

REPORT FOR DECISION



Agenda
Item 7

MEETING: PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE

DATE: 4th September 2018

SUBJECT: SITES OF BIOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE: 2016 REVIEW

REPORT FROM: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (LOCALITIES)

CONTACT OFFICER: CHRIS WILKINSON

TYPE OF DECISION: COMMITTEE

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

SUMMARY: This report describes the purpose and application of the Register of Sites of Biological Importance in Bury. It also identifies the latest changes made to the Register. Eight existing sites were reviewed, one, **Edgars Field**, was reinstated to the SBI register due to the recovery of its grassland habitat following restoration of appropriate management. **Grassland near Brandlesholme Old Hall Farm** was removed from the register due to the loss of grassland habitat through inappropriate management and tree planting. **Prestwich Clough** lost 0.1ha due to garden extensions but gained 0.7ha of additional woodland areas, making an overall gain of +0.6ha. **Redisher Wood and Holcombe Brook** gained 0.6ha of additional woodland and wetland habitat. **Wetland around Spenleach Lane** gained 3.5ha of additional bog habitat but lost 1.2ha due to agricultural changes to part of the brook. Overall therefore the site gained 2.3ha. Townside Pond was renamed **Townside** to better reflect the habitat

present on site. Otherwise only the site description was changed. The remainder saw no grade or boundary changes.

**OPTIONS &
RECOMMENDED
OPTION**

It is recommended that Planning Control Committee adopts the 2016 update of the Register of Sites of Biological Importance for use in development planning and management.

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

IMPLICATIONS:

Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:

Policies EN6/1 and EN6/2 of the Council's adopted Unitary Development Plan set out the Council's approach to managing development affecting existing and future SBIs.

**Statement by the S151 Officer:
Financial Implications and Risk Considerations:**

The costs of the AGMA Ecology Unit, which compiles and updates the SBI Register, are funded through existing budgets.

Statement by Executive Director of Resources:

None

Equality/Diversity implications:

None.

Considered by Monitoring Officer:

*Yes
The National Planning Policy Framework provides that planning policies should identify and map sites of importance for nature conservation and biodiversity. Updating the Register of Sites of Biological Importance will help to ensure that the Council complies with and its approach is where required, compatible with national planning guidance. The main issues are covered in the reporting.*

Wards Affected:

All

Scrutiny Interest:

N/A

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

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 harmful 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 Head of Strategic Planning and Economic Development. The sites are classed as Grade 'A' (of regional or county Importance) 'B' (of district importance) and 'C' (of importance within the *identified* geographical locality).
- 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 2015 review was reported to committee on 20th December 2016. The 2016 changes are the subject of the current report and is the latest available information.

2.0 ISSUES

- 2.1 Para 174 of the National Planning Policy Framework says that to 'protect and enhance biodiversity.., plans should....identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife rich habitats and wider ecological networks including....locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity'. Para 175 says that 'when determining planning applications,.....if significant harm from a development (*to biodiversity*) cannot be avoided..., adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.
- 2.2 Unlike Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) do not have statutory protection. However, the designation of 'regional and local sites' (i.e. SBIs) is promoted (in the NPPF and elsewhere) as a planning tool for conserving and enhancing

biodiversity. Designation allows identified sites of ecological value to be protected from harmful development that requires planning permission.

- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 A list of changes to the register, a list of current SBIs and a location plan are attached to this report. The register has not changed substantially for some years.
- 2.5 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

The 2016 update of the Greater Manchester Register of Sites of Biological Importance describes the current state of the most valuable sites of wildlife interest in the Borough. It will assist the Council in making decisions, particularly on planning applications, in accordance with government guidance, adopted Council policy and good practice. Its adoption is therefore recommended.

List of Background Papers:-

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (2008) 'Greater Manchester Sites of Biological Importance Selection Guidelines'

Website:-

<http://www.tameside.gov.uk/ecologyunit/sbi>

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APPENDIX 1: SBI REVIEW 2016 BURY – DISTRICT SYNOPSIS

In the review period January – December 2016 the Ecology Unit visited 8 SBIs representing 16% of Bury's SBIs.

Edgars Field was reinstated to the SBI register due to the recovery of its grassland habitat following restoration of appropriate management.

Grassland near Brandlesholme Old Hall Farm was removed from the register due to the loss of grassland habitat through inappropriate management and tree planting.

Prestwich Clough lost 0.1ha due to garden extensions but gained 0.7ha of additional woodland areas, making an overall gain of +0.6ha.

Redisher Wood & Holcombe Brook gained 0.6ha of additional woodland and wetland habitat.

Wetland around Spenleach Lane gained 3.5ha of additional bog habitat but lost 1.2ha due to agricultural changes to part of the brook. Overall therefore the site gained 2.3ha

Townside Pond was renamed **Townside** to better reflect the habitat present on site. Otherwise only the site description was changed.

Technical gains and losses are often due to the increasing accuracy 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 and a new OS base was acquired in 2017. The following sites had changes to its area due to technical changes: **Philips Park & North Wood** (+0.3ha) and **Hollins Vale** (+0.2ha).

APPENDIX 2: FACT SHEET

SITES OF BIOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE IN BURY
2016 REVIEW



DISTRICT FACT SHEET (All areas in hectares)

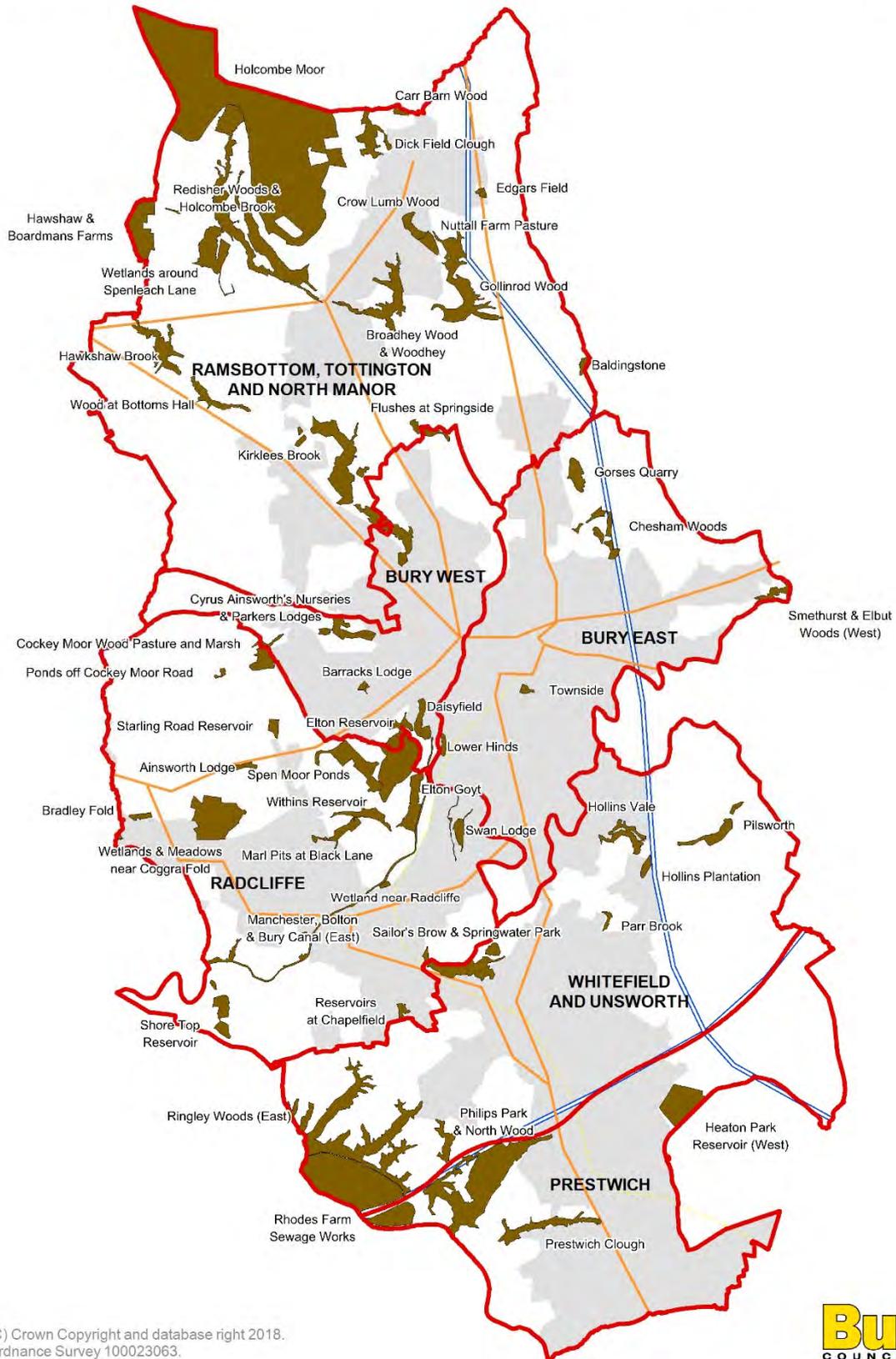
BURY

				Net Change 2015 – 2016	
	1984	2015	2016	No.	%
TOTAL NUMBER OF SBIS	27	50	50	-	-
TOTAL AREA OF SBIS	691.3	922.6	925.0	+2.4	+0.3
TOTAL NUMBER GRADE A	9	19	19	-	-
TOTAL AREA GRADE A	554.4	760.1	763.9	+3.8	+0.5
TOTAL NUMBER GRADE B	10	20	19	-1	-5
TOTAL AREA GRADE B	65.0	118.2	115.6	-2.6	-2.2
TOTAL NUMBER GRADE C	8	11	12	+1	+9.1
TOTAL AREA GRADE C	71.9	44.3	45.5	+1.2	+2.7
Grid Ref	Change in Grade of existing SBI			2015	2016
-	-			-	-
Grid Ref	New Sites			Grade	Area
SD799166	Edgars Field			C	1.2
Grid Ref	Site Deleted in Part or in Total		Grade	Area Lost	Present Total
SD785128	Grassland near Brandlesholme Old Farm		B	2.8	0
Grid Ref	Partial Gains		Grade	Area Gained	Present Total
SD766158	Wetland around Spenleach Lane		A	2.3	15.6
SD767162	Redisher Wood & Holcombe Brook		A	0.6	53.9

SD799038	Phillips Park & North Wood	A	0.3	64.7
SD807034	Prestwich Clough	A	0.6	11.9
SD818085	Hollins Vale	B	0.2	7.9
Grid Ref	Site visited with no change/change to description only			
SD805103	Townside*			

APPENDIX 3: SBI LOCATION MAP

Sites of Biological Importance in Bury: 2016 Review



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