

# Supplementary Planning Document Biodiversity

Adopted June 2011





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# 1 Introduction

**1.0.1** Biodiversity is the term used to describe the variety of life on earth.

**1.0.2** Since the 1992 Rio Convention, biodiversity has increasingly been recognised as a key factor underpinning the concept of sustainable development, with the services it provides to society progressively assigned greater importance.

**1.0.3** Guidance on biodiversity conservation including Biodiversity Action Plans has been accompanied by significant refinement of legislation at both European and national levels to ensure protection and enhancement is central to both strategic planning and project implementation. For example, the European Habitats Directive requires all plans or projects to be screened for the need for a Habitats Regulations Assessment to ensure protection of the Natura 2000 network of sites of European importance. Nationally, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 placed a statutory duty on all public organisations to have regard to biodiversity and lists the habitats and species of principal importance.

**1.0.4** Similarly evolving, the approach to biodiversity conservation itself has become more expansive and moved away from merely seeking to protect isolated areas of biological importance. The aspiration is to integrate such areas into a coherent ecological framework, which is more resilient and sustainable.

**1.0.5** Allied to this is the Green Infrastructure (GI) concept. This is the network of open space, woodlands, wildlife habitat, parks and other natural areas, which sustain clean air, water, and natural resources and enrich the community's quality of life. The perception of Green Infrastructure as a vital part of urban and suburban development is increasing. Inset within Merseyside GI planning, the Liverpool City Region Ecological Framework allows a coherent approach to biodiversity conservation and enhancement.



Picture 1.1 Sankey Valley - a key wildlife corridor (nb. all images © copyright of Mike Roberts unless otherwise stated)

## 2 The Aims of this SPD

**2.0.1** The key aims of the St.Helens Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document are:

- To provide clear and consistent guidance on the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in new development
- To ensure that biodiversity is safeguarded and enhanced through the determination of planning applications for new development.
- To increase the biodiversity resource and its robustness throughout St.Helens Borough, through the protection and enhancement of Core Biodiversity Areas, creation of new habitats and increasing the connectivity between them.



Picture 2.1 Stanley Bank Wood - Semi-natural Ancient Woodland

## 3 Policy Context

### 3.1 International Policy Context

**3.1.1** At European level there are two important drivers, which relate to environmental protection and enhancement.

**3.1.2** Since 2000, the EU Water Framework Directive has introduced new, broader ecological objectives, designed to protect and, where necessary, restore the structure and function of aquatic ecosystems themselves, and thereby safeguard the sustainable use of water resources.

**3.1.3** The Habitats Directive requires all member states to protect networks of habitats, which are important at a European scale. All plans and projects, which may cause direct or indirect harm to a European Protected Site, must be screened to establish whether a full Habitats Regulation Assessment needs to be carried out to fully investigate likely harm.

### 3.2 National Policy Context

**3.2.1** Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 transposes the European Habitats Directive into national legislation. All development proposals affecting species protected under European law must meet the requirements of the Habitat Regulations.

**3.2.2** The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is principle mechanism for the protection of wildlife in Great Britain and is the means by which European wildlife protection legislation is implemented in Great Britain.

**3.2.3** The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949) empowers Local Authorities, in consultation with Natural England, to declare sites as Local Nature Reserves for the study and protection of nature.

**3.2.4** The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 placed a statutory duty on all public organisations to have regards for biodiversity across all of their functions. Government Guidance on implementing the duty highlights the important role Local Authorities have in conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, including incorporating this into all relevant plans and strategies. The guidance also indicates that Councils should deliver the key principles for biodiversity set out in national planning guidance.

**3.2.5** Government Guidance contained in Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) delivering Sustainable Development (2005) sets out the Government's national planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system.

**3.2.6** A key aim of the PPS1 is stated as "protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside, and existing communities".

**3.2.7** PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation sets out key principles that Local Planning Authorities should adhere to in setting out planning policy and decision making. These include:

- Development plan policies and planning decisions should be based upon up-to-date information about the environmental characteristics of their areas.

- Plan policies and planning decisions should aim to maintain, and enhance, restore or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interests.
- Plan policies on the form and location of development should take a strategic approach to the conservation, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and geology.
- Plan policies should promote opportunities for the incorporation of beneficial biodiversity and geological features within the design of development.
- Development proposals where the principal objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity and geological conservation interests should be permitted.
- The aim of planning decisions should be to prevent harm to biodiversity and geological conservation interests.

PPS9 Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - A Guide to Good Practice provides case studies and examples of integration of biodiversity into development.

**3.2.8** PPS 7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas sets out the Government's objectives for sustainable land use in rural areas. Conservation of valued landscapes and biodiversity is one of these objectives particularly in relation to agriculture.

**3.2.9** "Working with the grain of nature –a biodiversity strategy for England" (DEFRA 2002) seeks to ensure consideration for biodiversity is embedded agriculture, forestry, management of the water environment, coastal and marine management and urban regeneration.

### 3.3 Regional Policy

**3.3.1** The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 Policy DP7 promotes environmental quality by maintaining the quality and quantity of biodiversity. Policy EM1 (B) Natural Environment require Local Authorities to develop Ecological Frameworks that address habitat and species fragmentation. It should be noted that it is the intention of the Coalition Government to revoke Regional Strategies, but at the present time they remain in force.

### 3.4 Local Policy context

**3.4.1** St.Helens Unitary Development Plan (UDP) contains a number of primary strategic aims that are relevant to this SPD which are set out in Part 1 of the written statement. These include:

- To secure urban regeneration
- To balance the needs of new development and protection of the environment.
- To improve the quality of the environment to make St.Helens a more attractive and safer place in which to live, work, invest and visit.
- To take account of the need of all sectors of the community in the provision of housing, employment, transport, recreation facilities and infrastructure.
- To conserve resources and work towards the principles of sustainable development.

**3.4.2** The Biodiversity SPD relates to the following policies in the St.Helens Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Saved Version:

- ENV 1 Protection of Open Space
- ENV 3 Greenways



- ENV 4 Statutory Site Protection
- ENV 5 Sites of Community Wildlife Interest and Local Nature Reserves
- ENV 7 Nature Conservation within development sites
- ENV 9 Species Protection Policy
- ENV 10 the Mersey Forest
- ENV 29 Pollution Control
- ENV 30 Drainage

**3.4.3** The Core Strategy and other DPDs in the St.Helens Local Development Framework (LDF) will eventually replace the saved UDP policies. The Core Strategy is scheduled to be adopted by St.Helens Council in April 2012.

The Biodiversity SPD will relate to the following Draft Core Strategy Policies:

- **CP1** Ensuring Quality Development in St.Helens
- **CQL1** Green Infrastructure
- **CQL 2** Trees and Woodlands
- **CQL3** Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

The purpose of the SPD is to set out the expectations of St.Helens Council in relation to development and biodiversity.

**3.4.4** North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan was developed by Merseyside Biodiversity Group in order to highlight ecological priorities and actions across Merseyside. Policy for Nature –a biodiversity action plan for St.Helens (2006) transposed these priorities and actions to the local level. This document will similarly be updated in order to transpose the Liverpool City Region Ecological Framework to the district level.

**3.4.5** St.Helens Green Space Strategy identifies biodiversity as a key issue within green Space and has an objective to “safeguard, enhance and increase the enjoyment of the wildlife resource.”

**3.4.6** As a crosscutting issue biodiversity must be considered across the whole of the planning spectrum and accordingly all relevant policy documents are aligned in order to ensure this.

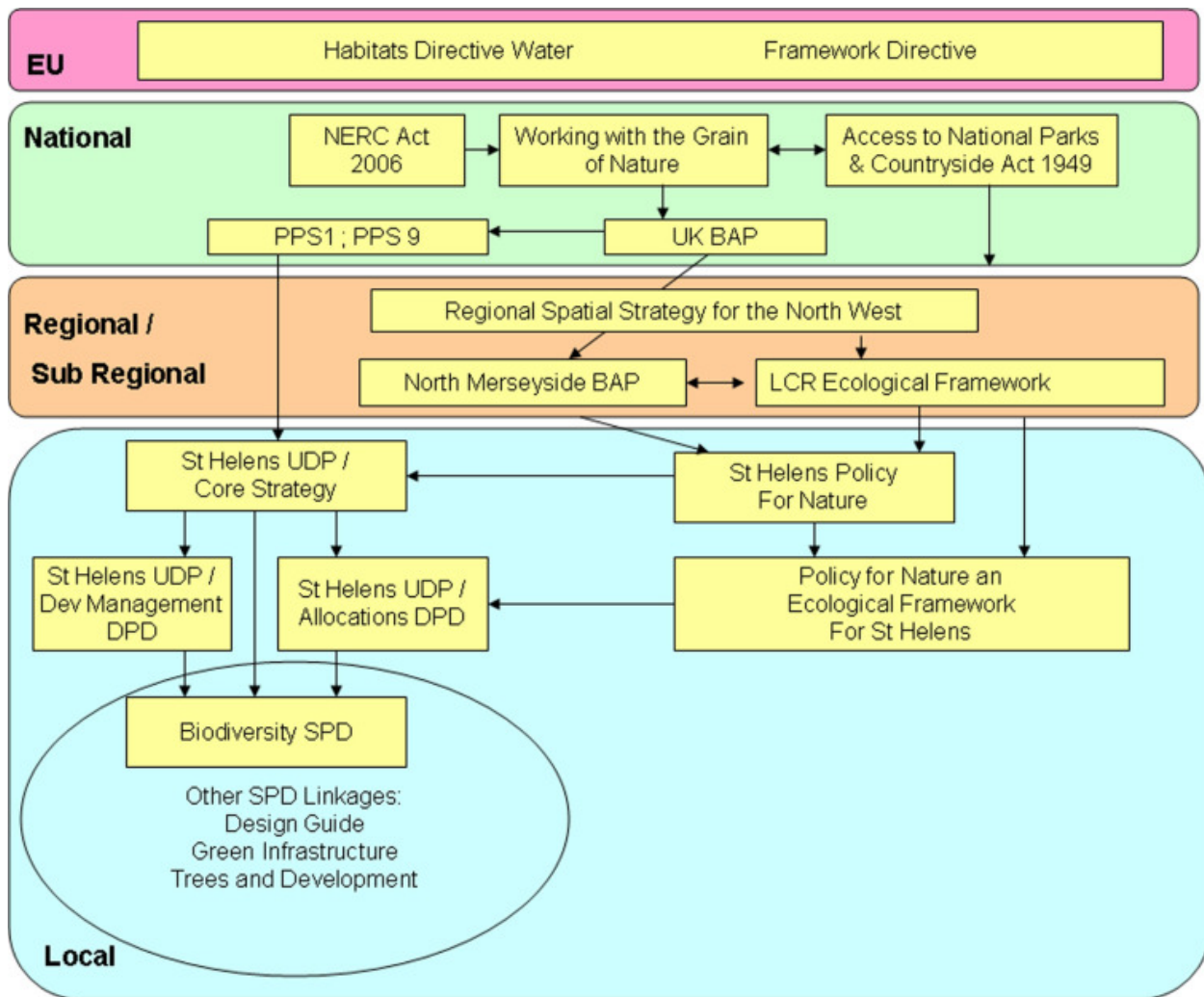


Figure 3.1 Policy Framework

## 4 Overview of Nature Conservation in St.Helens

### 4.1 Internationally Important Sites

**4.1.1** Whilst there are no internationally important sites within St.Helens Borough, there are a number in neighbouring areas such as the Mersey estuary and Manchester Mosses, which could be indirectly affected by some activities carried out within St.Helens.

### 4.2 Nationally Important Sites

**4.2.1** There are two sites designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) wholly or in part, within St.Helens.

A small area (0.14 hectare) of Highfield Moss SSSI on the boundary with Wigan Borough lies within St.Helens Borough. The site is designated for its mixed valley mire communities and acidic grassland habitats. The site is classified as being in “Unfavourable, Recovering” condition.



Picture 4.1 Management on Stanley Bank Meadows SSSI © St Helens Ranger Service

Stanley Bank Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is the only designated site of national importance wholly within St.Helens. The site is primarily designated for its wet neutral lowland grassland habitat and is sensitive to changes in hydrology. It is classified as being in “Favourable” condition.

### 4.3 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)

**4.3.1** Under powers invested through the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, Local Authorities, in consultation with Natural England, can declare areas as Local Nature Reserves for the study and protection of the natural environment.

**4.3.2** Currently, there are six LNRs in St.Helens.

LNR Name	O/S Grid Reference	Principal Habitats
Stanley Bank	SJ534,971	Neutral wet grassland, Ancient Semi-natural woodland
Siding Lane	SD463,020	Broadleaf woodland
Thatto Heath Meadows	SJ508,936	Neutral grassland, Stream , Hedgerows
Parr Hall Millennium Green	SJ527,961	Marshy grassland, wetland, Reedbed
Colliers Moss Common (north)	SJ543,939	Lowland Heath, Raised Bog, Reedbed, Wetland, Scrub

LNR Name	O/S Grid Reference	Principal Habitats
Clinkham Wood	SJ515,980	Broadleaf Woodland

Table 4.1 Local Nature Reserves in St.Helens

**4.3.3** Natural England's Accessible Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) provides a set of benchmarks ensuring access to access to places near to where people live. These standards recommend that people living in towns and cities should have one hectare of land designated as LNR for every 1000 of the district's population. Currently, St.Helens has 109.39 hectares of LNR land, a shortfall of 67 hectares.

#### 4.4 Locally Important Wildlife and Geological Sites

**4.4.1** Consistent with DEFRA Guidance, Merseyside Local Sites Partnership has been established to standardise the Local Sites System, advise on site selection, coordinate site condition monitoring and reporting.

**4.4.2** A review of locally important wildlife sites was undertaken in 2000 against selection criteria, which have been adopted across Merseyside. This resulted in 117 sites qualifying as Local Wildlife Sites, (formally known as Sites of Community Wildlife Interest) (Appendix 1). Occasionally, new information may require that further sites be designated as LWSs. Conversely, should a site no longer meet the criteria and have no likelihood of restoration, it may be deselected.

**4.4.3** Locally Important Geological Sites (formally RIGS) have been selected on the presence of important geological features such as aspects of stratigraphy, paleontology and petrology.

**4.4.4** The register of local sites, along with site selection criteria, will be maintained on the LDF section of St.Helens Council' website (<http://localdevelopment.sthelens.gov.uk>)

#### 4.5 Protected Species

**4.5.1** Some species recognised as being rare or threatened within a European context are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Of these, the species most likely to be encountered in St.Helens are great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) and bats.

**4.5.2** The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) provides protection for a number of threatened species including water vole (*Arvicola aquaticus*) which is widespread in St.Helens. The Act also protects all species of wild bird and their eggs and nests whilst in use.



Picture 4.2 Water Vole

**4.5.3** Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and occur in low numbers within the Borough.

**4.5.4** All protected species are material considerations. In many cases it is illegal to intentionally kill or injure a protected species or to destroy its habitat. The presence or possible presence of protected species should be factored into all projects and plans.

**4.6 Species and Habitats of Principle Importance**

**4.6.1** Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of species and habitats of principle conservation importance in England. As set out in Section 40 of the Act, it is the duty (often known as the Biodiversity Duty) of Local Authorities to have regard of these species and habitats across all their functions.

**4.6.2** These Species and Habitats are also the subjects of national biodiversity action plans. North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan (NMBAP) <sup>(1)</sup> transposes the national priorities to a City Region level. The following NMBAP Action Plans are relevant to St. Helens:

Habitats	Species
Lowland Acidic Grassland	Common Lizard
Urban grasslands	Great Crested Newt
Lowland Heath	Lapwing
Lowland Mixed Broadleaf Woodland	Skylark
Lowland Wood Pasture and Parkland	Song Thrush
Wet Woodlands	Corn Bunting
Canal	Grey Partridge
Ponds	Urban Birds
Reed beds	Water Vole
Lowland Raised Bog	Brown Hare
Field Boundaries	Bats
Urban Green Infrastructure	Red Squirrel
	Dragonflies
	Bluebell
	Purple Ramping Fumitory

Table 4.2 NMBAP Action Plans

1 [www.merseysidebiodiversity.org.uk](http://www.merseysidebiodiversity.org.uk)

## 5 Brownfield Biodiversity

**5.0.1** A further Biodiversity Action Plan reflects the high conservation value some Brownfield land can hold. The Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land BAP<sup>(2)</sup> identifies criteria for selection of qualifying habitats of high nature conservation value, which are:

- Rich and/or large examples of habitats typical of the substrate/edaphic conditions concerned, which demonstrate the characteristic mosaic of bare ground, pioneer communities, flower rich grassland and other habitat patches with associated structural and topographical features;
- Areas that have retained bare ground and pioneer communities over an extended period, demonstrating arrested succession;
- Threatened areas that support either the last remaining examples where the habitat was formerly widespread/extensive, or rare/ specialised types of this habitat for example where the nature of the substrate is particularly unusual;
- Presence of UK BAP priority species or Red Data Book/List species;
- Importance for an exceptional assemblage of key species groups.

**5.0.2** The extensive legacy of coal mining, metal working and glass production from the industrial revolution has left a distinctive mark on St.Helens' landscape, making Brownfield biodiversity a significant issue for re-use of derelict and underused land. Whilst now mostly reclaimed, the extensive areas of open derelict land provide good nesting habitat for birds such as little ringed plover and skylark as well as often providing a mosaic of grassland types which are often significant habitat for invertebrates. Where Brownfield development occurs, habitat for ground-nesting birds is often impossible to maintain within associated landscaping. Creation of Green Roofs on industrial units can successfully provide compensatory habitat.



Picture 5.1 Unimproved Grassland Regenerating at Lyme and Wood Pits, former Colliery Site

2 [www.ukbap.org.uk/PriorityHabitats.aspx](http://www.ukbap.org.uk/PriorityHabitats.aspx)

## 6 Invasive Species

**6.0.1** The spread of some non-native invasive species is a major threat to environmental and economic wellbeing with the cost of controlling them in Britain estimated to be £2 billion annually. Some of these plants and animals are controlled under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This includes japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) and himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandiflora*), all of which are frequently encountered on development sites in St.Helens. Where such plants are present on a proposed development site, a control plan must be agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to development commencing.



Picture 6.1 Japanese Knotweed

## 7 Green Infrastructure

**7.0.1** Green Infrastructure (GI) is the term given to the network of natural environmental components and open spaces. GI planning couples infrastructure provision with the ethos of acknowledging the interdependence between people and the natural environment. By taking a holistic approach to planning GI provision and management, investments can be maximised and the quality of development enhanced.

**7.0.2** Multi-functionality is central to effective GI planning and the interactions between GI functions and policy priorities are illustrated in Figure 1. The GI planning process identifies where functions occur, where functions need to be re-enforced and interventions required to achieve greater functionality.

Policy Priorities								
	Economic		Environmental				Social	
	Employment / Economic Growth	Protect & Enhance Cultural Heritage	Protect & enhance the landscape, geodiversity and natural environment	Biodiversity conservation & enhancement	Climate change mitigation and adaptation	Promoting sustainable transport & reducing the need to travel by car	Community cohesion & lifelong learning, volunteering	Healthy communities and well being
Access, recreation, movement & leisure								
Habitat provision & access to nature								
Landscape setting and context for development.								
Energy production & conservation								
Food production and productive landscapes								
Flood attenuation and water resource management								
Cooling effects								

Table 7.1 Policy Priorities and Inter-actions of Green Infrastructure Functions – Source: Green Infrastructure Guidance Natural England 2009

**7.0.3** From a biodiversity perspective, creative solutions to problems such as localised flooding can create a range of habitats such as ponds, swales and wet grassland habitat, which attenuate water whilst enhancing the setting of a development. Green roofs on industrial units can assist



with energy efficiency, slow the run-off rate of rainwater and provide habitat for insects and bird species. Urban tree planting can be effective in moderating air pollution and “heat Island” effects in towns and cities.

**7.0.4** An evaluation of landscape functionality allows solutions to safeguard and strengthen existing functions and the inclusion of new features to be planned, based on local circumstance and need.



Picture 7.1 Green Roof Habitat

**7.0.5** Climate Change places a further threat to biodiversity. The ability of species to adapt to predicted change may rely on greenspace corridors allowing northward species movement. In St.Helens, the Sankey Valley is part of a key corridor linking through Warrington to the River Mersey in the south and to the Black Brook valley in the north. Within the GI framework, the reduction of habitat fragmentation is a key principle, which is guided by a City Region level and a local level Ecological Framework.

## 8 Ecological Frameworks

**8.0.1** Much of the current focus of nature conservation is on the reduction of habitat fragmentation and species isolation with a view to establishing a more resilient natural environment that is better placed to adapt to changes in the climate.

**8.0.2** At sub-regional level an ecological framework has been identified which addresses the strategic issues for biodiversity conservation. The framework identifies the spatial arrangement of sub-region's core biodiversity assets and provides a guide to where habitats should be expanded to maximise ecological benefit. A zone of 50metres around each habitat patch shows where habitat creation should take place.

A further zone of 100m around each habitat patch indicates a wider pattern of habitat connectivity to be aspired to, whilst the linear landscape features such as rivers and road networks provide a framework for enhanced habitat connectivity.

The Liverpool City Region Ecological Framework identifies:

Core Biodiversity Areas	International, National and Locally Important Sites, plus Habitats of Principal Conservation Importance.
Search area for possible habitat expansion	A 50m zone around CBAs where habitat creation and expansion will be most effective at reducing fragmentation.
Connectivity Indicator	A 100m zone around CBAs, which provides a basis for identifying distinctive Biodiversity Action Zones to at District Level.
Linear Features	Rivers and transport networks which provide connectivity.

**8.0.3** Profiles of the City Region districts identify strategically important features such as key wildlife corridors that can play a role in enabling wildlife to adapt to climate change and major opportunities for habitat creation (Biodiversity Opportunity Sites) .

**8.0.4** At a district level, a more locally focused framework provides guidance within a series Biodiversity Action Zones (BAZ). These action zones are derived from the City region Connectivity Indicator which has been broken down into more locally distinctive and manageable sections.

Each BAZ has a profile that sets out priorities and actions for that area in order to increase habitat quality. The profile identifies areas where new habitat should be created and what needs to be protected in order to maintain a functioning ecological framework within the Borough.

**8.0.5** The Ecological Frameworks will be published on the St.Helens Council's Planning Policy website : <http://localdevelopment.sthelens.gov.uk> and will form a central plank in formulating biodiversity mitigation and enhancement within the development process.

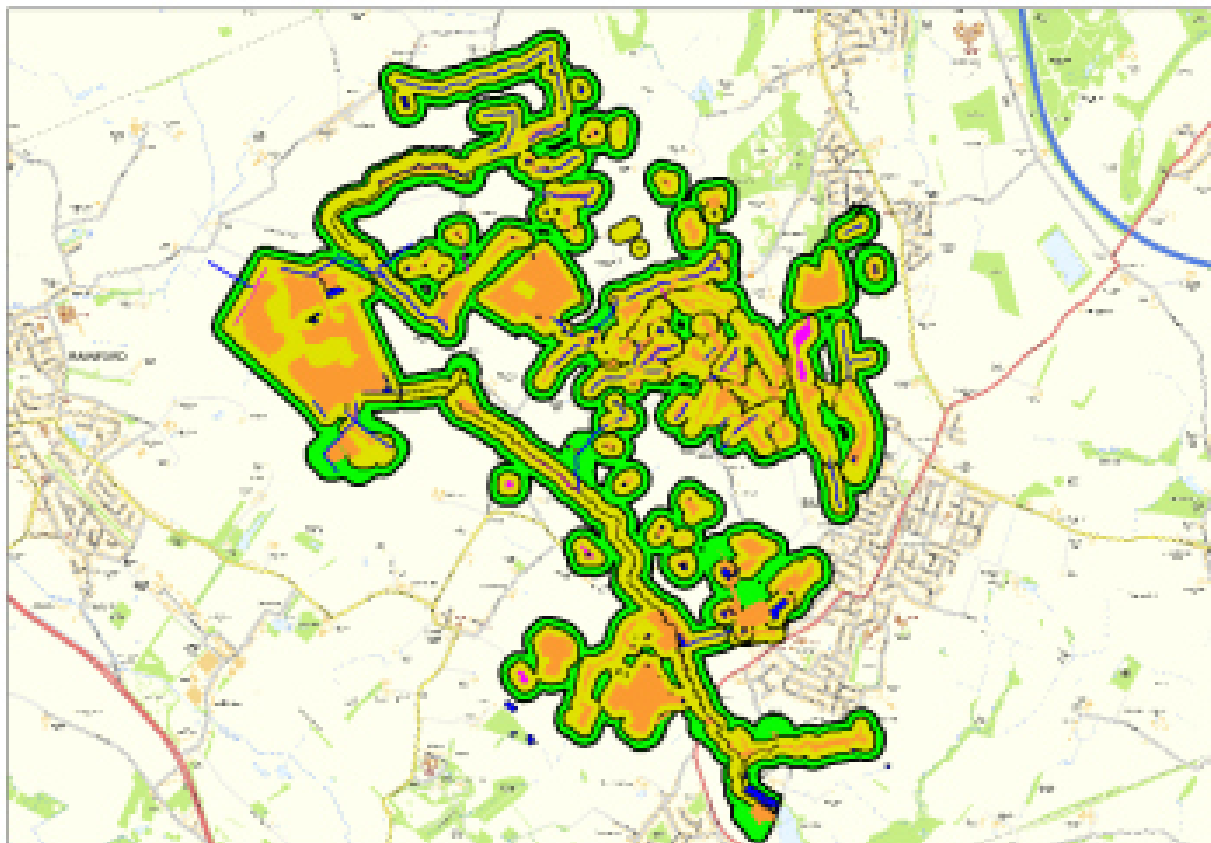


Figure 8.1 Extract from the St.Helens Ecological Framework showing the Billinge Biodiversity Action Zone.

## 9 Impacts, Mitigation and Compensation

### 9.1 Impacts

**9.1.1** Proposals for developments must accurately identify both impacts likely to occur from a design perspective and from the logistics of implementing the design.

**9.1.2** Broadly, there are four types of impacts that can result from development:

- Direct Impacts causing destruction or part destruction of habitat or a reduction in habitat quality e.g. Disturbance
- Indirect Impacts- where development affects habitats of the development site such as changes in hydrological patterns through drainage, affecting stream flow rates or wet grassland sites beyond the boundary of the development. Similarly, atmospheric deposition can cause indirect nutrient enrichment of species rich grassland or mossland sites.
- Landscape scale impacts- where the functioning of a wildlife corridor is interrupted increasing habitat fragmentation and species isolation.
- Cumulative Effects – where the effects of single development can be magnified, when in tandem with other developments.

### 9.2 Avoidance

**9.2.1** Avoidance of impacts upon biodiversity is the priority for any development. If there is a risk of impacts from initial design plans consideration must be given to eliminating these impacts by a re-design, regulation of the timing of works or the location of certain activities.

### 9.3 Mitigation

**9.3.1** In situations where impacts to habitats and species cannot be avoided within development design, it may still be possible to minimise damage through mitigation measures. In this situation the developer will be required to set out measures to significantly reduce / eliminate predicted damage. These measures, if acceptable to the Local Planning Authority, will be the subject of planning conditions or obligations detailing timings of work, design and methods of working and should be discussed and agreed prior to formal submission of any application.

**9.3.2** If proposed mitigation is insufficient to safeguard clear ecological value, Planning Permission may be refused on these grounds irrespective of other planning issues. Guidance on the timing of mitigation works is included in Appendix 3.

### 9.4 Compensation

**9.4.1** Where damage is still likely to occur despite mitigation measures, on or off-site habitat creation on a ratio 3:1 (by area) will be required to compensate for loss or reduced habitat quality for grassland, woodland, wetland and heath-land habitats. The Council may prefer off-site compensation measures to be directed towards Biodiversity Opportunity Sites identified on the LDF Allocations Plan. This should be discussed and agreed prior to formal submission of any application.

## 10 Responsibilities

**10.0.1** Generally, irrespective of any need for mitigation or compensation measures, developments must provide an overall net increase into the biodiversity resource of St.Helens and where appropriate, contribute to strengthening the ecological framework of the Borough

**10.0.2** Whilst habitat enhancement and creation requirements will be specific to each development there will be an assumption of it being commensurate with the nature and scale of the development. Examples are set out below:

Scale of Development		Scale of biodiversity enhancement measures required	Example
Minor Scale Development	Residential development 1-9 dwellings and less than 0.5 hectares in area	Voluntary only	Integration of bird nest box scheme into development design
Small-scale Major Development	Residential development 10-199 units and between 0.5 hectares and 4 hectares in area.	Significant habitat enhancement	Surface water drainage scheme provides ponds wet grassland.  Woodland copse provides woodland habitat as part of landscape design
	Non-residential development where floor space is less than 1000m <sup>2</sup> or the site is less than 1 hectare	Significant habitat enhancement	Boundary landscaping using native species provides bird nesting habitat and shelter, berried trees and shrubs provide food
Large Scale Major Development	Residential development with 200 or more units or the site is 4hectares or more in area	Extensive habitat enhancement	Village green areas including ponds, ditches, meadows and woodland areas with good habitat connectivity to surrounding habitats and wildlife corridors.
Large Scale Major Development	Non-residential development of more than 10,000m <sup>2</sup> or the site is more than 2 hectares in area	Extensive habitat enhancement	Green Roofs providing habitat for insects and birds. Generous landscaping includes extensions to retained habitats

### 10.1 Developers

**10.1.1** Biodiversity is a material consideration to all stages of the planning process and consideration must be given to the protection, retention and improvement,of existing biodiversity features within developments, and / or to incorporating new planting or specific biodiversity features into new designs.

## Pre-Application Stage

**10.1.2** Pre-application discussions are actively encouraged by the Council in order to establish issues arising from development ideas.

**10.1.3** Development design proposals must:

- Be based on up to date ecological information undertaken by appropriately experienced and qualified ecologists. Surveys must be carried out at appropriate times of the year, in appropriate weather conditions and to accepted methodologies. (Guidance on survey timings is included in Appendix 2 of this document)
- Be set into a wider ecological context –consultation with BioBank –the biological records centre for North Merseyside, is recommended
- Utilise the Liverpool City Region and St Helens Ecological Frameworks
- Include appropriate mitigation and compensation measures, where impacts on biodiversity are unavoidable and the value of the development is agreed to outweigh the damage.
- Have regard for Environment Agency Catchment Flood Management Plans

## Planning Application Submission

**10.1.4** Planning Applications for minor developments, where appropriate, and all major developments must include:

- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA), where appropriate
- Ecological Appraisal of the site's ecological significance and potential
- Surveys for Protected Species where they are known to be present and/ or the potential for them has been highlighted in ecological appraisals
- Relevant ecological survey results
- Mitigation measures
- Compensation measures
- Biodiversity enhancement measures linked, where appropriate, to ecological frameworks
- Appropriate Method Statements including timings of mitigation works. (Guidance on timings is included in Appendix 3)

**10.1.5** Failure to provide adequate supporting information and surveys may invalidate your application. For further information on validation, please refer to the Council's Validation checklist.

## Implementation Stage

- Production of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan, where required
- Protection of retained habitat features such as trees, ponds or grassland.

## Post construction

**10.1.6** Management and maintenance plans to safeguard retained or created habitats covering a 25-year period will be required to ensure such features continue to fulfil their roles within the Borough and City Region Ecological Frameworks.



Picture 10.1 Large water body created as part of landscaping for New Bold Place

## 10.2 St Helens Council

**10.2.1** The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a statutory duty on all public authorities where “Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”.

**10.2.2** To this end, the Local Planning Authority will seek to work with developers to maximise opportunities for biodiversity protection and enhancement by:

- Maintaining up-to-date biodiversity information on its web site,
- Providing pre-application advice on strategic biodiversity aims where requested,
- Providing pre-application advice on the scope of ecological survey requirements,
- Agreeing the scale and scope of mitigation and compensation. This may include off-site measures guided by the ecological framework.
- Advise on requirements for Habitats Regulation Assessments and Environmental Impact Assessments

## 11 Making Space for Nature

**11.0.1** St.Helens Council expects to see developments designed with wildlife in mind. Whether it is a large housing area, an industrial estate, an agricultural barn conversion or a single house refurbishment, there are simple measures that can be taken to make space for wildlife. Some examples are provided below.

### Ponds

**11.0.2** Ponds were once common in the landscape, often formed through extraction of marl for fertilizer and used to water farm animals. Ponds provide important habitat for a myriad of species including frogs, toads, newts and dragonflies. As farming changed, ponds become redundant and often got filled in, resulting in thousands being lost. Ponds in gardens, parks and open spaces now play a vital role in replacing these lost water bodies. Information on how to design ponds can be found on the following website: The British Dragonfly Society: [www.bds.org.uk](http://www.bds.org.uk)



Picture 11.1 Emperor Dragonfly

### Bats

**11.0.3** Bats live in hollow trees, bridges and tunnels, barns and outbuildings and houses both old and new. Bats can roost in buildings at any time of the year but are most likely to occupy a building between May and August. They do no damage to buildings and do not harm people. Bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. These statutory instruments protect both the species themselves and their associated habitats. Places utilised for shelter are protected whether the bats are present or not.

**11.0.4** Unobtrusive and often well hidden, bats are vulnerable to:

- Poisoning from some timber treatments,
- Being blocked in by loft insulation and starving to death,
- Being injured or killed during building works.

**11.0.5** Providing areas that encourage insects such as ponds, long grass and woodland will provide foraging areas for bats. Generally, bats prefer to fly along linear features in the landscape, so hedgerows linking roosting areas such as woodlands to feeding areas such as meadows and wetlands will benefit bats enormously. Bat bricks and other artificial roost sites can easily be built onto or into developments, providing extra opportunities for roosting. For further information on bats: Bat Conservation : [www.btc.org.uk](http://www.btc.org.uk)



## House Sparrows

**11.0.6** The familiar house sparrow has undergone a population decline so serious it is now a creature of conservation concern. The reasons are thought to be a lack of nesting sites and a shortage of insects necessary for the diet of young chicks. Modern house design tends to be less suitable for house sparrows as the access into the roof space is limited. Provision of nest boxes is an easy way to assist these birds. Better still, provide a number of nest boxes in the form of a “sparrow terrace” as they live in small colonies.

**11.0.7** Research has indicated that the mortality rate of chicks was high due to a lack of insects. By leaving areas of garden and green space with long grass, and creating some log piles, insect numbers can be increased, helping a range of species including the sparrow. More information can be found at the British Trust for Ornithology: [www.bto.org.uk](http://www.bto.org.uk)

## Hedgehogs

**11.0.8** Due to concerns about the population levels of the hedgehog, it has been included in the list of Species of Principal Conservation Concern published by the Government. In urban areas hedgehogs inhabit parks, gardens and green spaces where there are plenty of invertebrates such as slugs to feed on and places to shelter and hibernate. Hedgehogs can be helped by providing some hibernation areas which are dry and protected such as heaps of leaves, compost heaps and piles of branches. These should be sited in quiet areas of gardens or green space. More information on Hedgehog conservation can be found on: [www.mammals.org.uk](http://www.mammals.org.uk)



Picture 11.2 Hedgehog © Richard Burkmar

## Swifts and House Martins

**11.0.9** Swifts and house martins, along with the swallow, are summer visitors to this country, spending the summer here to breed. These birds are reliant on buildings for nest sites. Swifts nest inside the roof space whilst house martins make nests from mud, usually under the eaves.

**11.0.10** Concern for swift numbers grew as many houses were re-roofed and entrance holes to nest sites were blocked. Artificial swift boxes can easily be built into building development and refurbishment and are readily available from commercial suppliers.

**11.0.11** A vital factor in the success of house martins is the availability of mud to build a nest with. If it is not possible to provide a muddy patch of ground, artificial nest boxes are available.

**11.0.12** For more information on swifts and house martins: RSPB : [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk) British Trust for Ornithology: [www.bto.org.uk](http://www.bto.org.uk)

## 11.0.13 Barn Owls

The re-use of farm buildings for office or residential use and the removal of hollow trees reduce the number of sites suitable for barn owls to breed. Schemes to convert barns to residential use will be required by the Council to integrate nest boxes within the scheme. It is important to provide nearby feeding areas of rough grassland, which encourages prey species such as the short-tailed field vole. Barn owls are protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended. Under the act it is an offence to kill, injure, take (handle) any wild barn owl. It is also an offence to damage or destroy any barn owl nest whilst in use or under construction. For more information visit: The Hawk and Owl Trust :



Picture 11.3 Barn Owl

[www.hawkandowltrust.org.uk](http://www.hawkandowltrust.org.uk)

The Barn Owl Trust:

[www.barnowltrust.org.uk](http://www.barnowltrust.org.uk)

#### **11.0.14 Water vole**

Water voles remain widespread in St Helens despite increased predation by mink . Developments near water courses should retain a wide swathe of riparian strip of grassland habitat which serves as both shelter and habitat. Ponds can also provide good habitat, especially where sections of banking are steep to provide areas to burrow. The Water Vole Conservation Handbook 2nd Edition (WildCRU 2006 ) provides comprehensive conservation advice.

#### **11.0.15 Great Crested Newt**

Great crested newts have declined due to loss of suitable habitat such as pond loss due to development, pollution and a lack of management. Newly created or restored ponds within 500m of existing populations can play a major role in reducing population fragmentation. The Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook (Froglife 2001) provides guidance on conservation of this species.

#### **11.0.16 Trees and Woodland Creation**

Trees provide major, wide ranging benefits and can be incorporated within most developments. Where possible, appropriate native species should be used.

**11.0.17** Woodland habitat is relatively easy to create providing, not only significant biodiversity benefits but also landscape enhancement. Native species should be used unless there is a specific need to utilise more ornamental species as they are likely to be colonised by more invertebrate species, the base of a woodland food chain. Woodland Planting mixes should be kept simple and based around the W10 NVC Habitat Classification Extension planting to Semi-natural Ancient Woodland will be particularly beneficial to make these irreplaceable habitats more robust. For more information visit: [www.merseyforest.org.uk](http://www.merseyforest.org.uk)

**11.0.18 Grassland** Grasslands can benefit a range of species from invertebrates such as spiders, moths and butterflies to mammals such as field voles, hares and ground-nesting birds such as the lapwing. Where these occur they should ideally be protected and enhanced within development.

**11.0.19** Meadows created by either seeding or green hay strewing and cropped annually, can re-create this dwindling habitat where a range of herbs can flourish. Rough grassland is easily created on road verges and is valuable for small mammal habitat, which in turn provides food for owls and kestrels.

**11.0.20** Often Brownfield sites have developed into diverse grassland habitat frequently due to a lack of nutrient rich topsoil or have developed a particular habitat make up due to soil pH, such as acidic grassland on colliery waste.



Picture 11.4 Bee Orchid

## 12 Monitoring The Effectiveness Of This SPD

**12.0.1** The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the SPD over the life of the Local Development Framework:

### **Measure 1. The Condition of Stanley Bank Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest**

Managed by St.Helens Ranger Service, Stanley Bank Meadows is currently classified as being in "Favourable Condition". The site was upgraded in 2009 by Natural England following a programme of scrub clearance. Maintenance of the meadow through an annual cut and removal of the arisings is required to allow the quality of the meadow to improve. The wet woodland features of the SSSI designation need to be improved with a priority being the control of Himalayan Balsam.

Target: Favourable Condition achieved

### **Measure 2. Percentage of Local Wildlife and Geology Sites in Favourable Condition**

Of the current 117 Local Wildlife Sites and 11 Local Geology Sites 16.2% are in conservation management implying that the habitat is in favourable condition (National Indicator 197). A system of site condition monitoring is directed via Merseyside Local Sites Partnership, which assesses the broad ecological condition of the site. Currently, an annual target of 20% of sites is aspired to but success is dependant on resources. The Merseyside Local Sites Partnership issues an annual monitoring report.

Target: 75% of Local Wildlife and Geology Sites in Favourable Condition by 2016.

### **Measure 3. Area of new habitats created**

Habitat Opportunity Sites are identified within the LCR and St.Helens Ecological Frameworks and shown on the Allocations Plan.

Targets: Woodland: 35 hectares of new woodland habitat created; Wetland: 1 hectare of new wetland habitat created; Grassland: 31 hectares of new grassland habitat created

### **Measure 4. Area of Local Nature Reserve**

Increase the area of land designated as Local Nature Reserve to meet Natural England guidance.

## 13 Terms and acronyms used in this document

BioBank	North Merseyside Local Biological Records Centre- the central repository for ecological record across North Merseyside. <a href="http://www.merseysidebiobank.org.uk">www.merseysidebiobank.org.uk</a>
Biodiversity Action Plan	The internationally recognised programme addressing threatened species or habitats
Biodiversity Opportunity Sites	Areas identified for significant habitat creation opportunities within the City Region Ecological Framework, which strengthen major biodiversity assets such as key wildlife corridors.
Catchment Flood Management Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strategic tool that seeks to identify sustainable flood management mechanisms by:</li> <li>• understanding the factors that contribute to flood risk within a Catchment both now and in the future;</li> <li>• through discussion with communities and professional partners, recommending the best ways of managing the risk of flooding within the Catchment over the next 50 to 100 years.</li> <li>• providing a tool to communicate the issues to allow a discussion about the future management of flood risk.</li> </ul>
Compensation	Measures providing reparation for loss or damage to wildlife habitats
Ecological Framework	A strategy that aims to reduce habitat fragmentation and species isolation. It includes a map-based element, which identifies core biodiversity assets, the connectivity between them and potential opportunities for habitat expansion and creation.
Unfavourable Condition	Where a site fails to meet the Conservation Objectives set for it
Unfavourable / Recovering	Where a site has failed to meet the Conservation Objectives set for it but the necessary management regime is in place to allow recovery and meeting of Conservation Objectives in the future
Green Infrastructure	The network of green and blue spaces that lies between and within towns and cities, which provide social, environmental and economic benefits.
Green Roof	A green roof is a roof of a building that is partially or completely covered with vegetation and a growing medium, planted over a waterproofing membrane.
Habitat	The area or environment where an organism or ecological community usually lives
Habitats of Principal Importance	Habitats identified by the Government as being of highest conservation concern and being subject to a Biodiversity Action Plan
Mitigation	Measures to reduce or eliminate the effects of development on biodiversity
Natura 2000	The network of sites protected under European legislation made up of Special Protection Areas for birds and Special Areas of Conservation for other species and habitats.
Paleontology	The study of fossil records found in rock.
Petrology.	The study of the origin, composition, structure, and alteration of rocks.
Stratigraphy	The study of rock layers and layering.
Swales	A hollow or depression which provides for drainage

## Appendix 1: Local Wildlife and Geology Sites

Local Wildlife Site	O/S Grid Reference	Citation Summary
Alexandra Colliery	SJ501941	This site occupies a disused mine working and spoil heap. A range of habitats have now developed on this site including, acid and neutral grasslands which contain a number of regionally and locally important species.
Ansdell's Wood	SJ505916	A semi-natural oak woodland containing a number of nationally and regionally important habitats including neutral grassland, a pond and marsh. The site contains English bluebell and a number of regionally and locally important species.
Ashgrove Farm, Wood	SD529009	A woodland surrounding a watercourse and pond. This site comprises of a range of woodland and wetland habitats which are nationally and regionally important.
Ashton's Green Reclaimed tip (AKA Southport St. Open Space)	SJ545957	A former colliery site and then a landfill site, this site has now colonised naturally to form acid and neutral grassland. Other habitats on site include woodland and scrub and wetland habitats.
Barton Clough, Billinge	SD544007	Ancient semi-natural woodland, which runs along the steep banks of a brook. The woodland is predominantly mature oak woodland with willows and alder in the damper sections by the brook.
Bawdy Brook	SD472029	A reach of Bawdy Brook, which provides habitat for Water vole.
Billinge Beacon	SD525013	The summit of the beacon supports the only example of upland acid grassland in St.Helens and contains a habitat which is both nationally and regionally important.
Birchley Wood	SJ522997	Mature woodland containing a number of ponds and wetland habitats. The woodland supports a diverse ground flora including English bluebell and a number of regionally and locally important species
Black Brook, Kings Moss	SJ517996	A reach of Black Brook which provides habitat for Water voles
Blundell Hills Golf Course	SJ486903	A golf course containing a range of habitats including, woodland, scrub, wetlands and hedgerows. These habitats support a high diversity of species and include a number of nationally, regionally and locally rare species.
Booth's Wood	SJ547904	Deciduous plantation woodland dominated by Sycamore, Horse chestnut and Oak. A stream and ditch network runs through the woodland. The large pond in the south of the woodland is surrounded by rush pasture providing wetland habitat for a number of locally rare wetland species.
Brook Wood	SJ500979	A broadleaf deciduous woodland with containing a pond and wetland habitats. The woodland is notable for the presence of English bluebell.
Brown Birches	SJ455987	A mixed deciduous and coniferous plantation. This woodland is an important site for both breeding birds and red squirrels. This site abuts a Local Site in Knowsley.

Local Wildlife Site	O/S Grid Reference	Citation Summary
Cambourne Avenue Pond	SJ582969	A pond within Sankey Valley Park, which is an important breeding site for dragonfly and damselfly species.
Camholes Wood	SD456011	Plantation woodland on peat dominated by birch with a dense under-storey of rhododendron. This woodland supports a population of red squirrels.
Carr Mill Dam	SJ526981	Originally a mill dam but enlarged in the 1820s to provide water to the St.Helens Canal system. The dam supports a range of aquatic and marginal habitats and species as well as acid grassland and woodland.
Castle Hill	SJ595962	A sandstone hill, which is an ancient motte site. The site is predominantly grassland with many orchids. At the foot of the hill a swamp area has developed which is dominated by Reed Canary-grass.
Clinkham Wood	SJ515980	This broadleaf deciduous woodland managed as a community woodland site. The woodland contains a diverse range of habitats including a stream and rock outcrops which support a range on nationally, regionally and locally important species including a number of bryophytes.
Cloghe Wood and Grassland	SJ557960	Ancient semi-natural woodland and associated grassland, which runs along the steep banks of Cloghe Brook. The woodland is highly diverse with a stream and associated wetland habitats, including marsh and sallow / alder carr woodland. The woodland and grassland contains a number of regionally and locally rare species.
Colliers Moss Common Local Nature Reserve	SJ538941	This local nature reserve was designated in 2005 and is the site of disused colliery spoil heap. Remnants of the mossland on which the spoil heap sits remain around the perimeter of the site. A diverse range of habitats has developed on the site including acid and neutral grassland and heath whilst lagoons provide wetland habitats and breeding sites for a number of dragonfly and damselfly species.
Collingwood Road Open Space	SJ578954	Neutral unimproved grassland and marshy grassland within an area of open space used for informal recreation. The grassland contains a number of regionally and locally important species including, Comfrey and Smooth tare.
Crow Lane Copse	SJ574956	An old clay pit with a partial cover of mature oak plantation. The site contains a mosaic of habitats including acid grassland, ponds and woodland.
Depot, Rainford	SD460003	This depot contains a range of habitats including woodland, grassland and wetland habitats. The site provides habitat for Red squirrels and contains several nationally and locally uncommon plant species.
Dog Kennel Plantation	SJ542913	A mature plantation of beech, oak and sycamore providing an important bird-breeding site.
Downham Walk, Pond and Marsh	SD529022	A large pond surrounded by marsh and willow and alder scrub on the boundary of the borough. The site contains a number of nationally, regionally and locally important wetland habitats. The woodland scrub also contains English Bluebell.
Eccleston Golf Course, West Ponds	SJ484945	A group of ponds with associated ditches within the rough area of the golf course. The ponds are surrounded by alder dominated scrub and woodland which contains English bluebell.

Local Wildlife Site	O/S Grid Reference	Citation Summary
Eccleston Mere	SJ481947	The mere was a former extraction site for glass works in the area. Swamp is developing at the mere margins as well as alder and willow carr. To the south of the mere is an area of oak dominated woodland.
Eccleston Top Dam	SJ489951	A disused industrial dam providing aquatic habitat for locally rare aquatic species. The dam is surrounded by acid and neutral grassland, both nationally important habitats.
Ellams Brook	SJ582969	A reach of Ellams Brook which provides habitat for Water voles.
Emma Wood	SJ463975	A mixed deciduous / coniferous plantation containing a number regionally and locally important habitats as well as English Bluebell. The woodland is an important site for breeding birds.
Field, North of Gorsey Lane	SJ534921	An agricultural field which is no longer cultivated due to flooding. The field is now under Countryside Stewardship and is developing into a species rich meadow including, regionally and locally important species. The ponds and ditches on site provide habitat for water vole.
Fir Wood	SJ517996	Mixed woodland, containing ponds, a stream and associated wetland habitats. The woodland provides habitat for English bluebell and a number of other locally rare species.
Former Rainhill Hospital	SJ495924	Diverse range of habitats present including woodlands, wetlands, grasslands and a rock exposure.
Fox Covert, including Cow Hey Dam	SJ588972	A semi-natural woodland and adjacent Cow Hey Dam. The woodland is dominated by oak and sycamore with a ground flora containing stands of English bluebell. The dam has extensive reed beds including Bulrush and Reed canary-grass.
Gallows Croft	SJ597941	Mature broad-leaved woodland on the banks of a stream. The woodland is dominated by oak and sycamore with ground flora including species such as English bluebell, Creeping-jenny and Moschatel.
Gillars Green Wood	SJ476948	Naturally regenerating woodland on colliery spoil. The woodland is dominated by birch and oak and with an understorey of English bluebell and other regionally and locally rare species.
Glasshouse Close	SJ531972	Ancient semi natural woodland on the banks of the Black Brook and St.Helens Canal. The woodland is dominated by acidic oak woodland with alder and willow carr in the lower wetter areas. The woodland supports a diverse flora including English Bluebell as well as a number of regionally and locally important species. In addition, the woodland is a known breeding site for Purple hairstreak butterfly.
Goyt Hey Wood	SJ529984	Ancient semi natural woodland on the steep banks of a stream. The woodland is dominated by oak and supports a rich ground and bryophyte flora including a large number of locally rare species and extensive carpets of Bluebells. The woodland is an important breeding bird site.
Grassland by Parr Flat	SJ546943	A grassland site containing a mosaic of acid, neutral and marshy grassland. The marshy grassland supports a large number of marsh orchids. Wetland communities are developing where old field drains have become blocked.



Local Wildlife Site	O/S Grid Reference	Citation Summary
Grassland, North of Sankey Brook	SJ563948	Unimproved neutral grassland site containing two ponds. This site provides important breeding habitat for butterflies. The grassland is diverse containing species such as silverweed, Bird's-foot trefoil and a number of vetch species whilst the pond areas include marginal species such as Water mint, Branched bur-reed, Lesser pond sedge and Comfrey.
Grassland South of Towpath, Sankey Valley Park	SJ567948	An extensive grassland area within Sankey Valley Park which provides important butterfly habitat. Other habitats include swamp and woodland adding to the diversity of the site.
Mossborough Moss Wood and Land	SD461982	A mixed plantation with Scots Pine and an under-storey of Rhododendron. The woodland is an important breeding site for woodland birds
Grassland, west of Wagon Lane	SJ545962	An extensive area of unimproved grassland bounded by Wagon Lane on the west and a damp ditch running almost the length of the eastern side. The grassland contains a range of grass and herb species including Northern Marsh-orchid and Greater Burnet-saxifrage.
Haresfinch Bank	SJ520964	A waste tip from the glass industry which has now developed into a diverse site containing a range of acid, neutral and alkaline communities. Due to the diversity of the site a large number of plant species are present including nationally, regionally and locally important species.
Havannah Flash	SJ548957	A subsidence flash formed in the second half of the nineteenth century. The water quality is good and the flash has developed rich aquatic and marginal vegetation, with regionally and locally rare species including Rigid hornwort, Spiked water-milfoil and Small sweet-grass.
Haydock Cross	SJ573981	Great crested newts were translocated to this site in 1998. Monitoring of the site has shown that the translocated Great crested newt population has established and is being maintained on this site. In addition this is a botanically diverse site with a number of nationally, regionally and locally important habitats.
Haydock Park Woods	SJ592977	Broadleaf deciduous woodland dominated by Oak and Sycamore which contains a rookery and provides a roost site for Pipistrelle bat.
Hill Top Farm Woodland	SJ488987	A Scots pine dominated plantation, which provides important bird breeding habitat.
Holiday Moss, Rainford	SD496014	A restored landfill site with relict lowland raised mire. Restoration has included the creation of a variety of woodland, grassland and wetland habitats.
Hollins Hey Woods	SJ532983	Broadleaf woodland adjacent to Carr Mill Dam and contiguous with Goyt Hey Wood. The woodland provides habitat for Willow tit and Purple Hair-streak.
Hospital Grounds, Eccleston	SJ488950	A mix of woodland and wetland habitats with pond, marsh and marshy grassland.
Islands Brow Burgy	SJ522967	The burgy banks formed from the waste material from the glass making industry. The site contains a diverse range of habitats including acid, neutral, sand dune and wetland communities. This site has high species diversity including a large number of regionally and locally important and rare species.

Local Wildlife Site	O/S Grid Reference	Citation Summary
Kilbuck Lane Grassland	SJ573977	A calcareous grassland site which formed on the disused Old Boston Coal Pits site. The grassland species include regionally important Yellow-wort and Common comfrey as well as Perforate St John's-wort, eyebright species and Common spotted orchid.
Kings Moss Plantation	SD498007	A coniferous plantation on lowland raised bog. The site contains a range of habitats including woodland, marshy grassland, marginal vegetation. The modified bog habitat is immediately adjacent to the plantation. The site contains both regionally and locally important species.
Land, West of Gerrards Lane	SJ528930	The site is a surviving section of the valley of Sutton Mill Brook. The site is predominantly unimproved neutral grassland which contains a number of regionally and locally rare species.
Leg O' Mutton Dam and Woodland	SJ491951	A disused industrial dam with aquatic, marsh and marginal habitats. The lake is surrounded by both wet and dry semi-natural woodland providing habitat for nationally, regionally and locally rare plant species as well as a breeding site for a number of damselfly and dragonfly species.
Lyme Pit Tip	SJ565960	An extensive area of grassland which has developed around the foot of a disused slag heap. Both acid and neutral habitats are present. The grassland is species rich with over 200 species recorded including a number of regionally and locally important species.
Mersey Valley Golf Course	SJ542893	A golf course containing a number of ponds and hedgerows. The ponds provide habitat for the regionally important species Rigid Hornwort, whilst the hedgerows contain a number of locally rare species.
Mesnes Park and Stream	SJ588954	This site includes the stream area within Mesnes Park. This site contains a range of habitats including scrub, neutral grassland and small areas of developing wet woodland beside the stream providing habitat for locally rare species.
Mill Brook 04	SJ487958	A section of Mill Brook which provides habitat for Water vole. Good habitat diversity with open flowing water course
Mill Brook	SJ484956	Fast flowing water course in Eccleston which also provides habitat for Water voles.
Mill Wood, Eccleston	SJ487955	One of the few wet broad leaf woodland sites in St..Helens. <i>Carex riparia</i> present in its only urban site in the borough. Drainage ditches were dug to enable woodland planting to take place possibly in the early 20 <sup>th</sup> century.
Mine Spoil, West of Weathercock Hill	SJ544999	A disused mine tip which is now being colonised by plants. The spoil tip contains a variety of ephemeral, woodland and wetland habitats.
Moss Plantation	SJ482981	A mixed deciduous and coniferous plantation on mossland, which provides habitat for Red squirrels and contains regionally and locally rare habitats and locally rare species.
Mucky Mountains	SJ575945	A disused alkali waste mound on the edge of Sankey Valley. The site comprises of a mosaic of grassland types, including acid, neutral and calcareous grassland. The calcareous grassland closely resembles limestone grassland with species such as Quaking grass, Red fescue and Carnation sedge. The site contains a high number of regionally and locally rare species.

Local Wildlife Site	O/S Grid Reference	Citation Summary
Newton Brook 05	SJ590947	A section of Newton Brook with adjacent flood plain habitat. This section of the brook is diverse and includes stream, marginal vegetation, scrub and sandstone bank habitats. The site supports a number of nationally, regionally and locally important species.
Newton Brook 03	SJ591938	A section of Newton Brook providing good habitat for water voles.
Newton Common and Pond	SJ559952	Field ponds with well developed marginal vegetation. Marshy grassland including remnants of relict heath surrounds the ponds. Previous survey found Great crested newts, however further survey is required to meet amphibian criteria A1.
Newton Lake and Southern Woodland	SJ594957	A large lake within Willow Park with associated swamp habitats and a sandstone outcrop on the eastern shore. The woodland contains one of two known rookery sites within St.Helens.
Nursery Plantation	SD465015	A coniferous plantation dominated by Scots Pine which provides habitat for a population of Red squirrels.
Old Hey Wood	SJ579942	A narrow strip of woodland on steep banks leading down to St.Helens canal with marginal vegetation occurring along the banks of the St.Helens canal. The site contains stands of English bluebell and is important for bryophytes.
Old Joan's Plantation	SJ484948	Plantation woodland dominated by oak, sycamore and English elm including English bluebell. The woodland contains a pond that is developing marginal and wet woodland vegetation.
Old Mineral Line, Lea Green	SJ513915	A mix of grasslands established on colliery spoil. Scrub has developed since the site was first designated. Recent management work has occurred that has enabled vegetation colonisation to begin again.
Parr Hall Millennium Green	SJ525962	An exceptionally rich and varied marsh and grassland which has existed for at least 200 years. The site consists of both marsh and grassland and the site contains a number of regionally and locally important species. Water voles are also present on this stretch of the St.Helens canal.
Parrens Covert	SJ479906	A relict heath with broadleaf woodland and pond. Surrounded by deep ditches with water and suffers from active community uses.
Pendlebury Brook	SJ502912	A stretch of Pendlebury Brook which supports a population of Water voles.
Pilkington's Glass Factory Grounds	SJ512970	A diverse range of habitats are present including woodland, wetland and grasslands. Most of the site is underlain by alkali waste material providing ideal conditions for the Southern Marsh Orchid.
Plantation Copse and Ponds, Haydock	SJ572982	A small mixed deciduous copse with ponds and rough grassland. The site contains a number of nationally, regionally and locally important habitats and plants. The ponds and surrounding habitats provide habitat for Great Crested Newts.

Local Wildlife Site	O/S Grid Reference	Citation Summary
Ponds, East of Birch Wood	SD513026	A group of ponds surrounded by a small patch of woodland. This site contains a number of wetland and woodland habitats. Flora includes both wetland and woodland species, including English Bluebell.
Prescot Reservoirs Nos 3 & 4	SJ470938	This site comprises of two reservoirs and a disused dry reservoir. The disused reservoir and areas surrounding reservoirs 3 & 4 have now been colonised by a diverse and species rich grassland including species such as, Northern Marsh orchid and Common Spotted orchid.
Rainford Brook	SJ496987	A reach of Rainford brook which supports a population of Water voles.
Rainford Old Delph & Crank Caverns	SJ510995	A broad leaf woodland site above a cave system. The woodland includes several ancient woodland plant indicator species. The cave system is part of the largest known bat roost in north Merseyside.
Randles Brook	SD473013	A reach of Randles Brook which provides habitat for Water voles.
Ravenhead Ponds	SJ515942	This site is part of the Ravenhead Greenway and consists of two ponds with swamp and marginal vegetation. The site contains a number of regionally and locally important species including several species associated with coastal habitats.
Red Brow Wood	SJ578947	An ancient semi natural Oak woodland occupying a small valley leading down to St.Helens canal. The woodland has a diverse flora including species such as English bluebell, Ramsons and Wood anemone. Wetland features including standing water and a dry ditch add to the diversity to this woodland.
Rough Grassland around Sutton Dam Stream	SJ527925	This site contains a mosaic of habitats including neutral grassland, scrub, broadleaf woodland and wetland and marsh areas around Sutton Mill Brook that runs through the centre of the site. The site contains a number of nationally and regionally important species.
Mossborough Moss woodland and land	SJ461982	A mixed plantation with Scots Pine and an under-storey of Rhododendron. The woodland is an important breeding site for woodland birds.
Sand Pit West of Berrington's Lane	SJ494982	A site containing a mosaic of nationally, regionally and locally important habitats including acid grassland, unimproved grassland and sand dune habitat. The site contains a number of locally uncommon plant species.
Sankey Brook	SJ553952	A reach of Sankey Brook which provides habitat for Water voles.
Shaley Brow, Billinge	SD517018	A long linear wood along a stream valley. The woodland is dominated by oak, ash and sycamore and with a rich field layer of English bluebell, Wood sorrel and Dogs mercury.
Shaley Brow, Brownlow	SD517013	A narrow woodland around the line of three small stream valleys. The woodland is dominated by oak with an ground flora which includes English bluebells, Moschatel, Ramsons and Celandine.
Sherdley Park and Golf Course	SJ515934	The Victorian designed Sherdley Park includes several areas of relict woodlands and wetlands. The European protected species great crested newt is present and the site offers an excellent variety of habitats for plants, invertebrates, amphibians and mammals.

Local Wildlife Site	O/S Grid Reference	Citation Summary
Sidings Lane Local Nature Reserve, Rainford	SD463020	Sidings Lane Local Nature Reserve is a former colliery site, which is now dominated by birch woodland but also supports grassland and pond habitats. The site contains a large number of locally rare plant species and is important for Pipistrelle bats.
Small Wood, North-East of Fenny Bank	SJ508985	Predominantly broad leaf woodland with some Pine plantation within it. A diverse mix of woodland, grassland and wetland habitats are present.
St. Helens Canal, South of Haresfinch Burgy	SJ518962	A canalised section of Rainford Brook with good water quality. The north bank and slope are composed of burgy waste from glass manufacture and contain a number of regionally and locally important species including species more usually associated with salt marshes.
St. Helens Canal, Broad Oak Basin and Frog Hall	SJ542958	This site includes St.Helens canal and a series of three ponds which support a good range of marginal and aquatic plants. Diverse acid grassland surrounds the canal. Both the canal and grassland support a number of regionally and locally important plant species
St. Helens Canal	SJ534967	A disused stretch of the St..Helens canal at the end of the Blackbrook branch. This section of the canal has extensive emergent vegetation and aquatic vegetation dominated by common reed and reedmace.
Stanley Bank Meadow, Ponds and Wood	SJ534971	This site forms part of Stanley Bank Local Nature Reserve. The site comprises Stanley Bank Meadow SSSI, the largest area of lowland damp neutral grassland in Merseyside, and Stanley Bank Wood ancient semi-natural woodland. This is a diverse range of habitats and over 200 plant species are supported, a number of which are nationally, regionally and locally important.
Sutton Brook	SJ532935	A diverse section of Sutton Brook. Much of the diversity is as a result of part industrial use with leblanc waste forming parts of the banks of the brook in sections forming a mosaic of acid, neutral and alkaline grassland. The brook and its banks contain a number of regionally and locally important plant species as well as supporting a population of Water voles.
Sutton Mill Dam	SJ523923	A water body created by the damming of Sutton Mill Brook. The site contains a number of nationally and regionally important habitats and plant species including the nationally scarce species Tasteless water-pepper ( <i>Persicaria mitis</i> ).
Thatto Heath Dam	SJ496939	A disused reservoir with swamp and marginal habitats also used for angling. Notable for the presence of the aquatic plant Hornwort ( <i>Ceratophyllum demersum</i> ).
Thatto Heath Meadow	SJ507937	A remnant meadow system within the urban area. The meadows consist of unimproved grassland with a network of hedgerows. A stream valley runs through the site.
The Dingle, Newton	SJ565950	A small and rich sedgemarksh surviving on the edge of a former sandstone quarry. The site supports populations of marsh orchid as well as plants such as Bog pimpernel and Bristle club-rush. Within the marsh is a small patch of dry heath dominated by heather.
The Rough, Woodland	SJ491901	A semi-natural woodland dominated by oak and sycamore, the woodland contains abundant stands of English bluebell as well as locally rare plant species.

Local Wildlife Site	O/S Grid Reference	Citation Summary
Twelve Yarder Pits, Pond and Wood	SD518001	Two linked ponds surrounded by woodland that have been in their present form since 1849. The site contains a number of habitats including woodland and both marginal and wetland habitats. The site contains both nationally and regionally important species.
Woodland East of Wargrave Road	SJ583945	A small stand of mature woodland within the site of a former garden. The site contains a number of habitats including woodland, wetland and hedgerows contributing to a diverse range of species.
Whittle Brook	SJ522901	A stretch of Whittle Brook, which provides habitat for Water voles.
Wicken Hedge	SJ578971	A woodland surrounding Ellams Brook and associated wetland habitats. The woodland is dominated by a beech and sycamore canopy with a ground flora including species such as English bluebell, Dog's Mercury and Hairy brome.
Willow Park	SJ593955	Willow Park contains a range of habitats including woodland, neutral grassland, marshy grassland, a stream and marginal vegetation. The park supports a number of nationally and locally important plants including English Bluebell and Ragged robin.
Windle Brook	SJ482969	A section of Windle Brook which provides habitat for Water voles.
Windle Park Wood	SJ505978	A broadleaf woodland dominated by sycamore, oak and beech with ponds and a stream.
Windlehurst Quarry	SJ504969	An in-filled quarry left to re-colonise. Several sandstone rock exposures remain. Diverse grassland, scrub and wetland habitats are present on the edge of the urban area of the borough.
Windlehurst Sedgemarksh	SJ508973	The only example of a sedgemarksh in St.Helens. The site has not received any management in the last 20 years and has formed a wet woodland cover with the sedgemarksh intact beneath it.
Wood Pit Covert	SJ570967	Woodland which has regenerated on a spoil heap of the former Wood Pit. The woodland has a diverse range of habitats including acid grassland, ponds and marginal vegetation and supports a large number of locally rare species, particularly bryophytes.
Wood Pit Tip, Grassland	SJ568961	This site has developed around the foot of a disused slag heap and comprises of an extensive area of species rich marshy grassland which surrounds a pond and associated marginal vegetation. The site supports a number of regionally and locally important wetland species.
Wooded Valley at Billinge	SD525010	A steep sided wooded valley containing both woodland and wetland habitats. The site contains species of both national and local importance including English bluebell.
Woodland beside Old Garswood Railway	SJ531981	A broadleaf woodland formerly part of Old Garswood Park. The woodland is dominated by oak with a diverse ground flora including English bluebell. Wet and marshy areas provide habitat for a number of locally rare species.

Local Geology Site	O/s Grid Reference	Interest
Windlehurst Quarry	SJ503,969	Disused quarry
Crank Caverns	SJ510,990	Quarry and adits
Wargrave Quarry (Red Brow Wood)	SJ576,944	Disused quarry
Carr Mill Dam	SD 525,983	Disused quarry
Billinge Plantations	SD 525,017	Disused quarry
Billinge Quarry	SD 525,014	Disused quarry
Shaley Brow Quarry	SD517,017	Disused quarry
Brook, 150mENE of Houghwood Golf Course	SD516,017	Road Cutting
Brook, 130m NE of Houghwood Golf Course	SD517,017	Stream Section / water fall
Clinkham Wood (N), Mossbank	SD517,985	Disused quarry
Taylor Park	SJ491,947	Disused quarry

## Appendix 2: Survey Timing Guidance

Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec		
Habitats /Vegetation	Phase 1 & NVC (sub-optimal)													
Badger	Limited sett surveys	Bait Marking & sett surveys		Limited bait marking & sett surveys				Sett surveys		Phase 1 & NVC (sub-optimal)				
Bats	Inspection of hibernation roosts		Limited activity	Summer roost emergence & activity surveys								Limited activity	Hibernation roosts	
	Potential roost, and internal surveys are possible all year round. Trees are best surveyed in winter													
Birds	Winter species		Breeding birds/ migrant species		Breeding birds		Low activity		Migrant species		Winter species			
Great crested newt	Newts hibernating		Pond surveys for adults/ terrestrial survey/ Egg surveys April-mid-June/ Larvea surveys from mid-May									Habitat Survey		Newts hibernating
Reptiles	Reptiles hibernating		Peak survey months are April & May				Reduced basking time lowers effectiveness of refugia survey		Peak survey Month		Limited activity		Reptiles hibernating	
Water voles	Low activity	Initial habitat survey		Habitat & field signs/ activity surveys. May be limited by vegetation cover and weather								Initial habitat survey		Low activity
	Surveys recommended		Sub-optimal Survey Period		Surveys not possible									

\* Adapted with permission from Thomson Ecology Survey Calendar

This table provides general guidance. Local advice may vary slightly on occasion.



## Appendix 3: Mitigation Work Timings

Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Habitats /vegetation	Planting & translocation		Sub-optimal		No mitigation for the majority of species				Sub-optimal		Planting & translocation	
Badgers	No disturbance to existing setts/ building of artificial setts only											
Bats	Works on Maternity roosts	Works on Maternity roosts & hibernation roosts	Works on Maternity roosts & hibernation roosts	Works on hibernation roosts only				Works on Maternity roosts & hibernation roosts	Works on Maternity roosts & hibernation roosts			
Birds	Clearance											
Great crested newts	Pond management only (hibernation)		Newt trapping in ponds and on land				Newt trapping on land only			Pond Management only (hibernation)		
Reptiles	Above ground scrub clearance only (hibernation)		Capture & translocation programmes				Capture & translocation (Sub-optimal)		Capture & translocation programmes . Scrub clearance		Above ground scrub clearance only (hibernation)	
Water voles	Avoid works in habitat		Trapping / exclusion		No works as breeding			Trapping /exclusion		Avoid works in habitat		
		Mitigation possible			Mitigation restricted			Mitigation not possible				

\* Adapted with permission from Thomson Ecology Survey Calendar



## Adoption Statement

In accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, St.Helens Council hereby gives notice that the Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted on 22nd June 2011.

The Biodiversity SPD will provide guidance against which planning applications will be assessed in relation to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in new development.

Copies of the adopted Biodiversity SPD (22nd June 2011) and a summary of the representations received are available for inspection at Planning Reception, Town Hall, Victoria Square, St.Helens and all local libraries in the Borough during normal opening hours. The adopted Biodiversity SPD (22nd June 2011) and a summary of the representations can also be viewed and downloaded from the Council's website at [ldf.sthelens.gov.uk](http://ldf.sthelens.gov.uk) or obtained by contacting the Planning Policy Team on 01744 676190.

Any person with sufficient interest in the decision to adopt the Biodiversity SPD may make an application to the High Court for permission to apply for judicial review of the decision to adopt the document. Any such application must be made promptly and in any event not later than 3 months after the day on which the Biodiversity SPD was adopted.



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