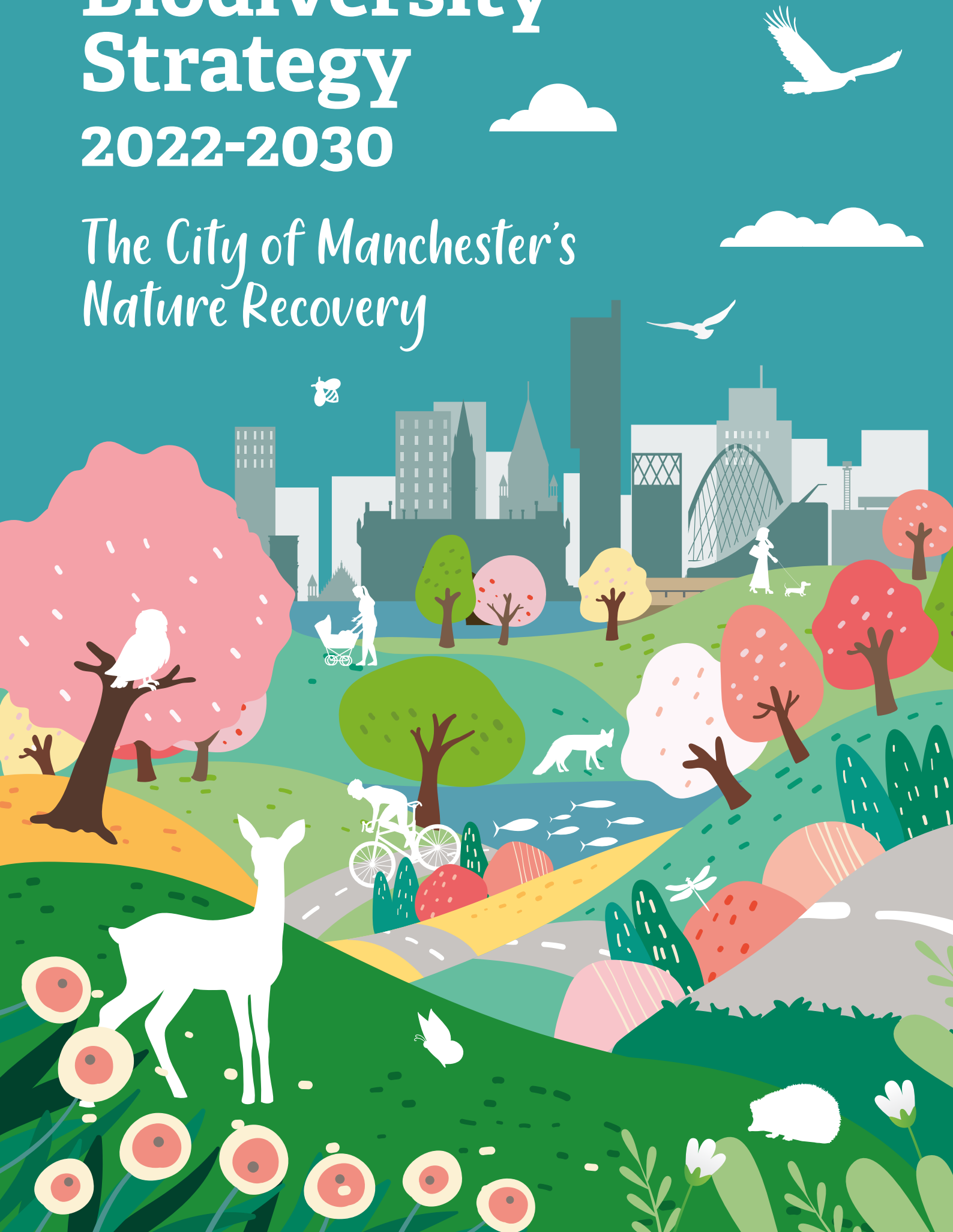


# Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2030

## The City of Manchester's Nature Recovery



**Manchester was the first city in England to sign the Edinburgh Declaration – a global pledge registering our concern about biodiversity loss and signalling our commitment to tackling the twin challenges of the biodiversity and climate crises.**



# Contents

## Section 1

The nature of Manchester	04
What does nature do for us?	08
The climate and ecological emergency	12
Our ambition	13
People and partnership powered nature recovery	16
The spaces in between	19

## Section 2

Policies, strategies and drivers	22
----------------------------------	----

## Section 3

Objectives and priorities	24
---------------------------	----

## Section 4

Action Plan	26
-------------	----

The 'Biodiversity Strategy 2022 - 2030: The City of Manchester's Nature Recovery' was co-produced by The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside and Manchester City Council with the support of the Manchester Biodiversity Action Group. It was endorsed by Manchester City Council in Autumn 2022.



The Wildlife Trust for  
**Lancashire  
Manchester &  
North Merseyside**



**MANCHESTER  
CITY COUNCIL**

# Section 1: The Nature of Manchester



## Manchester was the world's first industrial city.

From its towering mills, bustling warehouses and crowded streets came new ways to live, work and think, transforming lives in Manchester and across the world. But from the smoke of this new age rose an entirely new problem – **our natural world was suffering.**



## Nature, of course, has been here all along; watching, listening, waiting.

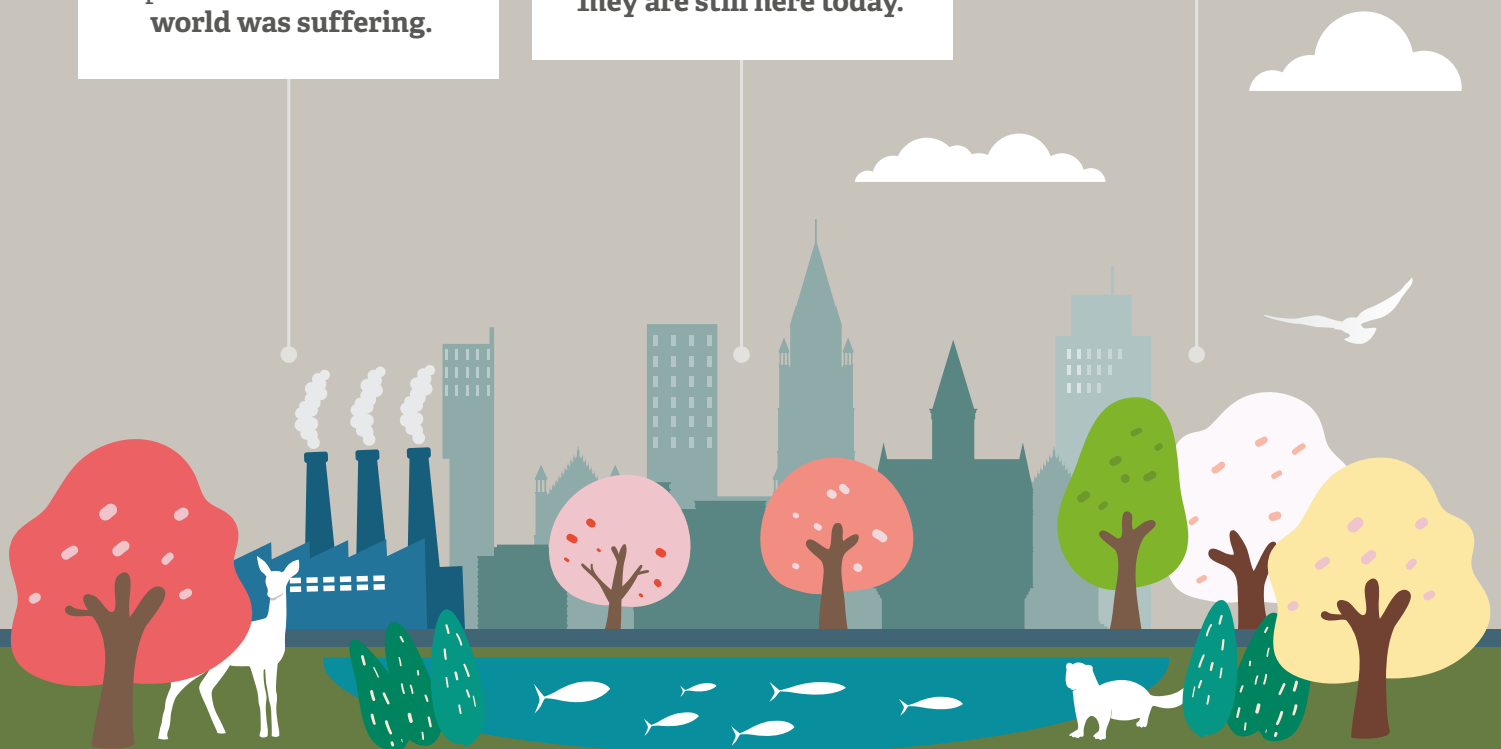
Our oldest trees in Wythenshawe Park felt the first wisps of smoke from the industrial revolution. Heard the hum of bombers in wartime. Heard the cheers of people at football matches. **They are still here today.**



© Luke Massey/2020VISION

## As are new residents

Roe deer in our parks and woodlands; salmon and trout day-trippers, passing through our ever-improving river valleys. The fleeting glimpse of an otter? **Maybe one day, soon.**



**As the epicentre for the Industrial Revolution, and as a city within one of the most nature-depleted countries anywhere in the world<sup>1,2</sup>, Manchester has the fantastic opportunity and responsibility to lead us into the new 'green revolution'.**

**One which can demonstrate how an economically rich, industrialised city can continue to bring nature back and give people the opportunity to enjoy wildlife every day.**

# The UK has a long history of love for, and fascination with, its natural heritage.

Manchester's residents share a national joy and appreciation of nature - with over 2,000 people telling us that Manchester's wildlife was important to them in 2019<sup>3</sup>.

The COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the full lockdown in 2020, heightened awareness about the importance of wildlife and greenspace where we live and work. A poll conducted by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in 2020 evidenced that people reported the value of connection with nature on wellbeing and happiness<sup>4</sup>.

Similarly, as part of a report conducted by The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside, over 99% of Mancunians surveyed stated that being able to connect with nature during restrictions was 'Very Important' or 'Important' to them<sup>5</sup>.

**Mancunians want a healthy and thriving natural world. If Manchester is to be nature-rich, we need nature-friendly policies and action that benefits people and wildlife alike.**



© Nick Rodd

**Sahar is a teaching assistant in a primary school in Manchester. Not only does she use nature in her teaching to inspire children, she also enjoys Manchester's parks and greenspaces in her personal time, unwinding and re-connecting to the world around her.**

"The park is just the perfect place for you to unwind and really think about things and I realise I've always got something to be happy about.

I think that when children are in nature, they are the happiest, so I've got to encourage them to do that and I feel really proud when they are doing that.

I think it's great that people across different backgrounds access public spaces in Manchester. It would really make me happy if I saw more ethnic minorities going into the parks with their families, their loved ones and enjoying the spaces they have."



# Nature is changing. Adapting.

**That's what it does. If we give nature a chance, nature will take advantage. Recover. Restore.**

Manchester has a long history of acting to protect nature. The city hosts some of the oldest public parks in the country; Philips Park and Queens Park, opened by the Victorians in the 1840s.

Manchester was also the home of Emily Williamson, a Victorian environmental activist and one of the founding mothers of the largest conservation charity in the UK, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, which now has over 1 million members.

Our city's river valley restoration projects in the 1970s and '80s transformed large swathes of habitat along the Rivers Irk, Medlock and Mersey, important arteries of blue and green spaces for nature.

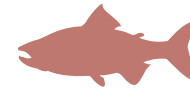
Nature is always there, working around us. We have seen huge peaks of people living in our city, (750,000 in 1930) dipping to below 450,000 in the 1980s. Now our city's population is rising again, with over 550,000 people living in a fast-moving, ever-changing environment.

Alongside our evolving communities, our landscape is changing - our treescape maturing, our rivers improving.

*And nature can, and will adapt to change – if we give it a chance.*



**Barn owls are back in Manchester for the first time in 75 years.**



**Salmon and Brown trout are returning to once heavily polluted rivers.**



**The fastest animal on the planet breeds in our city centre – the Peregrine falcon, which can reach over 200mph during its characteristic diving stoop.**



**“Green deserts” are becoming wildflower-rich habitats.**



**We don't shy away from the fact that we are urban; we celebrate it.**



**But urban doesn't mean we are devoid of nature. We have eight designated Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and 37 Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs); alongside a network of 160 parks.**



**Our city's river valleys and canals, once the powerhouses of Manchester's industry, are changing to become networks for wildlife to connect, move and thrive.**

# What does nature do for us?

**We know that many people living and working in the city have limited connection with nature or perceive it to be something which is only found in the countryside.**

**Whether we are connected with nature or not, it is beneficial to us all. Some benefits are fundamentally obvious – the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat are all ultimately reliant upon a healthy natural environment.**



**Other benefits are less obvious but just as important** - there is an increasing and compelling evidence base to show that exposure to the natural environment positively affects physical health and mental wellbeing<sup>6</sup>.

Access to green space across Manchester reflects the diverse character and history of our different neighbourhoods<sup>7</sup>. More attention is needed to ensure improved access to green space across the city.

Research by Friends of the Earth evidenced that individuals from Black and Asian backgrounds are more than twice as likely to live in a neighbourhood deprived of green space than those from White backgrounds. We need to work creatively to address this trend and ensure benefits from nature are equally available to all communities<sup>8</sup>.

To help nature recover in Manchester we will need more people to take greater action to protect it. This will also lead to the improved health and wellbeing of those involved. The growing focus on social prescribing provides an effective approach, linking individuals suffering from poor mental health to practical volunteering opportunities in the natural environment (eight out of 10 GPs are now issuing social prescriptions<sup>9</sup>).



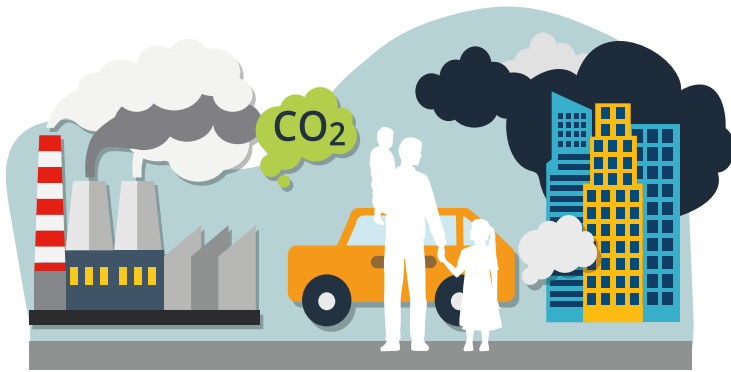
Alongside benefits for health and wellbeing, **nature is a critical component in creating thriving spaces where people want to live.** Sites that have a high value for nature bring people together from different communities and this can address barriers and reduce loneliness.

Greener neighbourhoods have also been shown to give rise to stronger neighbourhood ties<sup>10</sup>. Evidence shows that house prices are intrinsically linked to the aesthetic value and “greenness” of an area.

It is critical that these vibrant natural spaces are equitable and available to residents living throughout the city – reinforcing the need for a recovery plan which improves the quality of ‘the spaces in between’ as well as flagship sites.

Similarly, wildlife can be a catalyst for a sense of identity at a street, neighbourhood or even city level. The ‘Manchester Bee’ is the most compelling example of this, but consultation has evidenced that many residents living in Manchester want to act for nature as part of a bigger movement, even if that action is in their own garden<sup>3</sup>.





**Toxic air affects everyone<sup>11</sup>. Air pollution also has a significant adverse effect on biodiversity, so much so it has been evidenced to be one of the five leading causes of the biodiversity crisis<sup>12</sup>.** Nitrogen build-up in soils leads to enrichment meaning that species such as nettles and brambles thrive over more sensitive wildflowers. Air pollution has also been evidenced to impact the strength and longevity of floral scents, reducing the ability of pollinators to forage successfully<sup>13</sup>.

Green infrastructure, particularly trees, can improve air quality by removing pollutants from the air. Research by City of Trees estimates that air pollution removal by green infrastructure across Greater Manchester is 847 tonnes per year – the combined annual emissions from 2,000 cars<sup>14</sup>.

Research emphasises that green infrastructure, notably trees, can and will aid the dispersal of air pollution; particularly when sited in the areas of greatest need, such as those with poor air quality or where vulnerable individuals live or work<sup>14</sup>.

More complex and structurally diverse greenspace throughout Manchester, particularly in our most built-up areas, will not just help nature recover in the city; it will also have other health and wellbeing benefits.



**The impacts of flooding on residents, communities and commercial businesses are wide-ranging;** from the obvious physical damage and associated costs, and significant disruption to lives and businesses, to the less well-recognised impacts on psychological health and emotional wellbeing of those affected or at risk<sup>15</sup>.

Flash-flooding, from both rivers and surface water, is expected to become more frequent in future years. Alongside flood-risk management strategies by public bodies, actions associated with the recovery of nature in Manchester can deliver added benefits to help address flooding.

Changing the management regime of some of our urban green spaces can reduce the impact of flooding while also delivering positive outcomes for nature's recovery.

Similarly, actions by residents in their gardens – particularly a reduction in the area of impermeable surfaces – will minimise flood-risk<sup>16</sup> and support nature's recovery. Alongside flooding, climate change is also increasing drought risk which poses environmental risks to our water bodies and wetlands, as well as wider threats to our terrestrial habitats.

I am a bird,  
I fly between concrete cliffs.  
Between platinum petals,  
In a sepia sky.

I am a bird,  
I nest in trees,  
That rise up from the stone,  
And are blown in the breeze.

I am a bird,  
My wings a sonnet to the air,  
I accompany the melody of the city,  
The harmony in this square.

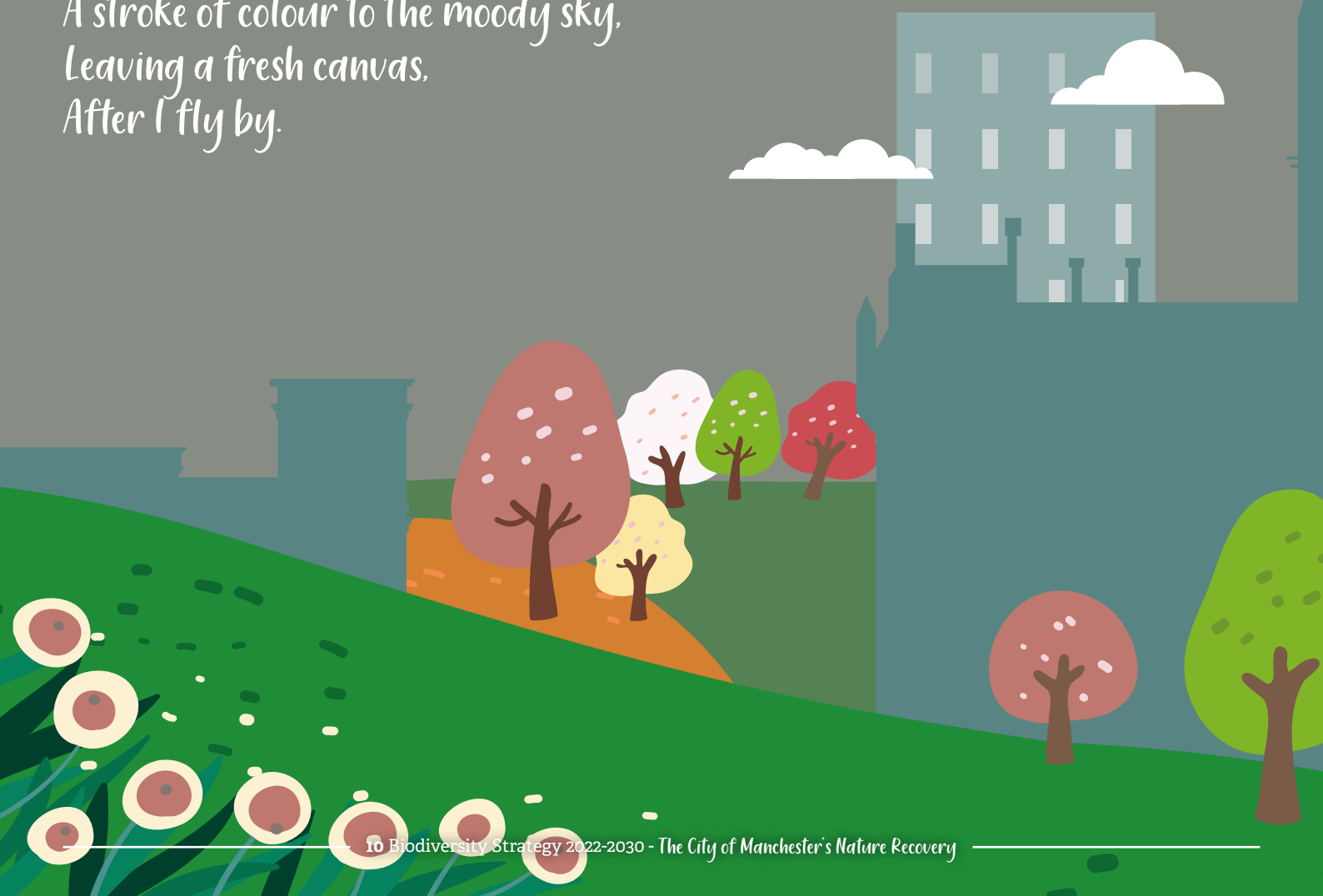
I am a bird,  
A stroke of colour to the moody sky,  
Leaving a fresh canvas,  
After I fly by.

I am a bird,  
I see my reflection,  
In glaring windows,  
Of perplexion.

I am a bird,  
I see flowers, I see grass,  
Little pockets of wild spaces,  
Growing among rocks and outlasts.

I am a bird,  
I hop with springs in my feet,  
Cos I live in this place,  
Nature and the city meet.

Poem written by Finty Royle, as part of the Wild Spaces workshop at Manchester Literature Festival, 2021





# The climate and ecological emergency

Despite the well-evidenced benefits of nature for people, we are facing 'a climate and ecological emergency'. Year-on-year, we're seeing growing evidence of the disruption it's causing.

**98% of people told us that they were concerned about the loss of wildlife in Manchester<sup>2</sup>.**

Biodiversity and climate change are interconnected. Habitats and species are affected by climate change; some are being degraded or extinguished as a result. But nature also plays a vital role in climate change mitigation and adaptation through the ecosystem services it supports - as recently evidenced by the Greater Manchester IGNITION project - most notably by reducing air temperatures and improving air quality<sup>7</sup>.

Consequently, conserving and sustainably managing biodiversity is crucial to addressing climate change.

It's no longer good enough to just think about trying to slow down the loss of the natural world and protect what little is left<sup>18</sup>. We need to halt and reverse these declines and put nature into recovery – both for the sake of nature itself and also to address climate change in Manchester.

**We recognise we have challenges that we need to overcome.**

*Manchester residents told us they were most concerned about the loss of wildlife and nature because...*



*“Future generations won't experience any wildlife”*

*“Neighbourhoods with wildlife are better for everyone to live in”*

*“Being near nature makes people feel happier”*

Scientific research has provided compelling evidence that we need to rapidly change the scale and pace of our work. Of equal importance are the voices of those living and working in Manchester. They have told us, either as part of consultation exercises or through protests including Fridays for Future, that nature is important to them and they are concerned about its loss.



# Our ambition

**Our ambition is to improve places for nature in Manchester. We will:**

- Increase the scale of practical action to protect and recover habitats throughout the city.
- Make smarter, evidence-based decisions on practical and policy actions to protect and recover nature in Manchester.
- Increase our understanding of the ecology and species diversity in our city.

**As citizens, we will work together to:**

- Increase the understanding, connection and love for nature throughout our communities.
- Encourage all individuals, businesses, schools, community groups and neighbourhoods to recognise their role in Manchester's nature recovery and take action.

**We will champion the role that nature plays in addressing many of the challenges which wildlife and our residents face; including climate change, poor health and wellbeing, pandemics and air quality.**



© Philip Schofield



© Fay Metcalfe



© Constanze Craddock



© Sam Sykes



© Sam Sykes

# How will we achieve this ambition?

**No single individual or organisation can deliver the changes needed in Manchester to achieve our ambition for wildlife and nature. We need to mobilise. Collaborate. Work together.**

Change will only come through action by all across our city from Blackley to Baguley, from Whalley Range to Clayton; not just the leafy suburbs. Residents – whether children or adults, retired individuals, workers or students – need to act alongside our schools, places of worship, businesses, community groups, environmental charities, housing associations and public agencies, notably Manchester City Council.

This will only happen if local communities are supported and empowered to become the agents of change. The recovery of nature mustn't be something that is done to people; it must be done by people. If long-lasting change is going to happen at the scale and pace required, it must be inclusive, welcoming and diverse, and nurture local communities.

We need a 'People and Partnership Powered Nature Recovery', embracing the Our Manchester approach of working together and recognising the strengths of individuals and communities.



## Resources

In addition to people power, we will only deliver our ambition for nature's recovery with the appropriate policy context, the political will, strong partnerships and sufficient resources. Resources, particularly financial, are needed to create and deliver new programmes of work, including those identified in our Action Plan (see section 4); as well as to sustain the benefits which are derived from those projects.

Securing investment for biodiversity work has classically been through public funding streams and philanthropy. Whilst there have been successes in our city, stakeholders working independently and collaboratively have not been able to secure sufficient resources, which is one reason why progress on reversing nature's decline has been halting and insufficient.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on public finances are likely to squeeze the availability of public funding streams further. It is critical that different investment avenues are explored and secured if we are to meet our ambitions – scaling the level of private sector investment, maximising investment driven through new approaches such as Biodiversity Net Gain, and having the expertise and evidence to secure other investments associated with the public goods delivered through nature recovery work.

## Is the challenge worth it?

We spoke with members of The Wildlife Trust's Youth Council and Wilder Youth group, the individuals who will inherit our city, to get their thoughts on why greater action for biodiversity is critical for the future of Manchester and UK.

“If we have another pandemic, a city which is rich in wildlife will benefit people greatly by giving them more green spaces to go to close to home.

Being in a green space is just healthy. It would impact me and other young people by creating safe spaces to go to improve our physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing. As well as creating more jobs in greener spaces.

Children need to know why we need to look after nature. They need to be given the opportunity to learn about and experience flowers, birds, and butterflies otherwise, all they might know are pavements.” *Katie*

## What have we got to look forward to?

Our next generation of young people will spend their Saturdays canoeing through clouds of banded demoiselles on our cities rivers and canals, catching the silver flash of salmon swimming past Manchester Cathedral.

Both children and adults will benefit from wildflower-rich meadows, mixed canopy woodlands, wildlife-rich rivers, and ponds; places that allow for escape, connection with nature, cultural awareness and development as well as bringing together individuals from our different communities and backgrounds.

Manchester's natural environment will inspire a new generation of artists, innovators, and leaders; ensuring that Manchester is a place where people want to live, work and visit.

“A wildlife-rich city has the means to encourage and inspire the future generation of ecologists and scientists as well as give youth a compelling and tangible reason to protect our planet.” *Sofi*

“I think Mancunians would be happier and feel better about themselves if the city was greener. It would provide outdoor spaces for people to be in nature which in turn could massively aid people's recovery and mental and physical health.

Future generations would be more caring to wildlife and understand nature better, resulting in less stress caused by the climate crises and biodiversity loss.” *Lauren*

“We need more knowledge and respect for wildlife. Everyone should be doing the best they can even if at the moment it's not the most cost or time effective choice, in the long run, it will lead to more sustainability and a greener city” *Patti*

# People and partnership powered nature recovery

A key driver in species decline in Manchester, and the UK as a whole, is the loss and fragmentation of habitats. If wildlife is to recover, it needs habitats which support its every need, larger habitats to enable populations to increase, and connections between habitats to allow species to move in response to changing conditions and to enable dispersal and spread<sup>19</sup>.

A Nature Recovery Network is a defined area where efforts for improving and expanding habitats can be prioritised.

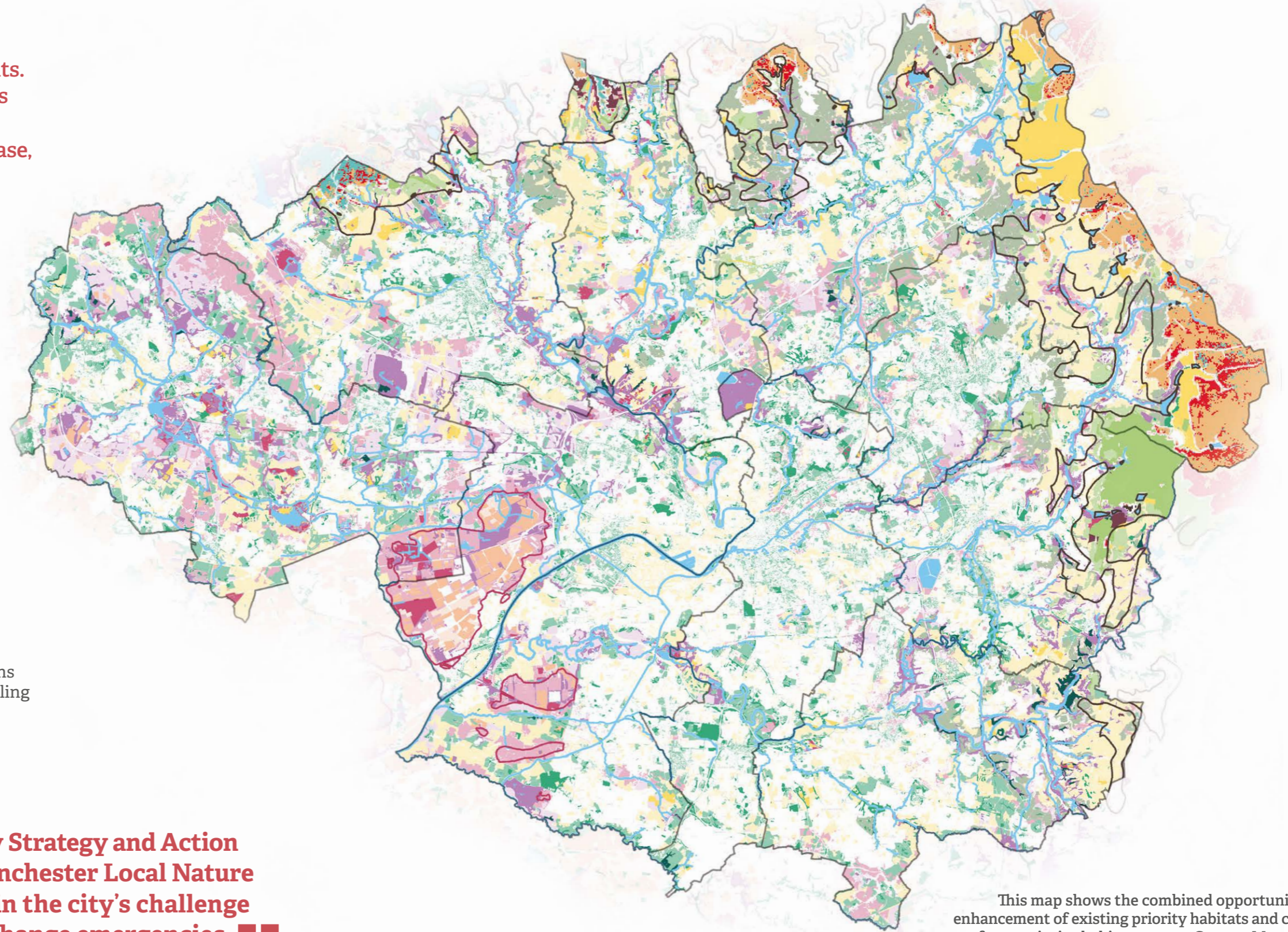
The Environment Act contains a series of new duties and tools to drive improvement for nature nationally. Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are a key foundation for Nature Recovery Networks and Greater Manchester published its Greater Manchester LNRS in 2021<sup>20</sup>.

Manchester is crucial to the Nature Recovery Network in Greater Manchester. The city of Manchester has an administrative boundary district with seven of the Greater Manchester districts, more than any other.

Our central location in the wider city region means that our city needs to be porous for wildlife, enabling species to move, spread and thrive from north to south and from east to west.

**“ This Manchester Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, linked up to the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy, is a key step in the city’s challenge to the biodiversity and climate change emergencies. ”**

Dr Amanda Wright, Senior Advisor Biodiversity at Natural England.



This map shows the combined opportunities for enhancement of existing priority habitats and creation of new priority habitats across Greater Manchester. This map was produced by Greater Manchester Combined Authority in 2021 as part of the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy Pilot<sup>20</sup>.



**Manchester is a thriving city, home to a growing population of over half a million people. The industrial heritage of our city means that no areas of unmodified natural habitats remain. The development of networks for nature will therefore be challenging but not impossible, because we share our city with hundreds of different species.**

These species are found throughout our eight designated Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), 37 Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs), our river valleys and canals, as well as through our network of 160 parks. They are also found in our cemeteries, allotments, school grounds and domestic gardens.



# The Spaces in Between

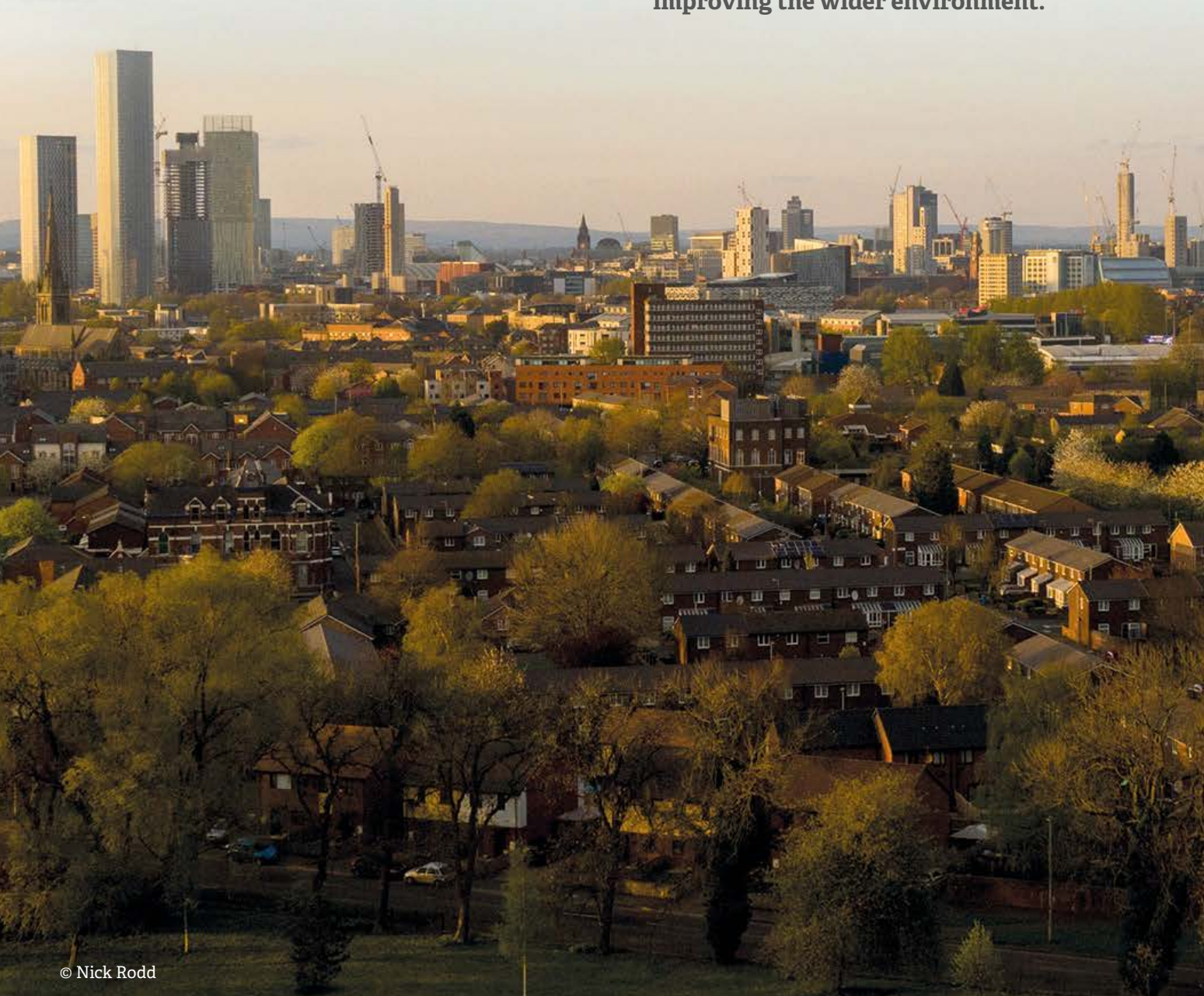
Although published as long ago as 2010, Professor Lawton's landmark 'Making Space for Nature: a review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network' report<sup>19</sup> remains hugely relevant to the development of Nature Recovery Networks.

Lawton said that the essence of what needs to be done to enhance the resilience and coherence of England's ecological network can be summarised in four words: **more, bigger, better and joined.**

There are five key approaches which encompass these principles, and also take account of the land around the 'core' ecological network.

## **In order to build a Nature Recovery Network, we need to:**

- 1. Improve the quality of current sites by better habitat management.**
- 2. Increase the size of current wildlife sites.**
- 3. Enhance and restore connections between, or join up, sites, either through physical corridors or through stepping stones'.**
- 4. Create new sites.**
- 5. Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment.**



# Nature network map

This map acts as an example of how a Nature Recovery Network can work at a local scale. It was produced in 2021 as part of the Lancashire Wildlife Trust's North Manchester Nature Network project, funded by Cadent Foundation. The project aimed to deliver a neighbourhood nature network which would increase wild species numbers whilst connecting local people to wild plants and animals.

## INCREASED WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

A strong connection to nature creates improved wellbeing and mental health. Feel better, live longer, perform better and be happier by increasing your connection to nature. Spending just an hour in nature can make you less stressed for the rest of the day.



ORANGE TIP BUTTERFLY

## INCREASED PHYSICAL HEALTH

When environments are high in nature, more people are keen to use them. Increased nature also means better air quality, perfect for helping outdoors exercise in the city.

## INCREASED EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY

Residents can learn how to utilise nature to benefit their health, learn new practical skills to safeguard local wildlife and new career skills that can increase employment possibilities.

### KEY

- Nature Hotspots
- Nature Network Project Area
- Owned by Lancashire Wildlife Trust
- Car Park
- St John Bosco Primary School
- Moston Fields Primary School
- Camberwell Park School
- St Mary's Primary School
- Co-op Academy Broadhurst



TAWNY OWL

## STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITY

Increased nature benefits all in the community and can connect isolated and lonely people to their neighbours. For old, young and for generations to come.

## INCREASED SPORTING BUZZ

Connecting with nature doesn't have to be something we only do in nature reserves, it can be something that happens every time a goal is scored or your 100m sprint begins. The air can be alive with both human and nature sporting excitement with chirping crickets.



GOLDCREST



## HELP WILDLIFE AVOID THE ROADS

One of the biggest dangers to wildlife in the cities are the roads. A small CD-sized hole in each fence allows hedgehogs, frogs and newts to search for food safely.



BATS

## PROTECT YOUR HOME-GROWN VEG!

Using chemicals to control pests can also wipe out hundreds of innocent invertebrates. Having a simple 'bug hotel' of bricks, tiles and dead wood is the perfect home for pest predators such as ladybirds, lacewings, frogs and toads.



BIRD'S FOOT TREFOIL



GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER

## INCREASED NATURE MOVEMENT

Wild animals and plants can struggle to move past roads and houses. If each garden, playground and park provided something for nature, these spaces could become stepping stones for birds, butterflies and even flowers to access new parts of the city.

## SEE MORE WILDLIFE AT HOME

During 2020 and 2021, nature at home became a huge part of daily life. When we can access high biodiversity, we get a sense of awe from nature. This emotion gives some of the biggest health benefits both mentally and physically. The more species the better!



FLY AGARIC



KESTREL

If we all did one thing to help nature, the dramatic effect would benefit our physical health, mental health and overall wellbeing for decades to come.

FIELD GRASSHOPPER

**There is not land between all Sites of Biological Importance that could be defined as conventional corridors or stepping-stones for nature, the illustration of the North Manchester Nature Network (pages 20 - 21) highlights the presence and significance of suburban gardens, school grounds, roadside verges, allotments and church grounds. The Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy identified the importance of these urban greenspaces as the space for delivering nature's recovery in the city region<sup>20</sup>.**

**Domestic gardens are one of the most significant priorities for biodiversity in Manchester and contribute to a range of other key priorities associated with our Biodiversity Strategy.**

Whilst individually, a domestic garden may appear insignificant, collectively, domestic gardens cover one fifth of Manchester's land area<sup>21</sup>. Research has highlighted that domestic gardens in cities can provide the space and diversity that wildlife species need to thrive<sup>22</sup>. Additionally, the mosaic of domestic gardens can assist the movement of species through the urban landscape, particularly when located in proximity to parks, nature reserves and other greenspaces.

However, the value of gardens for a Nature Recovery Network in Manchester is threatened by a reduction in the amount of green and blue spaces within domestic gardens. Research led by Manchester Metropolitan University in 2017 evidenced that only 50% of space within domestic gardens remained 'green'<sup>23</sup>.

One of the critical priorities to support the broader recovery of nature in Manchester is greater empowerment and involvement of people living and working in the city. One of the key routes to taking practical action for wildlife is increased enjoyment, value and connection with nature. Research has evidenced that it is within gardens where many individuals develop a personal relationship with nature<sup>24</sup> and so they are critical spaces to increase the number of people who feel empowered and involved in efforts to help nature recovery in the city; whether that be in their garden or in their street, neighbourhood or local park.

*A variety of flowers  
and vegetables  
in gardens can  
support around  
8,000  
insect species<sup>22</sup>.*

Similarly, spaces such as school grounds and cemeteries can and do have great value for wildlife in Manchester. Birds and mammals that use the woodland, grassland and other habitats in a site like Boggart Hole Clough will also rely on school grounds, allotments and cemeteries backing onto it; as well as the hundreds of local gardens where people put food out or provide nest boxes. The variety of flowers and vegetables found in gardens creates complexity in the landscape, which research shows can support around 8,000 insect species<sup>22</sup>.

© Jon Hawkins



**“To be as inclusive as possible, a Nature Recovery Network in the city must include the ‘spaces in between’ in the wider environment which models in rural or suburban landscapes may otherwise exclude.”**

Derek Richardson, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit.

In Manchester, some of Lawton’s underlying principles involved in creating a Nature Recovery Network may be challenging to achieve. The difficult (but not impossible) things to do would be to:

- Increase the size of current wildlife sites.
- Enhance and restore connections between, or join up, sites, either through physical corridors or through ‘stepping stones’.
- Explore opportunities to create new sites.

The remaining principles become more important as things which can be done more easily. The following measures should be prioritised:

- Improving the quality of current sites by better habitat management.
- Reducing the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment

**In fact, Lawton said in his report that:**  
*“The first priority is to enhance the quality of remaining wildlife habitats.”*

**It is these key principles which have shaped the objectives and priorities for Manchester’s Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.**

**If we are to act effectively, we must come back to the critical importance of people power.**

Over the next 10 years, if we are to achieve our ambition for wildlife and nature in Manchester, we need to follow the three key principles of:

- **Involving people in actions** – People Powered Nature Recovery
- **Improving the quality of current sites** by better habitat management
- **Reducing the pressures on wildlife** by improving the wider environment running through our streets, neighbourhoods and city. [gardens, school grounds, roadside verges, business premises, parks, etc.]



## Section 2: Policies, strategies and drivers

**It is important to see the bigger picture strategically when planning for biodiversity. There is a strong nested policy hierarchy that provides support and guidance for enhancing biodiversity in the city, from global campaigns and national legislation and standards, to local planning policy.**

Legislation is the Law. Local Plan policies are requirements that apply the legislation within a local context. Strategies provide the mandate for targeted action in order to deliver the policy.

*Acting locally, thinking globally is more important now than ever.*

This new strategy recognises that a wide range of international, national, regional and local legislation, policy and guidance has a bearing on biodiversity conservation, including (but not limited to):

- Post 2020 Global Framework
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended (WCA)
- The Natural and Communities Act 2006 (NERC) defines national priority habitats and species in England
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW)
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 as amended (Habitats Directive)
- The EU Water Framework Directive 2000
- Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network 2010
- England's Wildlife and Ecosystems Services Strategy 2011
- National Pollinator Strategy 2014
- A Green Future' 25 Year Environmental Plan 2018 (DEFRA 2018)
- The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF)
- The Environment Act 2021/22 in Biodiversity Net Gain and National Nature Recovery Networks
- Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services
- (DEFRA 2011) concentrates instead on landscape scale conservation, with an overall target of halting biodiversity loss by 2020
- State of Nature 2019
- Greater Manchester Strategy – Our People Our Place (2021)
- Places for Everyone, Joint Development Plan Document (Publication Stage) August 2021
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) 5 Year Environment Plan (2019–2024)
- All Our Trees - Greater Manchester Tree and Woodland Strategy (2020)
- Our Manchester Strategy (2015-2025)
- Manchester Local Plan (2012 -27)
- Manchester Climate Change Action Plan
- Manchester's Great Outdoors – A Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Manchester ( 2015-25) Manchester Tree Action Plan (2015-20)
- Manchester's Park Strategy 2017–2027



# The Environment Act

The new Environment Act is genuinely a once-in-a-generation opportunity to protect our environment and set a course for nature recovery in the UK. It means that the UK government will be directly responsible for environmental law and policy for the first time in decades.

In the face of a climate and ecological emergency, it is hoped the new Act will provide a robust framework for improving our natural environment.

Two key elements of the Environment Act include:

## National Nature Recovery Network

This will identify and reconnect wildlife-rich places across our towns, cities, and countryside.

### Establishing the Nature Recovery Networks will:

- Enhance sites designated for nature conservation and other wildlife-rich places - newly created and restored wildlife-rich habitats, corridors and stepping stones will help wildlife populations to grow and move.
- Improve the landscape's resilience to climate change, providing natural solutions to reduce carbon and manage flood risk, and sustaining vital ecosystems such as improved soil, clean water and clean air.
- Reinforce the natural and cultural diversity of our landscapes, and protect our historic natural environment.
- Enable us to enjoy and connect with nature where we live, work and play - benefitting our health and wellbeing.

## Biodiversity Net Gain

This will provide a legal requirement that any impact on biodiversity caused by development initiatives, where it cannot be avoided, will not only be compensated but will have to demonstrate a 10% biodiversity net gain.

An overview is provided in Appendix A.



# Section 3: Objectives and Priorities

**We want clearly defined objectives with supporting actions – so everyone can find a way to contribute.**

The Action Plan in Section 4 provides details on the current programme of actions which partners have identified as critical for the recovery of nature in Manchester. The three objectives under which actions are themed are identified below, along with a small number of key priority actions that provide examples of those included in the wider action plan.

---

## Objective 1 - *Managing and understanding biodiversity*

### KEY PRIORITIES

- A Nature Recovery Network Strategy, which is contextualised for the urban character of Manchester, must be developed for Greater Manchester. This should guide the focus of all future habitat management work.
  - All priority wildlife sites must be in active management by 2030.
  - Key indicator species must be identified and action plans for each key indicator species written. These action plans should sit alongside the Nature Recovery Network Strategy to guide any habitat management work across the Recovery Network. Key indicator species will also need to be recorded regularly to measure our impact.
- 

## Objective 2 - *Involving people*

### KEY PRIORITIES

- We must find creative ways to connect and involve new audiences with nature and the natural environment in Manchester.
  - The Manchester Biodiversity Action Group (MBAG) must support and empower local communities to take meaningful action for nature in the city.
  - Land managers and practitioners in the city must be provided with the necessary knowledge and skills to protect and recover biodiversity.
- 

## Objective 3 – *Planning, policy and partnerships*

### KEY PRIORITIES

- Biodiversity should be embedded into Manchester City Council's policies to help protect and enhance nature.
- Strong working relationships must be established with partners delivering against climate change, health and wellbeing, and air quality to ensure new and effective collaboration in the city.
- Long-term funding opportunities for the recovery of nature in Manchester must be identified, particularly through the planning and development process.



## Implementation of our objectives and priorities

The development of the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan has been largely influenced both by public consultations (Reconnecting Manchester with urban wildlife: next steps<sup>3</sup> and Valuing Nearby Nature<sup>5</sup>) and discussions with stakeholders and partners – notably Manchester City Council and the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit.

Around a dozen external organisations have been consulted and have provided in-depth comments (Appendix B) which have influenced the key objectives to deliver nature's recovery in Manchester. These organisations form the core of the Manchester Biodiversity Action Group, which is overseeing the delivery of the Action Plan.

Through consultation with stakeholders in Manchester we have sought, as a partnership, to identify lead delivery agencies for strands of work within the Action Plan.

Despite identifying lead delivery agencies, timescales, and measures, we recognise that we will face complex challenges. There will be actions important to the recovery of nature in Manchester that are not present. Financial resources to support the delivery of actions are not secured so there is a risk that lead agencies may not be able to deliver actions within proposed timescales, or at all. Similarly, we know that priorities associated with biodiversity in the city may change – often rapidly.

To address these risks, we will need to adapt and change our Action Plan based upon scientific data, species observations, reflections from our residents, and learning. This can only be achieved through building new and long-term collaborations and networks, so we established a new Manchester Biodiversity Action Group which brings together key delivery agencies, major landowners and organisations that have a key reach into and representation within communities throughout our city.

We recognise that a new Manchester Biodiversity Action Group will not and cannot address the challenges associated with nature's recovery in Manchester on its own. Nature's recovery will only be achieved with active involvement and empowerment of residents, schools, places of worship, and businesses across all communities in the city which is why our **Involving people** objective is as important as our **Managing and understanding biodiversity** objective.

Achieving a '**People Powered Nature Recovery**' will be incredibly challenging. It will take decades. We will face significant obstacles. However, we need to be bold with our passion and commitment to reverse biodiversity loss while also recognising that inviting new individuals and communities into this challenge is both necessary and the right thing to do for the wellbeing of future generations, and the cultural diversity of our great city.



## Section 4: Action Plan

**The Action Plan is a catalyst for activity, an opportunity to develop and implement meaningful projects which bring to life the ambition set out.**

The Manchester Biodiversity Action Group will be a key mechanism to deliver this work; whilst recognising that wider partnership work is needed beyond the scope of this group.

This Action Plan is not static. We aim to evaluate, report and refresh the Action Plan on a regular basis to reflect changes in the way that we need to respond to the biodiversity crisis at a city level; as well as take advantage of new knowledge, technology, legislation, and policy.



## MANAGING BIODIVERSITY

ACTION	LEAD + PARTNERS	MEASURE	DEADLINE
<b>FOCUS ON: UNDERSTANDING</b>			
Comprehensive assessment of the city's biodiversity resource	Manchester City Council, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and All	Delivery of Greater Manchester Ecology Unit baseline and species action plans	2022-30
		Development of ongoing monitoring programme	2022-30
Increased knowledge and understanding through research including research of local innovative actions, and through Citizen Science	Manchester City Council, Universities	Number of supported research studies undertaken	2022-30
		Increased use of LNRN mapping to improve habitat management across all sites	2022-30

<b>FOCUS ON: LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY NETWORK</b>			
Establishing a well-managed, ecologically coherent LNRN, aligning the Greater Manchester LNRS and in the context of the Environment Act to improve habitat management across all sites	All	Ha of land improved	2022-30
		Km of waterway improved	
		Number of species records	
		% of SBIs in active conservation management	
Promote the LNRN and engage the public and stakeholders with LNRN, including through the use of key indicator species	Manchester City Council, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and All	Communications plan	2022
		Number of species records	Ongoing as updated
		Social reach, press articles, etc.	Annual review
Delivery of practical conservation activity throughout Manchester	All	Number of biodiversity projects	Annual review
		Number of sites improved	
		Ha of sites improved	
		Number of species recorded	
		Number of people involved	

ACTION	LEAD + PARTNERS	MEASURE	DEADLINE
<b>FOCUS ON: PRIORITY WILDLIFE SITES</b>			
Develop habitat management planning for designated sites: SBIs, SSSIs and LNRs	Manchester City Council, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Universities, City of Trees, Canal and River Trust	Number of habitat management work plans delivered	Annual review
Increase the number and area of SBIs in active management	Manchester City Council, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Universities, City of Trees	Number of SBIs in active management	Annual review
		Ha of SBIs in Active Conservation Management	Annual review
		Number of volunteer days across SBIs	Annual review
		All SBIs in parks in active management	2030
Increase the number and area of LNRs	Manchester City Council	Number of LNRs	Annual review
		Ha of LNR	



© Tom Marshall

## FOCUS ON: SPECIES

Identification of key indicator species for Manchester's Local Nature Recovery Network	Greater Manchester Ecology Unit	Selection of indicator species (minimum 50)	2022
		Baseline mapping of the indicators species for Manchester	2022 - 2024
Development of species action plans to guide habitat management work across Manchester's Local Nature Recovery Network	Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and partners	Minimum of 25 species action plans covering habitats and land use typology developed	2022 - 2024
	Manchester City Council, Lancashire Wildlife Trust	Species action plans disseminated to site managers and operatives	As produced
Development of Local Pollinator and Insect Strategy	Manchester City Council, Landowners	Delivery of Pollinator and Insect Strategy	2022 - 2026
		Increase in pollinator records	
		Ha of land improved for pollinators	
Increase number of species records from priority wildlife sites year on year - targeted at key LNRN indicator species	Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, all	Number of species records from priority sites on iNaturalist and to Greater Manchester Ecology Unit	Annual review
Increase species records associated with woodland habitats - targeted at 17 indicators including Tawny Owl, Nuthatch, Wood Anemone, Fly agaric and Purple hairstreak	Lancashire Wildlife Trust, City of Trees, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, All	Number of records	Annual review
Increase species records associated with grassland habitats - targeted at 16 indicators including Birds-foot-trefoil, Small heath, Reed bunting, Red-tailed bumblebee and Grasshopper warbler	Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, All	Number of records	Annual review
Increase species records associated with rivers, canals and pond habitats - targeted at 29 indicators including Marsh marigold, Dipper, Daubenton's bat, Riverflies and Toad	Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, All	Number of records	Annual review
Increase species records associated with parks, gardens, school grounds and allotments - targeted at 13 indicators including House sparrow, Hedgehog, Dandelion, Manchester poplar and Holly blue	Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, All	Number of records	Annual review
Development of Invasive Non-Native Species Action Plan for Manchester to prioritise effects to control and eradicate	Environment Agency, Irwell Catchment Partnership, Mersey and Upper Mersey Catchment Partnerships, Mersey Rivers Trust, Canal and Rivers Trust, Manchester City Council	Delivery of Invasive Non-Native Species Action	2022 - 2024

ACTION	LEAD + PARTNERS	MEASURE	DEADLINE
<b>FOCUS ON: PRIORITY WILDLIFE SITES</b>			
<b>WOODLANDS AND TREES including hedgerows and scrub</b>			
Improve woodland management for biodiversity, with an emphasis on planning to transform plantations into SBI grade woodlands	Manchester City Council, City of Trees	Delivery of Managing Manchester Trees study	Annual review
		Ha of woodland in active management	Annual review
		Increase in % canopy cover	Annual review
Plant new trees and woodlands, including wet woodlands, for biodiversity in line with a Development Plan	Manchester City Council, City of Trees, Northern Forest	Number of trees planted	Annual review
		Ha of woodland created and or extended	Annual review
		M of hedgerow planted	Annual review

<b>LOWLAND GRASSLANDS including roadside verges, incidental spaces, parks and golf courses</b>			
Manage existing species-rich grassland prioritising SBIs, LNRs and river valley grasslands	Manchester City Council, Lancashire Wildlife Trust	Grassland Plan developed	2023 - 2025
		Ha of species-rich grassland managed for biodiversity	Annual review
Develop new areas of species-rich grassland in line with a Development Plan	Manchester City Council, Lancashire Wildlife Trust	Grassland Plan developed	2023 - 2025
		Ha of species-rich grassland improved	Annual review

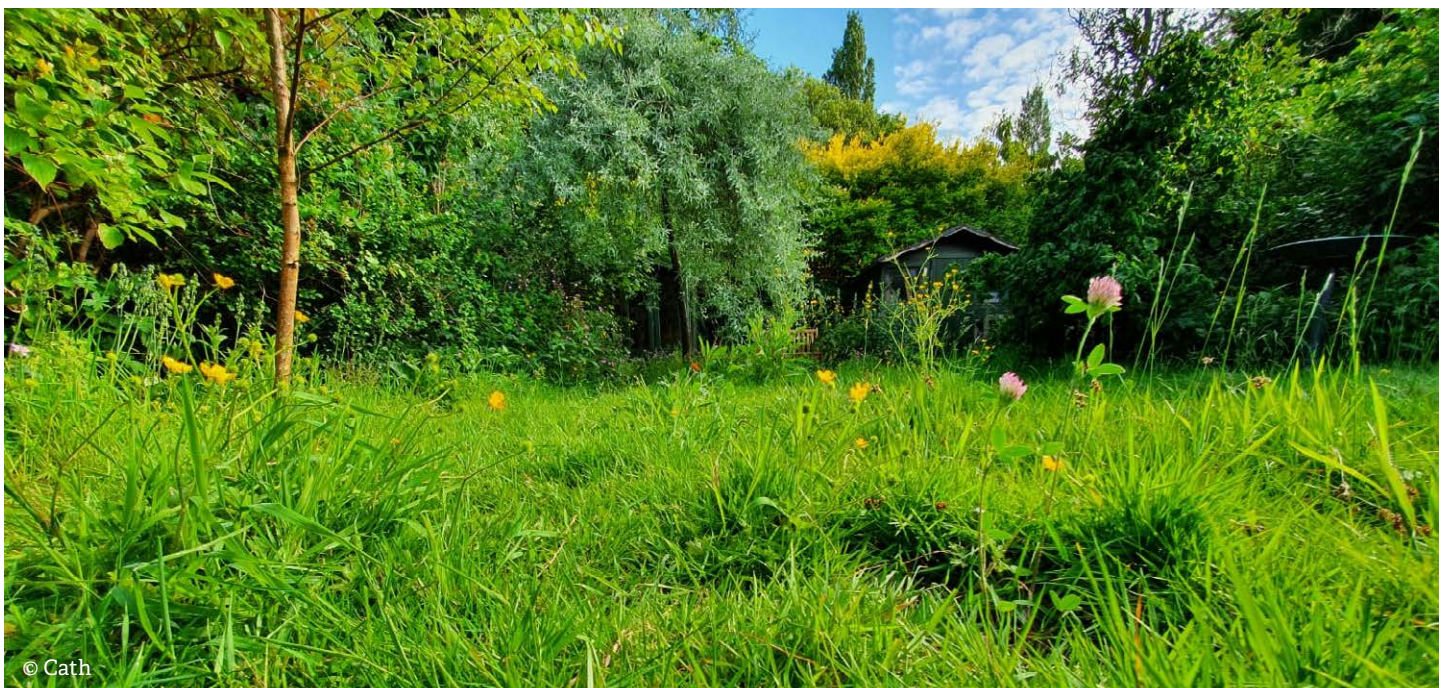
<b>RIVERS, CANALS, WETLANDS AND PONDS</b>			
Improve management of existing rivers, canals, wetlands and ponds for biodiversity - including assessment and support of river restoration and corridor enhancement within Manchester and in the upper / lower reaches of catchment outside of the district.	The Landowner, Environment Agency, United Utilities, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, Catchment Partnerships, Mersey Rivers Trust	Delivery of Our Rivers Our City Strategy, and Water Framework Directive	2022 - 2030
	Canal and River Trust	Canal Development Plan	TBC
	Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Manchester City Council	Manchester Wetland Plan	2025
Create new opportunities for ponds and wetlands linking in to flooding agenda where practical, and in line with a Development Plan	Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Manchester City Council	Number of ponds and wetlands created	Annual review
		M <sup>2</sup> of wetland created	
Assess and implement adoption of multifunctional Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) and remediate poor landfills and contaminated sites to improve ecological quality of water bodies and wetlands.	Environment Agency, Catchment Partnerships	Number of Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes created	Annual review
		Number of contaminated sites with remediated works	Annual review

## FOCUS ON: NEIGHBOURHOODS (PARKS, GARDENS, SCHOOL GROUNDS, CEMETERIES AND ALLOTMENTS)

Improve wildlife value of parks, school grounds, cemeteries, allotments, and other neighbourhood spaces	Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Manchester City Council and All	Review Park Plan format to include biodiversity in all park plans	Ongoing transitional target
		Ha of land improved	Annual review
		Number of species recorded	Annual review
		Review management of allotments to include biodiversity	2024 - 2025
		Review cemetery management regimes	2024 - 2025
		Number of case studies	Annual review
Improve wildlife value of domestic gardens	Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Manchester City Council, housing associations, Royal Horticultural Society	Campaigns and promotion delivered	Annual review

## FOCUS ON: CITY AND DISTRICT CENTRES

Encourage wildlife-friendly development and regeneration schemes integrating nature-based solutions	Manchester City Council, Universities, Registered social landlords, Hospitals and public health teams	Ha of land improved	Annual review
		Number of key projects integrating nature-based solutions	
		Number of street trees planted	
Develop case studies to promote biodiversity interventions in commercial premises, new developments and transport corridors, e.g. rail, road, Metrolink and cycleways.	Greater Manchester Passenger Travel Execution, Manchester City Council, Network Rail, National Highways, Lancashire Wildlife Trust	Number of case studies	Annual review



© Cath

## INVOLVING PEOPLE

ACTION	LEAD + PARTNERS	MEASURE	DEADLINE
<b>FOCUS ON: ENGAGING PEOPLE - TO ENABLE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</b>			
Deliver public events (face-to-face, self-guided and online as appropriate) aimed at engaging diverse audiences with the natural environment and wildlife	Manchester Nature Consortium partners	Number of events	Annual review
Aim to organise an annual Manchester Festival of Nature	Manchester Nature Consortium	Number of partners involved	Annual review
		Number of people attending	
		Social reach / press coverage	
Deliver biodiversity themed exhibitions	Manchester Museum, others	Number of exhibitions	Annual review

<b>FOCUS ON: ENGAGING PEOPLE - TO ENABLE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</b>			
Support groups and individuals to take biodiversity action in their neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces, streets, places of worship etc linking through to the LNRN	Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Manchester City Council	My Wild Garden sign-ups	Annual review
	All	Develop and support Manchester-wide network of wildlife champions	Ongoing
		Number of groups supported	Annual review
		Number of events / activities run	
		Number of people engaged	
Encourage and promote wildlife-friendly gardening	Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Manchester City Council, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Royal Horticultural Society	Number of My Wild Garden sign-ups	Annual review
		Number of people/engaged	
		Number of groups supported	
		Feedback from participants	
Delivery of practical conservation activity throughout Manchester	All	Number of sessions	Annual review
		Number of volunteers	



## FOCUS ON: PROMOTION AND AWARENESS RAISING

Promote and support LNRN focussing on habitats, species, gardens, parks etc as appropriate	Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Manchester City Council, other partners	Communications plan	Annual review
		Number of species records	
Training and advice for land managers to increase knowledge, skills and support for management regimes to improve biodiversity	Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Eden Project, City of Trees, Canal and River Trust, The Conservation Volunteers	Number of training workshops	Annual review
		Number of site managers / operatives attending	
Disseminate learning and celebrate achievement through publications, conferences, workshops etc	All	Number of publications / case studies produced	Annual review
		Number of workshops hosted / networks supported	
		Number of conference / workshop participants attending	
		Number of articles published	
		Number of Awards won	



## PLANNING, POLICY AND PARTNERSHIPS

ACTION	LEAD + PARTNERS	MEASURE	DEADLINE
Embed and mainstream biodiversity into refreshed Manchester City Council policies and strategies referring to the Greater Manchester LNRS and Environment Act	Manchester City Council	New Manchester City Council policies should reflect / reference / integrate the Biodiversity Strategy and LNRN objectives	Annual review
Protection and enhancement of biodiversity and nature-based solutions through the planning and development process	Manchester City Council	Integrate Biodiversity into Green Infrastructure Action Plan / Tree and Woodland Strategy / Climate Change Action Plan	Annual review
		Develop appropriate nature-based solutions, guidance and evidence base	
		Integration of Biodiversity Net Gain	
To establish key cross thematic linkages e.g. with climate change, health and wellbeing, sustainable transport, air quality	All	Number of organisations involved in delivering biodiversity action	Annual review
To support the delivery of collaborative practical projects	All	Number of key partnership projects involved in delivering biodiversity action	Annual review
		Establishment of Manchester Biodiversity Action Group	2022
To realise funding opportunities for biodiversity benefit	All	£ investment in biodiversity related projects	Annual review
		Number of jobs created	
		Number of key biodiversity project bids developed	
		Number of businesses supported	
Identification of potential sites for Biodiversity Net Gain offsetting in Manchester – using the Greater Manchester LNRS and NRN work by Greater Manchester Ecology Unit in Manchester to target priorities	Manchester City Council, All	Number of sites identified Ha of land identified	2023
Identify mechanism and organisation(s) to undertake Biodiversity Net Gain assessments on identified sites and develop management plans and costings for identified sites	Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, Manchester City Council, Greater Manchester Combined Authority	Lead organisation identified / selected	2023
		Number of net gain assessments completed on identified offset sites / Ha	Annual review
		Management plans developed for Biodiversity Net Gain work	Annual review
Monitoring system for delivery of net gain agreements on offset sites in Manchester defined	DEFRA, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit	Monitoring framework established for Biodiversity Net Gain sites	2023
		Lead organisation(s) identified / selected	



© Alice Singleton

# References

- <sup>1</sup> State of Nature 2019, State of Nature Partnership. 2019
- <sup>2</sup> Biodiversity Intactness Index, Natural History Museum's Data Portal, October 2021
- <sup>3</sup> My Wild City - Reconnecting Manchester with urban wildlife: next steps, The Wildlife Trusts for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside. 2019
- <sup>4</sup> Recovering together: A report of public opinion on the role and importance of nature during and in our recovery from the Coronavirus crisis in England, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, 2020
- <sup>5</sup> Nearby Nature, The Wildlife Trusts for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside. 2020
- <sup>6</sup> Bragg, R et al. (2015) Wellbeing benefits from natural environments rich in wildlife: A literature review for The Wildlife Trusts, University of Essex
- <sup>7</sup> The Nature of Manchester: Local Action Project, Westcountry Rivers Ltd. 2018
- <sup>8</sup> De Zylva, P, Gordon-Smith C. and Childs, M. (2020) England's Green Space Gap. Friends of the Earth.
- <sup>9</sup> Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership (2021) More people than ever before benefiting from 'social prescriptions' as Greater Manchester leads the way. Available at: [www.gmhsc.org.uk/news/social-prescribing-day/](http://www.gmhsc.org.uk/news/social-prescribing-day/) (Accessed: 13 September 2021)
- <sup>10</sup> Kuo, F. et al. (1998). 'Fertile ground for Community: Inner-city Neighbourhood Common Spaces'. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 26, 823 – 851.
- <sup>11</sup> Manchester City Council (2021) Air quality. Available at: [www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200075/pollution/7697/air\\_quality](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200075/pollution/7697/air_quality) (Accessed: 8 September 2021)
- <sup>12</sup> IPBES (2019). Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.
- <sup>13</sup> Fuentes, J. et al. (2016). 'Air pollutants degrade floral scents and increase insect foraging times', *Atmospheric Environment*
- <sup>14</sup> All our trees – Greater Manchester's Tree and Woodland Strategy, City of Trees
- <sup>15</sup> The state of the environment: the urban environment. Environment Agency, Chief Scientists Group, 2021.
- <sup>16</sup> Kelly, D. (2018). 'Impact of paved front gardens on current and future urban flooding'. *Journal of Flood Risk Management*, 11 S434–S443.
- <sup>17</sup> Nature-based solutions to the climate emergency: The benefits to business and society, IGNITION project, 2020.
- <sup>18</sup> House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee. Biodiversity in the UK: bloom or bust? First report of session 2021-22 (p12)
- <sup>19</sup> Lawton, J. et al. (2010). Making Space for Nature: a review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network. Report to DEFRA.
- <sup>20</sup> Report of the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy Pilot, 2020
- <sup>21</sup> Cavan, G. et al. (2018). My Back Yard: An action plan to increase green space and enhance wildlife in domestic gardens across Manchester. Manchester Metropolitan University
- <sup>22</sup> Davies, Z.G., Fuller, R.A., Loram, A., Irvine, K.N., Sims, V. & Gaston, K.J., 2009. A national scale inventory of resource provision for biodiversity within domestic gardens. *Biological Conservation*, 142(4), pp.761–771.
- <sup>23</sup> Smith, C. and Cavan, G (2018). Assessing the contribution of domestic gardens to urban ecosystem services. Manchester Metropolitan University
- <sup>24</sup> Goddard et al. (2010). Scaling up from gardens: biodiversity conservation in urban environments. *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*, 25(2) 90-98.

# Appendix A

## Biodiversity Policy and Legislative Context

### International

#### **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**

In 2010 at the Convention of Biological Diversity in Nagoya, Japan over 190 countries including the UK agreed an ambitious plan to protect global biodiversity, and to ensure that by 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and widely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.

In 2021/2, a new **Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)** will be produced which reinforces the importance of Governments to act and address Biodiversity loss. Manchester is one of many cities across the World that has signed the Edinburgh Declaration, a commitment by sub national, regional and local government's to register their concern about biodiversity loss and support the production of the new GBF.

#### **Cities with Nature Network**

Manchester is a signatory of this, a shared global platform for cities and their partners to engage and connect, working with shared commitment towards a more sustainable urban world. It has been developed to share best practice approaches with founding partners Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and IUCN, along with supporting bodies such as the CBD and other international partners.

#### **Water Framework Directive**

The European Water Framework Directive (WFD) came into force in December 2000 and became part of UK law in December 2003. It provides an opportunity to plan and deliver a better water environment, focussing on ecology.

Successful implementation of the WFD will help protect all elements of the water cycle. It provides an opportunity to plan and deliver a better water environment through river basin management planning, and help protect and enhance the quality of surface freshwater (including lakes, streams and rivers), groundwaters, groundwater dependant ecosystems, estuaries and coastal waters.

### National

#### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)**

The revised National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

#### **Specifically in relation to Biodiversity:**

Ch.15 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment), including Biodiversity net gain requirement (paragraph 175a) Town and Country Planning Act (2017) Environmental Impact Assessment including (para 4 (b) Process; Schedule 3.1 (d) Screening development; Schedule 3.2 (1) (b) Location of development; Schedule 4.1 (c) Information in Environmental Statements National Planning Practice Guidance Natural Environment (para 10 – 35) responsibilities include protected and priority species and habitats; 'proportionate' information and assessment required on biodiversity impacts at all stages of development; local ecology networks and nature recovery networks; application of mitigation hierarchy, net gain metrics, and promotion of woodlands

#### **Conservation of Habitats and Species**

Regulations 2012 (HM Government, 2017)

The Directive lays down rules for the protection, management and exploitation of such habitats and species. The Habitats Regulations 2017 transpose the Habitats Directive and elements of the Birds Directive in England, Wales and, to a limited extent, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

#### **Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)**

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is the primary legislation which protects animals, plants and habitats in the UK.

#### **Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006)**

The Act states that any public body or statutory undertaker in England and Wales must have regard to the purpose of conservation of biological diversity in the exercise of their functions.

### **National Pollinator Strategy (2014)**

The Government is committed to taking action to improve the state of our bees and other pollinating insects and to build up our understanding of current populations and of the causes of decline. The actions outlined in this Strategy build on existing policies and initiatives in Government and in many other organisations. We want to draw on the skills, experience and enthusiasm that already exist among organisations and individuals across the country to put in place a united effort to make positive changes for our pollinators.

The overarching vision is to see pollinators thrive, so they can carry out their essential service to people of pollinating flowers and crops, while providing other benefits for our native plants, the wider environment, food production and all of us.

### **The Environment Bill**

(Draft) Environment (Principles and Governance) Bill (2019/2020) (England and Wales) will create a new governance framework for the environment, and act as an enabler for priorities set out in Defra's 25 year Environment Plan.

### **25 Year Environment Plan**

The plan is the mechanism to deliver the ambitions set out in the Environment bill.

#### **Objective headings will include prioritising action supporting:**

1. Clean air
2. Clean and plentiful water
3. Thriving plants and wildlife
4. Reducing the risks of harm from environmental hazards
5. Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently
6. Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment
7. Mitigating and adapting to climate change
8. Minimising waste
9. Managing exposure to chemicals
10. Enhancing biosecurity

### **Biodiversity Net Gain**

A key output of the Environment Bill, Biodiversity Net Gain will provide a legal requirement that any impact on biodiversity, where it cannot be avoided, will not only be compensated, but will have to demonstrate a 10% biodiversity net gain – a legal commitment to improve biodiversity on development.

Net Gain will be measured using an agreed metric. This way of measuring the biodiversity baseline is fundamental to the whole process. It will involve grading habitats present on a particular development or project and providing it with a unit figure, measuring the area of habitat present, allowing an indication of the habitat which will be improved.

Conservation covenants between landowners and responsible bodies (possibly effective environmental managers) will be established, to provide sustainable and effective management of the intervention for a minimum of thirty years.

### **England's Nature Recovery Network**

The NRN will be a national network of wildlife-rich places. Defra's aim is to expand, improve and connect these places across our towns, cities and countryside.

The NRN is a major commitment in the government's 25 Year Environment Plan.

### **Biodiversity 2020 A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services**

This is the national strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services; it was published in summer 2011. It sets out the government's ambition to halt overall loss of England's biodiversity by 2020, support healthy well functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people.

A follow up document **Conservation 21: Natural England's conservation strategy for the 21st century** was published on 14th October 2016. This strategy sets out Natural England's thinking about what needs to be done differently in order to improve our natural environment. It post-dates Biodiversity 2020.

## State of Nature 2019

The 2019 State of Nature report is an independently produced health check on how the UK's wildlife is faring, and a response to Biodiversity 2020. It looks back over nearly 50 years of monitoring to see how nature has changed in the UK, its Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories.

This report has been produced by a partnership of more than 70 organisations involved in the recording, researching and conservation of nature in the UK and its Overseas Territories.

Over the long term, some 13 per cent of species are at risk of extinction from the UK. Pressures upon wildlife come from many sources, including agricultural management, urbanisation, pollution, hydrological change, woodland management and invasive non-native species. Climate change is driving widespread changes in the abundance, distribution and ecology of England's wildlife, and will continue to do so for decades or even centuries to come.

## Regional

### GM Strategy – Our Peoples Our Place

The overarching vision is to make Greater Manchester one of the best places in the world to grow up, get on and grow old.

The plan explains ambitions for the future of the city region and the 2.8 million people who live in the towns, cities, communities and neighbourhoods that make up Greater Manchester. It covers health, wellbeing, work and jobs, housing, transport, skills, training and economic growth.

### Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) 5 Year Environment Plan (2019–2024)

The plan sets out our long-term environmental vision – to be carbon neutral by 2038 – and the urgent actions we all need to take in the next 4 years to help achieve this.

## All Our Trees - GM Tree and Woodland Strategy (2020)

All Our Trees is Greater Manchester's tree and woodland strategy and shows the incredible value of the city region's 11.3 million trees – demonstrating why we should protect them, and outlines where to plant more trees.

Produced by charity City of Trees and endorsed by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), the strategy sets out clear objectives on how we can maximise the benefits of our trees and woods in relation to tackling carbon, air pollution and flooding.

## Places for Everyone

Publication draft with expected adoption in 2023. Once adopted it will form the Local Plan for all nine districts involved and provide the policy framework for biodiversity in advance of Biodiversity Net Gain becoming mandatory via the Environment Act in November 2023. When the Manchester Local Plan (Core Strategy) is reviewed it will need to be compatible with Places for Everyone.

## Local

### Our Manchester Strategy (2015-2025)

The Our Manchester Strategy sets a long-term vision for Manchester's future to be a world class City by 2025 and describes how we will achieve it. It provides a framework for actions by our partners working across Manchester – public sector organisations, businesses, the voluntary sector and our communities.

### Manchester Local Plan (2012 -27)

The Manchester Local Plan guides development within Manchester. It was previously known as the Local Development Framework.

It establishes a Vision for Manchester in 2027 and outlines Strategic Objectives. It also includes a range of policies under each objective that the Council feels will ultimately deliver the Vision.

Manchester's Core Strategy was adopted on the 11 July 2012 and is the key document in the Manchester Local Plan.

The local plan will be reviewed in 2022, with all Biodiversity related policies appraised.

### **Manchester Climate Change Action Plan**

In July 2019 Manchester declared a climate emergency. As one of the first councils in the UK to do so, this action was built upon a decade of work that had seen the City's direct carbon emissions reduced by more than half between 2009/10 and 2019/20. The Climate Change Action Plan 2020-25 translates that declaration into clear and measurable actions. The challenging target is to reduce direct carbon emissions by a further 50% by 2025.

### **Manchester's Great Outdoors – A Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Manchester (2015-25)**

Attractive and multi-functional green and blue infrastructure has a vital role to play in creating a high quality, healthy and biodiverse environment with accessible opportunities for recreation and exercise.

The GI strategy has been recognised as a UK best practice exemplar by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), winning the National Award for Knowledge Sharing in 2018.

### **Tree Action Plan (2015-20)**

The tree action plan forms part of the green and blue infrastructure strategy. The vision is to secure a long-term future for our trees and woodlands for generations to come, providing the right management and strong protection, ensuring their positive contribution to a growing, world class city, recognised for its dynamic and sustainable economy and high quality of life.

### **MANCHESTER'S PARK STRATEGY 2017–2027**

This Park Strategy has been prepared to guide the investment and upkeep of Manchester's parks over the next ten years. It sets out the vision, key themes and actions that are needed to ensure parks and green spaces can continue to serve the needs of communities across the city, providing popular and attractive open spaces for play, sport and informal recreation.



# Appendix B

## **Organisations involved in the Manchester Biodiversity Action Group.**

**Greater Manchester Ecology Unit**

**Natural England**

**Manchester City Council**

**University of Manchester**

**Manchester Metropolitan University**

**The Conservation Volunteers**

**The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds**

**The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire,  
Manchester and North Merseyside**

**City of Trees**

**Canal and Rivers Trust**

**Environment Agency**

**Manchester Museum**

