

Hulme Green Spaces

“The need for a managed greenspace for wildlife and people in Hulme”

Draft Strategy Document April 2006

Section 1 Introduction

Hulme - a background

Section 2

Urban Green Spaces & Biodiversity

“The value of accessible greenspace, managed in a more informal naturalistic way, within and around towns and cities, has long been recognised for people and wildlife.”
Manchester City Council (Parks for All Seasons -Manchester Leisure’s Parks Strategy)

National Policy perspectives

With the introduction of the Local Government Act (2000) all local authorities were committed to the principle of sustainable development, which means that development strategies must include a coherent and balanced approach that balances social economic and environmental factors.

Alongside this Local Community Plans means Councils have a statutory responsibility to ensure their services meet the needs of the community. Hulme’s Community Plan, like all those in the country must include biodiversity as a core aspect (CROW Act 2001). In addition, order to assist this process, DEFRA has issued “Life Support” which advises local authorities on how to incorporate biodiversity into local Community Strategies. The Local Government Association, in their statement on biodiversity, (200??) referred to the key role local authorities have in conserving and enhancing biodiversity through a sustainable approach to development, appropriate management of parks and the vital role of partnerships in delivering this process. All local authorities are obliged to conduct an audit of open space, and assess the provision of natural greenspace and potential for improvement.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (henceforth OPDM) and the government created advisory body Commission for the Built Environment (henceforth CABE) have, since 2003, delivered a series of policy documents on the multiple benefits of urban green spaces, and stressed the UK governments commitment to reversing the decline of urban green space and flagging them up as assets to communities and local authorities. Over the last 18 months CABE Space has commissioned new research into the economic value of green spaces and the way that cities around the world use green spaces to generate inward investment and economic prosperity.¹

¹The Value of Public Space-How high quality parks and public spaces create economic, social and environmental value
CABE, March 2004;Green space strategies ; Making the most of your parks and green spaces (CABE, 01 May 2004);CABE (2002)

In "Living Spaces, Better Places" the governments Urban Green Spaces Taskforce reported on the integral role of public green space in providing local communities with places to come into contact with the natural world.

Government guidance PPG 17 obliges all local authorities to audit open space in order that a greenspace network *which meets the needs of the community*.

All this intensive research and policy guidance highlighted several common themes, which unite under the overarching theme of quality of life. Urban green space had significant positive effects on existing communities and in regeneration in terms of economic value, physical and mental health, social cohesion and inclusion and bwnwfir for wildlife. Aside from the intrinsic value of having nature in our cities, urban wildlife habitats also provide a focus for local communities, who often become very attached to them, involving communities to create a shared vision.

CABE outlined evidence to show that people use their local public spaces more, and are more satisfied with them, if these include natural elements: even more so if they were 'natural' than if they were man-made.

In 2005 Government minister Yvette Cooper spoke at a flagship conference "Urban Green Spaces" - sustaining the renaissance - a one day conference" on the support government could give to local authorities to improve green spaces. That conference was sponsored by Regeneration and Renewal magazine, which has focused regularly on the significance of urban green space over the last two years, highlighting the economic, social, community and conservation value of green space.

City wide policy perspectives

Manchester City Council has been a lead partner in several key strategies developed over the past 5 years highlighting the importance of green space, aimed at improving the quality of life in the city. These include "Parks for All Seasons -Manchester Leisure's Parks Strategy" (referred to throughout), "Greening Greater Manchester" and the Manchester Biodiversity Strategy.

Greening Greater Manchester???

The Manchester Biodiversity Strategy, was adopted in April 2005 the delivery of which is facilitated by a group of lead agencies, including Manchester City Council. Its includes urban green space as a Priority Habitat, and makes extensive reference to sustainability as expressed through concern for wildlife and their habitats.

"Building vibrant sustainable communities means involving people in all aspects of development, including biodiversity. It makes specific provision for the role and importance of biodiversity in regeneration and development, which is worth stating in

Streets of Shame. Summary of findings from 'Public Attitudes to Architecture and the Built Environment'. London, CABE. Also, Countryside Rights of Way Act (HM Government 2000), "Life Support" (Local & Regional Strategy Implementation Group of the England Biodiversity Group, DEFRA ???; "Living Spaces, Better Places" Urban Green Spaces Taskforce (200??)

full:

“Large regeneration schemes such as New East Manchester and the North Manchester strategic framework will reshape communities and their environment. Biodiversity can be integrated into these development plans. In turn, through a number of different funding sources, Biodiversity can be a means of leveraging more funds into regeneration.

Objective 5 of the strategy states that partners signed up to the aim to “ensure that Biodiversity is integrated into the wider sustainable development agenda as well as incorporating biodiversity into new build, opportunities will arise to secure funding for biodiversity related projects.”

In 2005 the partners delivered a workshop which produced 5 further objectives which included the importance of a Sustainable development Agenda being adopted across Manchester and noted the need to provide information about the value of 'wild' or 'unkept' green spaces to the public

Hulme - local perspectives

In 2006 the consultants Jones Lang La Salle delivered the Birley Fields Review. This report made several definite recommendations about the future of the the land currently not occupied by built structures. It also recommended that a Land use Strategy and a Master plan for the site be devised. It stated that “a significant amount of background research was undertaken including an assessment of all issues associated with town planning, accessibility and the characteristics of the site”. It concluded that “ The Development Strategy over the first ten years has involved limited greening” and refers to as a “stark’ landscape”. There is mention of the “potential to build upon the broad theme of sustainability particularly as it relates to innovative approaches to the built environment. This would link to Hulme’s role as an Energy Conservation Area pilot”. This latter reference to sustainability nods to a theme referred to in the Manchester Biodiversity Strategy. It remarks on the European site - “Linked to the findings of the SURF report, it has the potential to be brought forward with high Sustainability and Eco Standards as a model of Best Practice. However, the reference is not expanded. JLL conclude that the right approach for the Birley Fields Study Area is based around the following key components:

- **clearer Vision**
- **better Plan**
- **more Integrated Strategy**

In 2002 the University of Salford Centre for Sustainable Urban and Regional Futures undertook the “Hulme, Ten years on -final report to Manchester city council” (June 2002). The report set out to assess what had been achieved by regeneration programme and to look at outstanding challenges. It used focus groups to reveal the attitudes and opinions of local people. Key findings were that “All wished to see more market facilities and services and a more interesting, greener and safer environment”. It stated that “adult residents were more interested in retaining sites for public uses, and the

development of less polluting forms of transport”.

The report recognised that 80% of objectives had been achieved but that a reappraisal was needed to create a new vision, which balanced the various development agendas with the retention of open space (not specified) and delivered an integrated strategy to improve life opportunities of local people

CTAC Hulme Green REPORT IN HERE

Neighbourhood Plan/ Local Community Plan

Section 3

Sustainable Communities: Hulme people, regeneration and green space

In any regeneration, green space is part of developing sustainability of a community. In 2004 John Prescott confirmed that

‘Successful, thriving and prosperous communities are characterised by streets, parks and open spaces that are clean, safe and attractive - areas that local people are proud of and want to spend their time in’.

“Living Places: Greener, Safer, Cleaner” ODPM (2002)

Green space enables many of the key priorities of Manchester City Council led Sustainable Neighbourhoods Partnership and The Sustainable Neighbourhoods Thematic Action Plan

- assisting with the regeneration of disadvantaged areas
- including local communities in health gain
- improving the quality of public space in neighbourhoods

Manchester City Council have affirmed that creating sustainable communities is a cross-cutting theme of the Community Strategy, and of the City Pride initiative, both of which are key initiatives within the city.

The document **Inner South Manchester draft strategic regeneration framework - consultation summary** (henceforth ISM SRF) was published and a consultation document “The Connected City” was delivered to householders in Hulme (along with other areas of ISM). The former stated that its purpose includes developing a vision to underpin future planning and develop a policy framework which “includes and links up all aspects of public service delivery, economic, social and physical regeneration and community engagement” (pg. 1).

In terms of green spaces the document notes that:

“Although ISM has some high quality parks and open spaces a greater emphasis on green and open space is required to strengthen neighbourhoods” (10). This chimes with the local findings of the CTAC report which stated that whilst Hulme has a notable park there is a notable need for more diversity in form of green space, such as wildlife areas/green corridors etc.

In terms of more localised approaches to building healthy communities the ISM SRF stated that: “While areas of Hulme have undergone considerable regeneration, there are still specific pockets of deprivation in the area...it has a range of physical and social problems that must be tackled in order for the area to meet its potential” (3) The ISM SRF vision of vibrant and sustainable communities involves

When the framework expands into detailed themes affecting the future of ISM under the section entitled Community Character it refers to “preserving nurturing and managing green space and where appropriate the establishment of new green spaces within dense urban environments” pg 29

1) Social Inclusion

Public spaces are open to all, regardless of ethnic origin, age or gender, and as such they represent a democratic forum for citizens and society. When properly designed and cared for, they bring communities together, provide meeting places and foster social ties of a kind that have

been disappearing in many urban areas. These spaces shape the cultural identity of an area, are part of its unique character and provide a sense of place for local communities.

It is worth quoting at length the findings of CABE in “The Value of Public Space How high quality parks and public spaces create economic, social and environmental value”

They conclude that:

“There is evidence to show that people use their local public spaces more, and are more satisfied with them, if these include natural elements: a green and pleasant space is generally, therefore, a well-used space. A study in Chicago found that people living in apartments tended to use nearby public spaces more if they were ‘natural’ than if they were man-made. This increased use of the green spaces led in turn to a greater amount of socialising among neighbours - initially as they met while simply pausing to sit, and later to deepen social ties.”

Inner South Manchester is a series of neighbourhoods, not one single uniform area. These communities should be equally vibrant and sustainable... they should also be able to accommodate a range of people from different social and ethnic backgrounds a key feature of a flourishing ISM will be the ability and willingness of communities and neighbourhoods to welcome and help integrate new arrivals” (10)

2) Health

Physical as well as mental health are influenced by the stress associated with living in neighbourhoods where the environment is seen as threatening,

“An ever increasing body of research is recognising that the sights, smells and touch of the natural environment can significantly improve mental well-being and relieve the symptoms of stress. Recent studies in America have highlighted that the presence of visible green space can accelerate the period of recovery for those recuperating from illness.”

Manchester City Council (Parks for All Seasons -Manchester Leisure’s Parks Strategy)

3) Wildlife and Biodiversity

Examples of successful community involvement and green space (anna)

see urban green spaces conference 10th March 2005

e.g Leaf St,

Section 4 Biodiversity Audit

Section 5 Management Plan

Section 6

Discussion (to go at end)

We would contend that the Birley Fields Review and the SURF report of 2002 did not take due consideration of the role of green space in regeneration, or factor in national and city wide strategies for green space, biodiversity, community cohesion and sustainability physical health and well being. We would question how does the proposed land use strategy as recommended in the Birley Fields Strategic Review (BFSR) tie in with existing Manchester City Council strategies eg Parks for All Seasons, Wild About Manchester - Manchester Biodiversity Strategy

In conclusion we contend that:

Hulme Common can offer a managed green space which:

1. Is community led
2. Meets commitments to biodiversity and sustainability targets as outlined in Wild About Manchester - Biodiversity Strategy 2005 to which MCC are signatories
3. Helps meets commitments to health and fitness targets
4. Meets commitments made in the MCC Parks for all Seasons strategy
5. Would be attractive to new investors and residents>>

The Value of Public Space

How high quality parks and public spaces create economic, social and environmental value

CABE, March 2004

"In research carried out for CABE, 85 per cent of people surveyed felt that the quality of public space and the built environment has a direct impact on their lives and on the way they feel.²"

² CABE (2002) Streets of Shame. Summary of findings from 'Public Attitudes to Architecture and the Built Environment'. London, CABE.

All too often, badly designed, badly managed public spaces are in the most deprived urban areas. Because of the lack of investment, they fail to improve the quality of life for the local people as they could, and should. Indeed, shabby, badly maintained public spaces only worsen the sense of physical and social decline in an area. In those places where regeneration projects are being undertaken, it is important to ensure that the push for higher density housing is not at the expense of good-quality outdoor spaces. In fact, the higher the density of housing, the greater the need for well-designed, well-managed public spaces to aid 'liveability' in that community. It also makes economic sense as the research highlights the increase in property and land values surrounding good quality parks.

As Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott argued in Living Places: Greener, Safer, Cleaner, 'Successful, thriving and prosperous communities are characterised by streets, parks and open spaces that are clean, safe and attractive - areas that local people are proud of and want to spend their time in'.⁵

⁵ ODPM (2002) Living Places: Greener, Safer, Cleaner. London, ODPM.

The Economic Value of Public Space

A high-quality public environment can have a significant impact on the economic life of urban centres big or small, and is therefore an essential part of any successful regeneration strategy. As towns increasingly compete with one another to attract investment, the presence of good parks, squares, gardens and other public spaces becomes a vital business and marketing tool: companies are attracted to locations that offer well-designed, well-managed public places and these in turn attract customers, employees and services. In town centres, a pleasant and well-maintained environment increases the number of people visiting retail areas, otherwise known as 'footfall'. A good public landscape also offers very clear benefits to

the local economy in terms of stimulating increased house prices, since house-buyers are willing to pay to be near green space.

Being close to public space adds economic value

- Small businesses choosing a new business location rank open space, parks and recreation as a number-one priority.¹⁰

The Impact on Physical and Mental Health

Clearly these problems need to be addressed. Access to good-quality, well-maintained public spaces can help to improve our physical and mental health by encouraging us to walk more, to play sport, or simply to enjoy a green and natural environment. In other words, our open spaces are a powerful weapon in the fight against obesity and ill-health.

<<What are Manchester's Health targets?>>

The Benefits for Children and Young People

But increasing urbanisation has left our children with far fewer opportunities than previous generations to play freely outdoors and experience the natural environment.

The Social Dimension of Public Space

Public spaces are open to all, regardless of ethnic origin, age or gender, and as such they represent a democratic forum for citizens and society. When properly designed and cared for, they bring communities together, provide meeting places and foster social ties of a kind that have been disappearing in many urban areas. These spaces shape the cultural identity of an area, are part of its unique character and provide a sense of place for local communities.

<<Tie this in with Government's Community Cohesion Strategy, 'Strengthening Communities'.>>

Promoting neighbourliness and social inclusion

Green spaces are well used

There is evidence to show that people use their local public spaces more, and are more satisfied with them, if these include natural elements: a green and pleasant space is generally, therefore, a well-used space. A study in Chicago found that people living in apartments tended to use nearby public spaces more if they were 'natural' than if they were man-made. This increased use of the green spaces led in turn to a greater amount of socialising among neighbours - initially as they met while simply pausing to sit, and later to deepen social ties.⁴¹

The social value of trees, plants and 'natural areas'

A view of trees is, along with the availability of natural areas nearby, the strongest factor affecting people's satisfaction with their neighbourhood. Having somewhere to grow flowers and vegetables also significantly affects feelings of community.

How and where these natural areas are located is important. It has been found, for example, that if green spaces are surrounded by housing or are in some way a continuation of the home environment, then they are shared by residents and are unlikely to suffer from the kind of maintenance problems that arise when there is a lack of perceived ownership. Large open spaces, on the other hand, do not often generate such positive community feelings. It is most beneficial, therefore, to provide small natural areas close to housing, providing opportunities to grow flowers and vegetables.⁴²

Value from Biodiversity and Nature

Vegetation also provides an opportunity for people to be close to 'nature', with the associated

positive impact that this can bring in terms of mental health and the simple pleasure of experiencing trees, birds, squirrels, ladybirds and other wildlife in an urban situation.

<<This is where we can link into the Manchester Biodiversity bits.>>

Nature and wildlife amongst the urban fabric

The current debate about housing, and whether it should be on brownfield or greenfield sites, often centres only on the buildings themselves and not on the external environment.

Aside from the intrinsic value of having nature in our cities, urban wildlife habitats also provide a focus for local communities, who often become very attached to them.

What became clear was that the opportunity for contact with nature in the city is particularly highly valued: open spaces are felt to provide a chance to experience nature and see creatures such as foxes at close quarters; they are places for exploration and 'adventure'; and they provide a variety of natural forms in contrast to the man-made environment. Even the simple knowledge that a natural area exists is, for many, a source of satisfaction.⁵⁵

Green space strategies

Making the most of your parks and green spaces

CABE, 01 May 2004

The Government is committed to reversing the decline of urban green space of previous decades. Part of this is to encourage a more strategic approach to the provision and care of our green network. Green space strategies help councils to turn public parks and other green spaces into assets rather than liabilities. Through a creative and joined-up approach, strategies can act as route maps to the provision of safe and popular public spaces that underpin urban renaissance by:

- involving communities to create a shared vision
- safeguarding the future of green spaces
- improving the quality of neighbourhoods
- enhancing the well-being of local people
- attracting resources for management

These plans provide an integrated approach to green space that support a council's drive for better value and attract external funding.

<<How does MCC's land use strategy for Hulme feed into government policy on green space as spelt out by ODPM and CABE.>>

<<Community Trust can manage the green space.>>

Who should be involved?

In addition, the views of local people of all ages and cultural backgrounds and those who do not currently use green spaces should be included.

Regeneration and Renewal Magazine
27 May 2005

Deputy Director of CABE Space Edward Hobson believes quality green spaces can have a dramatic effect, "People want to live in areas with high quality green spaces."

Tony Hawkhead of Groundwork says, "Design delivered and managed in the right way green spaces can contribute to addressing some of the most pressing challenges we face as a society."

That more and more community groups are taking on management roles is good news for parks; these groups are often in a better position to keep an eye on their local park than hard pressed local authority employees.... The management of green spaces is increasingly dependent on community engagement.

Birley Fields Strategic Review Executive Summary

<<How does the proposed land use strategy as recommended in the Birley Fields Strategic Review (BFSR) tie in with existing MCC strategies eg Parks for All Seasons, Wild About Manchester - Manchester Biodiversity Strategy.>>

In carrying out the study, a significant amount of background research was undertaken including an assessment of all issues associated with town planning, accessibility and the characteristics of the site. <<NOT ALL!>>

The remaining plots of land within the original Birley Field office site are all vacant and are open sites which create a poor visual impression. They are characterised by overgrown vegetation and trees that attract litter and some low level anti-social behaviour. In addition, there are sites to the north - known as European and Leaf Street - and east which are also vacant and overgrown and detract from recent developments on adjoining sites.

Lack of a Masterplan that sets out a clear identity and associated sense of place
Lack of coordinated plan has, over the years, led to ad hoc selection of planning applications and no planned public realm programme. A masterplan would be vital going forward to ensure continuity and that all aspirations are fulfilled (including, for example, those that aim to link the physical development with economic outcomes such as local employment).

<<How do we feed into this masterplan and how does it take account of green space and biodiversity issues.>>

- The Development Strategy over the first ten years has involved limited greening and what the report refers to as a 'stark' landscape.
- There is potential to build upon the broad theme of sustainability particularly as it relates to innovative approaches to the built environment. This would link to Hulme's role as an Energy Conservation Area pilot.

<<Sustainability is referred to in the Manchester Biodiversity Strategy, below pages 30, 34.>>

<<Hulme Common can offer a managed green space which:

6. Is community lead
7. Meets commitments to biodiversity and sustainability targets as outlined in Wild About Manchester - Biodiversity Strategy 2005 to which MCC are signatories
8. Helps meets commitments to health and fitness targets
9. Meets commitments made in the MCC Parks for all Seasons strategy
10. Would be attractive to new investors and residents>>

Given the SRF policies and the findings of the SURF report, it is suggested that larger family homes at lower densities would be preferred with sustainability and open space built into any developments. <<What does this mean?!?>>

JLL conclude that the right approach for the Birley Fields Study Area is based around the following key components:

- clearer Vision
- better Plan
- more Integrated Strategy

<<a cobbled together plan without unified strategy>>

6. DEVELOPMENT AND LAND USE STRATEGY

The report recommends that on the European site north of Bonsall Street, a new residential development is brought forward, with complementary commercial uses and dedicated open space to consolidate the neighbourhood in this area.

Linked to the findings of the SURF report, it has the potential to be brought forward with high Sustainability and Eco Standards as a model of Best Practice.

<<What do these terms mean?>>

Wild about Manchester - Biodiversity Strategy 2005

Building vibrant sustainable communities means involving people in all aspects of development, including biodiversity. Consultation, awareness raising and participation could lead to a greater understanding of the City's natural resource. Environmental improvements can also engender respect for the environment and provide an important link between people and places. Increased site use and more active local involvement will provide more opportunity for monitoring landscape change and species numbers through events and activities.

Large regeneration schemes such as New East Manchester and the North Manchester strategic framework will reshape communities and their environment. Biodiversity can be integrated into these development plans. In turn, through a number of different funding sources, Biodiversity can be a means of leveraging more funds into regeneration.

6.5 Manchester's Commitment to Biodiversity Conservation

Objective 5

To ensure that Biodiversity is integrated into the wider sustainable development agenda As well as incorporating biodiversity into new build, opportunities will arise to secure funding for biodiversity related projects.

Priority Actions

- To encourage elements of biodiversity good practice and sustainability into all new developments.
- To encourage developers to identify ecological impacts of proposals.
- To ensure that sites and species of special biodiversity interest (as listed in this strategy) do not suffer any overall negative impact from development.
- To seek protection against inappropriate development through the planning process.
- To maximise the opportunities for improving biodiversity by the introduction of new funding.

Objective 5 Integrate biodiversity into the wider sustainable development agenda

Action: To encourage environmentally friendly development

Lead agency: ES & C, MPL

Targets and milestones 2005: Influence design of major and minor developments in Manchester.

Targets and milestones 2006: Creation of 5 green roof schemes

"urban spaces in Manchester are all the more valuable" (Exec summary)

Manchester Priority Habitat Survey 2001 included managed green space as priority"

English Nature recommends that people living in cities such as Manchester should have :natural green space less than 300m (in a straight line) from home pg14

Environmental prevention

pg16 MCC priorities include creating network of safe and attractive major linear

recreational open spaces...including..better use of areas of open space”

Environmental protection

Maintaining environmental quality in residential areas by carefully controlling developments

3.5 The Manchester Community Strategy 2002-2012

This Strategy sets out a number of objectives about achieving a more sustainable environment.

- Investing in children, families and young people In many cases high density housing means

that managed green space is the first point of contact with nature that people have This green space is an opportunity for residents and families to benefit socially and educationally.

- Housing and Sustainable Communities

Managing the biodiversity of green spaces will raise the quality of the local environment and help to support the economic value of the area.

- Making Manchester Safe

Nature conservation should not just seek to focus on the biodiversity of Manchester but should also seek to increase the use of the natural environment by local people thereby increasing site surveillance and enhancing community safety; a practise used in the Green Flag management process.

- Health Inequalities

Manchester has some of the most challenging health problems in the UK; biodiversity can encourage the development of healthier outdoor activities and reduce pollution.

- Enhancing the cultural base

Well managed and attractive open space can provide the local residents with a communal meeting point and encourage community interaction. Furthermore, there is exciting potential for the linkage, exploration and promotion of the interaction between biodiversity and heritage in Manchester, for example through ancient woodlands and hedgerows, or lodges created during Manchester’s textile era. Protection and enhancement of such features to achieve improved biodiversity will contribute to the preservation of heritage sites and the city’s historical identity, further linking people with places and forging strong cultural connections.

3.6 Manchester Waterways Strategy 2003

The waterways of Manchester are a major asset for the city and provide significant opportunities to raise the profile of the city through a range of complimentary

regeneration initiatives. Manchester's rivers, tributaries and canals are in varying condition and of contrasting characters, from urban to semi-rural. A study was commissioned to examine the existing condition and future role of waterways in the regeneration of the city.

The Strategy was developed in the context of a changing policy background. Statutory legislation such as the European Water Framework Directive aims to encourage member states to improve water quality and provide river basin management plans by 2015, and will be the major policy driver for river management over the next 20 years.

3.7 Parks for All Seasons

- A Parks Strategy for Manchester 2003

The Parks Strategy identifies the following priority actions in relation to urban countryside, sustainability and environmental impact, which embrace biodiversity management:

- Review systems for recording wildlife in Manchester through appropriate partnerships. Develop wildlife and conservation strategies.
- Habitat Management Plans for relevant parks and open spaces.
- Adoption of a Local Authority Eco-Management and Audit Scheme, and evaluation against national and local sustainable development indicators.
- Close partnership working, with the integration of other environmental strategies and policies.
- Incorporate the principles, policies and guidelines of a woodlands strategy into park management plans
- Attract further funding to complete survey of trees and woodland.
- Development of links with appropriate voluntary groups and investigation into accessing environmental grants.
- Development of a strategy for the interpretation and education use of the environmental resource.

3.8 Manchester Leisure Greenspace Management Strategy 2003

This strategic framework provides site-by-site baseline information on landscape and habitat types for all recreational sites, and prescriptive guidance to the development of site-specific management strategies and action plans for these landscape and habitat types.

The framework therefore includes a summary audit of existing habitat and landscape elements

throughout the whole of the Manchester Leisure resource including woodland, summary options for change, and an initial Woodland Strategy with broad guidance for the production of

woodland management plans. A programme of production of site-specific management plans is underway which incorporates these landscape and habitat management

objectives and prescriptions, including site specific and generic woodland management planning.

4.8 Green Streets

Green Streets is an initiative that uses greening projects to improve the quality of life for urban dwellers in Manchester. Green Streets works at the heart of the community with residents, businesses and partner organisations to promote the value of greenery as a means of tackling a range of social, health and economic issues

Green Streets projects are designed to reflect local circumstances and individual preferences that mean that a variety of project types are delivered. The projects delivered include;

- Street Trees.
- Hanging baskets / planters / window boxes.
- Green walls (using wall climbing plants).
- Flowering grass verges.
- New secure front gardens for terraced properties.
- Tree planting on housing clearance sites / small open spaces and front gardens.

Delivering projects of this nature will also make a significant contribution towards biodiversity through the ability of trees and plants to attract invertebrates and birds.

6.1 Key Opportunities

Threats

- Un-coordinated approach.
- Inappropriate development.
- Inconsistent land management.
- Climate Change.
- Pesticide & herbicide use.

6.2 Discussion of key opportunities

Manchester has a diverse and changing landscape. It is dissected by a network of river valleys which act as wildlife corridors, and has some of the oldest formal parkland in the country. Topographically the landscape changes from the flat floodplains of the Mersey belt to the higher ground and acid grasslands of north Manchester.

The Phase 1 habitat survey provides good data as regards habitat distribution, but more focussed and detailed information is still required in relation to species abundance and distribution. Evidence from the best value survey of 2003 shows that 16% residents in Manchester value access to nature as a key factor in their quality of life. Subjective

evidence shows that biodiversity adds to well being however there are other factors, which have a more direct effect on quality of life. Factors such as access to employment, good quality housing and community safety are all more important to local people.

This does not mean that biodiversity is not important but it does mean that biodiversity cannot prejudice the regeneration of Manchester. Regeneration can at times have a negative impact on biodiversity. Floating water plantain can be affected by increased water traffic. Therefore the renaissance of Manchester's waterways could affect this species. In these cases translocation needs to be undertaken to ensure that the development can proceed. With other more common species a policy of biodiversity replacement may be applicable, although the hierarchy will always be to protect on site wherever possible.

Using bioremediation (the use of certain plants as a filtering mechanism) techniques has a proven ecological and environmental benefit. It can help reduce the pollution problem often associated with landfill and wastewater. Reedbeds for instance, have been used for many years as natural filters to reduce the impact of heavy metals leaching into watercourses from landfill. They are also a priority habitat, providing cover for target species like the reed bunting and great crested newt. Building vibrant sustainable communities means involving people in all aspects of development, including biodiversity. Consultation, awareness raising and participation could lead to a greater understanding of the City's natural resource.

Environmental improvements can also engender respect for the environment and provide an important link between people and places. Increased site use and more active local involvement will provide more opportunity for monitoring landscape change and species numbers through events and activities. Large regeneration schemes such as New East Manchester and the North Manchester strategic framework will reshape communities and their environment. Biodiversity can be integrated into these development plans. In turn, through a number of different funding sources, Biodiversity can be a means of leveraging more funds into regeneration. The majority of present biodiversity management within the city is uncoordinated and inconsistently or sporadically monitored, with moderate consideration given to biodiversity issues within long term management planning for open spaces in Manchester.

Un-coordinated management include extensive mowing regimes and inappropriate planting schemes. This represents a significant challenge for the City. Consistent and appropriate management practices and regimes are needed which maximise biodiversity potential.

New strategic initiatives like the Manchester Leisure Greenspace Management Strategy are seeking to address this through the undertaking of a systematic approach to site appraisal and management, with the aim of continually improving efficient, appropriate and sustainable management of parks and recreational open spaces citywide.

One of the main objectives for this strategy will be to set up a species database. Currently there isn't a central source where population numbers can be extracted which

leaves it very difficult to assess any increase or decrease in species numbers. This database will allow Manchester to monitor its own priority species, as records will be collated from community groups, schools and colleges, local conservation groups, park wardens and the general public.