



Local Development Framework – Core Strategy

Issues and Options Discussion Paper

Topic Paper 9 – Green Infrastructure, Open Space, Sport, Recreation and Biodiversity

1.00 Background

Policy / Guidance Document

- Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development
- Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts
- Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation
- Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan 2004
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
- Natural Area Profiles for the Mersey Basin and Dark Peak Joint Landscape Character Area
- Report on the Species and Habitat Review 2007
- Towards a Greater Manchester Green Infrastructure Framework
- Sport England: Spatial Planning for Sport: Creating Local Policy
- Tameside PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study Standards Paper
- Tameside PPG17 Open Space Study
- Tameside PPG17 Sports Facility Assessment
- Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan
- Biodiversity 2020 a Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services
- An Ecological Framework for Manchester
- Natural Environment White Paper

1.01 This paper brings together existing data and information to describe the environmental, open space and biodiversity characteristics of the Borough. It should be seen as a mechanism for developing early stakeholder involvement and has been developed following on from the conclusion of various ongoing planning studies, which form part of the Local Development Framework evidence base.

1.02 From the Core Strategy perspective the environment and the numerous biodiversity, recreational and wider open space functions it supports are the framework within which new development and growth takes place. The challenge is to deliver this growth in a sustainable fashion which respects the environments capacity to absorb additional development.

1.03 In addition to this it is important to recognise that a rich and varied natural environment can enhance the enjoyment and value of a location. Tameside by geographic location being to the east of Manchester benefits from having a diverse environment. There are clear contrasts between the east of the borough and its rural characteristics and close proximity to the Peak District National Park compared to the more urban western areas. In addition



to this the river valleys and canal waterways that have historically been lined with industrial development provide green corridors through the built environment.

- 1.04 There are however numerous national and regional indicators, the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Sustainability Appraisal of the Regional Spatial Strategy that highlight areas of concern in relation to the pressures which development exerts upon the natural environment. This paper also identifies the key messages emerging from other relevant policies, plans, programmes and strategies.

2.00 International Perspective

- 2.01 There are obligations upon the Government through various conventions and directives to protect international biodiversity designations. There is one such site within Tameside, Boar Flat. Located on the eastern moorland fringe it forms part of an extensive European Designated Peak District Moors Special Protection Area (SPA) and South Pennine Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The designations cover an entire SPA area of 45,301 ha and SAC area of 65,025 ha shown in figure 1.0 below. Where this designation exists the Council is obliged to maintain the Government's objectives to protect and enhance such sites as detailed through various planning policy guidance.

3.0 National Perspective

- 3.01 At a national level Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS 1) is central to the Government's intentions that the use and development of land must consider its long-term sustainability. The other planning policy statements are supplementary to PPS 1 in elaborating upon particular aspects of land use, and how sustainable development should be taken forward.
- 3.02 Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS 9): Biodiversity and Geological Conservation sets out the current (February 2012) planning policy framework for delivering the Government's objectives. It contains policies, procedures and standards which Local Planning Authorities must adhere to and use to guide policy and decisions.
- 3.03 Allied with PPS 9 concerning biodiversity and geodiversity, Planning Policy Guidance 2 (PPG2): Green Belt and Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17): Planning for open space, sport and recreation, all expand upon other areas of this topic paper.

Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

- 3.04 PPS 9 was published in 2005 to ensure that policies and decisions regarding biodiversity are better integrated in to the plan making and decision taking process.
- 3.05 In the context of PPS 9, biodiversity is considered the variety of life in all its forms discussed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). The national BAP and its update in 2007 contains 1,149 species and 67 habitats.
- 3.06 Within Tameside UK BAP Priority Habitat types cover 13.68% of the Borough (shown in figure 1.0) and for completeness include:

Blanket Bog	210.3 ha
Lowland Beech and Yew Woodland	13.2 ha
Lowland Dry Acid Grassland	24.5 ha



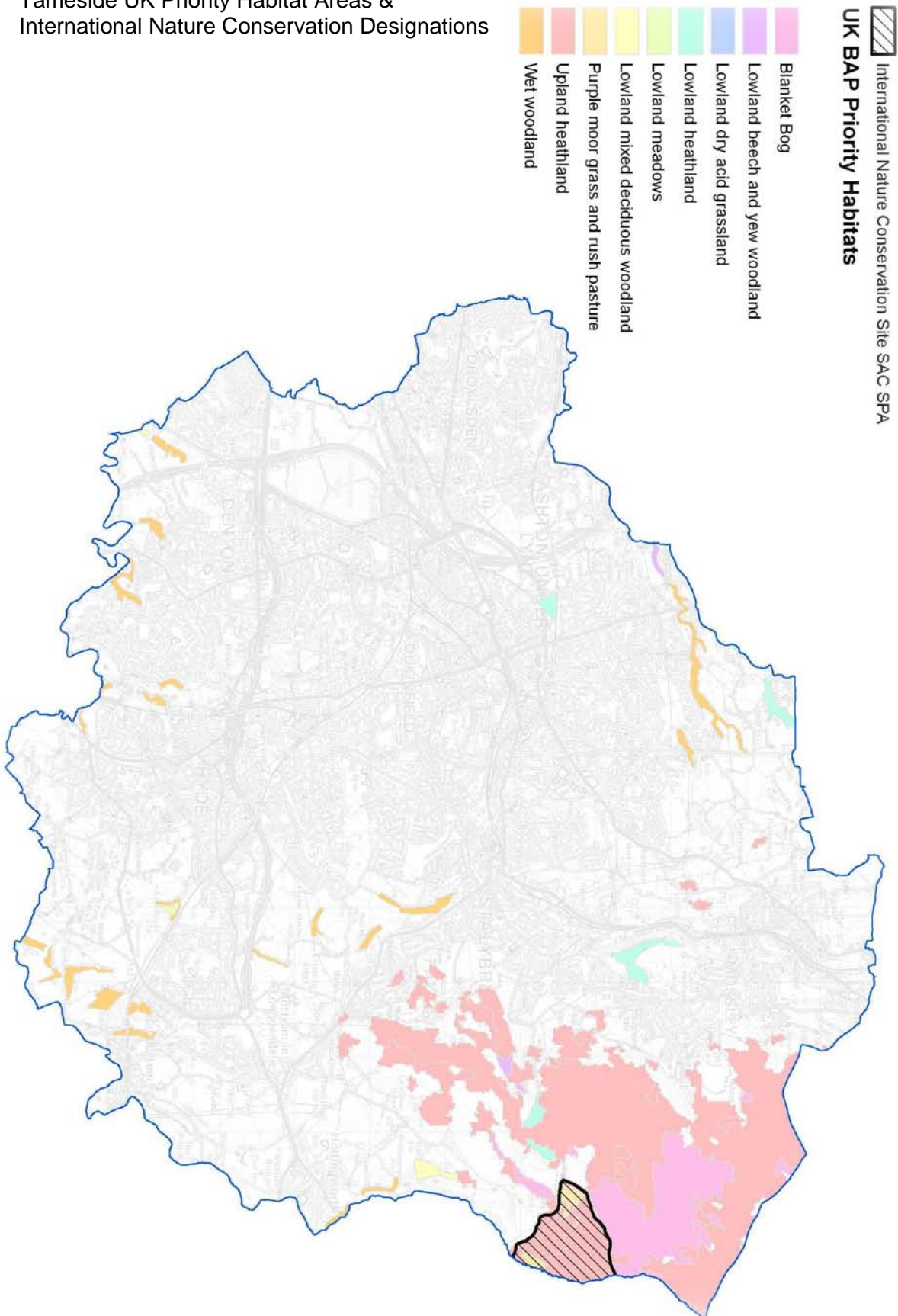
Lowland Heathland	60.6 ha
Lowland Meadows	2.3 ha
Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland	9.1 ha
Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pasture	81.6 ha
Upland Heathland	902 ha
Wet Woodland	107.5 ha

(Data from Greater Manchester Ecology Unit)



Figure 1.0

Tameside UK Priority Habitat Areas & International Nature Conservation Designations





PPS 9 sets out the following key principles to ensure that the potential impacts of planning decisions on biodiversity are fully considered.

- Development plan policies and planning decisions should be based upon up-to-date information about the environmental characteristics of their areas. These characteristics should include the relevant biodiversity of the area. In reviewing environmental characteristics local authorities should assess the potential to sustain and enhance those resources.
- Plan policies and planning decisions should aim to maintain, and enhance, restore or add to biodiversity. In taking decisions, local planning authorities should ensure appropriate weight is attached to designated sites of international, national and local importance; protected species; and to biodiversity within the wider environment.
- Plan policies on the form and location of development should take a strategic approach to the conservation, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity, and recognise the contributions that sites, areas and features, both individually and in combination, make to conserving these resources.
- Plan policies should promote opportunities for the incorporation of beneficial biodiversity within the design of development.
- Development proposals where the principal objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity interests should be permitted.
- The aim of planning decisions should be to prevent harm to biodiversity. Where granting planning permission would result in significant harm to those interests, local planning authorities will need to be satisfied that the development cannot reasonably be located on any alternative sites that would result in less or no harm. In the absence of any such alternatives, local planning authorities should ensure that, before planning permission is granted, adequate mitigation measures are put in place. Where a planning decision would result in significant harm to biodiversity which cannot be prevented or adequately mitigated against, appropriate compensation measures should be sought. If that significant harm cannot be prevented, adequately mitigated against, or compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

Specifically in relation to Local Development Frameworks, local authorities should:

- Take an integrated approach to planning for biodiversity when preparing local development documents. They should ensure that policies in local development documents reflect, and are consistent with, national, regional and local biodiversity priorities and objectives (including those agreed by local biodiversity partnerships).
- Indicate the location of designated sites of importance for biodiversity making clear distinctions between the hierarchy of international, national, regional and locally designated sites.
- Identify any areas or sites for the restoration or creation of new priority habitats which contribute to regional targets, and support this restoration or creation through appropriate policies.

3.07 In addition it is important to note that PPS 9 also provides guidance in relation to geological conservation. Within Greater Manchester the geology is dominated by rock formations, with those in the north and east being of Upper Carboniferous sandstones and shales of Millstone Grit. These are overlain by shales, mudstones, and coals, providing many outcrops in the upland Boroughs and features typically evident in Tameside.

3.08 PPS 9 also promotes nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These sites are informed by research undertaken by Natural England and are defined as



being some of the country's best wildlife and geological assets. Three SSSI exist within Tameside (shown in figure 1.1 below) covering an area of 122.14ha. The SSSI are the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, Hollinwood Branch Canal and the Dark Peak. It is important to note that the Dark Peak SSSI has only some units within the borough, the majority being located within areas of the Peak District National Park and High Peak Borough Council.

- 3.09 SSSI are divided into units for among other reasons ease of surveying. Of the units which make up the three SSSI in Tameside, 29.24% of the Dark Peak units in Tameside are considered to be within a 'favourable or recovering position'. The Huddersfield Narrow and Hollinwood Branch canals when last surveyed in 2007 were deemed to require better management to improve the condition of the SSSI.

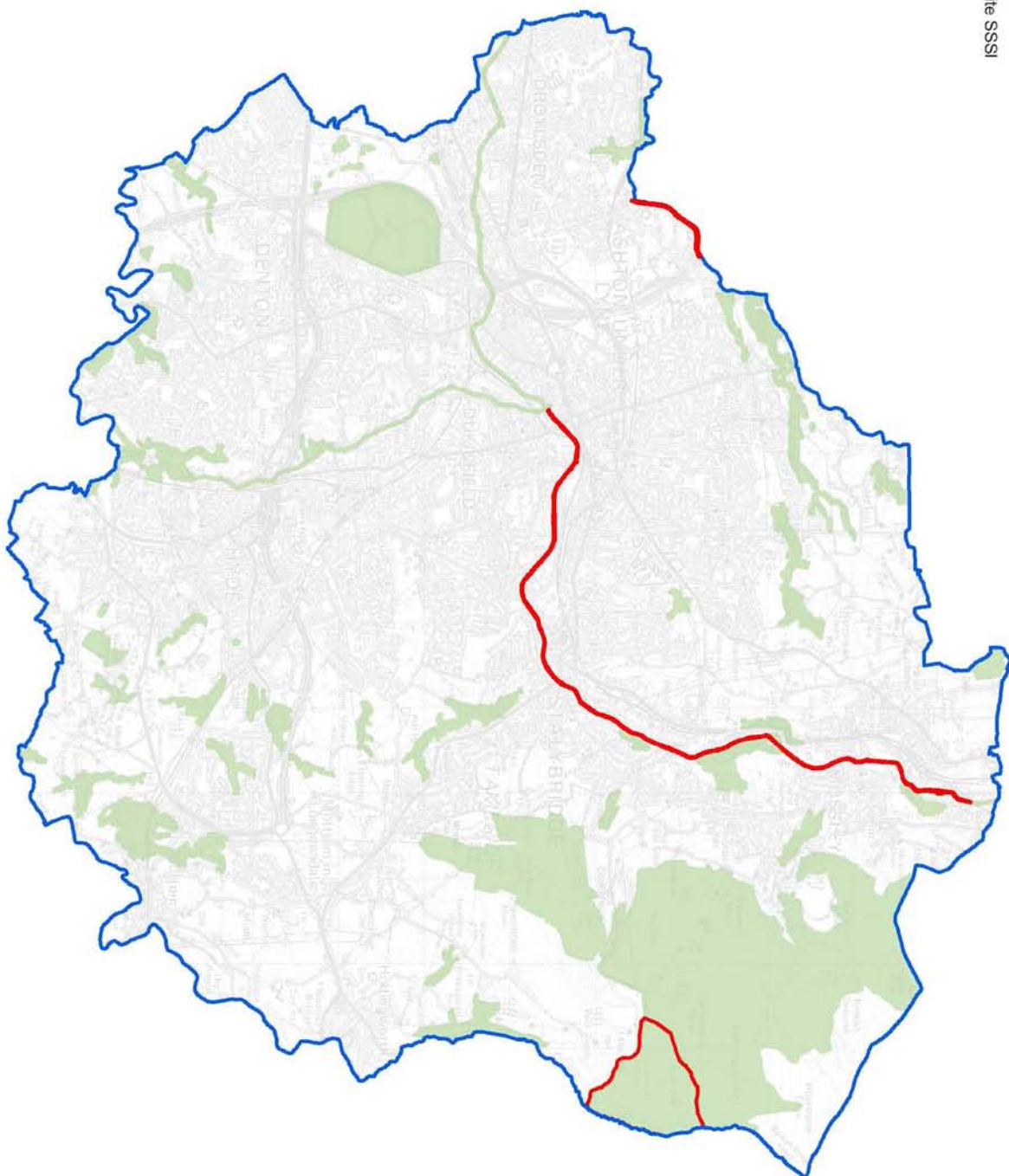
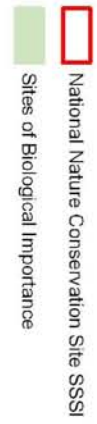
Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

- 3.10 PPG 17, published in 2002, details the current policies in relation to planning for open space sport and recreation. These spaces underpin people's quality of life and there are numerous benefits to having the right quantity, good quality spaces that are accessible. Wider Government objectives relate closely to many cross cutting themes, including:
- Supporting an urban renaissance.
 - Supporting a rural renewal.
 - Promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion.
 - Health and well being.
 - Promoting more sustainable development.
- 3.11 General development principles in determining applications are also contained in PPG 17 in relation to both maintaining an adequate supply of land and planning for new open space, sports and recreational facilities.
- 3.12 These principles have guided how the council has undertaken its own PPG 17 study to determine a relevant set of standards, and advise of the likely impacts upon the environment of expected levels of population growth and where new open spaces are required to support this.
- 3.13 It is important to note that PPG 17 when it considers the green environment includes both what is currently designated within the Unitary Development Plan as Protected Green Space and Green Belt. Green Belt is afforded protection through national PPG 2 and is not designated for its natural beauty or contribution to biodiversity but to control urban sprawl.
- 3.14 Green Belt however may also in many cases make a valid contribution to the wider environment as a nature resource, habitat, playing field, agricultural land or open moorland. In these cases it forms part of a PPG 17 audit of an authorities accessible open space.



Figure 1.1

Tameside Nationally Designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest
Locally Designated Sites of Biological Importance





Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belt

3.15 PPG 2 details the remit of Green Belt.

The designation of Green Belt is to:

- Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
- Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into on another.
- Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
- Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
- Assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

National guidance also recognises that Green Belt can have additional benefits depending on land management by:

- Providing opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population.
- Providing opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas.
- Retaining attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live.
- Improving damaged and derelict land around towns.
- Securing nature conservation interest.
- Retaining land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.

3.16 It is clear from the above three principle guiding planning policy documents in relation to the environment, PPS 9, PPG 17 and PPG 2, that there are many benefits to viewing the wider environment as one item. The approach taken forward through the hierarchy of planning policy to regional and local levels therefore utilises a Green Infrastructure terminology to view the environment as an infrastructure in itself.

Draft National Planning Policy Framework

3.17 It is important to note that the Government intends to replace the current suite of national planning policy statements and guidance, described above, and the North West Regional Spatial Strategy, with a single national planning document; the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This document had a period of public consultation in 2011 and is currently being reviewed (February 2012)

3.18 Whilst the current planning policy statements will remain in place until adoption of the NPPF, it is useful to be aware of its content as it will guide the policies in the Core Strategy.

3.19 The consultation draft of the NPPF contains a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. It also retains many of the principles of existing planning policy statements:

- Greenbelt should provide further opportunities for sport, recreation, enhance visual amenity and biodiversity.
- Conserve and enhance the natural local environment.
- Minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains.
- Protect valued landscapes.

3.20 The NPPF however advocates the above within a pro development framework, stating that plans should be prepared to meet development requirements and that the natural



environment should assist in this. The needs of development are placed first unless adverse impacts outweigh the benefits.

- 3.21 Therefore there is a need to proactively plan for the natural environment, with the NPPF referencing a green infrastructure approach to enhance the management of networks of open spaces and nature resources. This continues the overall trend in nature conservation policy toward further enhancing and creating habitats, in addition to protecting existing assets. This approach is also re-iterated within the Natural Environment White Paper by recommending the establishment of landscape scale Nature Improvement Areas.

4.00 Local Perspective

North West Regional Spatial Strategy

- 4.01 Although as stated above it is the clear intention to abolish regional spatial strategy it is important to recognise that in response to national planning policy surrounding green infrastructure, open space and biodiversity, the North West Development Agency through its Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) established policies and targets.
- 4.02 Policy EM1 recommends an integrated approach to biodiversity, landscape and green infrastructure. In aiding the promotion of open spaces, biodiversity and green infrastructure, the RSS contains an additional policy, EM3, requiring a green infrastructure approach to be adopted in all land use, development, community and economic and regeneration strategies.
- 4.03 Policy EM3 notes the importance of a green infrastructure in delivering benefits to many areas through cross cutting themes and multifunctionality. That said in many ways the term green infrastructure is a new term to draw together greenspace practice and policy that has existed for many years.

Emphasis is placed upon:

- Conserving and managing existing green infrastructure.
- Creating new green infrastructure.
- Enhancing its functionality, quality, connectivity and accessibility.

Greater Manchester

- 4.04 The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) set out its approach to the natural environment through sub-regional designations such as Sites of Biological Importance (SBI), and by developing a Greater Manchester Green Infrastructure (GI) Framework. The GI Framework is an interpretation of policy EM3 of the North West RSS.
- 4.05 In addition to the GI Framework other city region activities are undertaken by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU), providing important local specialist advice to, and on behalf of, the ten Authorities that make up Greater Manchester on biodiversity, nature conservation and wildlife issues.
- 4.06 Following on from the nationwide BAP, currently there are 13 action plans in Greater Manchester covering a range of habitats and species and a further 5 in the process of being formulated.



4.07 The Greater Manchester BAP is supported by PPS 9 as it advocates efforts to conserve, enhance and restore natural habitats, ecosystems and species that contribute towards a rural renewal and an urban renaissance. The Greater Manchester BAP Habitats cover 29.77% of the Borough and include:

Acid Grassland	518.9 ha
Canals	21.9 ha
Lowland Broadleaved Woodland	250.7 ha
Lowland Broadleaved Woodland/Lowland Heathland Mosaic	0.852 ha
Lowland Heathland	79.7 ha
Lowland Heathland/Acid Grassland Mosaic	103.6 ha
Managed Greenspace	760.8 ha
Marshy Grassland	28.6 ha
Mosslands	631.4 ha
Ponds and Lodges	153.7 ha
Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pasture	14.2 ha
Unimproved Neutral Grassland	19.4 ha
Upland Heath	41.9 ha
Upland Heathland/Acid Grassland Mosaic	321.1 ha
Wet Woodland	124.6 ha

4.08 In addition to the BAP, GMEU continually review sub-regionally designated SBI's shown in figure 1.1. The process of identifying SBI's clearly supports the PPS 9 approach of identifying the hierarchy of international, national, regional and locally designated sites.

4.09 The majority of SBI's within Tameside are located within the river and canal corridor network and toward the more rural eastern open land areas of the Pennines. In broad terms the SBI's within Tameside are designated for the presence of unimproved grassland, woodland, healthland and bog habitats.

4.10 The borough has a total of 54 SBI's covering an area of 1406.9ha, which have increased in net size since 2004/05 by 410.5ha. Although SBI's are a non statutory designation, support from PPS 9, the RSS and adoption through the existing Unitary Development Plan they serve an important role in monitoring, protecting and enhancing the boroughs nature conservation assets.

Green Infrastructure

4.11 The RSS is clear in the approach to be taken when considering the matrix of green, brown and blue environments, including those in the list below that are from the work undertaken through the Greater Manchester GI Framework.

Green Infrastructure assets include:

- Formal and country parks, managed open spaces, woodlands, rivers, canals, conservation areas, ecological sites, moorland fringes, river valleys, support networks of informal and ecological greenspace, multi-user routes, pocket spaces for play, amenity spaces and recreation spaces.

4.12 There has been much work been undertaken by consultants The Environment Partnership (TEP) on behalf of the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) in drawing together a vast array of evidence in establishing what is the existing core GI framework and on-going projects in highlighting good practice and potential investment opportunities. As

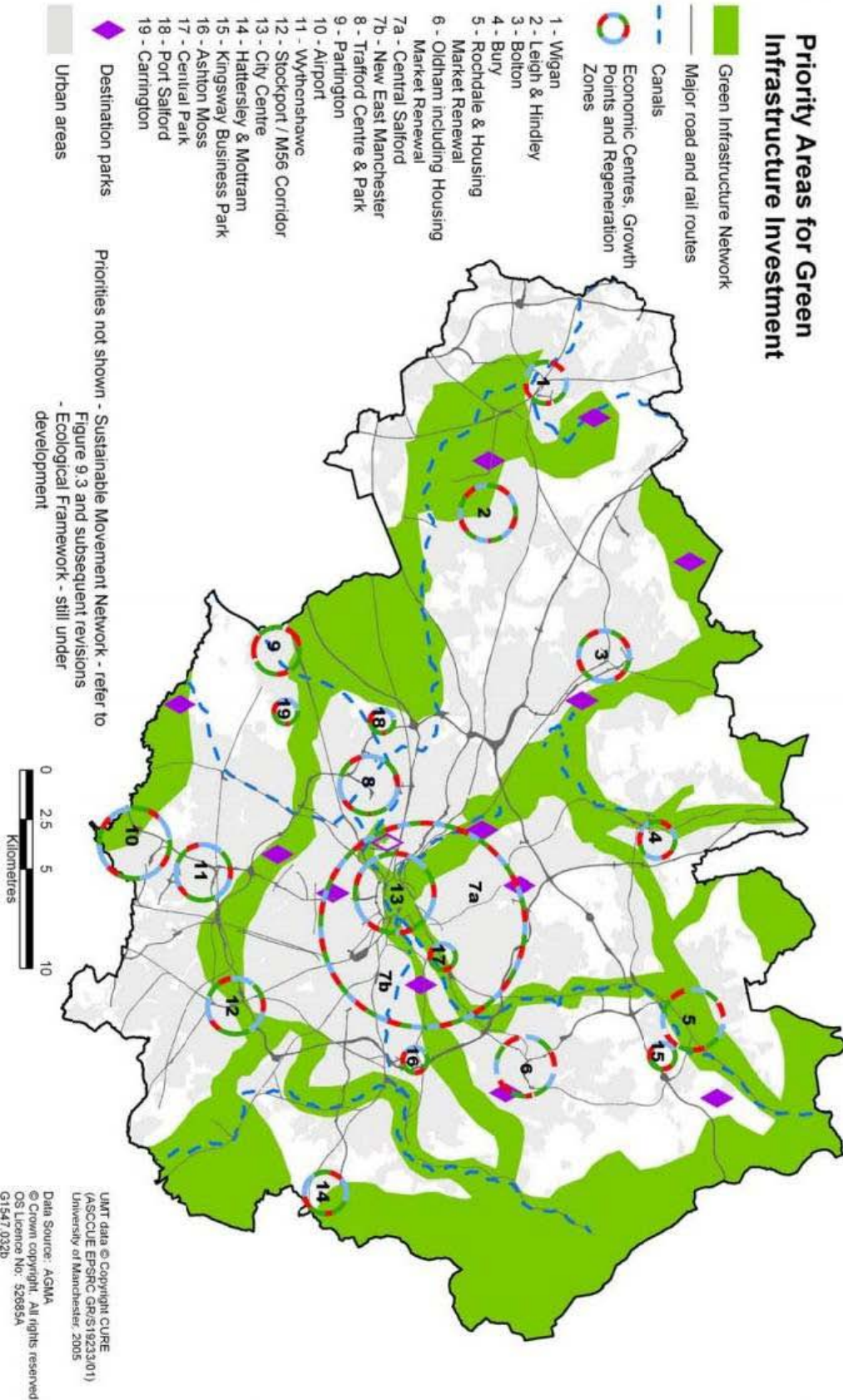


policy EM3 states it is important to conserve, create and enhance the existing network of spaces. To this end the TEP work establishes what the existing GI core consists of shown in figure 1.2.

- 4.13 This work is ongoing and has recently been taken on by AGMA to establish a GI Action Plan to deliver the framework specifically for actions at a strategic city regional scale.



Figure 1.2
Core Green Infrastructure Network. TEP (2008) Towards a Green Infrastructure for Greater Manchester, Figure 9.5.





5.00 Tameside

- 5.01 Tameside has a number of sites and areas of biodiversity and conservation value that are representative of the rich mosaic of semi-natural habitats and landscape types. Many of these features such as ponds and canals are the result of past industrial development which have since been reclaimed by nature. The river valleys and green routes, which although in many cases are still fringed by employment development, provide relief from the urban area and are biodiversity transit corridors. This is best evidenced through the Phase one Habitat Survey for the Borough, the most up to date comprehensive survey of habitats in Tameside available.
- 5.02 Geologically, Rocher Vale which is on the Borough boundary with Oldham toward Park Bridge Heritage Centre is designated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Site of Biological Importance. It has a mix of habitats including woodland, heath and riverbanks and displays many rocky outcrops and geological features. There are therefore ambitions to designate the site as a Regionally Important Geological and/or Geomorphological Site (RIGGS) to ensure conservation and promotion of it for future educational and public benefit. This is consistent with the PPS 9 approach and may be one of numerous appropriate sites within the Tameside.

Local Nature Reserve

- 5.03 There are eight Local Nature Reserve (LNR) in the borough, which is the most local designation within the hierarchy set out in PPS 9. LNR status can only be given to assets which are owned and managed by the Authority and are recognised within the currently adopted Unitary Development Plan. Currently designated LNR include:
- Knott Hill
 - Hollinwood Branch Canal
 - Great Wood
 - Hulmes and Hardy Wood
 - Haughton Dale,
 - Castle Clough and Cowbery Dale
 - Hurst Clough
 - Rocher Vale
- 5.04 There are plans to designate a further LNR in 2013/14 and 3 more in 2014/15. In addition to designated LNR the Countryside Service has also received accreditation for the sustainable management of 19 of its woodlands.

Open Space, Sport and Recreation

- 5.05 The Council undertook a PPG 17 study in accordance with the planning guidance available to determine a relevant set of space standards, advise of the likely impacts expected levels of population growth and where new open spaces are required to support this.
- 5.06 Completed in August 2010 jointly between the Council and Knight Kavanagh and Page, the study comprehensively assesses all publicly accessible space across the borough and:
- Sets provision standards for accessibility, quality, value and quantity.
 - Applies the provision standards to identify deficiencies and surplus in provision.



5.07 The setting of standards applies to the following types (typology) of greenspace, which were utilised for the purposes of surveying provision and setting standards:

- Parks and formal gardens.
- Natural space and accessible countryside.
- Amenity greenspace.
- Play areas.
- Allotments and community gardens.
- Green corridors.
- Cemeteries and graveyards.
- Hard surface civic space.
- Outdoor and indoor sports facilities.

Standards are based upon:

- Accessibility – distance thresholds.
- Quantity – hectares per 1,000 people.
- Quality – percentage thresholds.
- Value – percentage thresholds.

5.8 Not all ‘typologies’ mentioned above are able to be judged against all standards. As stated within the PPG 17 study, ‘Green Corridors’ for example are generally linear in nature meaning that practically only a quality and value standard is realistically appropriate to be set or judged against.

5.9 The table below details the accessibility benchmark standards that were applied to the types of greenspace. These have been derived from Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGST) set by Natural England and modified in some cases for Tameside based on primary evidence undertaken as part of the study.

5.10 The resident population should therefore live within the distance applied around the existing provision of greenspace.



Typology	Accessibility standard	Equivalent distance
Parks and formal gardens	15 minutes walk	600 metres
Natural space (including country parks)	10 minutes walk	440 metres
Amenity space	10 minutes walk	440 metres
Play areas	7.5 minutes walk	440 metres 330 metres
Allotments	15 minutes drive time	5,000 metres (at approx 30 mph)
Cemeteries/graveyards	30 minute drive	10,000 metres (at approx 30 mph)
Civic space	15 minutes drive time Or 15 minutes walk	5,000 metres (at approx 30 mph) Or 600 metres
The principle outcomes of the study	are as follows.	
Outdoor sports facilities (grass pitches)	All residents to live within 15 minute drive of provision available for community use	5,000 metres (at approx 30 mph)
Outdoor sports facilities (bowling greens and tennis courts)	All residents to live within 15 minute drive of provision available for community use	5,000 metres (at approx 30 mph)
Indoor sports facilities	All residents to live within a 10 minute drive of accessible sports hall, swimming pool, fitness provision.	3,333 metres (at approx 30 mph)

5.11 Based upon **accessibility**, having the correct sites within the right locations;

- **Parks and formal gardens**

New provision in Hyde is considered appropriate to meet the standard of a new local park of 2 ha in size.

- **Natural space and accessible countryside**

It is not considered that there are any gaps in provision

- **Amenity greenspace**

It is not considered that there are any gaps in provision

- **Play areas**

The majority of areas in Tameside are considered to have adequate access to play provision. However South Hyde, East Dukinfield and South Mossley are identified as areas being appropriate for new play area provision of a Local Area Equipped for Play (LEAP 0.04ha) standard. It is also noted that better access to provision contained within schools would assist deficiencies in accessibility.

- **Allotments and community gardens**

Based upon accessibility of a 15minute drive time the borough is adequately served. However assessed against a 15minute walk time standard highlights areas of Ashton are appropriate for new provision, as does assessment of demand by waiting lists.



- **Green corridors**

It is not considered that there are any gaps in provision, although better linkages particularly between sections of the bridleway network are highlighted as needed within the study.

- **Cemeteries and graveyards**

It is not considered that there are any gaps in provision

- **Hard surface civic space**

It is not considered that there are any gaps in provision

- **Outdoor and indoor sports facilities**

Sports Halls

New provision in Mossley is considered appropriate to meet the standard

Swimming pools

New provision in Mossley is considered appropriate to meet the standard

Health and fitness provision

New provision in Mossley is considered appropriate to meet the standard

Playing pitch provision

It is not considered that there are any gaps in provision, although it is noted that there is an undersupply of junior pitches and an over supply of senior pitches resulting in many cases where junior teams play across senior provision.

Outdoor sports

It is not considered that there are any gaps in provision

5.12 Based upon **quantity**, having enough sites to serve expected population growth;

5.13 An assessment of quantity is made by taking the current provision, adding in any existing deficiencies identified and then provision is projected forward to 2026 on a town basis allowing for population growth. Due to an expected population growth of between 7.6% (Office for National Statistics) and 14.5% (Greater Manchester Spatial Strategy) there is a need in all but a few cases to increase the overall number of hectares or number of sites for most typologies in most town areas. The increase in requirement is most noticeable however where an existing deficiency already exists as identified above through the **accessibility** modelling.

5.14 Based upon **quality** and **value**

5.15 The assessment of sites being of an acceptable quality and acceptable value uses a benchmark percentage of a scoring system that was applied to sites. A benchmark acceptable percentage threshold for quality of 47% was applied and 50% for value. For most typologies, over half of sites are considered of adequate quality and value. However amenity space and natural and semi natural greenspace typologies have over half of sites which are considered to be below acceptable quality.

5.16 It is important to note that individual site characteristics largely effect site scoring. Therefore something broadly as simple as improved site management has to be judged on a site by site basis as to the effectiveness and impact it would have on the quality and value scores.



6.00 Summary

- 6.01 Planning Policy Statements 1, 2, 9 and 17 outline how planning can help contribute to enhancing quality, connectivity and accessibility of our natural environments. It is clear that development can threaten and exert further pressures upon land that may support key wildlife or recreational functions. Through planning, a balance needs to be struck to protect and enhance these existing functions but to also allow further economic growth.
- 6.02 In order to help achieve these ambitions the filtering down through national and regional policy highlights the key elements of the Borough's environment that currently have and will continue to have protection.
- 6.03 The drive to deliver economic growth and expected population growth within Tameside serves to raise the importance of good management and protection of the natural environment. The 'enhance; quality, connectivity and accessibility' approach of policy EM3 of the North West RSS in adopting a GI approach to planning highlights the many multifunctional benefits to having an integrated planning approach to the items discussed within this paper
- 6.04 Tameside, as shown through the above discussion and evidence is blessed with many natural and semi natural landscapes and has a feeling or rurality, particularly so to the east of the borough. Evidence would suggest however that there is room for continued improvement of both the quality and value of many of Tameside's amenity spaces and more natural countryside environments.
- 6.05 Although there have been increases in both the number of designated SBI and LNR, there is a potential for further improvement of the Boroughs SSSI where the quality of nature conservation resources has much to do with appropriate land management in raising habitat quality. There is also evidence of appropriate RIGGS which could be encouraged as a designation where they exist across Tameside.
- 6.06 The PPG17 study has highlighted existing provision deficiencies in the Green Infrastructure for some typologies that are required to meet the existing demands of current population levels.

7.00 Key Issues

- 7.01 The Council will continue to have an obligation to improve the condition of nature conservation assets wherever possible. Government Policy advises that development should not be granted when it is likely to have an adverse effect on a SSSI. In addition, Tameside has many locally designated SBI and LNR and it is important therefore to ensure that any new development within the Borough has a minimal impact on the natural environment and that mitigation measures are employed if any proposed development may impact on designated sites.
- 7.02 There is therefore the need to continue the protection of existing areas of nature conservation importance regardless of whether a site is nationally, sub-regionally or locally designated.
- 7.03 As highlighted above it is extremely important to conserve and wherever possible improve the biodiversity resources of the borough. To some extent this is achieved through good



land management of the Councils own assets and encouraging others to follow suit. The network of existing biodiversity habitats will continue to be protected and enhanced and the Council will support the designation new local sites.

- 7.04 Pockets of Tameside are densely populated, however the urban areas are peppered with many small amenity and open spaces. With increased pressure for development however there may be pressure upon these assets. It is important therefore to recognise that they provide important places for exercise, play and relaxation. The Tameside PPG 17 audit of open space, sport and recreational facilities highlights the need for improvement of quality and value of these spaces.
- 7.05 The study also highlights existing deficiencies which although few in number, recommend a noticeable requirement for sport and play provision within the Mossley area.
- 7.06 Additional population pressure upon sometimes already deficient typologies, may mean that it is appropriate through the development process, that schemes of an appropriate size and scale provide a level of open space contribution. This would assist in maintaining an adequate level of quantity and accessibility, particularly if location based planning policy were utilised to prioritise the most deficient areas.
- 7.07 It is also evident that the Borough is located within an area that is likely to have potential RIGS, designation of such assets should be encouraged in accordance with the corresponding guidance.

8.00 Cross Cutting Themes

- 8.01 Issues surrounding green infrastructure, open space and biodiversity inter-connect with a number of other topic areas including:

Housing – Open spaces provide valuable recreational spaces within areas of new development, in addition there is evidence which highlights clear linkages with the value placed upon green urban environments in creating healthy, both physically and physiologically, and sociable places to live. In addition housing growth and population growth will inevitably mean that people will require additional supporting spaces.

Climate Change and decentralised energy - There are clear linkages between greening the urban environment and reducing the effects of climate change. There are also adaptive functions that open spaces are able to play in reducing the urban heat island effect, reducing surface water run-off and reducing vulnerability of the natural environment to warming of the climate. In addition habitats such blanket peat bog and woodland areas are carbon stores which help to more generally regulate fluctuations in the climate.

Economy & Employment – A green infrastructure that is embraced, as with housing has multiple spin off benefits, including making an area more attractive for investment.

Town Centres – Town centre environments can be stark in nature without adapting a green infrastructure approach. As mentioned above there are additional benefits of reducing the urban heat island effect, providing summer shading, improving air quality and creating a better overall retail and town centre environment.

Flood Risk – The river valleys of Tameside contribute to the overall habitat mix. In addition, limiting development only to that which is appropriate helps retain areas for flood water storage and reduces surface water run off which both help in reducing the flashiness of river systems and reducing overall risk.



Health and Inequalities – A green infrastructure assists with the promotion of a healthier lifestyle particularly by ensuring good accessibility to appropriate provision of various forms of recreational activities from both the natural environment to more formalised sporting activities.