

REPORT FOR DECISION

MEETING: Planning Control Committee

DATE: 24 August 2010

SUBJECT: Sites of Biological Importance: 2008 Review

REPORT FROM: Chief Planning Officer

CONTACT OFFICER: Chris Wilkinson, Greenspace Projects Manager

TYPE OF DECISION: EXECUTIVE (NON KEY DECISION)

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS: This paper is within the public domain

SUMMARY: This report identifies recent changes made to the Register of Sites of Biological Importance in Bury. It also describes the purpose and application of the Register

OPTIONS & RECOMMENDED OPTION It is recommended that Committee adopt the updated Register of Sites of Biological Importance for planning purposes so that, in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 9, the Council's decisions are based upon the most accurate and up to date ecological information.

Other options (not recommended) are not to adopt the updated Register, or to partially adopt the updated Register

IMPLICATIONS:

Corporate Aims/Policy Framework: Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework? Yes

Financial Implications and Risk Considerations: None to report

Statement by Director of Finance and E-Government: See above

Equality/Diversity implications: Yes No
(see paragraph below)

Considered by Monitoring Officer: Yes - The proposals are within the legal powers of the Council and accord with the Policy Framework.

Are there any legal implications? Yes - PPS9 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation' requires the Council as Local Planning Authority to consider and give appropriate weight, to any areas designated as 'Sites of Biological Importance' when reaching planning decisions. Updating the Register of Sites of Biological Importance will help to ensure that this requirement is discharged.

Staffing/ICT/Property: None additional

Wards Affected: All

Scrutiny Interest:

TRACKING/PROCESS

DIRECTOR:

Chief Executive/ Management Board	Executive Member/Chair	Ward Members	Partners
Scrutiny Commission	Executive	Committee	Council
		Planning Control	

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Borough's Unitary Development Plan identifies a number of Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) that policies EN6/1 and EN6/2 seek to protect from damaging development. The wildlife value of sites is however, not static; it may increase or decrease as vegetation changes, neighbouring land changes in character, or survey information improves. The UDP policies anticipate this by referring to both existing SBIs and those to be designated in the future.
- 1.2 The Greater Manchester Register of Sites of Biological Importance is maintained and updated on behalf of the ten Greater Manchester Districts by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit. The entries relating to Bury are kept by the Chief Planning Officer. The Greater Manchester sites are classed as Grade 'A' (of County Importance) 'B' (of District Importance) and 'C' (of more than local importance).

1.3 The Ecology Unit's Service Level Agreement requires it to re-survey each SBI at least every 10 years. It does this incrementally and produces an annual review of the sites it has surveyed in the previous year. The 2004 review was reported to committee on 28th June 2005. The 2005 to 2008 reviews are the subject of the current report.

2.0 ISSUES

2.1 Unlike Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Sites of Biological Importance do not have statutory protection. However, the designation of 'regional and local sites' (i.e. SBIs) is promoted (in PPS9 and elsewhere) as a planning tool for 'meeting overall national biodiversity targets, contributing to the quality of life and the well-being of the community and in supporting research and education'. Designation allows identified sites of ecological value to be protected from development requiring planning permission.

2.2 The designation of SBIs is an objective and methodical process of evaluating sites against set criteria. Bury Council has consistently chosen to use the designation as a way of protecting the Borough's wildlife by incorporating SBIs into the planning process.

2.3 A list of changes to the register, a list of current SBIs and a location plan are attached to this report.

2.4 An ECIA Initial Screening Assessment is appended to this report. It finds that the proposal to adopt the updated SBI Register serves an existing policy with minimal implications for equality or cohesion.

3.0 CONCLUSION

PPS9 (Aug 2005) states that 'in taking decisions, local planning authorities should ensure that appropriate weight is attached to designated sites of international, national and local importance, protected species and to biodiversity and geological interests within the wider environment'. The updated Register describes the state of the most valuable sites of wildlife interest in the Borough more accurately than the previous version. It is therefore a better tool for planning.

List of Background Papers:-

ODPM (2005) Planning Policy Statement 9; Biodiversity and geological conservation.
GMEU (2008) Register of Sites of Biological Importance in Greater Manchester.

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SBI REVIEW 2008

BURY – DISTRICT SYNOPSIS



Greater Manchester
Ecology Unit

In the review period January – December 2008 the Ecology Unit visited and revised 10 SBIs and potential SBIs, representing 20% of Bury's SBIs.

During the review period no new sites were added to the Register and one site was deleted **Edgars Field** (1.6ha). This site has been declining gradually in habitat quality over a number of years due to changes in management. The most recent visit found the site no longer met the SBI selection criteria. **Crow Lumb Wood** was upgraded from a C to a B as it is a UK BAP Priority Habitat, wet woodland.

Ringley Woods (East) lost a total of 2.9ha due to removal of areas of bracken. **Philips Park & North Wood** gained a total of 1.8ha, with the inclusion of 1.5 ha of broadleaved woodland and 0.3ha for technical reasons. **Kirklees Brook** gained a total of 1.2ha due to the inclusion of Square Lodge (GM Biodiversity Habitat)

Technical gains and losses are often due to the increasing accuracy that is used to draw boundaries and measure areas. Techniques used include orthorectified aerial photographs, which can be overlaid on the GIS system with the OS map base. This enables boundaries to be drawn to the edges of habitats where a clearly definable ground feature (e.g. fences, walls, streams etc) is not appropriate to use. In addition, site areas are automatically calculated by the GIS system. The changes at the following sites are for technical reasons: **Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal (East)** (+0.3ha), **Wetlands & Meadows near Coggra Fold** (-0.1ha).

The following sites recorded no changes to the site boundary or area, but revisions of the site description may have occurred: **Lower Hinds** (1.5ha), **Withins Reservoir** (5.7ha) and **Wetland near Radcliffe** (0.7ha).

As part of the introduction of the new SBI Guidelines the area figures for the Review have been verified against the SBI datasets. In the past we have rolled over the annual figures from year to year to calculate the Review figures. However, this year we decided to go back to source data (ie the SBI sheets and GIS layers) to recalculate and verify the data. This has highlighted discrepancies that have crept into the system over time. On the accompanying Table (District Fact Sheet) the figures in brackets are the new verified area figures. When quoting actual total areas the new verified figure in brackets should be used. When quoting change in the Register between 2007 and 2008 the figures without brackets represent the actual change in site data.

SITES OF BIOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE IN BURY – 2008 REVIEW

DISTRICT FACT SHEET (All areas in hectares)

BURY

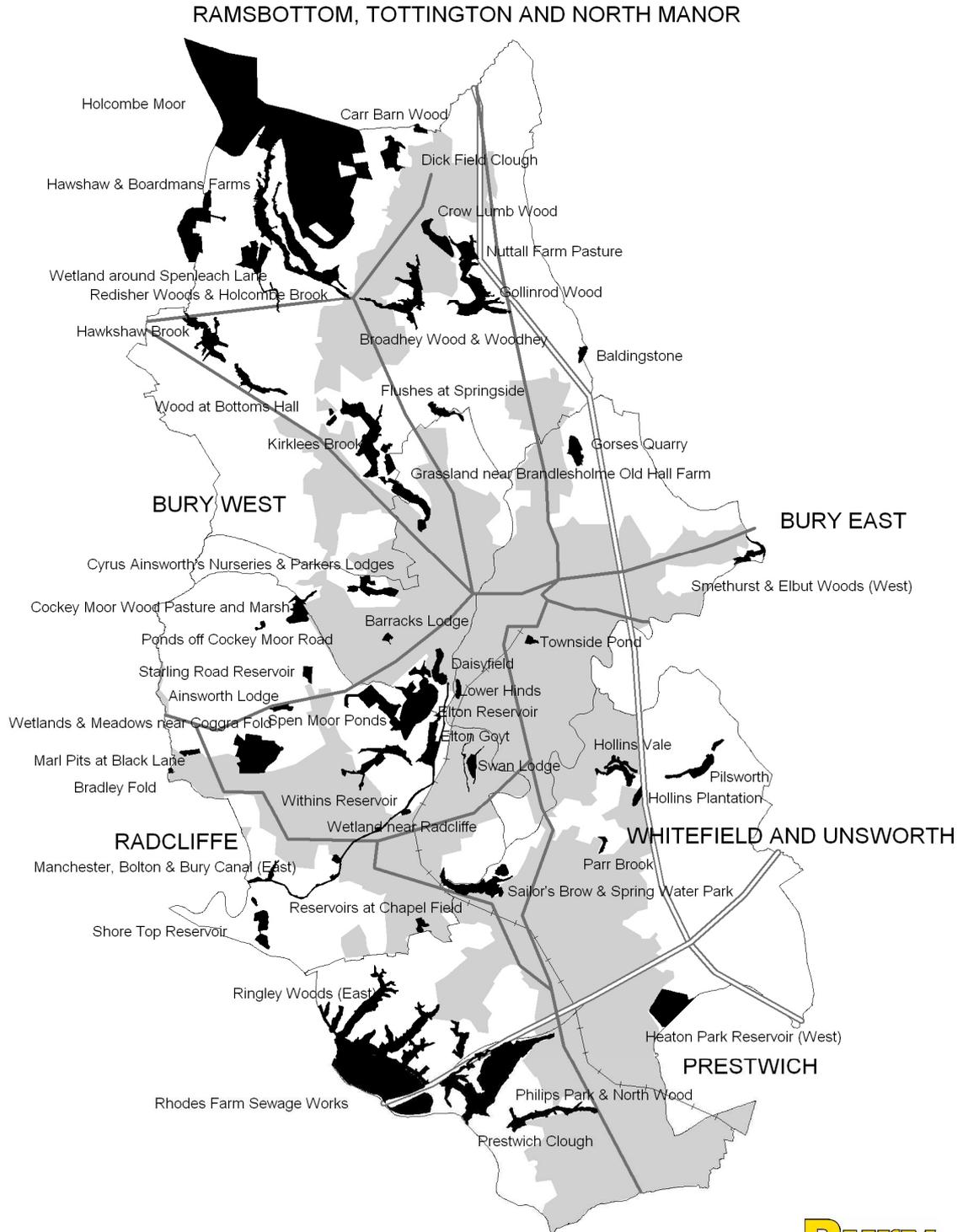
				Net Change 2007 – 2008	
	1984	2007	2008	No.	%
TOTAL NUMBER OF SBIS	27	50	49	-1	-2.0
TOTAL AREA OF SBIS	691.3	940.8	939.5 (909.7)*	-1.3 (-31.1)*	-0.1 (-3.3)*
TOTAL NUMBER GRADE A	9	18	18	-	-
TOTAL AREA GRADE A	554.4	724.9	725.2 (745.7)*	+0.3 (+20.8)*	<+0.1 (+2.9)
TOTAL NUMBER GRADE B	10	20	21	+1	+5.0
TOTAL AREA GRADE B	65.0	173.0	177.3 (126.9)*	+4.3 (-46.1)*	+2.5 (-26.6)*
TOTAL NUMBER GRADE C	8	12	10	-2	-16.7
TOTAL AREA GRADE C	71.9	42.9	37.0 (37.1)*	-5.9 (-5.8)*	-13.8 (-13.5)*
Grid Ref	Change in Grade of existing SBI		2007	2008	
SD791161	Crow Lumb Wood		C	B	
Grid Ref	New Sites			Grade	Area
-	-			-	-
Grid Ref	Site Deleted in Part or in Total		Grade	Area Lost	Present Total
SD765085	Wetlands & Meadows near Coggra Fold		A	0.1	26.8
SD785045	Ringley Woods (East)		A	2.9	59.8
SD799166	Edgars Field		C	1.6	0
Grid Ref	Partial Gains		Grade	Area Gained	Present Total
SD764068 - SD793096	Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal (East)		A	0.3	13.0
SD782130	Kirklees Brook		A	1.2	35.9
SD799038	Philips Park & North Wood		A	1.8	64.4
Grid Ref	Site visited with no change/change to description only				
SD794096	Lower Hinds				
SD784087	Withins Reservoir				
SD787078	Wetland near Radcliffe				

* Note – As part of the introduction of the new SBI Guidelines the area figures have been verified against the SBI datasets (paper and GIS system). The figures in brackets are the new verified area figures. When quoting actual total areas the new verified figure in brackets should be used. When quoting change in the register between 2007 and 2008 the figures without brackets represent the actual change in site data.

SITES OF BIOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE IN BURY 2008 REVIEW		
Site Name	Grid ref	Grade
Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal (East)	SD764068 - SD793096	A
Bradley Fold	SD756086	C
Hawkshaw Brook	SD759147	A
Hawkshaw & Boardmans Farm	SD756163	A
Shore Top Reservoir	SD766063	B
Wetlands & Meadows near Coggra Fold	SD765085	A
Ponds off Cockey Moor Road	SD767104	B
Wood at Bottoms Hall	SD764140	B
Wetland around Spenleach Lane	SD766156	A
Holcombe Moor	SD770178	A
Ainsworth Lodge	SD770093	B
Starling Road Reservoir	SD773098	C
Cockey Moor Wood Pasture & Marsh	SD772109	B
Redisher Woods & Holcombe Brook	SD767162	A
Rhodes Farm Sewage Works	SD785039	A
Ringley Woods (East)	SD785045	A
Reservoirs at Chapel Field	SD789062	C
Wetland near Radcliffe	SD787078	C
Marl Pits at Black Lane	SD781084	A
Withins Reservoir	SD784087	B
Spen Moor Ponds	SD783094	B
Elton Reservoir	SD788095	A
Barracks Lodge	SD784103	A
Cyrus Ainsworth's Nurseries & Parker's Lodges	SD782110	B
Grassland near Brandlesholme Old Hall Farm	SD785128	B
Kirklees Brook	SD782130	A
Broadhey Wood & Woodhey	SD788151	A
Dick Field Clough	SD785173	B
Carr Barn Wood	SD789176	C
Philips Park & North Wood	SD799038	A
Sailor's Brow & Spring Water Park	SD798067	C
Swan Lodge	SD796085	B
Elton Goyt	SD790086	B
Lower Hinds	SD794096	A
Daisyfield	SD791098	B
Flushes at Springside	SD791136	C
Gollinrod Wood	SD798153	A

Nuttall Farm Pasture	SD793160	B
Crow Lumb Wood	SD791161	B
Prestwich Clough	SD807034	B
Townside Pond	SD805103	B
Parr Brook	SD815074	C
Hollins Vale	SD818085	B
Gorses Quarry	SD811131	B
Baldingstone	SD812144	B
Heaton Park Reservoir (West)	SD825050	A
Hollins Plantation	SD820080	C
Pilsworth	SD830084	B
Smethurst & Elbut Woods (West)	SD837115	C

Sites of Biological Importance in Bury: 2008 Review



Equality and Cohesion Impact Assessment (ECIA) Initial Screening Form



The following questions will identify what type of impact your proposed policy, procedure, strategy, plan or working practice will potentially have upon the diverse groups within our community and their cohesion.

Your answers should form part of the development of your proposal, and inform your decision making process.

This will ensure that you consider the potential impact of your proposals on equality and cohesion, and make sure that as far as possible any negative consequences are eliminated or minimised, and opportunities for promoting equality and cohesion are maximised.

Name of Proposal	Update of register of Sites of Biological Importance in accordance with policies EN6/1 and EN6/2 of the Council's adopted Unitary Development Plan.	
Service		
Department	EDS	
Date		
This initial screening Equality and Cohesion Impact Assessment has been completed to the best of our knowledge:-		
Officer Completing the ECIA	Name:	Chris Wilkinson
	Post Title:	Greenspace Projects Manager
	Contact Number:	0161 253 5269
	Signature:	
	Date:	
Details of the Equalities Representative consulted	Name:	
	Post Title:	
	Contact Number:	
	Signature:	
	Date:	

For further information and support, please refer to the Guidance Notes found on the intranet at

<http://intranet.bury.gov.uk/CE/PersonnelDivision/CorpHumanResources/EqualityDiversity/default.asp> or contact your Departmental Equality Representative:-

Adult Care Services – Karen Young extn 6123

Chief Executive's Department – Andrea Gorton extn 5335

Children's Services – Liz Trayford extn 5658

Environment and Development Services – Hayley Whittles extn 5334

Details about your proposal.

1. PURPOSE: What are the aims, objectives, and purpose of the policy, procedure or working practice?
The protection of the Borough's most important sites of nature conservation importance.
2. DESIRED OUTCOMES: Outline what the policy, procedure or working practice will achieve.
A presumption against the granting of planning permission on sites of nature conservation importance.
3. Who are the main stakeholders? (eg services, community groups, partnerships, other departments etc)
The population as a whole, nature conservation groups, the Council's development management service and the Borough's wildlife.
4. Who is intended to benefit from the policy, procedure or working practice and how will they benefit?
The stakeholders identified above will benefit from the maintenance of the biodiversity interest of the Borough.
5. Who will be affected by this policy, procedure or working practice but will not directly benefit?
Everyone benefits from biodiversity and a healthy environment but landowners wanting to build on sites of wildlife value in their ownership may not initially see it that way.

6. Equality Impact

The policy, procedure or working practice may have a differential impact dependant upon a person's race, religion/belief, disability, gender, gender identity, age, sexual orientation or caring responsibilities. The impact could be positive (and benefit certain groups) or negative (and disadvantage certain groups). Alternatively there may be a neutral impact (where there are no consequences).

Please complete the table below to provide details of the impact, your reasons for reaching such conclusions and any justification for taking the proposed actions.

	Positive Impact (✓)	Negative Impact (✓)	Neutral Impact (✓)	Reason for Impact (Why will there be such an impact?)	Details of People Impacted (Who will be affected and how? Eg. disabled people due to lack of access.)	Can any positive/negative impact be justified? Is it lawful? (e.g. positive action)
Race			✓			
Religion/Belief			✓			
Disability			✓			
Gender incl Gender Identity			✓			
Age			✓			
Sexual Orientation			✓			
Caring Responsibilities			✓			

7. Cohesion Impact

Community Cohesion goes beyond the issues of tracking equality related discrimination and social exclusion. It is important to look at the potential impact of the service or policy on all the different sectors of the community and community relations.

A policy may have a negative or positive impact on one or more groups within the community. For example if a grant fund is aimed at one particular community how will other communities perceive this and how can this policy be used to promote community relations? **Please complete the questions below to assess the community relations implications of this policy.**

		Yes (✓)	No (✓)	Not Applicable (✓)		Describe any concerns there may be relating to these relationships and perceptions	Is a Full Impact Assessment Required?	
				Please also explain why (Eg. No groups impacted)			Yes	No
7a	Will this policy, procedure or working practice promote strong and positive relationships between the groups/communities identified?			✓				
							Yes	
							No	✓
7b	Does this policy, procedure or working practice bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other AND raise issues regarding their understanding and respect for each other?			✓			Note: If you answered any of the following:- No to 7a Yes to 7b Yes to 7c	
7c	Could this policy, procedure or working practice be perceived as being unfair by parts of the community who do not directly benefit from it.		✓		However, developers and owners of land may not like limitations on their ability to develop land in their control.	The planning system exists to further the collective good and the Council's development control policies are agreed and transparent.	your proposal has the potential to impact upon community cohesion and so you must proceed to a Full Impact Assessment.	

8. Where appropriate, please list all evidence used to decide the impact of your proposal. This could include details of who you consulted and what the outcome was, any data from the consultation exercise, service monitoring, satisfaction surveys, census data, complaints monitoring, legislation, guidance or comments from service users, clients or stakeholders.

The planning policy which the updated SBI Register supports was adopted by Bury Council, following extensive public consultation and an Inquiry in Public, in August 1997.

9. Where you have gathered evidence or carried out any consultation, please summarise the facts and issues which arose as a result.

The SBI Register is a technical document compiled by qualified ecologists. The value of sites is determined by assessment against set criteria.

10. Have you identified any gaps in your evidence or conclusions?

Please ✓ as appropriate

Yes

No

✓

11. Are there any unjustifiable negative or positive impacts?

If so, it is likely that further research and a Full Impact Assessment will be required.

Please ✓ as appropriate

Yes

No

✓

12. State the risks and weigh them against the benefits of implementing the proposal, then explain the rationale behind what you intend to do next. This could be either

- to proceed with the proposal,
- make amendments to the proposal, or
- to carry out further investigations and prepare a Full Impact Assessment.

The Greater Manchester register of Sites of Biological Importance has existed, been regularly updated and used by the 10 district Councils since the 1980s. If the Council did not continue to protect its most important wildlife sites it would be in breach of Government Policy as expressed in PPS9 and s40 of the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act.

13. If you intend to proceed with the proposal, please list clearly what monitoring arrangements have been put in place to monitor the impact of the policy, procedure or working practice.

Will you review the policy, procedure or working practice regularly? (for example every 3 years)

If appropriate, will statistics be gathered to evidence the impact of the policy? How will they be published? (For example service user satisfaction rates or user take up broken down by equality strand.)

The success of UDP policies EN6/1 and EN6/2 will be seen in future updates of the SBI Register.

14. As a result of this ECIA Initial Screening exercise, is a Full Impact Assessment required?

Please ✓ as appropriate	Yes		No	✓
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15. Has a copy of this EIA Initial Screening exercise been sent to Corporate HR for uploading to the web? (equality@bury.gov.uk)

Please ✓ as appropriate	Yes	
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16. Have the findings of this EIA Initial Screening exercise been included in the main body of any report, and a copy attached to the report for submission.

Please ✓ as appropriate	Yes	✓
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