

Agenda item 7	Classification: Open	Decision Type: For information
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Report to:	Planning Control Committee	Date: 22 July 2025
Subject:	Sites of Biological Importance: 2022 Review	
Report of	Development Manager	

Summary

1. This report identifies the latest changes made to the GM Register of Sites of Biological Importance for the Borough. It also describes the purpose and application of the Register. During the review period 2022 no sites were added to or removed from the Register, however gains were made at three sites.

Recommendation(s)

2. It is recommended that Planning Control Committee note the 2022 update of the Register of Sites of Biological Importance for use in development planning and management.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

3. To ensure that that Planning Control Committee is aware of the latest update of the Register of Sites of Biological Importance for use in development planning and management.

Alternative options considered and rejected

4. None.

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Background

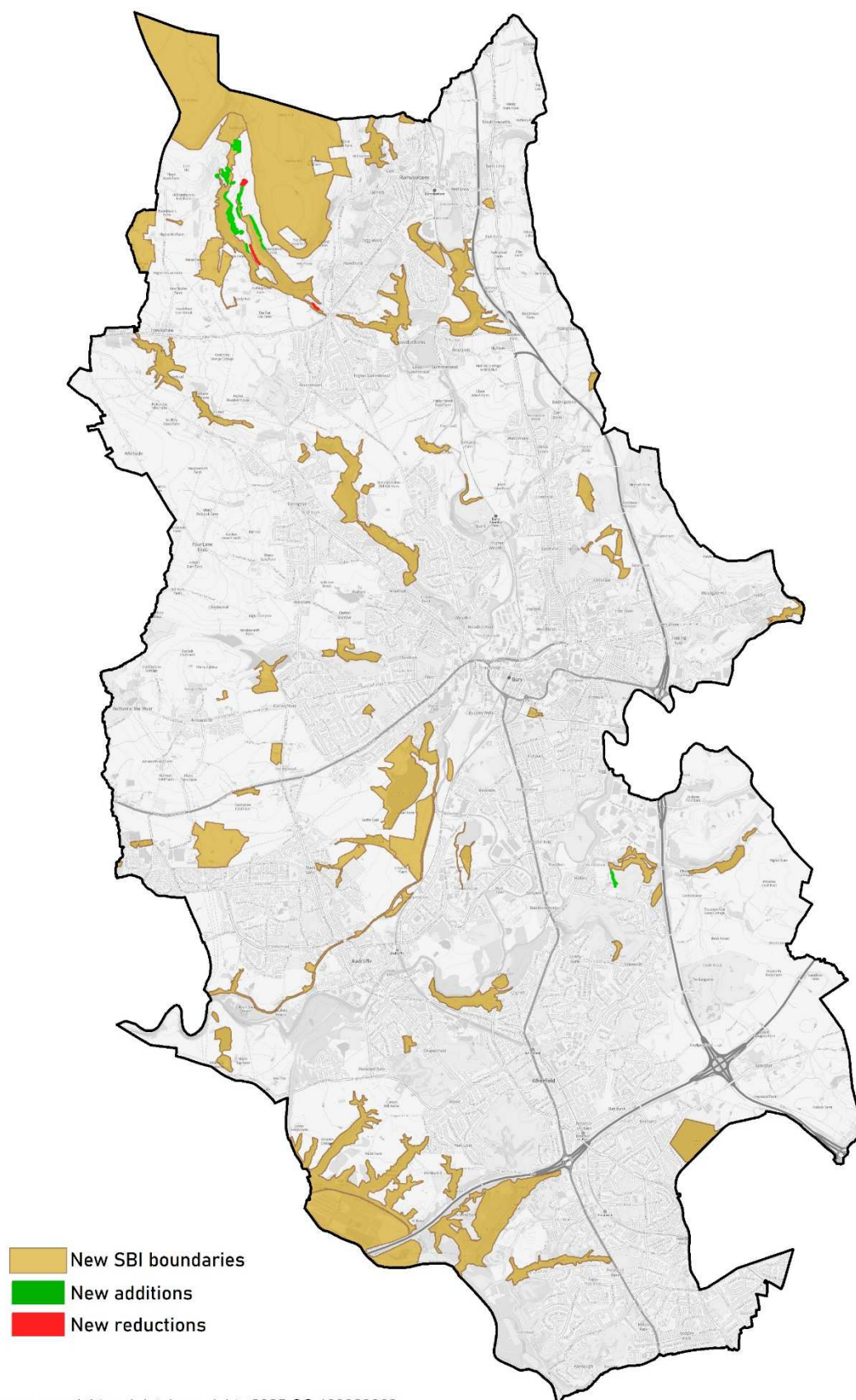
5. Members will be aware that the Borough's Unitary Development Plan identifies a number of Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) that policies EN6/1 and EN6/2 seek to protect from harmful development. The wildlife value of sites is, however, not static as it may increase or decrease as vegetation changes, 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.
6. 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 (GMEU). 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).
7. GMEU'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. The 2022 surveys and subsequent changes are the subject of the current report. As it is not practicable to complete the full report write up and analysis during the same year as the survey, there is a time lag between surveying and the receipt of reports and the 2022 update report was received on 24 June 2025.
8. Please note that the information set out in this report includes the 2022 changes made to the Elton Goit SBI which has subsequently been further revised by more recent survey work in 2024. These further changes to the Elton Goit SBI were reported to Planning Control Committee in January 2025¹. However, the 2022 citations and boundary are included to ensure you have a complete record of the changes.

2022 annual updates

9. 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.
10. A list of changes to the register, a list of current SBIs and a location plan are attached to this report for the changes in 2022.

¹PCC report (January 2025)

<https://councildecisions.bury.gov.uk/documents/s42923/Agenda%20item%207%20PCC%20report%20SBI%202024.pdf>



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Figure 1. New SBI boundaries

11. During the review period 2022 no sites were added to or removed from the Register. However, the following changes were made:
- Redisher Wood & Holcombe Brook gained 3.2ha of additional grassland and heathland but lost 0.2ha for technical reasons. This resulted in an overall gain of 3.0ha
 - Elton Reservoir gained 3.0ha of additional grassland habitat.
 - Elton Goit gained 2.1ha of waxcap grassland habitat.
 - Hollins Vale gained 0.2ha of additional wetland habitat
12. The full District Synopsis and Fact Sheets for the survey year 2022 is appended to this report and the up-to-date SBI layers are available to view on the Council's Policies Map².

Conclusion

13. Members of the Planning Control Committee are requested to note the 2022 update of the Register of Sites of Biological Importance for use in development planning and management.

Legal Implications:

14. 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 this requirement – and that its approach is, where required, compatible with national planning guidance. The main issues are covered in the reporting.

Financial Implications:

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

Appendices:

Appendix 1. Bury – District Synopsis for 2022

Appendix 2. Fact Sheet for 2022

² <https://www.bury.gov.uk/planning-building-control/policy-and-projects/planning-policy/policies-map>

SBI REVIEW 2022 BURY – DISTRICT SYNOPSIS



During the review period January – December 2022 the Ecology Unit visited 8 SBIs, representing 16% of Bury's SBIs.

During the review period no sites were added or removed from the Register.

Redisher Wood & Holcombe Brook gained 3.2ha of additional grassland and heathland but lost 0.2ha for technical reasons (see below). This resulted in an overall gain of 3.0ha

Elton Reservoir gained 3.0ha of additional grassland habitat.

Elton Goit gained 2.1ha of waxcap grassland habitat.

Hollins Vale gained 0.2ha of additional wetland habitat.

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 2021. Aside from the site listed above, the following site had changes to its area due to technical changes: **Heaton Park Reservoir (West)** (+0.7ha).

The following sites had no significant changes since their last review and no updated citations were required so only a monitoring form was completed: **Prestwich Clough, Hollins Plantation** and **Smethurst & Elbut Wood (West)**.

SITES OF BIOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE IN BURY 2022 REVIEW



DISTRICT FACT SHEET (All areas in hectares)

BURY

				Net Change 2021 – 2022	
	1984	2021	2022	No.	%
TOTAL NUMBER OF SBIS	27	50	50	-	-
TOTAL AREA OF SBIS	691.3	917.0	926.0	+9.0	+1.0
TOTAL NUMBER GRADE A	9	20	20	-	-
TOTAL AREA GRADE A	554.4	780.0	788.8	+8.8	+1.1
TOTAL NUMBER GRADE B	10	18	18		
TOTAL AREA GRADE B	65.0	89.2	89.4	+0.2	+0.2
TOTAL NUMBER GRADE C	8	12	12	-	-
TOTAL AREA GRADE C	71.9	47.8	47.8	-	-
Grid Ref	Change in Grade of existing SBI			2021	2022
-	-			-	-
Grid Ref	New Sites			Grade	Area
-	-			-	-
Grid Ref	Site Deleted in Part or in Total		Grade	Area Lost	Present Total
-	-		-	-	-
Grid Ref	Partial Gains		Grade	Area Gained	Present Total
SD825050	Heaton Park Reservoir (West)		A	0.7	18.5
SD767162	Redisher Wood & Holcombe Brook		A	3.0	56.9
SD818085	Hollins Vale		B	0.2	8.1
SD788095	Elton Reservoir		A	3.0	37.0
SD790086	Elton Goit		A	2.1	13.0
Grid Ref	Site visited with no change/change to description only				
SD807034	Prestwich Clough				
SD820080	Hollins Plantation				
SD837115	Smethurst & Elbut Wood (West)				