained and enhanced wherever possible. Where new development would impact on existing biodiversity resources, this should normally be through avoidance or mitigation of harm, but may need to be in the form of compensatory provision in the absence of reasonable alternatives.

6.2 The types of mitigation measures that could be used will depend on the situation, but potentially include:

- Timing of construction activities (e.g. to avoid bird nesting season which is usually March to July inclusive);
- Avoidance of key sites, and locations within sites;
- Avoidance of development activities that could change key ecological processes;
- Retention of existing natural features within the development footprint (through sensitive design and where appropriate by retention / provision of a buffer strip around these features);
- Provision for appropriate public access and interpretation of biodiversity features on the site;
- Prevention of further habitat fragmentation and species isolation (e.g. by seeking to link natural features both within the site, and with similar features outside the site, and provision of resources to prepare and implement a management scheme for the site);
- Avoidance of a reduction in the capacity of a site or area to support the quality, abundance, distribution or diversity of important habitats and species (e.g. could include robust fencing to keep out damaging activities such as off road motorcycling, and surfaced footpaths to prevent more widespread trampling of ground flora in a wood); and / or
- Restoration of habitats and species
6.3 Where mitigation measures cannot resolve any significant adverse effects on habitats and species in an appropriate manner, the use of compensatory measures (such as translocation) will only be considered as a last resort, if the habitat(s) and / or species in question, cannot be maintained in their present location. This is because of the great difficulties in re-creating good quality habitats in new locations within reasonable timescales. The sites to which any habitat(s) and / or species are moved, should not be at the expense of any semi natural habitat(s) and / or species already in that location(s).

6.4 If compensatory provision is to be made, then this should ideally be on the site, or near to it, in order to maintain the biodiversity resources of the local area. The scale and type of compensation should be commensurate with the ecological importance of the site affected, and the scale of loss or damage to any habitats and species within it. Habitat restoration / expansion will often be the preferred form of compensatory provision, although other potential forms of compensation will include:

- Provision of artificial features (e.g. bird and bat boxes);
- Provision of alternative public access and interpretation;
- Provision and management of alternative wildlife corridors and stepping stones, where there would be habitat fragmentation or species isolation;
- Creation of buffer strips around key features;
- Where appropriate the control of non native and / or invasive species.

6.5 In addition to avoiding, mitigating and compensating for impacts on existing biodiversity resources, it is thought that there are also opportunities within many development proposals to create new wildlife resources within the design of any new development. These could range from the provision of bird and bat boxes, climbing plants on walls, green roofs, decanalisation / restoration of streams and rivers and opening up of culverts, and incorporation of ponds / swales.

6.6 Planning conditions and obligations will be used to ensure that any measures identified are fully resourced and implemented. This may include the preparation and implementation of a management plan to secure the future of any habitats created or retained, for example tackling issues such as plant failure, unauthorised public access and future monitoring to establish appropriate remedial measures that may be necessary. The management of both national and local priority habitats should aim for a “favourable conservation” status as expressed in Appendices B and C of this SPD.

6.7 This policy supplements Policies ST13, EN6, EN7, EN8, EN9, EN10 and EN11 of the UDP (Adopted June 2006).
Policy NCB 2

ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

An ecological appraisal must accompany any planning application for development that could potentially have a detrimental impact, either directly or indirectly, on:

- Any designated nature conservation site (international, national, or local);
- A locally significant area of national and/or local priority habitat; or
- A protected or priority species.

All ecological appraisals must be undertaken by an appropriately qualified, and experienced ecology consultant. They should include:

- An assessment of the local context, and physical and biodiversity features on the site (including topography; landscape features; presence of non native/invasive species; type, location, extent, condition and conservation status of habitats; and, if appropriate, type, and population size of protected and priority species that may be present);
- An explanation of the likely impacts (including in terms of type, timing, source, duration, likelihood, scale and significance of impacts) of the development proposal on each of the key biodiversity features on the site and on any relevant adjacent biodiversity features;
- Details of how it is intended to avoid any adverse impacts, or, where this is not practicable, to minimise those adverse impacts as far as possible;
- An assessment of the significance of any residual impacts that cannot be mitigated, and the identification of compensatory provision to offset them; and
- An assessment of the overall impact of the development, and associated mitigation and compensatory provision, on biodiversity and nature conservation interest.

English Nature or Natural England (as appropriate) will be consulted on any applications that could either directly or indirectly affect internationally or nationally important sites, and/or species.

Reasoned Justification

6.8 If biodiversity is to be successfully protected and enhanced then it is essential that the appropriate information on the potential ecological impacts of development is available for those determining planning applications. It is important that an ecological appraisal is undertaken at the earliest possible stage of the development process. This will allow ecological constraints to influence and be integrated into the design of development from the start, which can save developers the costs of redesigning schemes later on as well as resulting in better nature conservation outcomes.

6.9 Designated sites include Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Sites of Biological Importance, and Local Nature Reserves. The key locations of the national priority habitats in Salford are shown on Map 1, while the location of local priority habitats are shown on Map 2.

Please note that from October 2006, English Nature, the Countryside Agency and the agricultural/environmental activities of the Rural Development Service are being merged to form a new organisation called “Natural England”
6.10 The degree of detail required in any ecological appraisal undertaken will depend on the scale of the development proposed, the conservation status of both the site affected and the habitats and species on it.

6.11 Appraisals will need to take account not only of biodiversity features on the site itself, but also in the adjoining area. In addition they need to address any issues arising during the construction phase of the development, as well as from its completed form.

6.12 Please see Policy NCB 1 for requirements concerning planning conditions and legal agreements in relation to mitigation and compensatory measures.

6.13 This policy supplements Policies ST13, EN6, EN7, EN8, EN9, EN10 and EN11 of the UDP (Adopted June 2006).

Policy NCB 3

PROVISION OF HABITATS AND LANDSCAPING

Where practicable and appropriate to the location, habitat creation / re-creation should focus on the provision of the following national priority habitats:

- Lowland acid grassland;
- Lowland heathland;
- Lowland raised bog;
- Wet woodland; and
- Eutrophic standing water.

Where the aforementioned national priority habitats are not considered appropriate to the location, then other local priority or semi natural habitats should be provided.

New and re-created habitats should be physically linked to existing areas of habitat wherever practicable, particularly within the Key Areas of Search for Wildlife Corridors.

Landscaping schemes should be appropriate to the locality. Where practicable they should incorporate locally native species, and priority and semi natural habitats, except where the design benefits of alternative species are considered to outweigh potential biodiversity benefits. In addition, they should where practicable be integrated with neighbouring habitats and Key Areas of Search for Wildlife Corridors.

Reasoned Justification

6.14 In order to maximise the nature conservation benefits for the city, and its contribution to national and international priorities, habitat creation should normally focus on the national priority habitats for Salford that are set out in the policy. The location and site context, including the surrounding habitats, will mean that such national priority habitats are not always appropriate, and in these circumstances other local or semi-natural habitats should be considered.

6.15 The local priority habitats in Salford (excluding canals and lodges, the provision of which would not be sought) are:
6.16 This approach applies to compensatory provision, landscaping, and other habitat creation / re-creation associated with new development, but is also appropriate for works not requiring planning permission or related to new development.

6.17 The means of habitat creation / re-creation should be based on best available guidance and are likely to include measures such as:

- Removal of existing vegetation and – if necessary- nutrient rich top soil
- Preparation of ground / soil
- Provision of appropriate drainage
- Cultivation and introduction of new plant material

6.18 In order to maximise the benefits of habitat creation / re-creation, the habitats should be linked to existing habitats wherever possible. This will help to facilitate the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species, supporting the city’s nature conservation interest. This approach is particularly important within the Areas of Search for Wildlife Corridors identified on the UDP (Adopted June 2006) Proposals Map, given their potential strategic significance.

6.19 Landscaping schemes associated with new developments have the potential collectively to make a major contribution to biodiversity in the city, providing stepping-stones and corridors for flora and fauna. The use of locally native plants, and for larger schemes semi-natural habitats, will assist in this. The appropriate type of native plants will depend on the location and surrounding habitats. The use of exotic species may be appropriate if integral to the design of a development, but there will often still be opportunities to utilise native species even within formal designs.

6.20 Please see Policy NCB 1 for requirements concerning planning conditions and legal agreements in relation to mitigation and compensatory measures.

6.21 This policy supplements Policies ST13, DES9, EN6, EN7, EN8, EN9, EN10 and EN11 of the UDP (Adopted June 2006).
LOWLAND RAISED BOG RESTORATION

The Mossland Heartland will be the priority for the restoration of lowland raised bog habitat within Salford.

Outside the Mossland Heartland, within the area covered by UDP (Adopted June 2006) Policy EN11, the potential for the restoration of sites to a lowland raised bog habitat will be identified having regard to the following criteria:

- Their topography;
- The type, extent and status of their existing vegetation cover;
- The degree to which they have been cultivated in the past; and
- Their proximity to other potential restoration sites.

The techniques used for the restoration of lowland raised bog should take account of the latest guidance from English Nature, and will include the:

- Removal of existing vegetation and nutrient rich surface layers (if appropriate and necessary);
- Provision of an acidic water supply;
- Retention of a sufficient depth of ombrotrophic peat in situ over humified peat;
- Provision of low bunds constructed with ombrotrophic peat to create shallow lagoons;
- Blocking of key ditches;
- Management of the water table to ensure year round water at, or close to the ground surface and;
- Introduction of appropriate plant materials.

Reasoned Justification

6.22 English Nature which is the lead agency for wetland habitats in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, has identified Chat Moss as being an important focus for lowland raised bog restoration. Within Salford, the UDP (Adopted June 2006) identifies a Mossland Heartland where lowland raised bog restoration will be particularly concentrated. However, there may be opportunities for restoration elsewhere on Chat Moss, particularly within the peat extraction sites but also potentially on some restricted areas of the existing agricultural land which have not been subject to very intensive agricultural use.

6.23 The topography of sites will be an important factor in terms of whether they are appropriate or capable of restoration. The best sites for the construction of bunds and water holding lagoons are those that are relatively flat. However, it may be possible to overcome some changes in level via the construction of a series of stepped lagoons.
6.24 As far as possible, any restoration site should link to other intended bog restoration sites, in order to maximise the viability of restored areas and the opportunities for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species. However, the restoration of isolated sites may still be advantageous, particularly if there are longer-term prospects of neighbouring sites being restored as well.

6.25 English Nature has been developing restoration techniques over a number of years, and has produced or contributed to several publications providing guidance on them. Early techniques simply involved the blocking of ditches to raise water levels, but the latest techniques also involve construction of low bunds using ombrotrophic peat to create shallow lagoons. Where land has been used for agriculture, it may be necessary to remove the top layers of peat that have been drained, limed, fertilized and sown with seed, before rewetting the remaining underlying peat deposits.

6.26 The necessary conditions for restoration will vary from site to site, but will require provision of an acidic water supply, fed directly by rainfall and without enrichment by nutrients from other sources, such as from mineral deposits underlying the peat or from adjoining agricultural land. Wherever possible a minimum depth of at least 0.5 metres of ombrotrophic peat should be retained in order to maximise the chances of re-establishing what is a particularly sensitive habitat within reasonable timescales, thereby supporting national biodiversity targets.

6.27 This policy supplements Policy EN11 of the UDP [ Adopted 2006].
7 Implementation

Planning Decisions

7.1 The development control process will be the primary way in which the SPD is implemented. It will inform decisions regarding new developments and the assessment of their potential impacts on biodiversity, as well as informing any required mitigation or compensatory measures that may be secured through planning conditions or planning obligations. The SPD does not have the status of the development plan (for the purposes of Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004), but will be an important material consideration in determining planning applications.

Scheme Design

7.2 Given its role in the development control process, the SPD should also be used by developers to inform the design of their development and landscaping schemes prior to the submission of planning applications. This will help to reduce costs for developers, by minimising the need for scheme amendments, and will also help to improve design quality by ensuring that developments respond to their context in terms of nature conservation assets. Developers are encouraged to have regard to the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Habitat and Species Action Plans, and to make links with these wherever possible.

Comprehensive Regeneration Activity

7.3 Major regeneration initiatives such as the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder will provide opportunities for a comprehensive approach to be taken to the enhancement of some of the city’s neighbourhoods, particularly within Central Salford. Given the scale of change and development envisaged, they will have a potentially major impact on biodiversity resources within the city and its individual neighbourhoods. However, that scale of change also offers the potential to plan more proactively to enhance biodiversity, for example through the location and design of greenspaces.

7.4 It will therefore be essential for all major regeneration initiatives to take full account of this SPD, and to integrate biodiversity considerations into their project development from the start, for example through Area Action Plans, masterplans, and other strategies. This will help to ensure that those initiatives are truly sustainable.
Partnership Working

7.5 It is anticipated that Salford’s various partners will have regard to this SPD, and will align their own plans and strategies with it wherever possible. In 2005 a number of environmental bodies in Greater Manchester (including the Countryside Agency, English Nature, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Northwest Regional Assembly, Northwest Development Agency, Environment Agency and Community Forests Northwest and several local authorities) have contributed to the preparation of a prospectus by the TEP consultancy called “Green Infrastructure for the Liverpool and Manchester City Regions”. Green Infrastructure is defined as the physical environment within and between cities, towns and villages, and includes the network of open spaces, waterways, green corridors, gardens, woodlands and street trees. The prospectus sets the context and identifies the priorities for improving the delivery of Green Infrastructure, the quality and accessibility of which is seen as a fundamental backdrop of social progress and economic growth in the northwest. Biodiversity is seen as a key component of Green Infrastructure.

7.6 At a more local level English Nature is keen to undertake bog restoration trials on agricultural land, and the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Officer wants to develop a Greater Manchester wide approach to implementing the GM Mosslands Action Plan. Preparation of this SPD, which includes identification of areas of local priority habitats, followed by policies which seek to protect, and where practicable, to extend them, is also seen as fulfilling some of the basic requirements of all of the GM Habitat Action Plans.

Red Rose Forest

7.7 Red Rose Forest, part of the Community Forests Northwest, is a strategic partnership involving the Countryside Agency, the Forestry Commission, the Metropolitan Boroughs of Bolton, Bury, Trafford and Wigan, and the cities of Manchester and Salford. It delivers a wide range of projects aimed at helping to improve people’s lives and promoting greener, healthier and more prosperous areas. Activities include the provision of urban woodlands, neighbourhood greening, and other environmental improvements.

7.8 The original Red Rose Forest Plan [August 1994] included a number of wildlife policies aimed at promoting the creation of new wildlife habitats, the management of existing wildlife sites, and the development of a network of wildlife corridors. A supplementary review of the plan in 2000 reiterated the policy of creating new habitats, and indicated that this would be “a major focus of Forest development work”. It also said that new woodland planting should not be at the expense of other important biodiversity resources. Red Rose Forest is therefore a potentially important delivery mechanism for this SPD.

City Council Activity

7.9 In addition to its role as the local planning authority and coordinator of regeneration activity, the city council will also assist in the delivery of the greenspace strategy through its other activities, for example through the way its own land is managed. Indeed the Environment Directorate has already designated a number of its own sites as Local Nature Reserves [see Para 3.3.13 above]. In addition, the council is also in discussion with the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside with a view to securing appropriate management of a mossland site, which the council leases from a peat extractor.
**Greenspace Strategy SPD**

7.10 The Greenspace Strategy SPD sets out a series of standards for the provision of different types of greenspace within Salford. Two of those standards relate to the provision of accessible strategic and local semi-natural greenspaces, and by achieving those standards the SPD will also help to deliver the biodiversity objectives within the Nature Conservation and Biodiversity SPD.

**Discussions with Landowners**

7.11 The SPD provides a framework for all landowners to make decisions regarding their sites. The city council will engage with landowners to encourage them to manage their sites in such a way as to support the biodiversity objectives within this SPD, for example through the maintenance and expansion of priority habitats. There are two peat extraction sites capable of restoration to lowland raised bog but where the planning permission only requires restoration to agricultural use. Discussions with landowners will continue on these sites in an effort to maximise the nature conservation benefits of the restoration schemes.
8 Monitoring and Review

Monitoring

8.1 The effectiveness of this SPD will be reported each year in Salford’s Annual Monitoring Report. This will detail performance against the SPD’s indicators, and will identify whether there have been any problems in implementing the policies of the SPD.

8.2 The following indicators will be used to assess the effectiveness of the SPD, and they are linked directly to the standards in the policies above:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Indicators for Nature Conservation and Biodiversity SPD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Annual number, grade and extent of Sites of Biological Importance (end December)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Annual Area of each of the following national priority habitats (end December):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lowland raised bog (readily restorable);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lowland dry acid grassland / lowland heathland mosaic;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lowland heathland;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wet woodland; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eutrophic standing water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review

8.3 The assessment of SPD performance within the Annual Monitoring Report will help to identify if there is a need for the SPD to be reviewed, both in terms of whether the standards in the SPD remain relevant and whether the policies are helping to achieve those standards in an effective manner.

8.4 Given that the Phase 1 Habitat Survey undertaken in 2005 only covered the Key Areas of Search for Wildlife Corridors (as shown on the UDP Proposals Map [Adopted June 2006]), it is thought that a full survey across the city should be undertaken every 5 years, in order to ensure the use of as accurate information as possible.
9 Glossary

9.1 The following definitions should be used in relation to the terms in this SPD and the UDP (Adopted June 2006). They are based on those in “Developing Naturally” (Oxford 2000 for the Association of Local Government Ecologists) and the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (RSS13).

Maintenance

9.2 Maintenance relates to both the “extent” and “quality” of a habitat. In terms of “extent” the aim is to ensure no further loss of the habitat, and in terms of “quality” it is to retain the existing quality of those areas in good condition, and to arrest any undesirable change.

Restoration

9.3 Restoration is where the aim is to raise the conservation status of a habitat from a relatively poor level to a more favourable state. The UK Biodiversity Group has provided definitions of the “favourable conservation status” of the different types of priority habitat, and these are given in Appendices B and C. In the UDP (Adopted June 2006) nature conservation policies, the term “enhancement” should be seen as equivalent to “restoration”.

Expansion

9.4 Expansion of an existing area of habitat would involve the “creation” of a new area of the habitat in question. The expansion could either be immediately alongside existing areas, or on entirely new sites. This creation would involve “the construction of communities of native species of wildlife conservation value on areas of land with no significant ecological interest”.

Mitigation

9.5 Mitigation is action “used to moderate the effects of a degrading action” on the biodiversity feature in question.
Distribution of UK Priority Habitats & Ancient Woodland in Salford

Legend
- Salford Boundary
- Wet Woodland
- Eutrophic Standings Waters
- Lowland Raised Bog (Readily Restorable)
- Lowland Dry Acid Grassland Lowland Heathland
- Ancient Woodland
Legend

- Salford Boundary
- Lowland Broadleaved Woodland
- Acid Grassland
- Unimproved Neutral Grassland
- Marshy Grassland
- Canals
- Ponds and Lodges outside the Wildlife Corridor
- Ponds and Lodges inside the Wildlife Corridor
- Mossland (see Figure 1 - Lowland Raised Bog)
Appendix A An Explanation of Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation

Special Protection Areas

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) were first identified under the EU Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Directive 79/409/EEC) as a means of protecting the habitats of those naturally occurring wild birds in the EU listed in Annex I (175 species) of the Directive. These birds were those in danger of extinction, vulnerable to specific changes in their habitat, considered to be rare, and/or requiring particular attention because of the specific nature of their habitat. It was also a means of protecting regularly occurring migratory bird species bearing in mind their need for the protection of their breeding, moulting and staging posts along migratory routes. Following designation of such sites the government is required to take appropriate steps to avoid deterioration of the habitats within the protected sites, or significant disturbance to the birds (and their eggs and nests) using the habitats. The requirements of this Directive have largely but not entirely been replaced by the EU Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Directive 92/43/EEC).

Special Areas of Conservation

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) were identified under the EU Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Directive 92/43/EEC) (Habitats Directive) as a means of ensuring the protection of Priority Habitats (listed in Annex I) and Priority Species (listed in Annex II). This designation should enable the natural habitat types and the relevant species’ habitats to be maintained, or where appropriate, restored at a favourable conservation status (see Appendices B and C for definition of this status) in their natural range.

Collectively the SPAs and the SACs form the Natura 2000, which is a European wide ecological framework.
Appendix B Definitions for UK Priority Habitats in Salford and Favourable Conservation Status

Lowland Raised Bog (including readily restorable)

Definition [from UK Lowland Raised Bog Action Plan]

Lowland raised bogs are peatland ecosystems, which develop primarily, but not exclusively, in lowland areas such as along river floodplains and in topographic depressions. In such locations drainage may be impeded and the resultant water logging provides anaerobic conditions, which slow down the decomposition of plant material, which in turn leads to the accumulation of peat. Continued peat accumulation leads to the elevation of the bog surface above local groundwater levels to form a gently curving dome from which the term "raised" is derived. The thickness of the peat mantle varies considerably but can exceed 12 metres.

The EU Habitats Directive Annex 1 affords priority habitat status to 2 categories of bogs as follows:

- Areas of active lowland raised bog [i.e. areas which still support a significant area of bog vegetation which is normally peat forming, as well as those where active formation is temporarily at a standstill, as after a fire]
- Areas of degraded raised bog [i.e. areas where there has been widespread disruption to the hydrology of the peat deposits, which has led to surface dessication or peat wastage, but which is still capable of natural regeneration]

According to the website for the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, the “Interpretation Manual of European Habitats” (1999) stresses that “degraded raised bogs” only includes examples which are “capable of natural regeneration i.e. where the hydrology can be repaired and where, with appropriate rehabilitation management, there is a reasonable expectation of re-establishing vegetation with peat-forming capability within 30 years”. The guidance goes on to state that provided sites are capable of natural regeneration, land use types such as conifer plantations, improved pasture, scrub woodland and bare peat are considered to fall within the definition of degraded raised bogs. Sites will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Lowland Dry Acid Grassland

Definition [from UK Lowland Dry Acid Grassland Action Plan]

Lowland dry acid grassland typically occurs below circa 300 metre in altitude, on nutrient-poor soils overlying acidic rocks or superficial deposits such as sands and gravels. The habitat includes a range of plant communities; those found in the Salford area include grass species such as wavy-hair grass, sweet vernal-grass and mat grass. Although the community is largely dominated by grasses, other flowering plants such as tormentil are also characteristic of this habitat.

Favourable Conservation Status of Dry Acid Grassland

Generally this habitat will be in favourable condition when:

- Key areas of the habitat are maintained
- There is continued presence of the habitat at known sites
- The habitat is composed of desirable dry acid grassland species
- Undesirable species are reduced to an acceptable level
- Undesirable human activities are reduced to an acceptable level
Lowland Heathland

Definition [from UK Lowland Heathland Action Plan]

Lowland heath occurs below circa 300 metre in altitude, and is characterised by the presence of plants such as heather and dwarf gorses. Areas of good quality heathland should consist of an ericaceous layer of varying heights and structures, some areas of scattered trees and scrub, areas of bare ground, gorse, wet heaths, bogs and open water. The presence and numbers of characteristic birds, reptiles, invertebrates, vascular plants are important indicators of habitat quality.

Favourable Conservation Status of Lowland Heathland

Generally this habitat will be in favourable condition when:

- Key areas of the habitat are maintained
- There is continued presence of the habitat at known sites
- The habitat is composed of desirable lowland heathland species
- A mosaic of heather plants of varying ages and structures is achieved and maintained
- Undesirable species are reduced to an acceptable level
- Undesirable human activities are reduced to an acceptable level

Wet Woodland

Definition [from UK Wet Woodland Action Plan]

Wet woodland occurs on poorly drained or seasonally wet soils, usually with alder, birch and willow as the predominant tree species, but sometimes including ash, oak, pine and beech on the drier areas. It can be found on floodplains, as successional habitat on fens, mires and bogs, along streams and in peaty hollows. These woodlands occur on a range of soil types including nutrient-rich mineral and acid, nutrient-poor organic ones. The boundaries with dry woodland may be sharp or gradual and may (but not always) change with time through succession, depending on the hydrological conditions and treatment of the wood and its surrounding land. Therefore wet woods frequently occur in mosaic with other woodland habitat types and with open habitats such as fens.

Favourable Conservation Status of Wet Woodland

Generally this habitat will be in favourable condition when:

- Key areas of the habitat are maintained
- There is continued presence of the habitat at known sites
- The habitat is composed of desirable wet woodland species
- A suitable and appropriate water supply has been achieved and maintained at known sites
- Undesirable species are reduced to an acceptable level
Eutrophic Standing Water

**Definition (from UK Eutrophic Standing Water Action Plan)**

Eutrophic standing waters are highly productive because plant nutrients are plentiful, either naturally or as a result of artificial enrichment. These water bodies are characterised by having dense, long-term populations of algae in mid summer, often making the water green. Their beds are covered by dark anaerobic mud, rich in organic matter. Many lowland water bodies in the UK are now heavily polluted. The action plan covers natural and man made still waters such as lakes, reservoirs and gravel pits but it excludes small pools, field ponds and brackish waters.
Appendix C Definitions for Local Priority Habitats in Salford and Favourable Conservation Status

Lowland Broadleaved Woodland

Definition (from GM Lowland Broadleaved Woodland Action Plan)

Lowland broadleaved woodland refers to ancient semi-natural woodlands, semi-natural secondary woodlands and plantations. Ancient woodlands are regarded as the most important of these three woodland types. Ancient woods are those where there has been continuous cover since at least AD 1000.

Secondary woods are those where woodland has grown up after the land has been used for something else.

Plantations are those sites where trees have been deliberately planted, often for amenity, recreation or as landscaping. Plantation woodlands are usually considered to be less important in ecological terms than ancient or secondary woodlands. Most of the woodlands in Salford are semi-natural secondary or plantation woodlands. In Salford there is only one small area of ancient woodland. This is within the woodland at Clifton Country Park.

Favourable Conservation Status

Generally this habitat will be in favourable condition when:

- Key areas of the habitat are maintained
- There is continued presence of the habitat at known sites
- The habitat is composed of desirable woodland species
- Undesirable species are reduced to an acceptable level
- Undesirable human activities are reduced to an acceptable level

Ponds and Lodges

Definition (from Greater Manchester Ponds and Lodges Habitat Action Plan)

These water bodies are included in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan on “Standing Open Waters”. Ponds are man-made or natural bodies of freshwater ranging from one square metre to two hectares in size, which hold water for all or part of the year. Ponds occur in a variety of situations including abandoned industrial sites, marl pits, brickworks, flooded sand pits as a result of mining subsidence and quarrying, as well as in more natural locations in woodlands and farmland settings. Garden ponds often provide additional pond habitat in the urban setting.

Lodges are man made waterbodies, with most examples originating from the industrial revolution. These were created to hold water for industrial processes – notably in Greater Manchester for the textile industry. Lodges differ in size but are generally associated with streams and rivers. In terms of biodiversity interest, there is little difference between lodges and ponds. Many lodges consist of extensive areas of open water, with some areas of marginal vegetation within them with species such as common reed, great reedmace and reed canary grass.
Definitions for Local Priority Habitats in Salford and Favourable Conservation Status

Ponds and lodges are often very rich habitats, particularly important for aquatic invertebrates, wetland plants and amphibians. They are also used by a variety of mammals, birds and fish, especially where they form a mosaic of wetland habitats. Bats roost, breed and hibernate in some of the culverts associated with lodges in addition to using ponds and lodges as important feeding areas.

**Favourable Conservation Status of Ponds and Lodges**

Generally this habitat will be in favourable condition when:

- Key areas of the ponds and lodges and their adjoining vegetation are maintained
- There is continued presence of ponds and lodges at known sites
- The ponds and lodges and their adjoining vegetation, support appropriate invertebrate, amphibian and plant species
- Undesirable species are reduced to an acceptable level
- Undesirable human activities are reduced to an acceptable level

**Canals**

**Definition (from Greater Manchester Canals Habitat Action Plan)**

Canals are inland waterways constructed to meet the transport needs of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries. At the time when canals were built, they were of a similar importance and influence to our modern day motorways. Today, many aspects of canals such as water filled channels, cuttings, embankments and bridges have an important role to play in the conservation of both biodiversity and landscapes. Many canals differ from natural watercourses because of their range of habitats, as well as their controlled levels and slow flows, although not all canals are now in use for boat traffic. The canal corridor forms a linear mosaic of habitats including woodland and scrub of sides, hedgerows, flower rich towpath verges and diverse emergent “reed” fringes. The corridor helps link habitats fragmented by urbanization and uniquely forms a wetland corridor between river catchments.

**Favourable Conservation Status of Canals**

Generally this habitat will be in favourable condition when:

- Key areas of canals are maintained for the benefit of wildlife
- There is continued presence of canals supporting wildlife species at known sites
- The habitat provided by canals is composed of desirable species
- Undesirable species are reduced to an acceptable level
- Undesirable human activities are reduced to an acceptable level

**Urban Managed Greenspace**

**Definition (from GM Urban Managed Greenspace Action Plan)**

Urban managed greenspace includes amenity grassland (i.e. intensively managed and regularly mown grassland), private gardens, allotments, town parks of many types, planted shrubberies, playing fields, golf courses, grounds of buildings, churchyards and cemeteries. These areas are all managed to some degree for their particular purpose, however they can still be important reservoirs for wildlife in urban settings. In addition, they provide green breaks in development and contribute to the health and well being of local people. Their proximity to schools and housing make them an ideal resource for learning about the natural world.
In addition to the grassland that dominates these sites, remnants of a diverse range of semi-natural habitats including woods, scrub or ponds are often found within their boundaries or next to them. These may have been in existence for many years – providing well-established continuity of biodiversity. They also act as sanctuaries for biodiversity as outside the managed areas they often receive relatively little human interference.
Appendix D List of SBIs

List of Sites of Biological Importance (at December 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Area (Ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Woolden Wood, Cadishead</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridgewater Canal, Eccles/Winton/Barton</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Sisters, Eccles</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old River Irwell, Irlam/Cadishead</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towns Gate Marsh, Irlam</td>
<td>C</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelve Yards Road, Irlam</td>
<td>A</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodland North of Moss Farm</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kersal Dale, Kersal</td>
<td>C</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Irwell, Kersal</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kersal High School Grounds, Kersal</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kersal Moor, Kersal</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsh and Pools, Greenheys</td>
<td>C</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponds North of Cleworth Hall, Little Hulton</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford Quays (North), Ordsall</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>8.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brindleheath Junction, Pendlebury/Pendleton</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grassland and Heath off Clively Avenue</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal, Pendlebury</td>
<td>C</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsh near Clifton Junction, Pendlebury</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakwood, Pendlebury</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity Brook, Pendlebury</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackleach Reservoir, Walkden (N)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clifton Moss (South), Walkden(N)/Pendlebury</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>16.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Springside Reservoirs, Walkden(N)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brickfield Wood, Walkden(S)</td>
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<tr>
<td>How Clough, Walkden(S)</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponds near New Manchester, Walkden(S)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walkden Reservoir, Walkden(S)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foxhill Glen, Winton</td>
<td>C</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alder Forest, Worsley and Boothstown</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Area (Ha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bittern Pits Wood, Worsley and Boothstown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Botany Bay Wood, Worsley and Boothstown</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>141.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Wood, Worsley and Boothstown</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worsley Woods, Worsley and Boothstown</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E Landscape Features Potentially Supporting Protected Species

According to UK Biodiversity Action Plans (UKBAP), Urban Mersey Basin Natural Area (UMBNA), North West Biodiversity Audit (NWBA), Greater Manchester Biodiversity Audit (GMBAA), and Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (GMBAP)

**Water vole**

*Habitat Types*
- Rivers *(GMBA)*
- Ditches and dykes *(GMBA)*
- Lakes/reservoirs *(GMBA)*
- Canals *(GMBA)*
- Ponds *(GMBA)*

**Pipistrelle Bat**

*Habitat Types*
- All water bodies *(GMBA)*
- Old trees, woodland edges and rides *(GMBA)*
- Buildings especially modern houses for roosting with their associated gardens for feeding *(GMBA)*
- Farmland especially hedgerows and farmyards *(GMBA)*
- Linear features *(GMBA)*
- Areas of scrubby vegetation *(GMBA)*

**Great crested newt**

*Habitat Types*
- Ponds *(GMBA)* – clusters forming pondways important to movement *(NWBA)*
- Grassland *(GMBA)*
- Hedgerows *(GMBA)*

**Barn owl**

*Habitat Types*
- Arable *(GMBA)*
- Grassland including "wasteland" and roadside verges *(GMBA)*
- Hedgerows *(GMBA)*
- Woodland edges *(GMBA)*

**Bluebell**

*Habitat Types*
- Broadleaved woodland *(GMBA)*
- Acid grassland *(GMBA)*
- Hedgerows *(GMBA)*
Appendix F Contact List of Nature Conservation Organisations

Telephone List of Nature Conservation Organisations

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (provides an advisory service to and on behalf of the ten district councils of Greater Manchester) 0161 371 8545

Environment Agency 08708 506506

English Nature (to be merged with the Countryside Agency, and the agricultural and environmental activities of the Rural Development Service from October 2006) 01942 820342

The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside (Bolton Office) 01204 361847

Greater Manchester Bat Group 0161 797 4745

South Lancashire Bat Group 0161 764 8850

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds 01484 861148

British Trust for Ornithology 01942 712615
Salford City Council

Spatial Planning
Housing and Planning Directorate
Salford Civic Centre
Chorley Road
Swinton
Salford
M27 5BW

Telephone : 0161 793 3782
E-mail: plans.consultation@salford.gov.uk

Adopted 19th July 2006