

Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Impact on European Protected Sites of Wigan Borough Local Plan: Publication and Submission Version

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For

Wigan Council



1. Introduction

1.1 European protected sites are of exceptional importance for the conservation of species and natural habitats. The purpose of Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) of land use plans is to ensure that protection of the integrity of European protected sites is an integral part of the planning process at a regional and local level. European protected sites comprise Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar sites. Government guidance advises that potential SPAs (pSPA), candidate SACs (cSAC) and potential Ramsar (pRamsar) sites are also included in HRAs.

1.2 Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC transposed into UK law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 dealing with the conservation of European protected sites states that:

'Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.'

1.3 The Wigan Borough Local Plan is regarded as a Plan which is considered likely to have significant effect on one or more European protected site and should therefore be subject to assessment.

1.4 It is noted that the Plan being assessed is still at initial draft stage and will be subject to public consultation and likely further amendment. Further Appropriate Assessments may therefore be required if, as expected, changes are made as a result of either the current consultation, future consultations or a future Examination in Public.

1.5 Habitats Regulation Assessments can be seen as having a number of discrete stages –

- Stage 1 – Screening
- Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment
- Stage 3 – Derogation (compensation) where effects cannot be avoided or mitigated

1.6 This document forms Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) process and contributes to the fulfilment of the Council's statutory duty as regards Article 6(3). It is an Opinion and an Assessment of whether the Wigan Borough Local Plan may have a significant effect on the special interest of any European designated protected sites.

1.7 It is also an Opinion on, and an Assessment of, whether any of the identified effects (if any) can be avoided or mitigated or whether any of the actions proposed in the plan need adjustment.

1.8 Stage 1 – Screening

The purpose of the Screening stage of the HRA process is to initially identify the risk or the possibility of significant adverse effects on a European site which could undermine the achievement of a site's conservation objectives, and which therefore require further detailed examination through an appropriate assessment. If risks which might undermine a site's conservation objectives can clearly be ruled out (based on the consideration of objective information), a proposal will have no likely significant effect (LSE) and no appropriate assessment will be needed. In order for a policy or an allocation in a Plan to be screened out of the HRA process a conclusion must be made 'beyond reasonable scientific doubt' that the policy or allocation will not have an LSE on the European Protected site or its qualifying features. Case law has established in relation to screening that:

- An effect is likely if it 'cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information' (Waddenzee C127-02 ∞ 45). This requires consideration and a conclusion made against known and presented data/survey or results/scientific evidence (e.g. literature review).
- An effect is significant if it 'is likely to undermine the conservation objectives' [of the European protected site (Waddenzee (C127-02 ∞ 48))]. This excludes from consideration other impacts not related to the qualifying features and their conservation objectives.
- In undertaking a screening assessment for likely significant effects 'it is not that significant effects are probable, a risk is sufficient, but there must be credible evidence (see above) that there is 'a real, rather than a hypothetical, risk' Boggis v Natural England & Waveney District Council. This refines the understanding of the 'precautionary principle' as it applies to the Habitats Regulations.
- The Sweetman (case C258-11) also offers some simple guidance that the screening step 'operates merely as a trigger', in order to progress to further assessment stages through the process.

1.9 Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment

In 2017 the decision of the Court of Justice of the European Union (People over Wind, case C323/17) concluded that it was not appropriate within the Screening Stage to consider measures that would mitigate for impacts on the qualifying or designated features of the European site. This ruling has resulted in an update to the Habitats Regulations 2017 as they have been translated into UK domestic legislation and updated Habitats Regulations (amendment)(EU Exit) 2019 to reflect the exit of the UK from the European Union. In a Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment, evidence and detail should be considered which can demonstrate that a Plan including any embedded measures or additional mitigation can result in a conclusion that there would be no 'adverse effect on integrity' (AEOI), when considering a European sites conservation objectives. In applying the Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment the relevant competent Authority – in this case the Local Authority concerned - must also consider whether there is a relevant planning mechanism (which may apply at a different level of the planning hierarchy) which can secure the necessary mitigation via either conditions or obligations.

In the case of a Strategic Local Plan the level of detail in land use plans concerning developments that will be permitted under the Plan at some time in the future is rarely sufficient to allow the fullest quantification of potential adverse effects. It is therefore necessary to be cognisant of the fact that HRAs for plans can be tiered, with assessments being undertaken with increasing specificity at lower tiers. This is in line

with DCLG guidance and court rulings that the level of detail of the assessment, whilst meeting the relevant requirements of the Habitats Regulations, should be 'appropriate' to the level of plan or project that it addresses.

Government guidance says:

"The scope and content of an appropriate assessment will depend on the nature, location, duration and scale of the proposed plan or project and the interest features of the relevant site. 'Appropriate' is not a technical term. It indicates that an assessment needs to be proportionate and sufficient to support the task of the competent authority in determining whether the plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of the site." That is, the Plan must make every effort to ensure that no Policies or Allocations will cause harm to the special nature conservation interest of European sites. But where some doubt remains as to whether harm will occur the plan must show that sufficient safeguards will be in place in other levels of the planning hierarchy to ensure that no harm will be caused to the special interest of European sites. A precautionary approach should always be taken".

The advice of Advocate-General Kokott to the European Court of Justice (9th June 2005, Case C-6/04) is relevant. She commented that:

"It would ...hardly be proper to require a greater level of detail in preceding plans [rather than planning applications] or the abolition of multi-stage planning and approval procedures so that the assessment of implications can be concentrated on one point in the procedure. Rather, adverse effects on areas of conservation must be assessed at every relevant stage of the procedure to the extent possible on the basis of the precision of the Plan. This assessment is to be updated with increasing specificity in subsequent stages of the procedure".

1.10 In Combination Assessment

The Habitats Regulations also include a requirement for an assessment not only for a Plan alone but also for consideration of any LSE in-combination with other projects or plans. An 'in-combination' assessment should be undertaken for any impact which is shown to have an effect even where it might be considered 'de minimis' for the plan in isolation. In the application of the in-combination test projects or plans are also considered to include reasonably foreseeable proposals (RFP), which may include projects, plans or schemes which have not concluded their passage through the development planning process, whether they are in full or outline or include other strategic planning documents.

Other plans, which are also important in the context of the Wigan Borough Local Plan, which are considered here in the test of in-combination effects. Include:

- Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document (2024);
- Salford Local Plan: Development Management Policies and Designations (2023);
- Salford Local Plan: Core Strategy and Allocations (in development);
- Warrington Local Plan (2023);
- St Helens Local Plan
- Central Lancashire Local Plan
- West Lancs Local Plan
- Sefton Coast Local Plan
- Greater Manchester Joint Minerals DPD (2013);
- Greater Manchester Joint Waste DPD (2012);
- Standish Neighbourhood Plan (2019);
- Other Supplementary Planning Documents and local plans

These usually include their own Habitats Regulation Assessments and the conclusions of these HRAs have been taken into consideration when determining whether or no likely significant effects will occur.

1.11 The Competent Authority

The competent authority under the Habitat Regulations, is the body which undertakes the assessment of likely significant effects (LSE). This is usually the Local Planning Authority in relation to the preparation of Plans or the consideration of planning applications but may also be another statutory body who has authority and powers to permit, consent or licence activities (e.g. the Environment Agency). Natural England as the statutory government advisor in these matters also has a role in the process to ensure that the Plan will not have any likely significant harmful effects on European sites.

A Judicial Review (R (Preston) v Cumbria County Council [2019] EWHC 1362) concerning a project level HRA ruled that a Local Planning Authority cannot rely on the future decisions and assessment of another permitting competent authority (in this instance the Environment Agency) within their own conclusions on the Screening (Stage 1) and must give consideration of sufficient securing measures (Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment) at the time of their own determination of an application for development.

Government guidance in this regard which seems relevant to plans, outline proposals or operations which might require an additional consent/permit from a third party indicates: - a competent authority is permitted to grant a plan or project consent which leaves the applicant free to determine subsequently certain parameters relating to the construction phase, only if that authority is certain that the consent includes conditions that are strict enough to guarantee that those parameters will not adversely affect the integrity of the site.

While this Plan, and the HRA, are at a high tier of the planning process, this is important when considering any necessary mitigation for identified effects.

1.12 The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit

The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU), as the specialist ecological adviser to Wigan Council has prepared this Screening Opinion and Assessment. Information held by Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) was consulted for the qualifying features, the conservation objectives and favourable condition for the European Sites concerned.

GMEU ecologists familiar with the European sites concerned and their special interests, reviewed the ecological information. The key vulnerabilities and sensitivities of the European sites concerned are understood by GMEU allowing for an informed assessment of the possible effects of the Plan, and any specific aims, objectives and policies contained in the Plan.

GMEU has prepared a number of HRAs for Local Plans and Strategies, prepares HRAs for planning applications across GM and Lancashire and is often consulted on HRAs prepared by others.

1.13 This report assesses the 'Wigan Borough Local Plan: Publication and Submission Version (December 2025)' including policies and strategic allocations within the Plan. It is recognised that this is a framework for development in Wigan and that land currently not allocated may come forward for development during the period of the plan. Where these cannot be screened out as having no likely significant effect an Appropriate Assessment will occur at the time of the allocation or application stage.

The assessment takes into account the likely cumulative impacts (in-combination effects) of these additional developments based on the current estimates of the amount of new development which may be proposed outside of the strategic allocations. It also takes into account likely cumulative impacts of strategic allocations within Wigan identified in the Places for Everyone and strategic and local allocations in neighbouring districts and Boroughs such as Salford, Warrington and St Helens.

The report identifies Policies, which may require further Assessment as, part of the ongoing HRA of the Wigan Borough Local Plan as the Plan develops and makes recommendations, where necessary, on possible changes to policies.

2. Brief description of the Plan

2.1 The Plan being assessed is the 'Wigan Borough Local Plan: Publication and Submission Version' produced by Wigan Borough Council in December 2025.

2.2 The primary purpose of the Wigan Borough Local Plan is to guide development proposals not covered by and to ensure delivery of the policy targets in Places for Everyone up to March 2039. The main purposes of the plan are:

- Set out the policies alongside the adopted Places for Everyone Plan through which the Council will manage development and use it to inform its determination of planning applications.
- Lead the regeneration of our towns and neighbourhoods and address the social, environmental and economic challenges they face.
- Identify designations for the protection of the borough's environmental and historical assets, our town and local centres, employment areas and infrastructure.
- Allocate land to meet our future need for homes.
- Promote the development of supporting infrastructure including transport, education, health and social care, community facilities, open space, play space, sport and recreation and utilities.
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

3. Identification of European designated sites concerned

3.1 This Assessment has first screened all European sites in the region and where appropriate Wales, to generate a long list and decide which of these sites are likely to be affected by future development in Wigan. When assessing the impact of a Plan on European protected sites it is important to consider the impact on sites not only within the administrative area covered by the Plan but also those which fall outside the Plan boundary, as these could still potentially be affected by the Plan.

3.2 The location of sites assessed both screened in and screened out at stage 1 and their proximity to Wigan are shown in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 shows potential pathways from Wigan to the European sites

3.3 The Screening Criteria

3.4 In carrying out the initial screening process, the Assessment has considered the main possible **sources** of effects on the European sites arising from the Plan, possible **pathways** to the European sites and the effects on possible sensitive **receptors** in the

European sites. Only if there is an identifiable source, a pathway and a receptor is there likely to be a significant effect.

- 3.5 Possible sources and pathways for effects arising from development on the identified Sites and used in the screening of European sites are considered to be:
- Water pollution and impacts on hydrology via watercourse and groundwater moving from Wigan to European sites (habitat damage and species loss);
 - Air pollution primarily transport related via road network (habitat damage);
 - Direct land-take and change of use (habitat loss);
 - Increased recreational disturbance to European sites and functionally linked land on-foot, by road or train (species disturbance and habitat damage);
 - Risk of invasive non-native species introduction via waterways (habitat and species impacts);
 - Loss of functionally linked land – land utilised by key species associated with a European site outside the designated area;
- 3.6 Guidance and precedence concerning distances at which significant effects on European sites are caused by water or air pollution has been taken into account during the screening of European sites. Recommended buffer zones for certain types of 'most damaging' operations (e.g. air pollution from vehicles and recreational disturbance) have been used in the screening of sites. The buffer zones are based on distances before pollution sources and recreational disturbance become so diffuse so as to be indiscernible or impossible to ascribe to particular source. Outside of these buffer zones significant effects on European sites arising from water and air pollution and recreational disturbance are considered unlikely to arise.
- 3.7 Natural England also publish SSSI 'Impact Risk Zones' (IRZs) providing guidance on the types of development which should be considered for their possible impacts on SSSIs and which impacts should be considered. All European designated sites are also designated as SSSIs. IRZs can therefore provide guidance when screening European sites that could be affected by the Plan.
- 3.8 The nine authorities involved for the Places for Everyone (PfE) strategic plan (including Wigan) have published a supplementary planning document (SPD) covering Holcroft Moss (part of the Manchester Mosses SAC). An SPD has also been published by Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside covering the South Pennines SAC/SPA. These documents have also been taken into account when assessing European sites that could be affected by the Plan.
- 3.9 Although guidance concerning buffer zones/risk zones has been taken into account when screening European protected sites, in the case of a Plan affecting the development of an entire metropolitan area, buffer/risk zones should be regarded as important but **not** as definitive; for example, this buffer zone may not be sufficient when assessing certain very large-scale developments, secondary impacts, or cumulative impacts where pathways to receptor sites are rivers, air pollution is a factor or the receptor site is sensitive to recreational pressure resulting from an increase in population.
- 3.10 Taking the above into account four European sites are screened in owing to proximity to the Borough of Wigan.
- Manchester Mosses SAC
 - Rixton Clay Pits SAC
 - Rostherne Mere Ramsar and
 - Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar.

3.11 We have also screened into the assessment owing to clear pathways from the Borough of Wigan.

- Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar (hydrological connectivity via tributaries of Sankey and Glaze Brooks, potential recreational destination)
- Ribble & Alt Estuary SPA/Ramsar (direct connectivity via River Douglas, potential recreational destination)
- South Pennines Moors SAC/SPAs (air quality impacts) and
- Sefton Coast SAC (Potential recreational destination).

3.12 Other European sites considered but Screened-out of the assessment include:

- Rochdale Canal SAC – whilst connectivity for leisure boats via the Bridgewater Canal exists and disturbance of floating water-plantain the qualifying species by leisure boats is an identified source of negative effect, it is 23km from the Borough boundary via the canal network to the SAC and the current trigger for likely significant effect of 800 boat movements per annum very unlikely to be exceeded in isolation or in-combination given the most recent lockage report (2024) indication less than 200 boat movements per annum.
- Liverpool Bay SPA – whilst hydrologically linked to Wigan the volume of water in Liverpool Bay is such that any pollutants generated in the Borough of Wigan could not be reasonably attributed to any likely significant effects owing to a reduction in Water quality detected in Liverpool Bay SPA.
- Dee Estuary SPA/Ramsar– whilst hydrologically linked to Wigan any pollutants generated in the Borough of Wigan could not be reasonably attributed to any likely significant effects owing to a reduction in water quality detected in the Dee Estuary SPA/Ramsar.
- Mersey Narrow & Wirral Foreshore SAC – whilst hydrologically linked to Wigan any pollutants generated in the Borough of Wigan could not be reasonably attributed to the Borough of Wigan

4. Initial Screening of potential Likely Significant Effects (LSE)

4.1 Sources are described and considered in more detail below. The aim of this section is to provide reasoned justification for the decisions made later in the Screening.

Given the distances of allocations and potential allocations within the Borough of Wigan from the European sites concerned, and the special nature conservation interests of the European sites screened in, the following impacts can be effectively screened out of the assessment as being very unlikely to be caused through the operation of the plan, or any effects will be so diffuse or diluted so as to be *nugatory* (that is, too small to be distinguished from background):

- Light Spillage or shading (whilst the Manchester Mosses SAC falls partly in Wigan; light pollution does not represent a risk to restoration of the degraded lowland bog.);
- Risk of invasive non-native species introduction (whilst theoretically introduced species could be transported down to the Mersey or Ribble Estuaries as the river is freshwater and the estuary salt water the risks are negligible. Invasive species are not listed as a constraint to the restoration of the Manchester Mosses SAC).

4.2 The following impacts have been 'Screened In' to the assessment as considered to have the potential to cause likely significant effects:

- Direct Land take (Manchester Mosses SAC and functionally linked land),
- Water pollution,
- Hydrology (decreased or increased discharge to surface and ground water),

- Air pollution (primarily that generated by vehicles),
- Increased recreational pressure,
- Loss of functionally linked land,
- Recreational disturbance of functionally linked land and
- Noise disturbance of functionally linked land.

The following brief discussion of these impacts is included to give an understanding of the rationale for the conclusions reached in the subsequent Screening process, summarised in Table 6.1.

4.3 Direct Land take

Astley & Bedford Mosses are part of the Manchester Mosses SAC and located in the Borough of Wigan. It is therefore possible that a development proposal could come forward that would result in a direct loss of part of this SAC, although this is not currently planned.

4.4 Water Quality

- 4.4.1 Negative effects on distant European sites, both habitats and qualifying species can occur through increases in water pollution such as nutrient enrichment from diffuse pollution discharged from wastewater treatment works, agricultural run-off and/or industrial processes as well as increases in sediment load.
- 4.4.2 Of sites considered, diffuse water pollution could have an effect on the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar Site, via pathways such as the Glaze and Sankey Brooks into the River Mersey and the Estuary and on the Ribble & Alt SPA/Ramsar via the River Douglas.
- 4.4.3 Prior to discharging into the Estuaries these watercourses pass through other Metropolitan areas and districts with the Mersey Estuary adjacent to the very large Merseyside conurbation. Both estuaries receive inputs from many disparate sources. It will therefore be very difficult to establish whether any water pollution arising from development in Wigan was responsible for a significant effect on pollution of either Estuary. However, given the need to take a precautionary approach when preparing an HRA, the Mersey Estuary & Ribble & Alt Estuary has been 'Screened In' to this assessment.
- 4.4.4 There is no possibility of water pollution generated in the Borough of Wigan effecting the Rochdale Canal SAC as whilst there is hydrological connectivity via the Leeds Liverpool & Bridgewater Canal, the direction of flow in the Canal is from Rochdale to Manchester.
- 4.4.5 Water quality Effects on the Manchester Mosses and in particular Astley & Bedford Mosses could occur via surface and groundwater, given it falls within the Borough. The Manchester Mosses SAC has therefore been 'Screened In' for potential water quality effects from sources created by development supported by the policies in the local plan.

4.5 Hydrology

- 4.5.1 The Manchester Mosses SAC depend on a high water table to maintain good condition, any negative effects on surface or ground water supply could have a significant effect on this European site. As developments could theoretically impact upon surface or groundwater of the Astley & Bedford Mosses, the Manchester Mosses SAC has been 'screened-in' for potential changes to hydrology resulting from development supported by the policies in the local plan.

4.6 Air Quality

4.6.1 Air can transport pollution, dust and odours over significant distance and air pollution can cause significant harm to habitats and species. The main types of air pollutants likely to have an adverse effect on an ecologically important site are:

- Oxides of Nitrogen (NO_x),
- Ammonia (NH₃),
- Dust,
- Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂),
- Low level Ozone (O₃) and,
- Acid deposition caused from chemical reactions to NO_x, SO₂ and CO₂.

4.6.2 Of these NO_x (nitrates) are the most likely to arise as a result of development controlled by the Plan under consideration here. Dust and low-level ozone only have effects very close to the source. Ammonia emissions are most closely associated with certain types of intensive agricultural production not identified as a significant land-use within the Borough of Wigan. SO₂ are associated with certain industrial operations such as paper pulp, cement and smelting and burning of fossil fuels such as coal and oil.

4.6.3 The main sources of these pollutants are road traffic. The greatest damage caused by nitrates occurs within 200 - 250m of the source. Although allocations in Wigan will be located further than 250m from any European sites, it is recognised that development within Wigan will generate road traffic over a much wider area and some of this traffic may subsequently pass within 250m of a European site. Where proposed developments within Wigan are likely to result in these pollutants arising, they have been screened-in to this Assessment.

4.6.4 The issue of diffuse air pollution is complicated by the fact that two of the European sites of concern to this Assessment (the Manchester Mosses SAC and Rixton Clay Pits SAC) are already exceeding nitrate levels which would be considered harmful to sensitive habitats on these sites (*source* Natural England and Air Pollution Information System (APIS)), so any level of increased nitrate pollution no matter how small could be considered to be harmful. Habitats in the South Pennines SAC are also susceptible to air pollution.

4.6.5 A joint SPD has been produced by the nine places for everyone authorities and Warrington Borough Council providing guidance on when levels of traffic generation are likely to require mitigation with regards to Holcroft Moss part of the Manchester Mosses SAC. The current guidance is that any development that generates more than 100 vehicle movements along the M62 or 20 Heavy Goods Vehicles will exceed the threshold.

4.6.6 For Rixton Clay Pits SAC and the South Pennines SAC/SPA and other parts of the Manchester Mosses SAC no guidance is currently available. They have therefore been screened-in on the precautionary principle.

4.6.7 Whilst no significant industrial processes are currently proposed applications may come forward that have emissions that would require permitting by the Environment Agency. Any such application should therefore be accompanied by an Air Quality Assessment that includes potential effects on European protected sites.

4.7 **Recreational Pressure**

4.7.1 The effects of significantly increased populations and associated recreational pressures on the regions European protected sites has been considered in this Assessment because it is recognised that this could have a negative effect on the special interest of some European sites.

4.7.2 Recreational use of an internationally designated site has potential to:

- Cause damage through excessive erosion (trampling, wear and tear),
- Cause nutrient enrichment,
- Cause disturbance to sensitive species, such as nesting and overwintering birds and,
- Prevent appropriate management or exacerbate existing management difficulties.

4.7.3 The European protected sites closest to the Borough of Wigan are the Manchester Mosses SAC, Rixton Clay Pits SAC, Rostherne Mere Ramsar and Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar. Managed access occurs at Rixton Clay Pits SAC, parts of the Manchester Mosses SAC, (Risley Moss Country Park) and Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar. Any changes to population levels or access arrangements (e.g. promotion, improved footpaths, facilities, events etc) could have impacts on these sites.

4.7.4 Of the other European sites located at a greater distance, the Sefton Coast SAC and Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar and the South Pennines SPA and SAC are in part promoted as recreation destinations and are therefore potentially vulnerable to an increase in population in the Borough of Wigan. However, Natural England have advised that they no longer regard recreational disturbance of the South Pennines SPA or SAC to result in any likely significant effect. (ref. letter dated 7th August 2024 to GMCA). The Sefton Coast SAC/Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar are therefore screened-in and the South Pennines SPA/SAC screened-out.

4.7.5 The qualifying habitats of Lowland raised bog such as the Manchester Mosses SAC and the sand dunes of the Sefton Coast SAC are sensitive to recreational activity. These include increased access by pedestrian off-road 4x4 vehicles, motorbikes, trail/mountain bikes and horse riding that can cause erosion of the peat and sand dune habitats. Increased access can also result in an increase in the number of accidental fires which on peat habitats can result in long-term habitat degradation.

4.7.6 The qualifying species of Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar, the Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar and Merey Estuary SPA/Ramsar which include breeding and wintering birds are also at risk from recreational disturbance. Both European sites are therefore screened- in for recreational disturbance.

4.7.7 It is therefore, considered that the additional recreational pressures arising from the likely increased population resulting from development within the Borough of Wigan on European protected sites will need to be screened-in.

4.8 **Functionally Linked Land**

4.8.1 For an area to be considered to be functionally linked to a European site it must be shown to regularly support significant numbers of species for which a European site has been designated. 'Regularly' is taken to mean over a number of years, but there is no accepted standard definition of what may constitute 'significant numbers' because this will depend on the species concerned.

4.8.2 The concept has been most often studied in relation to birds, bats and marine species, because these species are highly mobile in their habits and can rely on sites very far apart to complete their life cycles.

4.8.3 The qualifying species associated with Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar include pink-footed geese, bewick and whooper swan which are highly mobile and there is the potential for land in Wigan to be utilised by birds primarily resident at Martin Mere. There is also a theoretical risk of sites in Wigan being functionally linked to the Mersey Estuary

SPA/Ramsar and Ribble & Alt SPA/Ramsar as the qualifying species are again primarily birds that utilise land and waterbodies outside the designated areas.

- 4.8.4 Effects on functionally linked land can include direct loss or disturbance (recreational, noise or visual). Disturbance could also occur to functionally linked land outside of the borough.
- 4.8.5 Functionally linked land associated with the South Pennines SPA has been screened-out owing to the distance of the Borough of Wigan to this European site and the qualifying species associated with the South Pennines SPA.
- 4.8.6 For this reason, risk to functionally linked land associated with Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar, Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar and Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar has been screened-in.

4.9 **Summary Results of Screening of Sites**

- 4.9.1 From the screening process, the following European designated sites have been identified as having some potential to be affected by development proposed and planned for within the Wigan Borough Draft Local Plan:
 - Manchester Mosses SAC,
 - Rixton Clay Pits SAC,
 - Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar site,
 - Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar,
 - Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA,
 - South Pennine Moors SPA/SAC,
 - Sefton Coast SAC.
- 4.9.2 Rostherne Mere Ramsar site is screen-out as there are no likely pathways (no recreational access and sufficiently buffered from major roads) to this site for negative effects generated in Wigan.

5. The Nature Conservation Interest of the “Screened In” European Sites

The following information is derived from information available from Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

5.1 Manchester Mosses SAC

5.1.1 Description of the Manchester Mosses SAC

Mossland formerly covered a large part of low-lying Greater Manchester, Merseyside and southern Lancashire, and provided an obstacle to industrial and agricultural expansion. While most has now been converted to agriculture or lost to development, several examples have survived as degraded raised bog, such as Astley & Bedford Mosses (Wigan), Risley Moss (Warrington) and Holcroft Moss (Warrington). Their surfaces are now elevated above surrounding land due to shrinkage of the surrounding tilled land, and all except Holcroft Moss have been cut for peat at some time in the past. While historic drainage has resulted in purple moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and birch (*Betula*) spp. scrub or woodland colonising the lowland bog habitat, wetter pockets have enabled the peat-forming species to survive. Habitat management including rewetting and reintroduction of appropriate lowland bog species has started to reverse the degradation of these sites.

5.1.2 Primary Reason for Designation of the Manchester Mosses SAC

The site supports degraded bog still capable of natural regeneration (JNCC code 7120), which has the potential to be restored to active raised bog (JNCC code 7110).

5.1.3 Conservation Objectives of the Manchester Mosses

The conservation objectives (Natural England 2018) for this site are:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.

5.1.4 Supplementary Advice on Conserving and Restoring

5.1.5 On this site, favourable condition requires the maintenance of the extent of each designated habitat type. A series of site-specific targets, which will contribute to favourable condition, have been produced by Natural England. However, many of these relate to management of the habitats on the site and are not particularly applicable to assessing the effects of development proposals on the SAC whilst others relate to direct impacts. Therefore, the operations that may damage the special interest of the SAC resulting from development in Wigan have been restricted to:

- Pollution including atmospheric pollutants and NOx;
- Hydrological impacts and;
- Recreational activities.

5.2 Rixton Clay Pits SAC

5.2.1 Description of Rixton Clay Pits SAC

Situated east of Warrington, this site comprises parts of an extensive disused brickworks excavated in glacial boulder clay. The excavation has left a series of hollows, which have filled with water since workings ceased in the 1960s, leading to a variety of pond sizes. New ponds have also been created more recently for wildlife and amenity purposes. Great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) are known to occur in at least 20 ponds across the site. The site also supports species-rich grassland, scrub and mature secondary woodland.

5.2.2 Primary Reason for Designation of Rixton Clay Pits

The primary reason for the designation of Rixton Clay Pits is its significant population of great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*), a European protected species. Sites selected as SACs where there is evidence of a relatively large and robust population of great crested newts, based on reliable recent survey data.

5.2.3 Conservation Objective for Rixton Clay Pits

The conservation objectives (Natural England 2018) for this site are:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species, and;
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

5.2.4 List of operations that could potentially damage the special interests of the European Site include:

- Human intrusions and disturbances.

Additionally, Natural England also states that the site is sensitive to air quality.

5.3 Martin Mere SPA & Ramsar Site

5.3.1 Description of Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar

Martin Mere is a low-lying wetland complex of open-water, marsh and grassland habitats overlying deep peat. It is situated to the north of Burscough and occupies part of the site of the old Martin Mere which, prior to drainage, was probably the largest lake in Lancashire. Acquired by the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust in 1974, the site has been transformed into a reserve of international importance for waterfowl.

5.3.2 Primary Reason for Designation of Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar

The principal interest of the site lies in the number of migrant birds it supports during the winter months. Of particular importance are wintering populations of pink-footed geese, teal and pintail in excess of 1% of the NW European population. Martin Mere also supports nationally important numbers of bewick swan, gadwall, mallard, whooper swan and shoveller and nationally important numbers of snipe, lapwing, black-tailed godwit and ruff.

Qualifying Species

This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:

- Over Winter
- Bewick Swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*
- Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

The site qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed.

- Over winter
- Pintail *Anas acuta*
- Pink-footed Geese *Anser brachyrhynchus*
- Teal *Anas crecca*

Assemblage qualification: A wetland of international importance.

The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl. Over winter, the site regularly supports 46,196 individual waterfowl (5-year peak mean 1991/2 – 1995/6) including: pochard *Aythya farina*, mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*, teal *Anas crecca*, wigeon *Anas penelope*, pintail *Anas acuta*, pink-footed goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*, whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus* and Bewick's swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*.

5.3.3 Conservation Objectives

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
- The population of each of the qualifying features, and
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

5.3.4 List of operations that could potentially damage the special interests of the European Site include from the JNCC standard data sheet and Natural England advice on operations:

- Invasive non-native species;
- Pollution to ground water (point sources and diffuse pollution)
- Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions (impacts of drainage and peat shrinkage)

5.4 Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar

5.4.1 Description

The Mersey Estuary is located on the Irish Sea coast of north-west England. It is a large, sheltered estuary that comprises large areas of saltmarsh and extensive intertidal sand- and mudflats, with limited areas of brackish marsh, rocky shoreline and boulder clay cliffs, within a rural and industrial environment. The intertidal flats and saltmarshes provide feeding and roosting sites for large populations of waterbirds. During the winter, the site is of major importance for ducks and waders. The site is also important during

the spring and autumn migration periods, particularly for wader populations moving along the west coast of Britain.

5.4.2 Primary Reason for Designation

Qualifying species

This site qualifies under **Article 4.1** of the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:

Over winter

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, 3,070 individuals representing at least 1.2% of the wintering population in Great Britain (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)

This site also qualifies under **Article 4.2** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species:

On passage

Redshank *Tringa totanus*, 3,516 individuals representing at least 2.0% of the Eastern Atlantic - wintering population (5-year peak mean, 1987-1991)

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*, 1,453 individuals representing at least 2.9% of the Europe/Northern Africa - wintering population (Count, as at 1989)

Over winter

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*, 44,300 individuals representing at least 3.2% of the wintering Northern Siberia/Europe/Western Africa population (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)

Pintail *Anas acuta*, 2,744 individuals representing at least 4.6% of the wintering North-western Europe population (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)

Redshank *Tringa totanus*, 4,689 individuals representing at least 3.1% of the wintering Eastern Atlantic - wintering population (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)

Shelduck *Tadorna*, 5,039 individuals representing at least 1.7% of the wintering North-western Europe population (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)

Teal *Anas crecca*, 11,667 individuals representing at least 2.9% of the wintering North-western Europe population (5-year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6)

Assemblage qualification: A wetland of international importance.

The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl

Over winter, the area regularly supports 99,467 individual waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6) including: Curlew *Numenius arquata*, Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa islandica*, Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, Wigeon *Anas penelope*, Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*, Redshank *Tringa totanus*, Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina*, Pintail *Anas acuta*, Teal *Anas crecca*, Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*.

5.4.3 Conservation Objectives

To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;
- The population of each of the qualifying features and;
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

5.4.4 **List of operations that could potentially damage the special interests of the European Site include from the JNCC standard data sheet and Natural England advice on operations:**

- Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities;
- Invasive non-native species;
- Changes in biotic conditions;
- Commercial shipping;
- Construction of port and harbour structures and;
- Dredging proposals.

5.5 **Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar**

5.5.1 **Description**

The Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA is composed of extensive intertidal mud and sandflats and large areas of saltmarsh. The inner flats of the Ribble Estuary are flanked by very large areas of saltmarsh. The outer flats of the Ribble Estuary are sandy. They run south as a wide sandy shore along the Sefton Coast, merging into the Alt Estuary and extending as far south as Crosby. The intertidal sandflats on the Sefton Coast are extensive and have the highest exposure to wave action. The central flats of the Alt Estuary are also sandy but with a higher mud content, and a small saltmarsh on the east bank of the channel.

They provide an important feeding habitat for birds. The estuary also provides extensive roosting sites for large populations of water birds. It is of major importance during the winter for duck and wader species and for supporting wader populations moving along the west coast of Britain during the spring and autumn migration periods.

5.5.2 **Primary Reason for Designation**

Qualifying species

This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:

Over winter

Bewick Swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii* 276 individuals representing at least 3.9% of the wintering population in Great Britain (5-year peak mean 1993/94 - 1997/98)

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* 182 individuals representing at least 3.3% of the wintering population in Great Britain (5-year peak mean 1993/94 - 1997/98)

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, 3,598 individuals representing at least 1.4% of the wintering population in Great Britain (5-year peak mean 1993/94 - 1997/98)

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* 20,086 individuals representing at least 37.9% of the wintering population in Great Britain (5-year peak mean 1993/94 - 1997/98)

Breeding

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* 1 nest representing at 9.1% of the breeding population in Great Britain (1980's count)

Common Tern *Sterna Hirundo* 182 pairs representing at least 1.5% of the breeding population in Great Britain (1996 count)

The site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European bio-regional importance of the following species listed.

On Passage

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* 1,657 representing at least 3.3% of the North African population (5-year peak mean 1993 - 1997)

Sanderling *Calidris alba* 6,535 individuals representing at least 6.5% of the East Atlantic Western and south African population (5-year peak mean 1993 - 1997)

Redshank *Tringa totanus*, 3,247 individuals representing at least 2.2% of the Eastern Atlantic population (5-year peak mean 1993 - 1997)

Over winter

Pink-footed Geese *Anser brachyrhynchus* 11,764 individuals representing at least 5.2% of the Greenland/Iceland/UK population (5-year peak mean 1993/94 - 1997/98)

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, 4,925 individuals representing at least 1.6% of the wintering North-western Europe population (5-year peak mean 1993/94 - 1997/98)

Wigeon *Anas penelope* 85,259 individuals represent at least 6.8% of the West Siberia and NW/NE European population (5-year peak mean 1993/94 - 1997/98)

Teal *Anas crecca*, 7,157 individuals representing at least 1.8% of the North-western Europe population (5-year peak mean 1993/94 - 1997/98)

Pintail *Anas acuta*, 2,731 individuals representing at least 4.6% of the North-western Europe population (5-year peak mean 1993/94 - 1997/98)

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*, 18,535 individuals representing at least 2.1% of the European and North-western African population (5-year peak mean 1993/94 - 1997/98)

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* 9,355 individuals representing at least 6.2% of the Eastern Atlantic population (5-year peak mean 1993/94 - 1997/98)

Knot *Calidris canutus islandica* 68,922 individuals representing at least 19.7% of the Canada/Greenland/Iceland and NW Europe population (5-year peak mean 1993/94 - 1997/98)

Sanderling *Calidris alba* 2,882 individuals representing at least 2.9% of the East Atlantic Western and south African population (5-year peak mean 1993/94 - 1997/98)

Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina*, 39,376 individuals representing at least 2.8% of the Northern Siberia/Europe/Western Africa population (5-year peak mean 1993/94 - 1997/98)

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*, 1,273 individuals representing at least 1.8% of the Iceland population (5-year peak mean 1993/94 - 1997/98)

Redshank *Tringa totanus*, 2,505 individuals representing at least 1.7% of the Eastern Atlantic population (5-year peak mean 1993/94 - 1997/98)

Breeding

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graellsii* 1,800 pairs representing at least 1.5% of the Western Europe/Mediterranean/West African population (1993 count)

Assemblages

The area also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl

In the non-breeding season, the area regularly supports 323,861 individual waterbirds (5 year peak mean 1993/94 - 1997/98), including Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*, Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*, Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*, Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*, Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, Wigeon *Anas penelope*, Teal *Anas crecca*, Pintail *Anas acuta*, Scaup *Aythya marila*, Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*, Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*, Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*, Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, Knot *Calidris canutus islandica*, Sanderling *Calidris alba*, Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina*, Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa islandica*, Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*, Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*, Curlew *Numenius arquata* and Redshank *Tringa tetanus*.

The site also qualifies under article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by over 20,000 seabirds in any season: In the breeding season, the area regularly supports 29,236 individual seabirds (count period ongoing), including Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*, Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graellsii* and Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*.

5.5.3 Conservation Objectives

To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;
- The population of each of the qualifying features and;
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

5.5.4 List of operations that could potentially damage the special interests of the European Site include from the JNCC standard data sheet and Natural England advice on operations:

- Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions
- Invasive non-native species;
- Changes in abiotic conditions;
- Air pollution, air-borne pollutants;
- Biocenotic evolution, succession.

5.6 Sefton Coast SAC

5.6.1 Description

The Sefton Coast in north-west England displays both rapid erosion and active shifting dunes. A substantial stretch of the dune system is fronted by shifting dunes.

The sequence of habitats from foredunes to dune grassland and dune slack is extensive, and substantial areas of open dune vegetation remain. There are large areas of semi-fixed and fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation exhibiting considerable variation from calcareous to acidic.

5.6.2 Primary Reasons For Designation of the Sefton Coast SAC

Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:

- Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (Calluno-Ulicetea). (Coastal dune heathland) *
- Dunes with *Salix repens* ssp. *argentea* (*Salicion arenariae*). (Dunes with creeping willow)
- Embryonic shifting dunes
- Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes"). (Dune grassland) *
- Humid dune slacks
- Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ("white dunes"). (Shifting dunes with marram)

Qualifying species: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following species listed in Annex II:

- Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*
- Petalwort *Petalophyllum ralfsii*

Annex I priority habitats are denoted by an asterisk (*)

5.6.3 Conservation Objective for Sefton Coast SAC

The conservation objectives (Natural England 2018) for this site are:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualify natural habitats
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natura habitats and the habitats of the qualifying species rely
- The populations of qualifying species and
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

5.6.4 List of operations that could potentially damage the special interests of the European Site include from the JNCC standard data sheet and Natural England advice on operations:

- Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions
- Invasive non-native species;
- Changes in abiotic conditions;
- Air pollution, air-borne pollutants;
- Biocenotic evolution, succession.

5.7 South Pennines Moors (Phase 1 and Phase 2) SPA

5.7.1 Description

The site is an extensive tract of moorland and moorland-fringe habitat. It includes most of the unenclosed moorland areas of the north, eastern and south-western Peak District, where it also extends into enclosed farmland of wet rushy pasture, hay meadows and small wetlands in the valley bottoms. The moorland habitats include extensive tracts of blanket bog and dry heath, which together with wet heath, acid grassland, small flushes, gritstone edges and boulder slopes, streams and moorland reservoirs, fringing semi-natural woodland and enclosed farmland, represents the full range of upland vegetation characteristic of the South Pennines. The site supports several important species assemblages, including higher plants, lower plants and insects, as well as breeding birds. Many physical features are of geological interest.

5.7.2 Primary Reason for Designation

Qualifying species

This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the Great Britain population of species listed in Annex I

In any season:

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) 30 – 36 breeding pairs representing 2.3-2.8% of the breeding population in Great Britain (period 1990/1998)

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*) 435 - 445 breeding pairs representing 1.9-2.0% of the breeding population in Great Britain (period 1990/1998)

Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) 22 - 25 breeding pairs representing 2.2 -2.5% of the breeding population in Great Britain (period 1990/1998)

Non-qualifying species of interest:

The site supports a rich upland breeding bird assemblage which, as well as the qualifying species listed above, includes important numbers of Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*), Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), Dunlin (*Calidris alpina schinzii*), Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), Curlew (*Numenius arquata*), Redshank (*Tringa tetanus*), Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*), Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*), Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*), Ring Ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*) and Twite (*Carduelis flavirostris*).

5.7.3 Conservation Objectives

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;
- The population of each of the qualifying features and;
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

5.7.4 List of operations that could potentially damage the special interests of the European Site include:

- Hunting and collection of Wild Animals;
- Fire and Fire Prevention;
- Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions;
- Outdoor sports, leisure and Recreational Activities;
- Outdoor sports, leisure and recreational activities to functionally linked land and;
- Reduced fecundity and genetic suppression.

5.8 South Pennine Moors SAC

5.8.1 Description

This site covers the key moorland blocks of the Southern Pennines from Ilkley Moor in the north to the Peak District in the south. The moorlands are on a rolling dissected plateau formed from rocks of Millstone Grit at altitudes of between 300m – 600m and a high point of over 630m at Kinder Scout. The greater part of the gritstone is overlain by blanket peat with the coarse gravelly mineral soils occurring only on the lower slopes. The moorlands as a whole support a breeding bird community of national and international importance. The site is representative of upland dry heath, which covers extensive areas, occupies the lower slopes of the moors on mineral soils or where peat is thin, and occurs in transitions to acid grassland, wet heath and blanket bogs. The upland heath of the South Pennines is strongly dominated by *Calluna vulgaris* – *Deschampsia flexuosa* heath and *C. vulgaris* – *Vaccinium myrtillus* heath. More rarely *C. vulgaris* – *Ulex gallii* heath and *C. vulgaris* – *Erica cinerea* heath are found. On the higher, more exposed ground *V. myrtillus* – *D. flexuosa* heath becomes more prominent. The smaller area of wet heath is characterised by cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and purple moor grass *Molinia careulea*. The site also supports extensive areas of acid grassland largely derived from dry and wet heath. In the cloughs, or valleys, which extend into the heather moorlands, a greater mix of dwarf shrubs can be found together with more lichens and mosses. The moors support a rich invertebrate fauna, especially moths, and important bird assemblages. This site also contains areas of blanket bog, although the bog vegetation communities are botanically poor. Hare's-tail cotton-grass *Eriophorum vaginatum* is often overwhelmingly dominant and the usual bog-building Sphagnum mosses are scarce. Where the blanket peats are slightly drier, heather *C. vulgaris*, crowberry *Empetrum nigrum* and bilberry *V. myrtillus* become more prominent. The cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccus* and the uncommon cloudberry *Rubus chamaemorus* is locally abundant in bog vegetation. Bog pools provide diversity and are often characterised by common cotton-grass *E. angustifolium*. Substantial areas of the bog surface are eroding, and there are extensive areas of bare peat. In some areas, erosion may be a natural process reflecting the great age (up to 9000 years) of the South Pennine peats. Around the fringes of the upland heath and areas of bog are blocks of old sessile oak woods, usually on slopes. These tend to be dryer than those further north and west, such that the bryophyte communities are less developed (although this lowered diversity may in some instances have been exaggerated by the effects of 19th century air pollution). Other components of the ground flora such as grasses, dwarf shrubs and ferns are common. Small areas of alder woodland along stream-sides add to the overall richness of the woods. The moorland also supports a range of flush and fen habitats associated with bogs, cloughs, rivers and streams. Although generally small-scale features, they have a specialised flora and fauna, which makes a great contribution to the overall biodiversity of the moors. Acid flushes are the most common type and these include transition mires and quaking bogs characterised by a luxuriant carpet of bog mosses Sphagnum spp., rushes and sedges.

5.8.2 Qualifying Features

Under Article 4(4) of the Council Directive (92/43/EEC) on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:

- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*; Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath (JNCC Habitat code H4010);
- European dry heaths (JNCC Habitat code H4030);
- Blanket bogs* (JNCC Habitat code H7130);

- Transition mires and quaking bogs; Very wet mires often identified by an unstable `quaking` surface (JNCC Habitat code H7140) and;
- Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles (JNCC Habitat code H91A0).

5.8.3 Conservation Objectives

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:

- The extent and distribution of the qualifying natural habitats;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of the qualifying natural habitats and;
- The supporting processes on which the qualifying natural habitats rely.

5.8.4 List of operations that could potentially damage the special interests of the European Site include:

- Agricultural activities;
- Fire and Fire Prevention;
- Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions;
- Outdoor sports, leisure and Recreational Activities;
- Air Pollution and air borne pollutants.

6. Initial Screening Opinion

6.1 The Screening Criteria

The first stage of an HRA is a Likely Significant Effect Test (Screening). This is essentially a risk assessment to decide whether a particular Policy or site can be effectively `screened out` from further, more detailed assessment or needs to go forward for more detailed Assessment. The essential question to ask is:

“Is the Policy or the Site, either alone or in combination with other relevant Policies and Plans, likely to result in a significant effect upon the integrity of European sites?”

In carrying out this Screening process the Assessment has considered the main possible sources of effects on the European sites arising from the implementation of the Plan, possible pathways to the European sites and the effects on possible sensitive receptors in the European sites. Where:

- The source is the direct or indirect changes (land take, emissions to air or water, hydrological changes) potentially occurring as a result of the development at an identified site.
- The pathway is the route or mechanism by which any likely significant effect would manifest in the environment and would reach the receptor.
- The receptor is the European Site and more specifically the qualifying features and conservation objectives for the site.

Only if there is an identifiable source, a pathway and a receptor is there likely to be a significant effect.

Possible sources and pathways for (unmitigated) effects used in the screening of potential policy impacts on European sites are considered to be:

- Direct effect (Manchester Mosses SAC only);
- Changes to Hydrology (Manchester Mosses SAC only);
- Water Pollution via River Douglas or tributaries of the River Mersey;
- Air pollution resulting from vehicular emissions and industry;
- Increased recreational pressure and;
- Loss and disturbance of functionally linked land.

6.2 The results of the screening are shown in the 'Screening Summary' tables below.

6.3 Each of the Policies has been assessed to determine whether they are:

- Unlikely to have an effect on a European Site – Screened Out,
- Could have a potential positive effect on a European Site – Screened Out,
- Could have a potential negative effect on a European Site – Screened In,
- Would be likely to have a significant negative effect on a European Site – Screened In.

6.4 Only Policies and Strategic Sites with potential negative effects or significant effects have been "Screened In" for further Assessment. This assessment has been made based on the content and type of each Policy and the HRA must be read together with the Plan.

6.5 The timescales over which effects (both stand-alone and in-combination) have been considered are the lifetime of the Plan and the lifetime of any proposals (including operational and restoration timescales) that may come forward during the Plan.

Table 6.1 Initial Screening Summary of impacts of Wigan Borough Local Plan: Initial Draft Consultation of European Sites.

Policies and site allocations screened into this Assessment identified in red text. Note appendices referred to under Policy description are not included.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
People				
PE1	Planning for healthier living Proposals for major development should be designed in a way that contributes effectively to the delivery of healthier environments, within the development itself, through its connection to surrounding areas and in its integration with neighbouring communities. Through either a Health Impact Assessment or a Planning for Health Checklist, applicants will need to demonstrate that due consideration has been given to the potential impact of the proposed development on the health and wellbeing of the population, based around the following topic areas, as applicable: 1. Accessibility for walking, wheeling and cycling 2. Access to open space and the natural environment 3. Creating great places and child friendly environments 4. Adaptation to climate change 5. Air quality, noise and neighbourhood amenity 6. Crime reduction and community safety 7. Housing standards and affordability 8. Access to work and training 9. Access to healthy food 10. Access to health and social care services and other social infrastructure	People	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated. of this policy.	Screened Out Potential positive effects on air quality by reducing car usage by encouraging walking, cycling, use of public transport local employment and local greenspace. Potential positive effects on recreation pressure through provision of local greenspace.
PE2	New Hot food takeaways New hot food takeaway will not be permitted except where all the following apply:	People	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated. of this policy.	Screened Out positive impacts on air quality by reducing car

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	1. It is within a Ward with less than 10% of reception pupils and less than 15% of year 6 pupils classified as obese (or severely obese). An exception to would be for hot food takeaway proposals within new Local Centres, delivered in accordance with Policy TC13, where a maximum of 1 hot food takeaway will be permitted in principle. 2. It is within a Town Centre Area, elsewhere within a Town Centre where there is a concentration of shop-type premises or within a Local Centre (or a new Local Centre delivered in accordance with Policy TC13). 3. It will not result in: 1. A concentration of more than 10% of ground floor or mall level shop-type premises within the town centre core area being hot food takeaways. 2. More than 33% of ground floor or mall level shop-type premises within the street frontage concerned being hot food takeaways. 3. A concentration of more than 33% of ground floor shop-type premises within the Local Centre being hot food takeaways Outside of our Town Centres and Local Centres, there will be a strong presumption against the provision of hot food takeaways.			travel out of local area
PE3	Gambling and short term loan establishments New betting shops, adult gaming centres, amusement arcades, casinos, pay-day loan uses or pawnbrokers, or extensions to existing premises in such uses, will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated unequivocally against sector recognised measures, that they will not increase incidences of unmanaged gambling addiction and/or increase incidences of problem debt.	People	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated. of this policy.	Screened Out

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
PE4	Protection of Open space, sport and recreation provision Working with partner groups and organisations, the council will seek to ensure that the borough's network of open spaces is protected, managed, enhanced and where appropriate expanded, including the 3 principal parks and 20 neighbourhood parks as a focus for a wide range of informal and formal play, recreation and sports activities across the borough. Development proposals that would result in the loss of existing open space and/or sport and recreation facilities, including playing fields and formal play spaces, will not be permitted unless either: 1. It is for ancillary facilities which add value to the sport and/or recreational use of the site. 2. It can be demonstrated that it meets one of the exceptions listed in national planning policy, in conjunction with the following open space standards and up-to-date evidence. The further development of the complexes at Leigh Sports Village and the stadium at Robin Park will be supported in principle where the development would contribute to one or more of the following objectives: a. Supporting the ongoing presence of first-class sporting clubs, both in the playing of first team matches and in the wider development and operation of the clubs. b. Supporting the ongoing or potential use for community and grassroots sports use. c. Developing an enhanced visitor economy offer centred on the sports clubs and facilities.	People	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated. of this policy.	Screened Out positive impacts on air quality by reducing car travel out of local area

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	d. Establishing the complexes as centres of wellbeing, both through the direct delivery of health-related services from accommodation in them, and through the establishment of synergies between the activities being undertaken by the sporting clubs and other agencies that are present. Designated Local Green Spaces, as shown on the policies map, will be protected from development in line with national planning policy.			
PE5	Open space and play provision in new housing developments New housing developments of below 100 homes will be required to make a financial contribution to the capital and commuted maintenance costs of off-site open space, play space and sport and recreation provision within that Ward or within 1,000m of the site, commensurate with the number of units proposed, in lieu of on-site provision, unless otherwise agreed by the council. New housing developments of 100 or more homes will be required to provide a minimum of 25 square metres (sqm) per home of open space and equipped play space on-site. The exception to this is where the development is adjacent, or otherwise very close to, and easily accessible to existing open space and equipped play space, where it would be logical to enhance the existing facilities. In such circumstances, a financial contribution, in lieu of on-site provision, will be required consistent with the approach applied to developments of below 100 homes. Within the housing allocations under policies H3-H8, proposed open space provision which accords with specific on-site requirements set out in those policies will be taken into account as part of this need. The scale and specification of on-site play equipment shall be agreed with the council.	People	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated. of this policy.	Screened Out positive impacts on air quality by reducing car travel out of local area

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	Proposals for on-site open space and equipped play space must incorporate suitable arrangements for their ongoing maintenance and to ensure their continued public access. The typology of open space provision should be informed by the open space standards set out in policy PE4, and evidence of any deficiencies in the Local Area.			
PE6	Delivering Infrastructure Development will be required to provide, or contribute towards the provision of, the infrastructure needed to mitigate its adverse impact. Where this cannot be addressed through planning conditions, it will be secured through planning obligations. Where assessments of infrastructure capacity are required to be submitted in support of a planning application, these assessments, and any new provision or mitigation measures proposed, shall take into account planned and committed developments (in line with policy H1) within a reasonable catchment of the infrastructure concerned. Where necessary and justified by the evidence, a proportionate contribution to a larger infrastructure project, or projects, will be sought. Planning applications for development that comprise part of a larger site, whether allocated or unallocated, shall be supported by an assessment of the infrastructure impact arising from the development of the whole of the larger site, and the application proposal will be expected to make a pro-rata contribution to the provision of the infrastructure needed for the site as a whole, including on-site provision. For very large or strategically important sites a master planning process may be initiated to guide the delivery of the development and the provision of infrastructure. Contributions will be sought to meet requirements in health and care, education, community facilities, open space, play space, sport and recreation (in line with policy PE5) and affordable housing (in line with policy H2). The contributions	People	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated. of this policy.	Screened Out positive impacts on air quality by reducing car travel out of local area

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	will be used to provide or improve assets such as accommodation, facilities or equipment. Other matters on which contributions may be sought include transport accessibility improvements, flood defence and alleviation schemes, climate change mitigation or adaptation schemes and other matters in line with policy requirements. The viability of development proposals will only be considered where it can clearly be demonstrated, through a robust site-specific Financial Viability Assessment, that development would not be financially viable if full planning obligations were sought. Where a Financial Viability Assessment is submitted this shall include, at the point of submission, a summary capable of being placed in the public domain. Where it has been demonstrated that it is not viable to provide the full planning obligation requirements, contributions will be prioritised in line with evidence on local circumstances and need. For large or multi-phase developments a review mechanism will be required within the S106 Agreement to ensure that additional contributions are secured should viability improve over time prior to the completion of the development.			
PE7	Community facilities 1. Proposals that retain or enhance existing community facilities and services will be supported in principle. 2. Proposals that provide new community facilities or services will be supported in principle where the provision is good quality, accessible, and of a sufficient capacity and configuration to serve the local community. 3. Proposal to provide multi-purpose community facilities in venues, such as primary healthcare alongside sports provision, a community centre or a library, where this could increase the take-up of services, will be supported provided there is no material detriment for users or adverse amenity	People	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated. of this policy.	Screened Out positive impacts on air quality by reducing car travel out of local area

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	impacts for neighbours. 4. Proposals that would result in the loss of a community facility will only be supported where at least one of the following apply: a. It can be demonstrated that there is no longer a need for the facility. b. The loss is part of a wider proposal to improve community facilities or services in the area. c. An alternative facility of an equivalent or better standard will be provided on-site or elsewhere.			
PE8	Development supporting users of publicly provided support services Development likely to cater, or provide accommodation, for users of publicly provided support services, including but not limited to mental health services, substance misuse treatment and adult social care, will only be permitted where it is clearly demonstrated that: 1. A need for the development exists arising from the requirements of people already ordinarily resident in Wigan Borough, including existing service users currently receiving services outside the authority area. 2. Where the development consists of a facility directly providing a support service, the nature and scale of the facility is in line with the Council's commissioning strategies, such that resources are likely to be available to refer individuals to the facility and it can be reasonably expected that people already ordinarily resident in Wigan Borough, including existing service users currently receiving services outside the authority area, will be the principal users of the facility. 3. The development will not lead to an increase in the level of demand for any publicly provided support service, to an extent that is likely to result in a deterioration of the level of service available to existing users.	People	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated. of this policy.	Screened Out positive impacts on air quality by reducing car travel out of local area

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
Homes				
H1	Housing Delivery We will work closely with developers, registered providers, landowners, strategic partner bodies and other groups or organisations as applicable, to enable the delivery of the housing required to meet our needs. 1. Over the period 2022 - 2039 a minimum of 16,527 net additional homes, or an average of 972 homes per annum should be provided in accordance with Policy JP-H1 of the Places for Everyone Plan. 2. The housing requirement will be met from the following sources: a. Completions to date b. Sites allocated in the Places for Everyone Plan. c. Sites allocated in this Local Plan in part or wholly for housing development. d. Sites that have been identified as deliverable or developable in the Wigan Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. as shown on our evidence map, including homes on: - i Sites under construction - ii Sites with full planning permission or reserved matters approval - iii Sites with outline planning permission - iv Sites with Permission in Principle or Prior Approval e. Anticipated windfall sites (based on historic trends, SHLAA evidence and expected future trends). f. An allowance for 'windfall' development on small sites. g. Any other site or building that is brought forward for housing where it complies with national planning policy and relevant policies in the development plan. The delivery of new housing will continue to be monitored annually to ensure that an adequate supply of new housing is provided at all times, in accordance with the Housing Delivery Test set out in national planning policy and to ensure that there is a deliverable supply of housing that is sufficient to	Homes	Potential significant effect from negative impacts on: - direct loss Manchester Mosses SAC and functionally linked land, - air quality to the Manchester Mosses SAC and South Pennines SAC, -water quality to the Mersey Estuary SPA, Ribble & Alt Estuaries and Manchester Mosses SAC, - hydrology – Manchester Mosses SAC - recreational pressures to a number of European Sites and functionally linked land.	Screened In for direct loss, air pollution, water pollution, hydrological effects and recreational pressure.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	provide at least 5 years' worth of new housing development in the next 5 years.			
H2	Housing Mix New residential development should be delivered at a density appropriate to its location in accordance with policy JP-H4 in the Places for Everyone Plan and contribute to the provision of a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures across the borough to help address identified housing needs, reflecting the latest local housing needs assessment or equivalent requirement. <u>Affordable housing requirements in market-led developments</u> 1. Developments of 10 homes or more will only be permitted where at least 25% of the homes delivered are affordable, subject to viability, comprising a tenure split of 25% affordable home ownership and 75% for rent, with homes for social rent prioritised. Alternative tenure splits will be permitted where justified by local needs. 2. On build to rent developments of 10 homes or more at least 20% of the homes should be affordable in line with national guidance, subject to viability. This should be in the form of affordable private rent. 3. Where the proportion of affordable housing required in criteria 1 or 2 above is demonstrated to be unviable, a reduced contribution will be negotiated. 4. Affordable housing should be provided on site unless there is clear justification for it to be provided off-site through payment of a commuted sum. Any commuted sum received will be ring fenced for the provision of affordable housing in the borough. <u>Housing for older people and other specialist housing</u> 5. Developers of housing will be required to show how their site meets the needs of older people and people with disabilities. 6. On new build residential schemes of 20 homes or more, a minimum of 4% of new homes should be wheelchair accessible in accordance with Part M4(3) of the Building Regulations, unless this is impracticable due to site-specific	Homes	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out The house type and tenure does not significantly affect the potential impact of a development.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	factors or it is demonstrated to be unviable. 7. The development of residential care homes and nursing homes will be supported where there is a demonstrable need for this type of housing, and where the development accords with other relevant planning policies. 8. Housing provision for older people and people with disabilities will be supported where it accords with other relevant planning policies and where it: a. Is sustainably located, with access to public transport, local services and amenities. b. Promotes ease of movement on foot and with mobility aids. c. Includes parking spaces and setting down points in proximity to entrances where practicable. d. Has accessible and appropriately designed outdoor spaces, including seating areas, step free spaces and gentle approaches suitable for wheelchair users and people with visual or mobility impairments. <u>Care Leavers</u> 9. Affordable homes for care leavers will be sought as part of section 106 agreements for affordable housing and as part of suitable council and registered provider housing developments. Typically, this would require the provision of a small number of one or two-bed homes. <u>Self-build and custom-build housing</u> 10. The council will work with developers to agree a sustainable approach to delivering self-build and custom-build housing, where viable and appropriate, subject to local demand as set out in the council's self-build register, and work with the self-build / custom-build communities to further understand their requirements and promote on their behalf. <u>House Extensions</u> 11. Proposals for the extension of residential properties should accord with the principles and design guidelines set in our House Extensions Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document. Exceptions to this will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposed extension is required			

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	to provide a genuine health and wellbeing benefit and that it would not adversely impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties.			
H3	Remaing Land at North Leigh Park Remaining land at North Leigh Park, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for residential development. Development of this site will be required to: 1. Be brought forward in a comprehensive way that works as a whole site and with its surroundings in phases, building on the principles established by the outline permission, as amended and remaining applicable, in liaison with key stakeholders and the council. 2. Deliver around 1,500 homes with an appropriate mix of types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, in accordance with Policy H2 in this plan. 3. Deliver a link road from the A578 Leigh Road to the A579 Atherleigh Way of a suitable standard to accommodate bus services 4. Deliver a new Local Centre comprising a balanced range of commercial uses to serve residents, within a location that is also convenient to serve the new homes and existing residents in Westleigh, Pickley Green and the eastern end of Hindley Green. 5. Provide good accessibility for bus services, walking, wheeling and cycling within the site and with communities in surrounding areas and Leigh Town Centre. 6. Provide a strategic green infrastructure network, including as necessary, provision for open space, trees woodland, flood mitigation and wildlife habitat. 7. Make provision for biodiversity, including taking appropriate account of priority species and ecological features, in accordance with Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-G8, having regard to the previous delivery of ecological mitigation nearby at Pickley Green 8. Restrict surface water run-off from the site into watercourses including Westleigh Brook to no more than the rates prior to development.	Homes	Potential significant effect from negative impacts from - air quality (Manchester Mosses SAC) - recreational disturbance to a number of European sites and functionally linked land -water quality (Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar)	Screened In for Air pollution, water pollution and recreational pressure.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	9. Ensure the remediation and/or mitigation of landfill, landfill gas, colliery spoil, mine shafts, coal seams and the geological fault within the site in-line with policy EN7. 10. Work with key partners to investigate the feasibility of minewater heat to be used for an area-wide heating scheme and, if it is demonstrated to be a viable and an attractive proposition, incorporate a minewater heat network to supply properties on the site. 11. Provide, or contribute towards the provision of, the infrastructure needed to mitigate its adverse impact including, as appropriate, in health and care, education, community facilities, open space, play space, sport and recreation and affordable housing in accordance with policy PE6, including a proportionate contribution to the infrastructure needed to support the development of the site as a whole, from any development parcel within the site boundary, subject to viability.			
H4	South Hindley Land at South Hindley is allocated for a residential-led development and supporting infrastructure and facilities to form a sustainable urban extension to Hindley. Development of this site will be required to: 1. Provide, or contribute towards the provision of, the infrastructure needed to mitigate its adverse impact including, as appropriate, in health and care, education, community facilities, open space, play space, sport and recreation and affordable housing in accordance with policy PE6, including a proportionate contribution to the infrastructure needed to support the development of the site as a whole, from any development parcel within the site boundary, subject to viability. 2. Deliver up to 2,000 homes with an appropriate mix of types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, in	Homes	Potential significant effect from negative impacts from - air quality (Manchester Mosses SAC) - recreational disturbance to a number of European sites and functionally linked land -water quality (Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar)	Screened In for Air pollution, water pollution and recreational pressure.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	accordance with Policy H2 in this plan, with higher densities in the most accessible locations and close to the new local centre. 3. Deliver a new local centre, comprising a range of commercial uses and community facilities to meet local needs, in a location that is accessible by walking, wheeling and cycling to serve new residents and existing residents to the north, in line with policy TC13. 4. Deliver a link road from the A58 Liverpool Road to the A578 Leigh Road that is of a suitable standard to accommodate bus services. 5. Ensure good walking, wheeling and cycling provision within the site and to Hindley town centre, other services, amenities and employment opportunities in Hindley and links to countryside locations to the south. 6. Provide a strategic green infrastructure network within the site, including the enhancement of Leyland Park, the creation of an east-west linear landscape feature and the provision / enhancement of sports, open space and recreational provision, in accordance with Policies PE3 and PE5. 7. Make provision for biodiversity, including taking appropriate account of Sites of Biological Importance, the adjacent Low Hall Local Nature Reserve, watercourses and wildlife corridors, in accordance with Policy JP-G8 of the Places for Everyone Plan. 8. Restrict surface water run-off from the site into watercourses to no more than the rates prior to development and protect and enhance the environs of Borsdane Brook and Dog Pool Brook to reduce flood risk in the wider Borsdane Brook Catchment, if possible, supporting an integrated approach to water management. 9. Ensure the site-wide remediation and/or mitigation of colliery spoil, mine shafts, coal seams and the industrial legacy within the site. 10. Work with key partners to investigate the feasibility of minewater heat to be used for an area-wide heating scheme			

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	and, if it is demonstrated to be a viable and an attractive proposition, incorporate a minewater heat network to supply properties on the site. 11. Provide, or contribute towards the provision of, the infrastructure needed to mitigate its adverse impact in accordance with policy PE6, including a proportionate contribution to the infrastructure needed to support the development of the site as a whole, from any development parcel within the site boundary, subject to viability. 12. Consider the extraction of any viable mineral resources within Mineral Safeguarding Areas, in accordance with Policy 8 of the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan (or any relevant policies in subsequent plans)			
H5	Remaining land South of Atherton Remaining land south of Atherton, to the east of Millers Lane, is allocated for residential development. Development of this site will be required to: 1. Deliver around 320 homes across two areas, one each side of Chanters Brook, principally to the north of Lodge Lane with an appropriate mix of types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, in accordance with Policy H2. 2. Complete the road connection from Leigh Road at Howe Bridge to Tyldesley Road at Hindsford, with a suitable junction provided at Tyldesley Road. 3. Ensure that substantive development south of Lodge Lane is accessed from the new through road which connects Leigh Road and Tyldesley Road and takes appropriate account of flood risk. 4. Ensure good walking, wheeling and cycling provision within the site and to adjacent areas of Atherton and Hindsford, including to local schools, and links to countryside locations to the south. 5. Restrict surface water run-off from the site into watercourses to no more than the rates prior to development, prioritising natural flood management interventions 6. Protect and enhance the environs of Chanters Brook as a green infrastructure corridor for biodiversity, flood risk	Homes	Potential significant effect from negative impacts from - air quality (Manchester Mosses SAC) - recreational disturbance to a number of European sites and functionally linked land -water quality (Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar)	Screened In for Air pollution, water pollution and recreational pressure.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	management and open space, and make wider provision for biodiversity in accordance with policy JP-G8 of the Places for Everyone Plan and policy EN4 in this plan. 7. Take appropriate account of heritage assets and their settings, including the Grade II Listed Church of St Anne and the Grade II Listed Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church, both on Tyldesley Road, in accordance with Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-P2 and Policy PL2 of this plan. 8. Provide, or contribute towards the provision of, the infrastructure needed to mitigate its adverse impact including, as appropriate, in health and care, education, community facilities, open space, play space, sport and recreation and affordable housing in accordance with policy PE6, including a proportionate contribution to the infrastructure needed to support the development of the site as a whole, from any development parcel within the site boundary, subject to viability.			
H6	East Atherton Land east of Atherton is allocated for residential and employment development. Development of this site will be required to: 1. Be in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan including the infrastructure required and its timescales and costings, and phasing plan prepared in liaison with key stakeholders, as applicable, and approved by the council. 2. Deliver around 600 homes with a mix of types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing and with higher densities in the north of the site, in accordance with Policy H2. 3. Ensure that good quality vehicular access is provided into the site from the A579 Bolton Road. 4. Deliver or provide financial contributions to improved walking and wheeling access from the development to Atherton Rail Station and nearby bus stops on Bolton Road, as well as facilities at those locations, as applicable.	Homes	Potential significant effect from negative impacts from - air quality (Manchester Mosses SAC) - recreational disturbance to a number of European sites and functionally linked land -water quality (Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar)	Screened In for Air pollution, water pollution and recreational pressure.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	5. Ensure good walking, wheeling and cycling provision within the site and to adjacent areas of Atherton and Shakerley and to Chanters Industrial Estate to the south, including safeguarding the integrity of the public footpath across the site. 6. Maximise the opportunity to extend the existing industrial activity at Chanters Industrial Estate northwards. 7. Ensure the provision of a green infrastructure corridor between the employment and residential development, which also incorporates the corridor of Hindsford Brook to the east. 8. Make provision for biodiversity, including taking appropriate account of the Site of Biological Importance that lies to the north-east of the site, in accordance with Places for Everyone policy JP-G8 and policy EN4 of this plan. 9. Ensure that surface water flooding within the site is addressed through sustainable drainage measures as part of the green infrastructure on site. 10. Provide, or contribute towards the provision of the infrastructure needed to mitigate its adverse impact including, as appropriate, in health and care, education, community facilities, open space, play space, sport and recreation and affordable housing in accordance with policy PE6, including a proportionate contribution to the infrastructure needed to support the development of the site as a whole, from any development parcel within the site boundary, subject to viability.			
H7	Remaining Land at Landgate, Ashton-in-Makerfield Remaining land at Landgate is allocated for residential development. Development of this site will be required to: 1. Be in accordance with a comprehensive site masterplan, including the infrastructure required and its timescales and costings, which is prepared in liaison with key stakeholders, as applicable, and approved by the council. 2. Deliver around 500 homes with an appropriate mix of house types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, in accordance with Policy H2.	Homes	Potential significant effect from negative impacts from - air quality (Manchester Mosses SAC) - recreational based disturbance to European sites and functionally linked land -water quality (Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar)	Screened In for Air pollution, water pollution and recreational pressure.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	3. Retain Landgate School and the adjacent employment premises at Landgate Farm or appropriately replace them if suitable locations can be found either on-site or elsewhere within the borough. 4. Extend the new road from the A49 Wigan Road through the site to the B5207 Bryn Road. 5. Ensure good walking, wheeling and cycling provision within the site and to Bryn local centre, Bryn rail station and South Lancashire Industrial Estate and improve connections into the countryside to the east, including for horse riding. 6. Safeguard and enhance the settings of the fishing ponds for recreation and wildlife. 7. Ensure the retention or re-configuration, and enhancement of the playing pitches in the south of the site, including the provision of ancillary changing facilities and car parking. 8. Prior to development, undertake an archaeological investigation of the route of the Roman road in the southwestern part of the site to enable a detailed record of the road, if intact, to be compiled. 9. Provide, or contribute towards the provision of, the infrastructure needed to mitigate its adverse impact including, as appropriate, in health and care, education, community facilities, open space, play space, sport and recreation and affordable housing in accordance with policy PE6, including a proportionate contribution to the infrastructure needed to support the development of the site as a whole, from any development parcel within the site boundary, subject to viability.			
H8	Remaining Land at Westwood Park, Wigan Remaining land at Westwood Park, Wigan is allocated for housing led mixed-use development. Development of this site will be required to:	Homes	Potential significant effect from negative impacts from - air quality (Manchester Mosses SAC) - recreational based disturbance to European sites and functionally linked land	Screened In for Air pollution, water pollution and recreational pressure.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	1. Be in accordance with a comprehensive site masterplan, including the infrastructure required and its timescales and costings, which is prepared in liaison with key stakeholders, as applicable and approved by the council. 2. Deliver around 420 homes with a mix of house types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing and more aspirational homes, in accordance with policy H2. 3. Deliver around 16,800sqm of high-quality employment floorspace to the east of the site to serve the needs of modern businesses. 4. Deliver high quality green infrastructure, taking advantage of the setting adjacent to Westwood Flash and the Leeds Liverpool Canal, with direct access into countryside to the south. 5. Make provision for biodiversity, including taking appropriate account of areas of deciduous woodland, and the adjacent Westwood Flash Site of Biological Importance, in accordance with policy EN4 in this plan and policy JP-G8 in the Places for Everyone Plan. 6. Create an attractive gateway into Wigan town centre along the enhanced strategic road network. 7. Ensure good walking, wheeling and cycling provision within the site and to Wigan town centre, enhance the public rights of way network, and maximise the opportunities to integrate the canal towpath into the development in accordance with policy PL6. 8. Take appropriate account of heritage assets and their settings, including the Grade II Listed Westwood Gardens, in accordance with policy PL2 in this plan and policy JP-P2 in the Places for Everyone Plan. 9. Ensure that account is taken of the proximity of Ince Wastewater Pumping Station and potential impacts in terms of noise and odour, in accordance with policy EN7. 10. Provide, or contribute towards the provision of, the infrastructure needed to mitigate its adverse impact including, as appropriate, in health and care, education, community facilities, open space, play space, sport and recreation and affordable housing in accordance with policy PE6, including a proportionate contribution to the infrastructure needed to support the development of the site		-water quality (Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar)	

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	as a whole, from any development parcel within the site boundary, subject to viability.			
H9	Sustainable Housing Growth in Standish Development proposals for the sites below, or parts thereof, must accord with criteria (ii) and (iii) of Policy H1 in the Standish Neighbourhood Plan: H9.1 Land to east of Robin Hill Lane H9.2 Land to east of Wood Green Close H9.3 Land to east of Moss Green Close H9.4 Land to west of Rowton Rise H9.5 Land at Lurdin Lane	Homes	Potential significant effect from negative impacts from - air quality (Manchester Mosses SAC) - recreational based disturbance to European Sites & functionally linked land -water quality to the Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar	Screened In for Air pollution, water pollution and recreational pressure.
H10	Houses in Multiple Occupation Proposals for new houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), or extensions to existing HMOs, will only be supported, where all of the following criteria are met, having regard to the application proposal and all other existing and committed development: 1. It would not lead to an unacceptable concentration of HMOs in the vicinity of the development and would not give rise to harm to the prevailing character of the surrounding area. 2. It would not result in the sandwiching of non-HMO residential properties. 3. It would not result in a block of three or more adjacent HMOs. 4. It would provide acceptable levels of amenity for future occupiers in terms of outlook, room sizes, outdoor amenity space, cycle storage and waste and recycling storage. 5. It would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties or the surrounding area, including by virtue of noise, activity levels or the intensity of occupation of the building. 6. It would not have an unacceptable impact on the availability of on-street parking in the vicinity to the detriment of amenity, road safety or traffic management.	Homes	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out Any increase in the local population will be nugatory as a result of this policy.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	7. A robust management plan is submitted, and approved by the council, prior to the occupation of the HMO, containing details on the following matters: 8. a. The form of tenancy agreement to be used by the landlord for the occupiers. b. The maintenance and management of internal communal areas and external areas. c. Appropriate provision for the servicing, storage, transfer and collection of waste. d. The methods to be deployed by the landlord to address and prohibit nuisance			
H11	Homes for Looked after Children Providers and developers of children's residential and supported accommodation should work proactively with the Council to ensure that new provision meets identified local needs, reflecting the latest Children's Social Care Sufficiency Strategy or equivalent evidence. The Council will support proposals for new children's residential and supported accommodation, providing that it: 1. Is based upon a clearly demonstrated local need in accordance with policy PE8, and shows clear alignment with the council's adopted children's social care strategies. 2. Is in a suitable location for residential development with access to services and amenities. 3. Does not result in an undue concentration of such uses in a particular area. 4. Is in appropriate premises that are large enough to provide the facilities required. 5. Has a garden, or area capable of conversion to open space, which is suitable for use by residents, which incorporates appropriate boundary treatments. 6. Will safeguard the children in care and the amenity of neighbouring occupiers effectively and on an ongoing basis, in line with a robust management plan that is kept under review.	Homes	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out As policy result in no significant change to local population or generate any significant land take or construction activity.

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	To ensure that provision is available to meet the needs of local children, the council will require applicants to enter into a section 106 agreement to specify that the property can only be occupied on a residential basis by children either placed by Wigan Council or with the written agreement of the council's Children's Services Department. The council will monitor the level of provision of children's residential and supported accommodation against needs. If applications for new provision do not meet needs, applications are likely to be refused			
H12	Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers Existing provision for gypsies and travellers will be safeguarded for continued use by gypsies or travellers, unless: 1. They are replaced by another appropriate site or sites, of the same or better quality, in a suitable location providing at least the same number of pitches; or 2. It is demonstrated that there is no current or projected demand over a 15-year timeframe for the site from gypsies or travellers. In addition, land at Little Lane, Pemberton is allocated as an extension of the existing traveller site to help meet the borough's identified need for an additional 18 gypsy and traveller pitches. Proposals for the development of this site will need to: 3. Accord with a site masterplan prepared by the owner and approved by the council, including layout, surfacing, boundary treatment and landscape planting. 4. Ensure that residential amenity for occupiers is provided for and maintained to a suitable standard, including the provision of suitable facilities for residents and that the amenity of neighbouring residents is safeguarded. 5. Provide suitable vehicular and pedestrian access from the existing site.	Homes	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out As policy result in no significant change to local population or generate any significant land take or construction activity.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	6. Make adequate provision for the manoeuvring, parking and storage of all vehicles associated with the use of the site. 7. Ensure that access through the site to the telephone mast is maintained and available when needed. 8. Ensure the provision of necessary infrastructure including water, power, surface water drainage, waste water and sewage drainage and waste disposal. If further unmet needs are demonstrated, proposals for additional capacity to meet those needs will be permitted where they accord with criteria 3-8 above, and where the site: 9. Is not subject to physical constraints or other environmental issues that cannot be mitigated to an acceptable level. 10. Is accessible by active travel and public transport to key local services such as education and health facilities, shops and community facilities. 11. Can be accessed and egressed safely and conveniently by vehicles and pedestrians from and to the highway network, with adequate provision made for the manoeuvring, parking and storage of all vehicles associated with the use of the site. 12. Will not have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area or on the amenity and privacy of neighbours.			
H13	Accommodation for travelling showpeople Existing sites for travelling showpeople will be safeguarded for continued use by travelling showpeople, unless: 1. They are replaced by another appropriate site or sites, of the same or better quality, in a suitable location providing at least the same number of plots; or 2. It is demonstrated that there is no current or projected demand over a 15-year timeframe for the site from travelling showpeople. If further unmet needs are demonstrated, proposals for additional capacity to meet those needs should be suitable for	Homes	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out As policy result in no significant change to local population or generate any significant land take or construction activity.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	the residential accommodation of Travelling Showpeople as well as the storage and maintenance of their show equipment and associated vehicles and, otherwise, the site: 3. Is not subject to physical constraints or other environmental issues that cannot be mitigated to an acceptable level. 4. Can be accessed and egressed safely and conveniently by vehicles and pedestrians from and to the highway network, with adequate provision made for the manoeuvring, parking and storing of all vehicles associated with the use of the site. 5. Is accessible by active travel and public transport to key local services such as education and health facilities, shops and community facilities. 6. Has appropriate provision for water, power, surface water drainage, waste water and sewage drainage and waste disposal. 7. Will not have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area or on the amenity and privacy of neighbours.			
Jobs				
J1	Supporting Economic Growth Economic growth will be supported in the borough by: 1. Targeting new development that facilitates the growth and diversification of our economy, notably within our foundational and frontier sectors, in key spatial locations including the M6 corridor and the Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor (NorthFold), together with our Employment Areas and our town centres. 2. Over the period 2022-2039, identifying sufficient land to deliver at least 482,326 sqm of high-quality employment floorspace in line with the Places for Everyone Plan, including on sites: - Completed to date - Allocated in the Places for Everyone Plan (policies JPA31, JPA33 and JPA34). - Allocated in this Plan (policies H6 and H8).	Jobs	Potential significant effect from negative impacts on: - air quality to the Manchester Mosses SAC and South Pennines SAC, -water quality to the Mersey Estuary SPA, Ribble & Alt Estuaries and Manchester Mosses SAC, - hydrology of Manchester Mosses SAC - direct loss/disturbance of functionally linked land	Screened In for direct loss of functionally linked land, air pollution, water pollution and hydrological effects.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	d. Available within our Employment Areas (policy J2). e. Committed development outside of designated Employment Areas. 3. Protecting our Employment Areas from redevelopment for alternative uses – see policy J2 and recognising them as areas for economic regeneration, intensification and jobs growth. 4. Working collaboratively with businesses, education providers and other relevant partners to further develop an environment where local residents are equipped to access local job and training opportunities that align with the borough's foundational and frontier sectors. Within the supply identified, there is potential scope to accommodate NorthFold Food Innovation Centre, identified as part of the strategic vision for the Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor, as set out in policy JP-Strat8 of the Places for Everyone Plan.			
J2	Employment Areas 1. Within our Employment Areas, as shown on our policies map the following employment uses will be permitted provided that there will be no unacceptable environmental, amenity, highway, road safety or other adverse impact: a. Use Class B2 general industry b. B8 storage and distribution c. E(g)(i) offices, where it does not detract from the role of the borough's town and local centres as the primary focus for office activity d. E(g)(ii) research and development e. E(g)(iii) light industrial f. Sui generis employment uses, where appropriate. Permitted change of use rights for other Class E uses will be withdrawn by condition of planning permission. 2. Development for, or change of use to, non-employment uses will only be permitted within Employment Areas when:	Jobs	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy. Changes to existing employment areas.	Screened Out as development restricted to existing employment areas, none of which are located in proximity to European sites.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	a. It will be small scale and complementary to the employment function of the area such as a small gym, café or creche, the scale and location of which means that they would primarily serve those employed in that employment area, or b. It would not detract from the employment use of the remaining sites or premises in the area, nor detract from the economic potential of the wider site or employment area for business investment, and c. It can be demonstrated robustly that at least one of the following applies: i. The site or premise has been subject to a detailed and robust market appraisal for a minimum of 24 months, that clearly demonstrates that there is no current or likely future demand for employment uses. - ii The site or use gives rise to a significant environmental problem and redevelopment or reuse for other uses is the only viable means by which mitigation can be achieved. - iii It is the only viable means of retaining a listed building or structure. - iv It is the most appropriate means by which upgrading, modernisation or redevelopment of the remainder of the site/premises will be achieved, necessary to ensure its retention. When development will result in the loss of employment land or floorspace, within an Employment Area to residential, retail or leisure development under criteria b. and c. of this policy, a contribution will be sought to facilitate economic development and/or regeneration elsewhere in that Employment Area, in ways that will help secure its future for employment purposes or, where that is not practicable, in an alternative employment area nearby, unless it would not be viable to do so. The contribution sought will be £5 per sqm of employment floorspace, including external space, that will be lost. The fee in the paragraph above is set at 1 April 2025 and will be reviewed and amended annually on 1 April in each			

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	subsequent year according to the rate of inflation applying at that time provided by the Office for National Statistics. This will apply to the date that the development commences.			
J3	The Green Economy We will facilitate the delivery of growth in the green economy by: 1. Encouraging existing and new businesses and their supply chains to become greener in what they do or produce, and how they do it or produce it, including through: a. Using energy more efficiently b. Generating and/or using renewable energy c. Using more sustainable materials d. Reducing waste in line with the waste hierarchy e. Engaging more widely in the circular economy as a model of production and consumption, and f. Being resilient to climate crises. 2. In addition to requirements set out in policy JP-S2 of the Places for Everyone Plan, requiring development proposals for existing and new businesses to achieve EPC rating B or better, subject to viability and feasibility. 3. Collaborating with Greater Manchester partners and the Government as appropriate, the council will support businesses in the renewal and refurbishment of their existing premises to meet carbon emissions and energy performance requirements, including low carbon energy generation and retrofitted energy conservation measures.	Jobs	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy. .	Screened Out as encourages positive effects on the environment.
J4	The Visitor Economy We will support the growth of our visitor economy by: 1. Protecting and enhancing the special features that attract visitors, including the following tourism, sporting and cultural assets and their settings: a. Key elements of our historic environment as identified in policy PL2, including Haigh Hall and Haigh Woodland Park, Lancashire Mining Museum at Astley Green, the Leeds and Liverpool and Bridgewater Canals and Wigan Pier Quarter.	Jobs	Potential significant effect from negative impacts on: - air quality to the Manchester Mosses SAC and South Pennines SAC, - promotion of Chat Moss as a recreation destination	Screened In for Recreational disturbance and air pollution

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	b. Key elements of our natural environment as identified in policy EN1, including the Flashes of Wigan and Leigh National Nature Reserve, Chat Moss and our local nature reserves. c. The borough's sporting assets, including Leigh Sports Village and at Robin Park. d. The borough's cultural assets, including the Turnpike Gallery in Leigh, Tyldesley Little Theatre, and the Wigan Museum, Wigan Little Theatre, The Old Courts, and the former Royal Court Theatre in Wigan. e. Our historic town centres as identified in policies TC2-11. 2. Supporting proposals for new and enhanced and, where appropriate, expanded visitor and tourism facilities, including tourist accommodation, cafes, restaurants and bars in sustainable locations, particularly within our town centres that complement or add to the above assets and their settings. 3. Encouraging and promoting opportunities for new complementary tourist attractions in the historic and natural environment in sustainable and appropriate locations. 4. Maintaining and, where appropriate, enhancing the provision of arts and cultural activities and facilities within our town and local centres, including workspaces, studios and venues. 5. Enhancing our key public right of way network where it connects or provides circular links, including the New Wigan Way and those parts of the GM Ringway trail route within Wigan Borough, with our tourism, sporting and cultural assets, for walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding. 6. Improving access to our tourism, sporting and cultural assets by walking, wheeling, cycling, bus and rail			
J5	Digital and Telecommunications Infrastructure The ongoing rollout and improvement of affordable, high speed, high-capacity digital infrastructure to serve all parts of the borough is supported in principle, in line with national policy and policies JP-C2 and JP-D1 of the Places for Everyone Plan, subject to the following: 1. That before a new mast or structure is proposed, the	Jobs	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out As negligible physical effects, no increase in population and safeguards within policy to protect designated sites.

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	potential first to maximise operations underground has been thoroughly assessed and discounted on technical grounds and then, secondly, the ability to use an existing mast or structure has been similarly assessed and discounted, such that a new mast or structure is the only reasonable alternative. 2. It is designed and sited in a such a way that minimises its impact on the townscape or landscape, the street scene and the amenity of neighbouring properties, including any cumulative impact, as far as technical constraints reasonably allow. 3. It is designed and sited in a such a way that it will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on a protected environmental or heritage asset or its setting, unless it can be demonstrated that no technically acceptable alternative site is available, and the public benefits of the proposal outweigh the harm caused. 4. It will not be detrimental to highway safety. 5. It will not adversely impact on the functioning of existing digital or telecommunications infrastructure. 6. It will be designed or sited in a way that avoids creating opportunities for crime.			
Transport				
T1	Safeguarding future transport priorities New development will not be supported if it would prejudice the delivery of the following future transport priorities, as shown on the policies map via the links below, which have been identified through the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan and the Wigan Borough Transport Strategy processes: 1. Wigan Station Gateway 2. Golborne Station 3. Improved infrastructure and services on the Atherton rail line (Wigan-Manchester) 4. Improved infrastructure and services on the Kirkby rail line	Transport	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out Some proposals encourage use of public transport whilst others support car usage. The policy is however not generating additional traffic and air pollution directly.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	5. Improving rapid transport services in Leigh 6. M58 Link Road 7. Wigan-Hindley Link Road 8. South Hindley Link Road 9. North Leigh Park Link Road 10. Gibfield Park Way Extension 11. West of Gibfield – Lee Hall Link 12. A577 and A58 Active Travel and Public Transport Improvements 13. Lane Head South Relief Rd. Together, the transport priorities will break down the barriers that create financial, health, education and environmental inequalities in our borough. For the Wigan-Hindley Link Road project, specific hydrological surveys will be required for the consideration of impacts to the wider peat mass and water dependent National Nature Reserve features at Amberswood Common.			
T2	Determining the transport implications of new developments Proposals for major development that are likely to generate significant travel demands should be designed in way that maximises the opportunity for walking, wheeling and cycling, and public transport trips, both within the development itself with trips to and from the development, in order to make all our towns and neighbourhoods flourish for those who live and work in them. Applicants will need to take a vision-led approach taking into account the type of development and its location and mitigating any residual impacts to an acceptable degree. New development will not be supported if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe.	Transport	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out Relates to the process not the development.

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	This will be determined through a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan, or through a Transport Statement, in line with the thresholds set out in Appendix 2. A Travel Plan will be required alongside, and in support of, a Transport Assessment, in accordance with our Travel Plan Supplementary Planning Document. Transport Assessments and Travel Plans, or Transport Statements as applicable, will be required to: 1. Outline how new developments will prioritise access by walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport, and demonstrate how they will link into and enhance existing active travel and public transport infrastructure and services. 2. Commit to the implementation of a series of measures and initiatives to facilitate and encourage access by walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. 3. Outline how the design and use of the site will not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety for all users. 4. Consider how the trips generated by the development can be adequately served by the local and strategic road network to ensure that the residual cumulative impacts on the road network will not be severe. 5. Identify where there are any significant impacts of development and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures, including the infrastructure and/or services required to deliver the vision for the site, are identified, including the stages of development they should be delivered at. The thresholds for requiring a Transport Assessment or a Transport Statement are provided in Appendix2. The thresholds for requiring a Travel Plan are contained within the Travel Plan SPD.			
T3	Parking provisions at new developments Parking will be required in new developments and for material changes of use, in accordance with the standards set out at	Transport	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out The policy is not encouraging excessive car

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	Appendix 3, for: • General car parking • Accessible parking • Cycle parking • Spaces for electric vehicle charging The standards are the starting point for the requirement. The scope for providing parking above or below the standards will be considered against the following factors: a. The accessibility of the site by walking, wheeling and cycling and public transport. b. The availability of convenient and safe off-street parking. c. The availability of on-street car parking without detriment to residential amenity, traffic management or highway safety. d. The feasibility of providing on-site parking relative to other planning issues, such as the reuse of a constrained site or building, the ability to conserve an historic environment, and/or the ability to achieve good design in the interests of the wider area. e. Levels of car ownership in the catchment for the development			provision or car usage
T4	Design and Layout of parking The design and layout of car parking will be required in line with the following criteria, when material: 1. A minimum 5.0m x 2.5m for standard spaces at right angles (perpendicular) to the access aisle, kerb or boundary, or 6.0m x 2.0m for spaces parallel to the access aisle, kerb or boundary. 2. A minimum vehicular aisle width at off-street car parks and/or parking courts of 6.0m when the parking is designed at right angles (perpendicular) to the access aisle, kerb or boundary. For all other types of angled (echelon) parking these spaces and the vehicle aisle should be designed in accordance with recognised industry standards. 3. An additional width of 1.2m on each side for a designated	Transport	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated. of this policy.	Screened Out a design policy

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	accessible space, which can be shared with adjacent spaces. 4. An additional zone of 1.2m at the end of the designated accessible space to enable access from the rear of the vehicle and, when the parking space is parallel to the aisle or highway, an additional zone of at least 1.8m to enable access from the side of the vehicle. 5. Car parking should be designed to provide safe and convenient access to and from vehicles and the site or building entrance(s), as applicable. 6. Car parks should be more than uninterrupted expanses of tarmac with white lining. Different materials should be used to differentiate different spaces and/or soft landscaping should be provided, including trees suitable for the space. 7. For residential properties with a driveway, each parking space should be at least 5.0m x 3.0m to be counted as a space, with an additional 1.0m length required in front of a garage door. An additional 0.5m width is required where a space adjoins a wall or boundary feature and/or where the driveway provides the principal access for people to/from the property. If there is more than one parking space side by side, this additional width can be shared. Cycle parking 8. Consideration of appropriate cycle storage facilities should be undertaken early on in the design stage for new development. 9. Internal cycle storage is preferable for homes, employees and long term visitors to premises, for security and to avoid impacting the street scene. 10. For residential developments, garages count towards cycle parking provision. Developments without garages must provide alternative, secure cycle storage. 11. At non-residential developments, cycle parking should be as easily accessible as car parking and should be at the main entrance, or closer to the main entrance than car parking where possible, to encourage use. 12. At non-residential developments, where internal storage is not possible, external cycle stores can be provided but they must be secure and weatherproof. Cycle stores should be			

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	well-lit and easily accessible from the main entrance of the building(s) concerned.			
T5	Aerodrome safeguarding (Manchester and Liverpool Airports) Development that would adversely affect the operational integrity or safety of Manchester or Liverpool Airports or Manchester or Liverpool Radar will not be permitted.	Transport	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated. of this policy.	Screened Out Relates to the process not development.
Places				
PL1	Securing high quality and inclusive design 1. All new developments are required to be of a high standard of design consistent with local design guides or design codes where available, and with the following key characteristics: a. Context: informed by and enhancing its surroundings including heritage, local history, culture and landscape. b. Identity: attractive and distinctive. c. Built form: a coherent pattern of development. d. Movement: accessible, easy to move around, and an environment that effectively engages children. e. Nature: enhanced and optimised, integrating with green and blue infrastructure and nature recovery networks. f. Public spaces: safe, social and inclusive for all, including women and girls. g. Uses: mixed and integrated. h. Homes and buildings: functional, healthy and sustainable. i. Resources: efficient and resilient. j. Lifespan: made to last, with an emphasis on quality and simplicity. 2. Proposals for strategic developments should be supported by a design-led masterplan and, where appropriate, a site-specific design code to show how it delivers on the requirements above.	Places	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated. of this policy.	Screened Out a design policy

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
PL2	Our historic environment The Council will proactively manage and work in genuine partnership with property owners, developers, the local community and other stakeholders to support proposals which conserve or, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment of Wigan Borough. Particular consideration will be given to ensure that the significance of key elements of the historic environment, which contribute most to the borough's identity, character and distinctiveness, are protected from harm and where appropriate, enhanced. These key elements include, but are not exclusive to: 1. The borough's Roman origins, including the town of Wigan which sits on the Roman settlement of Coccium, with Roman Roads extending through various parts of the borough including from Wigan to Standish and to Ashton, broadly following the route of the A49, and from Wigan to Mosley Common via Hindley and Atherton, broadly following the route of the A577. 2. The borough's medieval past, found particularly beneath our town centres and around halls and moated sites. 3. The borough's industrial origins, including the former textile mills of Butts Mill, Eckersley Mills, Ena Mill, Leigh Spinners Mill, Mather Mill, Pagefield Mill, Trencherfield Mill and Victoria Mill. 4. The Leeds and Liverpool and Bridgewater Canals and their associated buildings and structures, including bridges and locks. 5. The borough's mining legacy, including the Lancashire Mining Museum at Astley Green, which is a former colliery site and home of the last surviving headgear in the Lancashire coalfield and the historic mining village of Howe Bridge on the edge of Atherton. 6. Historic town centres including Wigan, Leigh and Standish, which have medieval cores.	Places	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated. of this policy.	Screened Out Protection of heritage policy

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	7. Historic halls and country houses, including Haigh Hall, Winstanley Hall and Dam House in Astley. 8. Historic parks, gardens and cemeteries, including the nationally listed Mesnes Park, and a number of others across the borough. 9. A wide range of churches and chapels ranging from the medieval period to the 20th Century, with the oldest and most ornate tending to be in the major towns and villages, including the Grade I Listed St Wilfrid's Church in Standish. 10. Former industrial landscapes such as Kirkless Local Nature Reserve, Wigan Flashes and Pennington Flash. A number of these key elements of the borough's historic environment include one or more of the borough's Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and/or Conservation Areas. Proposals which harm the significance of designated heritage assets, or their settings, will be determined in accordance with legislation and national planning policy. Proposals that may affect designated and/or non-designated heritage assets, or their setting, should be accompanied by a proportionate heritage assessment and/or an archaeological desk-based assessment where the site has potential archaeological interest.			
PL3	Heritage Assets at Risk The council will facilitate the effective conservation, restoration and/or sensitive regeneration of heritage assets at risk within the borough, including through: 1. Working collaboratively with asset owners and other key stakeholders to, as far as we are able to do so, identify suitable schemes and delivery programmes, and to secure funding opportunities that can be used to conserve, restore or sensitively regenerate heritage assets. 2. Using enforcement powers where necessary and reasonable.	Places	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated. of this policy.	Screened Out Protection of heritage policy

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	3. Supporting proposals, in principle, that will facilitate their viable and effective conservation, restoration, and/or reuse, including for short-term temporary uses that engage the local community ahead of securing their long-term conservation			
PL4	Development within our Conservation Areas 1. Development proposals should be designed carefully and sympathetically to preserve and enhance, and not harm, the character or appearance, identity and distinctiveness of the area, or its setting, in line with the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, as applicable. 2. Buildings, structures and architectural features of value, including porches, chimneys, windows, roofs and boundary walls/railings, which make a positive contribution to the historical, architectural or industrial archaeological character or appearance of a Conservation Area, should be retained and not altered inappropriately. 3. The demolition of buildings within Conservation Areas will only be permitted where: a. The planning permission for demolition includes a condition that the demolition will not take place until a contract or other legally binding document for the appropriate redevelopment or treatment of the site has been made and planning permission for those works have been granted, and those works materially enhance or, for premises that currently make a positive contribution, at least maintain the appearance of the Conservation Area. b. It has been demonstrated that, for buildings which make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, all possible efforts have been made to find a suitable use for the building and it demonstrably cannot be suitably used. 4. Signage will be permitted provided it accords with the following: a. Fascia signs should be in keeping with the character of the shop front, fascia details and materials, the building as a whole and the area, particularly in terms of size, proportions, degree of projection, positioning, materials,	Places	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated. of this policy.	Screened Out Protection of heritage policy

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	type of construction, colour and style, and size of lettering. b. If a fascia sign is to be illuminated, it should be externally illuminated using unobtrusive and discreet light fittings or take the form of individually illuminated and affixed letters. c. Projecting or hanging signs should be of a small size, thin section, located at fascia level and, if needed, illuminated externally and discreetly. d. The cumulative impact of advertisements should not detract from the character or appearance of the building or locality. 5. The preservation and, where necessary, the sensitive relocation of attractive items of street furniture will be encouraged, as will the preservation and, where possible, the enhancement and extension of stone sett and flag surfaces. Where works are undertaken to these and other special surfaces, permanent reinstatement should be in the original material. 6. Development within the grounds or gardens of residential properties, places of worship or other buildings will only be permitted where they would preserve or enhance the historical, architectural or industrial archaeological character and appearance of the Conservation Area. 7. Proposals that will harm the character or appearance, identity and distinctiveness of a Conservation Area, or its setting, will only be permitted when it can be demonstrated, clearly, that the harm is outweighed by public benefits.			
PL5	Non-designated heritage assets Development which would directly or indirectly remove, harm or undermine the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, including those with archaeological interest, or its setting, will only be permitted where the benefits of the development outweigh the harm. This should have regard to the scale of the harm and the significance of the non-designated heritage asset, including to the character and identify of the borough, or the location concerned within it.	Places	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated. of this policy.	Screened Out Protection of heritage policy

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	Prior to the loss of a non-designated heritage asset, or a loss of significance, an appropriate and proportionate building or site recording investigation will be required and submitted for the Historic Environment Record			
PL6	The Borough's Canals Development that is adjacent to, or adjoins, the Leeds and Liverpool Canal or the Bridgewater Canal should: 1. Not turn its back on the canal and, as far as possible, face the canal, effectively and sympathetically integrating the canal environment into the overall design, by providing natural surveillance, access and useable space. 2. Promote high quality design in which the scale, massing, detailing and materials of new development respects the local context and reflects and/or complements the distinctive industrial character of the canal. 3. Provide improved, safe and convenient access to and from the canal towpath for walking, wheeling and cycling including, for large scale developments on the opposite side of the canal, connecting via a bridge where it is feasible to do so. 4. Protect or, through appropriate management, enhance the use of the canals for recreation and leisure uses. 5. Protect or, through appropriate management, enhance the environmental quality, ecological connectivity and biodiversity value of the waterway corridor, and not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of the area. 6. Seek to maximise opportunities for reducing carbon emissions and building resilience, in particular investigating the potential for using canal water to heat and cool canalside buildings using water-sourced heat pumps. 7. Not adversely impact on the structural integrity of the waterway or its related infrastructure and assets.	Places	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated. of this policy.	Screened Out Policy does not promote leisure craft usage on the canals.
PL7	Extension, alteration or conversion of existing buildings in the Green Belt Extensions and alterations to, or the replacement of, existing buildings in the Green Belt will only be allowed where they would:	Places	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated. of this policy.	Screened Out Any theoretical increase in recreational

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	1. Other than in the case of dwellings that are suburban in character and clearly form part of a pocket of development or a continuous road frontage (in which case only criteria 2 and 3 apply), not exceed the cubic content of the original building by more than 30%, including any proposed ancillary structures such as garaging or storage buildings. 2. Not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness and purposes of the Green Belt, including the domestication of outdoor space as garden ground. 3. Respect local building styles and materials, and the form, bulk and general design are in keeping with its surroundings. The conversion of existing buildings will be permitted where they meet criteria 1-3 above, and where: 4. The existing building is permanent, structurally sound and of substantial construction, and capable of conversion without the need for major or complete reconstruction.		Any theoretical increase in recreational impacts, peat mass or hydrology would be nugatory	impacts, peat mass or hydrology would be nugatory
Town and Local Centres				
TC1	Hierarchy of town and local centres The centres and their hierarchy within the borough, defined by their scale and function are: Main sub-regional town centre - Wigan – see policy TC2 Main town centre Leigh – see policy TC3 Town Centres Ashton (policy TC4), Atherton (policy TC5), Golborne (policy TC6), Hindley (policy TC7), Pemberton (policy TC8), Platt Bridge (policy TC9), Standish (policy TC10) and Tyldesley (policy TC11) Local centres (Policy TC12) Area Local centre Appley Bridge (Woodnook Road) Ashton (Stubshaw Cross) Aspull (Scot Lane) Atherton (Bolton Road, Derby Street, Hag Fold) Bryn Bryn, Hindley (Borsdane, Atherton Road (Hindley Green)) Ince (Higher Ince, Lower Ince), Leigh (Higher Folds,	Town & Local Centres	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out As the town centres already exist and policy safeguards existing use

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	Warrington Road, Wigan Road), Lowton (Church Lane, Oaklands Road, Slag Lane), Orrell (Orrell Post) Shevington, Tyldesley and Astley (Blackmoor, Stour Road, Mosley Common, Parr Bridge, Sale Lane, Shakerley), Wigan Ashbourne Avenue, Beech Hill Avenue, Gidlow Lane, Goose Green (Clap Gate), Goose Green Wigan (St Pauls Avenue), Hawkley, Kitt Green, Marsh Green, Mesnes Road, Newtown, Norley Hall, Ormskirk Road, Poolstock, Scholes, Springfield, Swinley, Whelley, Winstanley, Woodhouse Lane, Worsley Hall) The Core Area within each town centre, as shown on the policies map, is the core area for main town centre uses. New main town centre uses should be located in accordance with the sequential approach established in national planning policy, seeking to direct those uses to the Core Area in the first instance, followed by edge of centre locations within 300 metres of the defined Core Area boundary, and only then at out-of-centre locations. The scale and purpose of the use proposed should be appropriate to the role and function of the town centre concerned, and there should be no significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre. Impact assessments will be required for all retail and leisure uses which are not located within a defined centre where the proposal either: a. Provides a gross floorspace of more than 500 sqm. b. Is located within 800 metres of either: 1. A town centre (not including Wigan or Leigh) and provides a gross floorspace of more than 300 sqm. 2. A local centre and provides a gross floorspace of more than 200 sqm. New convenience shops, and extensions to existing convenience shops, up to 600 sqm gross internal floorspace outside of designated town and local centres, are subject to policy TC14. New hot food takeaways are subject to policy PE2.			

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
TC2	Wigan Town Centre The further regeneration and improvement of Wigan town centre, as shown on the policies map , as the largest town centre in the borough, and our only town centre with a sub-regional role, will be secured by working in genuine partnership with businesses, residents, visitors, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, with a focus on the following key priorities: 1. Completing the delivery of the comprehensive redevelopment of the former Galleries site, now known as Fettle, as a new location for main town centre uses, including a new market hall and seeking to establish a new residential neighbourhood in the heart of the town centre. 2. Consolidating the role of The Grand Arcade as an important location for shops but using vacant floorspace to the rear, with opportunities for independent access, in different ways to add to the opportunities in the town centre. 3. Restoring a thriving Standishgate (south of Mesnes Street / Crompton Street specifically) and Market Place, underpinned by shops, complemented by cafes, restaurants, bars and financial and professional service uses, and preserving and enhancing the historic value of the location. 4. Conserving and enhancing Makinson Arcade as an important location for independent shops and complementary uses that provide active shop frontages during daytime hours. 5. Continuing the conservation-led renovation and improvement of King Street, Library Street and neighbouring streets and the connections between them, to provide for a broader range of hospitality, leisure and entertainment uses and accommodation for creative industries, as well as encouraging the active use of upper floors including for residential where this can provide an appropriate level of amenity without detracting from the hospitality, leisure and entertainment role of the location. 6. Securing significant improvements at Wigan Station Gateway, including to the two rail stations and the spaces in	Town & Local Centres	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out Very unlikely to attract significant additional vehicle movements but could reduce vehicle movements to regional centres such as Manchester and Trafford Centre.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	between them, to better integrate how they operate, reducing highway conflicts, relocating car parking to the south of the mainline railway, delivering substantial residential and commercial development on the land vacated by car parking, and protecting and enhancing the historic value of the location. 7. Working with landowners and businesses to secure the comprehensive redevelopment of an area around Queen Street / Caroline Street / Wallgate, as a new neighbourhood for living, leisure and working, reducing the impacts of motor traffic, providing replacement car parking for that within the Station Gateway, as necessary, and better integrating this area with the wider town centre. 8. Supporting the delivery of comprehensive, conservation-led mixed use regeneration of the historic Wigan Pier Quarter, including Eckersley Mills, land south of Southgate and at Wigan Pier, and enhancing the role performed by this area as a connection between the town centre and the sport, leisure and retail attractions at Robin Park. 9. Securing mixed use development at the Eastern Gateway to the town centre, around Millgate, Rodney Street, Harrogate Street and Darlington Street (western end), and simplifying motor traffic movements in that area. 10. Working with landowners and businesses to secure the comprehensive redevelopment of the area to the north of the town centre bounded by Mesnes Street, Northway, Powell Street, Riverway and Crompton Street, as new neighbourhoods for living, working and leisure activities, retaining active ground floor frontages on main streets including Standishgate, addressing the issues of the two older, outdated existing multi-storey car parks and protecting and enhancing the historic value of Mesnes Street south of Mesnes Terrace and around its junction with Standishgate and Crompton Street. 11. Preserving and enhancing the historic value, the variety of town centre and civic uses and residential properties, and the overall amenity of the area north of Mesnes Street, Northway and Powell Street and along Bridgeman Terrace. 12. Securing, with the owner, developers and other parties as needed, the comprehensive, conservation-led and housing-			

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	led regeneration of the historic Pagefield Mill, retaining the main mill building and conserving the key architectural and historic significance of the site. 13. Preserving and enhancing the historic Mesnes Park as an important heritage and green space asset for the town centre and continuing to embrace the park as part of celebratory events within the town centre. 14. Supporting and strengthening the role of The Learning Zone (Wigan and Leigh College and the Deanery High School) and its contribution to upskilling the borough and supporting the wider town centre functions. 15. Preserving and enhancing the historic value and mix of uses of the area around All Saints Church, Hallgate and Market Street opposite the former Galleries site and of the residential properties on and off Parsons Walk and Park Road, while maintaining an appropriate balance with the valued sports clubs and facilities to the rear. 16. Sustaining and, where applicable, enhancing the Employment Areas at Wigan Pier Business Park and Chapel Lane (part) that are within the town centre, in line with policy J2. 17. Sustaining and, where applicable, enhancing the residential locations in the town centre as places to live, including Eleanor Street, Heritage Way, Swan Meadow Road and on, and around, Spring Gardens. 18. Conserving and restoring the townhouses on New Market Street opposite the Learning Zone and on Dicconson Street adjacent to Northway. 19. Supporting the active use of upper floors above commercial premises, including on Standishgate, Market Street and Mesnes Street in addition to King Street / Library Street, including for residential use provided that an appropriate level of amenity can be achieved without detracting from the commercial role of the location. 20. Improving walking, wheeling and cycling connections within the town centre and between the town centre and neighbouring areas, including Wallgate, Scholes, the supermarket at Water Heyes, Standishgate north of Northway, Swinley and Mesnes Park as the central park within the town.			

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	21. Reducing the adverse impacts of motor traffic on the liveability and accessibility of the town centre, by removing unnecessary motor traffic and exploring options for simplifying vehicle movements and providing benefits for bus access, including at Wallgate and Darlington Street. Development proposals that will assist the delivery of one or more of these key priorities will be supported in principle. Conversely, development proposals that will adversely impact on the delivery of these key priorities will not be supported in principle.			
TC3	Leigh Town Centre The establishment of Leigh as a distinctive and thriving centre, with an expanded and diversified economic and functional footprint in the east of the borough, will be secured by working in genuine partnership with businesses, residents, visitors, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, with a focus on the following key priorities: 1. Securing significantly improved rapid transit services between Leigh and Manchester. 2. Introducing new health, education and employment uses, including a higher education presence and new office and co-working spaces, and supporting the provision of infrastructure and complementary forms of development that will support these objectives. 3. Restoring a thriving Bradshawgate that works for the daytime and night time economies, including supporting its shopping role through improvements to shop frontages, having an emphasis on independent shops, cafes, restaurants and bars as far as practicable, particularly towards the eastern end of the street, improving walking, wheeling and cycling connections with the Spinning Gate Centre, car parking and The Loom and preserving and enhancing the historic value of the street. 4. Sustaining and enhancing Leigh Market as a place to shop	Town & Local Centres	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out Very unlikely to attract significant additional vehicle movements past Holcroft Moss on the M62.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	and spend time. 5. Supporting the key role of the Spinning Gate Shopping Centre as a location for shops and complementary uses that create active frontages within the shopping centre and on the elevation facing the bus station. 6. Securing a modern bus interchange and associated development on the existing bus station site and that of the former public house adjacent, to better integrate the facility with its surroundings and establish a positive contribution to the streetscape at the corner of Spinning Jenny Way with King Street. 7. Better integrating The Loom and its canal side environment into the town centre through improved walking, wheeling and cycling linkages, outdoor space and landscaping. 8. Supporting and enhancing the regeneration of the historic and architectural character of Railway Road. with an emphasis on quality of place, consolidation of commercial activity to the east of the street, securing improvements to shop frontages and sustaining and enhancing the residential role to the centre and west of the street. 9. Developing the Civic Square as a vibrant hub for civic and cultural activity, supporting and capitalising on the historic architectural value of the Town Hall, Turnpike Centre and Leigh Parish Church, and improving walking, wheeling and cycling links along the King Street / Market Street / Market Place corridor from the canal to The Avenue. 10. Improving the network of streets north of Bradshawgate as places to live in and as places for businesses, balancing the needs of each so that they can coexist with an appropriate level of amenity, reducing the dominance of motor vehicles in the street scene, both moving and parked, enhancing walking, wheeling and cycling connections to Bradshawgate and generally, and preserving and enhancing the historic value of the west of this area, in particular. 11. Working with landowners and businesses to secure a comprehensive redevelopment of the Ellesmere Street area as a new neighbourhood for living and for work, that enhances and positively engages with the canal and the neighbouring historic environment and provides a good level of amenity for existing and future homes.			

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	12. Consolidating the area around Chapel Street (west) and East Bond Street as a location primarily for business and public services, including the areas within the Mather Lane or Platt Fold Street Employment Areas in line with policy J2, while safeguarding residential areas. 13. Developing a market for more town centre living, with a mix of quality new market and affordable homes of different types and tenures that both creates the right amenity for residents but does not detract from the ability of the town centre to serve the town and its wider catchment commercially and culturally. 14. Supporting the active use of upper floors above commercial premises, including on Bradshawgate and Railway Road, including for office use, and for residential use provided that an appropriate level of amenity can be achieved without detracting from the commercial role of the location. 15. Greening the town centre with the addition of street trees, green walls and roofs, landscape planting and the introduction of 'natural' sustainable drainage solutions where possible and practicable. 16. Improving connections for walking, wheeling and cycling between the town centre, Parsonage Retail Park, Leigh Infirmary, Leigh Sports Village, Pennington Flash and surrounding communities. 17. Reducing the adverse impacts of traffic on the liveability and accessibility of the town centre, by introducing measures to remove unnecessary traffic. Development proposals that will assist the delivery of one or more of these key priorities will be supported in principle. Development proposals that will adversely impact on the delivery of these key priorities will not be supported in principle.			
TC4	Ashton-in-Makerfield Town Centre The ongoing regeneration and improvement of Ashton-in-Makerfield town centre, as the main town centre in the south-west of the borough, will be secured by working in genuine	Town & Local Centres	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out Potential minor positive effects on air quality by reducing car

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	partnership with businesses, residents, visitors, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, with a focus on the following key priorities: 1. In the short term, making the town centre a better place to spend time by softening the impact of traffic in Gerard Street with measures to reduce the amount of space given over to general traffic, improving the quality of surfacing, road crossings and landscape planting, securing improvements to shop frontages, enabling more business activity in the street where this can be accommodated without obstruction, realising active uses on upper floors and preserving and enhancing the historic value of the street and its environs. 2. In the longer term, securing the means to divert traffic away from the town centre by providing better alternative routes to the motorway network and other strategic routes, and exploring the potential to introduce traffic management measures to improve safety in the town centre. 3. Reinventing the location of the former market as a multifunctional space that will accommodate stalls, greenery and events and be a focal point for residents, visitors and businesses. 4. Supporting the key role of the Gerard Centre as a location for retail shops and complementary uses that provide active shop frontages. 5. Securing improvements to the frontages of the small retail premises on Garswood Street to retain and enhance their contribution to the commercial offer of the town centre. 6. Improving the environs to the rear of properties on the west side of Gerard Street and around Millingford Brook as a green infrastructure asset within the town centre. 7. Sustaining and, where applicable, enhancing the residential locations in the town centre as places to live, including on and around Bryn Street, Old Road, Wigan Road, Foy Street / Ivy Street, Heath Road and Princess Road / Ladysmith Avenue / Hilton Street. 8. Working with landowners and businesses to sustain and improve the business area at Armoury Bank for ongoing			travel to out-of-town shopping and to larger town centres.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	employment use in accordance with policy J2. 9. Preserving and safeguarding King George's Field for the public benefit as an important green space asset for the town centre, and embracing its use for, or as part of, celebratory and other significant events within the town centre that are compatible with its covenant. 10. Improving the A58 Bolton Road gateway to the town centre by addressing gap sites and vacant buildings through provision of new homes, and environmental improvements. 11. Improving walking, wheeling and cycling connections, including to Jubilee Park and Bryn railway station to the north, King George's Field to the north-east, Haydock Park racecourse to the south, and to the west of the town. 12. Improving the town centre as an interchange location between bus services and rail services at Bryn Station, plus securing better cross boundary bus services, including to employment locations in Haydock and Newton-le-Willows. 13. Achieving a more coordinated and efficient use of car parking across the town centre to reduce the amount of space taken up by parked cars. Development proposals that will assist the delivery of one or more of these key priorities will be supported in principle. Development proposals that will adversely impact on the delivery of these key priorities will not be supported in principle.			
TC5	Atherton Town Centre The regeneration and improvement of Atherton town centre, as a key town centre in the north east of the borough, will be secured by working in genuine partnership with businesses, residents, visitors, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, with a focus on the following key priorities: 1. Improving Market Street, with shops underpinning its role complemented by cafes, restaurants, bars, financial and professional service uses and other shopfront uses, by exploring the potential to create a safer and more people-friendly environment that enables more business activity in	Town & Local Centres	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out Potential minor positive effects on air quality by reducing car travel to out-of-town shopping and to larger town centres.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	the street where this can be accommodated without obstruction, landscaping and street tree planting, space for regular and/or occasional markets, exploring also the ability to provide canopies for wet weather shelter, and with west or southbound bus services transferred to Mealhouse Lane / Bag Lane in a way that makes walking distances as short as possible. 2. Supporting businesses and buildings owners to improve shop frontages and bring vacant upper floors into active use, including for housing provided that an appropriate level of amenity can be achieved without detracting from the commercial role of the location. 3. Improving the market site for market purposes or for redevelopment if the market is relocated, in a way that enhances the Market Place Conservation Area and its setting immediately adjacent to the Grade II listed St John the Baptist Church. 4. Sustaining and, where applicable, enhancing the residential locations in the town centre as places to live, including on Mealhouse Lane, Wigan Road, Sumner Street, Bag Lane, Hampson Street, Smith Street, St John Street, Morley Street and Stanley Street. 5. Securing significantly improved rapid transit connections with Manchester, including faster services to Manchester and the provision of park and ride facilities, if needed. 6. Improving connections for walking, wheeling and cycling across the town centre, including between Market Street and Ena Mill and the supermarket on Crab Tree Lane, so they work better as a combined offer, and with surrounding communities so that they can access the town centre easily and conveniently. 7. Achieving a more coordinated and efficient use of car parking across the town centre to ensure suitable provision for shoppers and other visitors to the town centre, as well as users of the guided busway service. 8. Restoring or replacing the public conveniences at Flapper Fold Lane. Development proposals that will assist the delivery of one or more of these key priorities will be supported in principle.			

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	Development proposals that will adversely impact on the delivery of these key priorities will not be supported in principle.			
TC6	Golborne Town Centre The regeneration and improvement of Golborne town centre, as the key town centre in the south of the borough, will be secured by working in genuine partnership with businesses, residents, visitors, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, with a focus on the following key priorities: 1. Strengthening the shopping role of High Street and Heath Street, complemented by a range of range of cafes, restaurants, bars, financial and professional services and other shopfront uses, and improving the pedestrian environment, including at Peter Kane Square. 2. Securing the provision of the best possible new rail station and services for Golborne, ensuring that the facility is effectively integrated with the town centre and maximises the regeneration benefits it can bring to the town centre. 3. Reinventing the Railway Road / Queen Street area ensuring it is easily accessible by walking, wheeling and cycling, taxis and bus services on High Street, that car parking is better managed, and the quality of the environment is improved, and that this area is well connected to Heath Street as well as High Street. 4. Reducing the impact of the West Coast Mainline as a barrier to accessing the town centre and the railway station, by walking, wheeling and cycling, from adjacent parts of Golborne and Lowton to the east. 5. Improving walking, wheeling and cycling connectivity between the town centre and residential areas to the north and south, and to the west of the town and Haydock Park racecourse. 6. Exploring options to increase car parking provision for the town centre and new rail station, including some shorter stay parking. 7. Improving Golborne Library, either at the existing premises or through relocation as part of the railway station works.	Town & Local Centres	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out Potential minor positive effects on air quality by reducing car travel to out-of-town shopping and to larger town centres.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	8. Preserving or enhancing the historic value of Heath Street, High Street and Railway Road. 9. Seeking to address traffic levels on Heath Street and resolve conflicts at the junction with High Street. 10. Sustaining and, where applicable, enhancing the residential locations in the town centre as places to live, including on Railway Road and adjacent on High Street, John Street, Wood Street, Heath Street, side streets off Heath Street and Charles Street. Development proposals that will assist the delivery of one or more of these key priorities will be supported in principle. Development proposals that will adversely impact on the delivery of these key priorities will not be supported in principle.			
TC7	Hindley Town Centre The regeneration and improvement of Hindley town centre, as the key town centre in the north and centre of the borough, will be secured by working in genuine partnership with businesses, residents, visitors, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, with a focus on the following key priorities: 1. Strengthening the shopping role of Market Street, complemented by a range of cafes, restaurants, bars, financial and professional services and other shopfront uses, with a strong focus on the area between the junctions with Cross Street and Ladies Lane. 2. Reviving a regular market and/or occasional specialist markets at the Morris Street site and securing improvements to the quality of the site. 3. Maximising the benefits of the supermarket in the heart of the town centre and enhancing its walking, wheeling and cycling connections with Market Street and Cross Street. 4. Improving walking, wheeling and cycling connectivity between the town centre and its surrounding residential areas, notably to the north, south and east, and to Hindley rail station.	Town & Local Centres	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out Potential minor positive effects on air quality by reducing car travel to out-of-town shopping and to larger town centres.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	5. Sustaining and, where applicable, enhancing the residential locations in the town centre as places to live, including at First Avenue, Pennington Street, Carr Street, Trafalgar Road and Lowe Mill Lane. 6. Improving flood risk management at Borsdane Brook and creating associated nature and recreation benefits. 7. Preserving and enhancing the historic value of Market Street and neighbouring parts of Bridge Street and Ladies Lane to the north and Wigan Road, Atherton Road and Liverpool Road to the south. 8. Securing benefits for the environment and street scene, walking, wheeling and cycling and bus services in Hindley town centre through traffic reduction measures on the A577 between Wigan and Atherton and the A58 between Hindley and Bolton, as the new east-west link road is delivered to divert general traffic to the south. Development proposals that will assist the delivery of one or more of these key priorities will be supported in principle. Development proposals that will adversely impact on the delivery of these key priorities will not be supported in principle.			
TC8	Pemberton Town Centre The maintenance and improvement of Pemberton town centre, as a key town centre in the west of the borough, will be secured by working in genuine partnership with businesses, residents, visitors, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, with a focus on the following key priorities: 1. Maintaining and strengthening the shopping role of Ormskirk Road complemented by a range of cafes, restaurants, bars, financial and professional services and other shopfront uses. 2. Securing benefits for the environment and street scene, walking, cycling and wheeling and bus services in Pemberton town centre through traffic reduction measures on the A577 between Orrell and Wigan, as the M58 Link Road is delivered to divert general traffic to the south.	Town & Local Centres	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out Potential minor positive effects on air quality by reducing car travel to out-of-town shopping and to larger town centres.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	3. Better managing the provision of car parking across the town centre for shoppers and residents. 4. Improving walking, wheeling and cycling connections with neighbouring residential areas, notably Norley and Orrell to the north, and Pemberton and Highfield to the south. 5. Sustaining and, where applicable, enhancing the residential locations in the town centre as places to live, including on Ormskirk Road, Normanby Street and environs, Short Street, Woodford Street and Park Road. Development proposals that will assist the delivery of one or more of these key priorities will be supported in principle. Development proposals that will adversely impact on the delivery of these key priorities will not be supported in principle.			
TC9	Platt Bridge Town Centre The regeneration and improvement of Platt Bridge town centre, as a key town centre in the centre of the borough, will be secured by working in genuine partnership with businesses, residents, visitors, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, with a focus on the following key priorities: 1. Masterplanning the town centre to seek to maximise its potential, develop gap areas where applicable, reduce the adverse impact of traffic and better integrate the component parts of the centre. 2. Enhancing the shopping and food and drink offer with a focus on Walthew Lane and Platt Street / Warrington Road. 3. Capturing potential opportunities for the town centre to benefit from its central location amongst the sites that make up the Flashes of Wigan and Leigh National Nature Reserve, in provision for day visitors and overnight stays. 4. Capturing opportunities for work and training in the town centre and improving its cultural offer. 5. Capturing and celebrating the town centre's cultural heritage through the masterplan and proposals emerging from it.	Town & Local Centres	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out Potential minor positive effects on air quality by reducing car travel to out-of-town shopping and to larger town centres.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	6. Enhancing walking, wheeling and cycling connections in and around the town centre and between the town centre and residential areas around the town, neighbouring villages, the canal and the surrounding green infrastructure network, including reducing the barrier effect of the main A58 and A573 roads, and their junctions. 7. Adding to the value of the town centre as a place to spend time in by improving public spaces, incorporating sustainable drainage wherever possible. 8. Improving the provision and management of parking in the town centre. 9. Improving flood risk management for the town centre from Hey Brook. 10. Sustaining and, where applicable, enhancing the residential locations in the town centre as places to live, including on Chapel Street, Stephen Street, Gas Street, Templeton Road, Walthew Lane, New Street, Car Street, Tram Street, Wigan Street and Lily Lane. Development proposals that will assist the delivery of one or more of these key priorities will be supported in principle. Development proposals that will adversely impact on the delivery of these key priorities will not be supported in principle.			
TC10	Standish Town Centre The further improvement of Standish centre, as a key centre in the north-west of the borough, will be secured by working in genuine partnership with businesses, residents, visitors, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, with a focus on the following key priorities: 1. Maintaining the shopping role of the area around the crossroads at the heart of the centre, complemented by a range of cafes, restaurants, bars, financial and professional services and other shopfront uses.	Town & Local Centres	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out Potential minor positive effects on air quality by reducing car travel to out-of-town shopping and to larger town centres.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	2. Improving the quality of the street scene, particularly along the A49 High Street and Preston Road, Pole Street, Market Street and Cross Street, and making it more pedestrian-friendly. 3. Supporting the effective redevelopment of vacant land in the north of the centre west of Preston Road, for a compatible use or uses that will contribute positively to the vitality of the centre, including an element of time limited car parking that will serve the development and the wider centre. 4. Improving walking, wheeling and cycling linkages from surrounding residential areas, notably to the north east, east and south west, and to/from Wigan. 5. Agreeing a strategy locally to better manage car parking provision within the centre. 6. Preserving or enhancing the historic value of the centre and, notably, the Grade I listed Parish Church of St Wilfrid and neighbouring listed structures and their setting. 7. Sustaining and, where applicable, enhancing the residential locations in the centre as places to live, including on Church Street. Development proposals that will assist the delivery of one or more of these key priorities will be supported in principle. Development proposals that will adversely impact on the delivery of these key priorities will not be supported in principle.			
TC11	Tyldesley Town Centre The further regeneration and improvement of Tyldesley town centre, as a key centre in the north-east of the borough, will be secured by in genuine partnership closely with businesses, residents, visitors, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, with a focus on the following key priorities: 1. Continuing the preservation and enhancement of the historic core and regeneration of Elliott Street, with an emphasis on independent shops, complemented by a range of	Town & Local Centres	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out Potential minor positive effects on air quality by reducing car travel to out-of-town shopping and to larger town centres.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	cafes, restaurants, bars, financial and professional services and other shopfront uses, and the active use of upper floors, where practicable, including for homes provided that an appropriate level of amenity can be achieved without detracting from the commercial role of the location, and softening the impact of traffic through traffic calming measures. 2. Enhancing the quality of the street furniture, materials and built form on The Square to better reflect the historic value of the buildings fronting The Square on Stanley Street and Elliott Street, and their contribution to its setting. 3. Supporting the regular local market and additional occasional specialist markets on The Square. 4. Softening the impact of traffic on Shuttle Street, Elliott Street and Castle Street, as far as is reasonable and practicable. 5. Securing the conservation and appropriate reuse of the former Town Hall, former Technical School and former Conservative Club. 6. Preserving or enhancing the historic value of Stanley Street and Milk Street to the north of Elliott Street and of the residential streets between Elliot Street and the busway. 7. Better managing the provision of car parking across the town centre for shoppers, residents and busway users, as applicable. 8. Securing significantly improved rapid transit connections with Manchester. 9. Improving connections for walking, wheeling and cycling to the town centre from the north, including enhanced crossing facilities on Shuttle Street. 10. Sustaining and, where applicable, enhancing the residential locations in and immediately adjacent to the town centre as places to live, including on Shuttle Street, Green Street, Blossom Street, Johnson Street, Milk Street, Robinson Street, Well Street, Primrose Street South, Johnson Street South, Upper George Street, Mary Street, Astley Street, Wareing Street and Castle Street.			

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	Development proposals that will assist the delivery of one or more of these key priorities will be supported in principle. Development proposals that will adversely impact on the delivery of these key priorities will not be supported in principle.			
TC12	Local centres supporting thriving communities Our local centres, will be the focus as community hubs For main town centre uses of a scale to serve a local catchment, together with corresponding community services, as far as is possible and practicable, so that those services and facilities that provide for people's day-to-day requirements are available collectively, in single combined trips, close to where they live. A local centre that is providing a strong service to its community needs to have a strong food shopping role and a wider function which, if its size and location allows, provides: 1. A balance of complementary retail-type uses such as hairdressers, cafe, public house or bar, hot food takeaway, financial and professional services and other shopfront uses. New hot food takeaways are also subject to policy PE2. 2. A range of community services such as a library, health centre, community hall, religious building and school. 3. Create an attractive environment with seating and planting where people can spend time and socialise. Where planning permission is required, the contribution that the proposal would make to strengthening the collective offer of the local centre and its role as a community hub will be a significant determining factor. In addition, the council will support, and work with property owners and businesses and the local community as applicable, to: a. Make local centres safe and convenient to access by walking, wheeling and cycling through providing, where provision can be improved, measures such as dropped kerbs, tactile paving, safer road crossings and accessible shop frontages, safer routes for cycling, provision of safe and	Town & Local Centres	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out Potential minor positive effects on air quality by reducing car travel to out-of-town shopping and to larger town centres.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	secure cycling parking, and accessible bus stops where centres are served by local bus services. b. Better manage the provision of car parking and servicing and reduce conflicts with walking, wheeling and cycling. c. Improve the environmental quality of centres through owner and business investment into their buildings, including shop front and signage improvements and building fabric maintenance and improvement, as well as better quality paving, landscaping, boundary treatment and street tree planting. Underperforming local centres will be targeted for these improvements as resources allow. The council will seek to coalesce public and community assets around these centres, as far as is practicable and resources allow.			
TC13	Gaps in the provision of local centres Outside of the catchment areas for our existing town and local centres, there are substantive gaps in the provision of local centres in the following locations:: Shevington Moor and North West Standish/ North Wigan and South Standish/ /Hindley Green/South West Atherton/Bickershaw/Westleigh and Pickley Green/Plank Lane & Firs Lane, Leigh/Pennington, Leigh/East Lowton/South-central Astley. Proposals for a new local centre within one of these areas will be supported provided that the proposal is: 1. For a minimum of four shop units including at least one unit of between 400sqm and 600sqm gross internal floor area and a total area of less than 1000sqm gross internal floor area. 2. In a location that will make a substantial contribution to meeting the gap in provision spatially. 3. Restricted by planning condition to convenience retail and other uses appropriate in a local centre. Development at West of Gibfield (Places for Everyone Plan allocation) has the potential to meet the need for a new local centre in North West Atherton.	Town & Local Centres	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out Potential minor positive effects on air quality by reducing car travel to out-of-town shopping and to larger town centres.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	The following site allocations also provide opportunities to address gaps in the provision of local centres: • Policy H3: North Leigh Park can meet the need for a new local centre in Pickley Green and Westleigh. • Policy H4: South Hindley can meet the need for a new local centre in South East Hindley Green / North West Leigh.			
TC14	Convenience shops outside of designated centres Outside designated town and local centres, the development of, or change of use to, small convenience shops with a gross internal floorspace of less than 150 sqm, including extensions to existing premises, will be permitted provided that: 1. It will be suitably located in terms of access by walking or wheeling from the surrounding area, including considerations of road safety. 2. It will not unduly affect the amenity of nearby residents and businesses, in accordance with Policy EN7. Convenience shops with a gross internal floorspace of between 150-600 sqm, including extensions to existing premises, will be permitted outside designated town and local centres provided that the above criteria are met, and: 3. No suitable sites or buildings are available, or likely to become available within a reasonable period of time, in or adjacent to a town centre and/or a local centre from which a similar catchment would be served. 4. It will not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of an existing local centre. For proposals for larger convenience shops with a gross internal floorspace over 600 square metres, including extensions to existing premises, outside of the Core Areas within our town centres and our Local Centres, as applicable, will be subject to the sequential approach and, if above 900 sqm gross internal floorspace, an impact assessment, as set out in Policy TC1.	Town & Local Centres	No Likely Significant Effect on any European Site is anticipated from the operation of this Policy.	Screened Out Potential minor positive effects on air quality by reducing car travel to out-of-town shopping and to larger town centres.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	Land at the former petrol station site at the junction of the A49 Wigan Lane with Walter Scott Avenue, Wigan is allocated for a food-led convenience shop, or shops of less than 600 sqm gross internal floorspace, subject to satisfactory provision being made for design, access and amenity			
Environment				
EN1	Our natural environment Wigan Borough is home to a unique natural environment that includes internationally important remnant mosslands such as Chat Moss nationally significant wetlands that have been reclaimed from the borough's industrial mining and industrial legacy and now form the Flashes of Wigan and Leigh National Nature Reserve, irreplaceable pockets of ancient woodland in the Shevington and Standish Lower Ground area and regionally valuable areas of plantation woodland such as Haigh Plantations. The importance of Wigan's diverse natural landscape of water, fen, wet grassland, wet woodland and lowland raised bog habitats means that the whole of the borough is designated as part of the Great Manchester Wetlands Nature Improvement Area. These green infrastructure assets deliver multiple social, environmental and economic benefits, as well as climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience opportunities. The council will work in genuine partnership with landowners, developers, the local community and other stakeholders to protect and enhance our green infrastructure network, supporting the priorities set out in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, particularly in the following priority locations: 1. Our flashes and wetlands in the borough's Greenheart which is focused on the key former coalfield areas between Wigan, Leigh and Hindley. 2. Our mosslands south of Astley and Lowton connecting into Salford and Warrington that form part of the Risley, Holcroft and Chat Moss National Nature Reserve.	Environment	Likely positive effect	Screened Out Policy provides protection to protected sites

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	3. Our river valleys including the River Douglas in and around Wigan and the northwest of the borough and Borsdane Brook / Hey Brook in Aspull, Hindley, Abram and Leigh which form part of the Mersey Catchment. 4. The Leeds and Liverpool and Bridgewater Canals which pass through the borough and our main town centres of Leigh and Wigan, where compatible with their use and maintenance. 5. Our areas of common land such as at Aspull, Amberswood (between Ince and Hindley) and Edge Green (Golborne), and main parks in our towns and villages such as Alexandra Park, Newtown, Central Park in Atherton and Jubilee Park, Ashton-in-Makerfield. 6. Our town centres through the provision of more street trees, sustainable drainage and the addition of green walls and green roofs. 7. Within strategic development sites, including the sites allocated within this Local Plan and the Places for Everyone Plan, which provide opportunities to enhance green infrastructure. 8. Areas identified in the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy as areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity (or 'opportunity areas'). We will prioritise protecting and enhancing sites of nature conservation and/or geodiversity value in accordance with the following hierarchy: a. The borough's internationally designated Manchester Mosses Special Area of Conservation at Chat Moss, as part of a wider designation including sites in Salford and Warrington. b. The borough's nationally designated sites including the Sites of Special Scientific Interest at Bryn Marsh and Ince Moss, Abram Flashes, Astley and Bedford Mosses and Highfield Moss and the sites that form the Flashes of Wigan and Leigh and Risley, Holcroft & Chat Moss National Nature Reserves within the Borough. c. The borough's areas of irreplaceable habitat including our areas of peat soils, ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees.			

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	d. Regionally designated sites including our numerous Sites of Biological Importance, Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS) at Recepticle Delph and Main Drive Cutting at Haigh Hall and Local Nature Reserves at Greenslate Water Meadows in Orrell, Borsdane Wood in Hindley and Kirkless in Wigan. e. Other sites that are not designated for nature but contain substantial nature conservation value of local significance, including priority habitats such as wet woodland and grasslands and other protected species such as Willow Tit and Bittern, which contribute to the borough being designated as part of the Great Manchester Wetlands Nature Improvement Area and have the potential to support the priorities of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Development that would adversely affect the biodiversity and/or geodiversity value of a site will only be permitted when the need for the development in that location overrides the need to protect that biodiversity and/or geodiversity, with the weight accorded in line with the above hierarchy, and that the ability to mitigate the development has been maximised as far as is reasonably possible. Applicants will be required to demonstrate, through a supporting ecological assessment, the potential impacts to biodiversity and how they will be mitigated, both within the development site and outside the development site where appropriate			
EN2	Development and green infrastructure Green Infrastructure in Wigan Borough comprises a network of multifunctional natural assets, the priority locations of which are highlighted in Policy EN1 Our Natural Environment. The Council will work with partner organisations, local communities and developers to: 1. Expand tree cover in appropriate locations across the borough to improve landscape character, water and air quality and the value of trees to wildlife. 2. Strengthen and expand the network of wildlife sites, corridors and stepping stone habitats to secure a net gain in	Environment	Likely positive effect	Screened Out provision of local destinations for travel, reducing air pollution and recreational visits to European sites.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	biodiversity and support the delivery of the Nature Recovery Network. 3. Improve and increase opportunities for walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding within the green infrastructure network, particularly where it can have a positive impact on our marginalised communities. 4. Increase the accessibility of open space within walking distance of housing, health, employment and education establishments to promote healthy lifestyles, informed by the most up to date open space assessment. 5. Reduce the risk of flooding, improve river water quality and riverine and riparian habitats within the Douglas and Mersey Catchments supporting the objectives of Policy EN3. 6. Ensure that development proposals on strategic employment and housing sites are supported by a holistic green infrastructure plan to provide wider environmental net gains. Developers will be required to provide long-term management arrangements for new and existing green infrastructure within development sites, proportional to the scale and roles of the green infrastructure within the site. Development should contribute to, or provide opportunities to enhance the function of, existing green infrastructure and its connectivity from residential areas, town and local centres, employment areas and other open spaces, in line with priorities and actions set out in the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Development that would result in the loss, fragmentation or isolation of green infrastructure assets will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that: a. Appropriate protection or retention of green infrastructure assets cannot be achieved; and b. The development would bring benefits that would override the resultant harm; and c. There are no realistic alternatives to the proposed development that would avoid such harm.			

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	In such cases, appropriate compensatory provision will be required off site. Major development proposals must apply the latest nationally recognised Urban Greening Factor calculator, (or successor) at the earliest design stage and is expected to achieve the following Urban Greening Factor outcomes commensurate with site context and viability: i. 0.2 for predominantly industrial development - ii 0.3 for predominantly commercial development. - iii 0.4 for predominantly residential development on previously developed land, and - iv 0.5 for predominantly greenfield residential development. Where Urban Greening Factor outcomes below these expected levels are proposed, applicants must evidence the ecological/viability reasons and demonstrate alternative on-site design responses that deliver equivalent benefits for biodiversity, flood risk, climate resilience and health. An operation and maintenance plan must also be included which satisfactorily demonstrates that the green features will be successfully retained throughout the life of the development. Development should take account of existing trees, woodland and hedgerows on site, prioritising their retention where possible. Development that would result in the loss of, or damage to trees, woodlands and/or hedgerows of significant amenity, screening, wildlife or historical value will only be permitted when there is a clear and overriding public benefit that cannot reasonably be achieved through an alternative location or design; the loss is the minimum necessary; remaining assets are suitably protected, including during construction; compensatory planting is agreed and undertaken in line with that agreement; and a long-term management agreement is also in place and adhered to.			

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	New or compensatory tree and woodland planting will be required as early as possible in the construction process, where practicable, given the length of time needed for new planting to become established, and should provide an increase in canopy cover compared to existing levels. Development which would cause the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) will not be permitted unless significant, exceptional reasons are demonstrated, and significant compensatory measures are provided.			
EN3	Blue Infrastructure network Blue infrastructure is a key component of Wigan Borough's green infrastructure. It comprises a network of multifunctional water-based assets, the priority locations of which are highlighted in Policy EN1. Developers and landowners have specific responsibilities with regards to water management, relative to the size and scale of their land and proposals and its relationship to those water-based assets. Therefore, any development proposals that would drain into, or be located on, or alongside, a waterbody should, as far as is applicable: 1. Protect and enhance its multifunctional environmental, social and economic benefits as part of the borough's blue infrastructure network. 2. Maintain an undeveloped and unobstructed buffer zone that is natural in character, distinct from the built environment and contains native plant species, and is: a. At least 10 metres from the top of the bank of any Main River, or a minimum of 8 metres in line with Environment Agency regulations where 10 metres is demonstrably impractical due to site constraints. b. At least five metres from the top of the bank of any ordinary watercourse, including from development features	Environment	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated. of this policy. Potential	Screened Out positive effects on water quality and hydrology

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	such as formal landscaping, sports fields, footpaths, lighting and fencing. 3. Conserve and enhance biodiversity within the watercourse and its corridor by incorporating Water Framework Directive (WFD) action measures, supported by ecological surveys and a WFD assessment. These may include: a. In-channel enhancements b. The creation of priority wetland habitats for natural flood management c. Measures to address misconnections d. The eradication and management of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS). 4. Enhance its role as a location for suitable water-based leisure activities, integrating it into the development where possible and appropriate to do so. 4. Support appropriate water-based leisure activities, integrating the waterbody into the development where feasible and suitable. 5. Open and re-naturalise modified watercourses including culverted and piped waterways and avoid using hard engineering solutions. A WFD assessment should be submitted detailing measures to prevent future flooding and how the proposal will impact WFD status. New proposals for culverting will not be permitted. 6. Ensure that the provision of crossings and bridges are: a. Justified strongly in transport terms, including improving opportunities for walking, wheeling and cycling. b. Designed to be in keeping with the setting. c. Engineered to avoid obstructing flood flows. d. Supported by a WFD assessment, as applicable. 7. Include a management plan for all riparian areas of a site, ensuring that it: a. Includes all of the activities covered by criteria 1-6 within this policy, as applicable. b. Ensures access for maintenance of existing services, utilities and watercourses. c. Ensures the long term stewardship of riparian zones.			

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
EN4	Nature Recovery and improvement Where proposals are subject to mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain, this should be delivered on-site as first preference, taking into account priorities set out in the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Off-site alternatives will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that, after following the mitigation hierarchy, all reasonable opportunities to achieve measurable net gains on-site have been exhausted or where greater gains can be delivered off-site where the improvements can be demonstrated to be deliverable and are consistent with the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Only if it can be demonstrated that biodiversity net gain that contributes meaningfully to the local green infrastructure network cannot be practically and/or feasibly achieved all within the site boundary, will the council consider off-site alternatives. For off-site alternatives, the locational hierarchy below should be followed in line with the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy, with opportunities in preceding levels of the hierarchy only being dismissible when it can be demonstrated with overriding evidence that they have been robustly considered and are not practicable or feasible. 1. On sites directly adjacent to the proposed development where ecologically feasible. 2. Within sites that make up the Wigan Greenheart Landscape Recovery Scheme. 2. Within other areas in Wigan Borough. 3. Within Greater Manchester. 4. Within the Lancashire Coal Measures and Mersey Valley National Character Areas. 5. Elsewhere in England. Only when it is demonstrated that there is no possibility of delivering Biodiversity Net Gain within the above locational hierarchy will the purchase of statutory credits be supported.	Environment	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated. of this policy.	Screened Out Potential positive particularly if directed towards measures that would buffer Bedford Moss.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	Development should deliver Biodiversity Net Gain that helps deliver nature-based solutions to climate change as well as biodiversity loss, such as the restoration and creation of ecosystems to protect communities from flooding or increasing carbon sequestration where appropriate to do so. To deliver additional ecological enhancement in new developments the council will require: a. Swift boxes to be provided in all new residential and commercial developments over 5 metres in height to the eaves. Built-in swift bricks, rather than external swift boxes, will be required unless circumstances make the swift brick impractical. b. Other bird boxes or bat boxes to be included as appropriate mitigation for any identified impacts. c. Hibernacula, habitat piles and bug hotels to be located within public open space where appropriate. d. Rear garden boundaries to be designed with suitable gaps to allow movement of hedgehogs where appropriate. Ongoing maintenance of additional ecological enhancement assets should be included within wider landscape or habitat management plans where appropriate.			
EN5	Chat Moss The area of Chat Moss within Wigan Borough will be protected and enhanced as a key component of Greater Manchester's strategic green infrastructure network, forming part of a wider lowland wetland area extending into Salford and Warrington. There will be a strong emphasis on: 1. Delivering nature conservation improvements and creating peatland habitats in the Risley Holcroft & Chat Moss National Nature Reserve and providing, ecological connections to surrounding areas, supporting the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	Environment	Likely positive impact on Manchester Mosses SAC, through direct protection of Wigan part of SAC and adjacent land.	Screened Out Protects Manchester Mosses

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	2. Enhancing public access, with high quality routes for walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding within the area and connecting it to surrounding communities and other parts of the Great Manchester Wetlands Nature Improvement Area, in a manner that is compatible with nature conservation objectives and avoids additional pressure impacting adversely on the Manchester Mosses Special Areas of Conservation, so as to enable local residents to benefit from this vital and distinctive piece of green infrastructure. 3. Improving visitor facilities that support public use of Chat Moss and offer learning opportunities, including at Moss Side Farm. 4. Reducing carbon emissions and protecting and enhancing the area's role in storing and sequestering carbon, thereby supporting climate change objectives and improving resilience. 5. Retaining the flat, open and relatively tranquil character of the area, and its relative darkness. 6. Restoring the functionality of peat habitats, helping to improve the hydrology of Glaze Brook 7. Supporting opportunities for new forms of sensitive wetland farming that are compatible with the protection of peat. 8. Protecting remaining areas of peat from harmful development where possible. 9. Supporting the conservation of the archaeological and heritage importance of the area including through interpretation opportunities.			
EN6	Safeguarding and soil resources New development should: 1. Safeguard the long-term capability of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a in the Agricultural Land Classification), as a resource for future generations, unless there are overriding reasons not to do so. 2. When it is on best and most versatile agricultural land, be supported by a soil handling plan and sustainable soil management strategy.	Environment	Likely positive impact on Manchester Mosses SAC	Screened Out protection of peat.

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	3. Protect peat and wetland soils from disturbance or damage due to their high environmental value. The council will support the use of fixed facilities for the temporary relocation of clean, natural soil to help ensure that the impact of development on soils can be dealt with in a more sustainable way.			
EN7	Protecting amenity and the environment To help maintain, enhance and protect our environment and/or general levels of amenity for the benefit of the health and wellbeing of our communities and wildlife, new development will only be permitted where it would: 1. Not result in unacceptable levels of pollution, individually or cumulatively with other existing or proposed development, both during the construction phase and operationally. Developers should demonstrate, where appropriate, that environmental risks have been evaluated and appropriate measures have been taken to minimise these as necessary. 2. Not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity and quality of life of occupiers or users of surrounding sites, or future occupiers or users of the proposed development itself, in respect of, but not limited to air quality, noise, vibration, odour, sunlight and daylight, artificial light, dust, privacy and overlooking, and/or temperature, as applicable. 3. Be located and designed to not have an adverse impact on established noise and other nuisance-generating uses such that those uses can remain viable and continue or grow without unreasonable restrictions being placed on them. 4. Not have an unacceptable impact on air quality, particularly within an Air Quality Management Area. 5. For proposals on, or adjacent to, land that is, or has the potential to be, contaminated and/or unstable, be supported by an assessment of the extent of the issues and any possible risks, with development only permitted where the land is, or can be made, suitable for the proposed use. 5. Not give rise to the pollution of any watercourse, groundwater or mossland or result in the transfer of contaminated run-off to surface water drainage, public sewer	Environment	Likely positive impact on Manchester Mosses SAC	Screened Out protection of air and water quality

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	or adjacent sites where there is a potential pathway to a watercourse.			
EN8	Land reclamation and renewal The council, in conjunction with other partners, will seek to secure the reclamation and renewal of the following sites for development, routes for walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding and/or nature recovery and improvement, as appropriate: 1. Whelley Loop Line – Hall Lane to Sennicar Lane, Wigan 2. Whelley Loop Line Viaduct, Wigan 3. Whelley Loop Line, Chorley Road to Rectory Lane, Standish 4. Red Rock Railway South, Wigan 5. Gidlow Tip, Wigan 6. Gidlow Mineral Railway, Wigan 7. Ince Moss, Ince, Wigan 8. Grammar Pit, Hindley 9. Pickley Green Railway, Leigh 10. Bickershaw Colliery Spoil, Leigh 11. Leigh Road, Atherton 12. Princess Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield 13. Bedford Colliery, Leigh	Environment	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated of this policy.	Screened Out minor positive effects by reducing the number of recreational visits out of the Borough and reducing the use of cars.
EN9	Low carbon heat and energy In line with Greater Manchester’s target to be carbon neutral by 2038, the council will work with partners and communities to support and facilitate, where applicable: 1. Development that utilises heat decarbonisation, replacement of natural gas with hydrogen and the implementation of district heat networks particularly in our heat and energy network opportunity areas. 2. The fabric retrofit of the borough’s homes and other buildings to enable heat decarbonisation. 3. Exploration of opportunities to use the borough’s vast underground mine water resources for district heating. 4. Delivery of large-scale solar PV and wind developments where appropriate, particularly in our urban fringes.	Environment	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated of this policy.	Screened Out minor positive effects by reducing the impact of climate change

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	5. Delivery of small-scale hydroelectric generation where appropriate. 6. Delivery of battery energy storage systems in appropriate locations and circumstances, provided that any sites over 1Mwh include suitable environmental protection measures including bunding systems to contain materials in the event of a fire.			
EN10	Development and flood risk Development proposals should adopt a sequential approach to flood risk management, in accordance with national planning policy. Where a Flood Risk Assessment is required, applicants will be required to demonstrate that their proposal does not increase, and reduces surface water and fluvial flood risk elsewhere by ensuring that: 1. Any loss of fluvial flood storage within the 1 in 100 plus appropriate climate change allowance flood extent must be compensated for on a level for level, volume for volume basis. Proposals must demonstrate that fluvial flood flow routes are not impeded. 2. Unless robust evidence is demonstrated for not doing so, opportunities to provide additional flood storage must be considered and be designed into the development, in addition to ensuring no loss of surface water and fluvial flood storage. Where major development is located upstream of flood-vulnerable communities, it should, where feasible and/or practicable, actively contribute to downstream flood resilience. This could include: a. Provision of additional flood storage beyond baseline requirements. b. Use of multi-functional SuDS designed to retain water during extreme rainfall events. c. Integration of landscape-scale natural flood management features.	Environment	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated of this policy.	Screened Out minor positive effects by reducing floodwater that could flush pollutants and sediment

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	Sustainable drainage systems should be integrated into development proposals at an early stage and be designed in line with the National SuDS Standards 2025 or any subsequent update. Surface water must be discharged in accordance with the following hierarchy: - i An adequate soakaway or some other form of infiltration system. - ii An attenuated discharge to a surface water body. - iii An attenuated discharge to public surface water sewer, highway drain or another drainage system. - iv An attenuated discharge to public combined sewer. Suitable access should be safeguarded for the maintenance of water supply and drainage infrastructure. Development should achieve greenfield run-off rates unless it is demonstrated to be impracticable. Major development proposals should include sustainable drainage systems which are multi-functional, in accordance with the four pillars of sustainable drainage in preference to underground piped and tanked storage systems, unless there is clear evidence why such techniques are not feasible. Where a major development includes SuDS, a maintenance plan and performance monitoring strategy to ensure long-term effectiveness will be required. Where a development proposal is part of a wider development or allocation, holistic drainage strategies should be part of whole site-masterplans considering existing water and foul sewage infrastructure and minimising the need for pumped drainage systems. A proliferation of pumping stations on a phased development should be avoided.			
EN11	Flood water storage areas Lilford Park Basin and Wigan Flood Alleviation Scheme are safeguarded for flood water storage. Development within, or adjacent to, these flood water storage areas, which would	Environment	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated of this policy.	Screened Out positive effects by holding back floodwater that could flush

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
	have a negative impact on their functions, will not be permitted. The implementation of flood storage and natural flood management schemes for Borsdane Brook upstream of Hindley and Platt Bridge will be strongly supported. The delivery of future flood water storage areas in the Leigh East catchment will be strongly supported in principle if it is needed to ensure the long-term effectiveness of Lilford Park Basin and Bedford Pumping Station in protecting this area from flooding. Where development is proposed within existing or future catchments that have been identified as potentially requiring flood storage areas to alleviate existing flood risk, developers will be required to: 1. Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to explore the opportunities for flood risk reduction / management within the site. 2. Demonstrate what these opportunities are and their respective feasibilities. 3. Deliver flood risk reduction / management within their proposal, unless they can provide a sufficient justification to allow for an extreme exception to do otherwise.			pollutants and sediment.
EN12	Groundwater source protection zones Development proposals within Groundwater Source Protection Zones must accord with the latest national guidance on groundwater protection and, as appropriate, be supported by: 1. A risk assessment and mitigation strategy. 2. Master planning which mitigates the risk to the water environment. 3. A management plan relating to construction and activities that will take place during the operation / lifecycle of any permitted development	Environment	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipate of this policy.	Screened Out Likely no effect to positive as extends under Manchester Mosses SAC

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION	POLICY TYPE*	POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON EUROPEAN SITE	SCREENING OUTCOME
EN13	Water efficiency in new development All new residential developments must achieve, as a minimum, the water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day in line with the optional requirement in Building Regulations or any lower requirement in line with a subsequent update to the Building Regulations. All major non-residential development shall incorporate water efficiency measures so that predicted per capita consumption does not exceed the levels set out in the applicable BREEAM 'Excellent' standard, unless it can be demonstrated that it is not feasible.	Environment	No likely Significant Effects on any European Site is anticipated of this policy.	Screened Out Potential positive effects resulting to hydrology, water flow and movement of pollutants and sediment down the catchment.

7. Summary of Policies Screened In

7.1 The following Policies have been provisionally 'Screened In' to the Assessment because it is considered that the implementation of these Policies may have harmful effects on the special interest of one or more European protected sites:

7.2 Homes

- Policy H1 – Housing Delivery
- Policy H3 – North Leigh Park
- Policy H4 – South Hindley
- Policy H5 - Remaining land South of Atherton
- Policy H6 – East Atherton
- Policy H7 – Remaining Land at Landgate
- Policy H8 - Westwood Park, Wigan
- Policy H9 – Sustainable Housing Growth, Standish

7.3 All screened in owing to potential for increased negative air quality effects on Manchester Mosses SAC and increased recreational disturbance effects to various European site and functionally linked land. Some also have potential negative effects on water quality and hydrology.

Jobs

- Policy J1 – Supporting Economic Growth
- Policy J4 – Visitor Economy

7.4 Policies J1 is screened in owing to potential for increased in air quality effects on Manchester Mosses SAC and J4 owing to potential for increased in air quality effects on Manchester Mosses SAC and increased recreational effects on Manchester Mosses SAC. Both may also have potential effects on water quality.

7.5 The details of potential increases in air and water pollution, hydrological effects and recreational disturbance and consequent effects on European sites, is difficult to empirically determine at this time. It is the *broad principles* of whether the scale and type of development planned for Wigan can be implemented without harming the special interest of any European Protected Sites that is being tested in this screening Report.

7.6 When preparing HRA's for projects it is normally anticipated that where developments are 'Screened In' to the appraisal they will then be subject to more detailed Assessment. This approach is not possible for this Strategic Plan, at least at this stage. Rather, the Screening exercise provides indications of where future Assessments may need to be considered and also indicates areas where future Assessments can be ruled out.

7.7 In addition, recommendations can be made at this stage about further necessary safeguards that should be incorporated into the Plan to ensure that no harm will result to European sites from the scale and type of development planned.

7.8 Taking the precautionary approach recommended in the legislation, further Screening and Assessment will be required as further stages of the plan and as details of plan implementation become available.

7.9 There are also significant safeguards in other Policies in the Plan such that the special interest of the European sites concerned should be able to be protected and

enhanced. This is a Plan with strong 'green' credentials and with sustainability at its heart.

- 7.10 Policies that have inbuilt measure to potentially mitigate negative effects or are generally positive to European Sites include:

Homes

- 7.11 The Housing allocation policies below include a range of measures though not necessarily all that are listed for each policy, that would potentially mitigate the negative effects of an increased population and increased number of cars, such as new community facilities, measures to improve public transport usage and active travel, provision of new recreational space, protection of adjacent watercourses and remediation of existing pollution sources.

- Policies H3 – H9

Jobs

- 7.12 The following could have a positive effect:

- Policy J3 – The Green Economy

7.13 Environment

- 7.14 The following policies could have a positive effect on European sites:

- Policy EN1 – Our Natural Environment
- Policy EN2 – Development and Green Infrastructure
- Policy EN4 – Nature Recovery and improvement
- Policy EN9 – Low Carbon heat and energy

- 7.15 A significant number of policies aim to maintain and enhance existing facilities and as a result reduce the need to travel and air pollution generated by vehicles.

- 7.16 Policies that have the potential for positive effects on Air Quality include:

- **Town Centre:** Policies TC4 – TC10, relating to the town and local centres where residents may travel to out of the Borough or to the larger town centres, of Leigh and Wigan
- **People:** Policies PE1, PE2 and PE4 to PE8 relating to retention and development of range of local community facilities reducing the need to travel by vehicle.
- **Environment:** Policy EN7 – Protecting amenity and the environment; Policy EN8 – Land reclamation and renewal (promoting use for recreation and active travel)
- **Transport:** Policy T1 – Safeguarding future transport priorities

Potential positive effects on Water Quality:

- 7.17 The following policies aim to reduce hydrological, drainage and water quality issues:

Environment

- EN3 – Blue Infrastructure Network
- EN7 – Protecting amenity and the environment
- EN10 – Development and flood risk

- EN11 – Flood water storage areas
- EN12 – Groundwater Source Protection Zones
- EN13 – Water efficiency in new development

7.18 Potential positive effects on recreational pressure:

Environment:

- Policy EN8 – Land reclamation and renewal

7.19 Potential Positive effects on Manchester Mosses SAC:

Environment:

- Policy EN5 – Chat Moss
- Policy EN6 – Safeguarding soil resources

7.20 Direct Habitat Loss of Habitat was initially screened in at section 4.3 of the HRA, because part of the Manchester Mosses SAC falls within the borough. No housing or employment allocations are however located in close proximity to Astley and Bedford Mosses and policy in place EN5 – Chat Moss, that should prevent any development within the SAC. Direct loss of habitat has therefore been screened out at this part of stage 1.

7.21 The following impact pathways that could affect the integrity of European sites arising from the plan have however been identified.

- Recreational pressure – pathways to Manchester Mosses SAC (Risley Moss via car and Bedford and Astley Moss on foot), Rixton Claypit SAC (by car), Sefton Coast SAC (by car/train), Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar (by car/train), Mersey Estuary (car) South Pennines SPA/SAC (by car); Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar (by car)
- Air quality – vehicular pathway to Manchester Mosses SAC (primarily Holcroft Moss) and Rixton Claypit SAC;
- Water quality – pathway via Glaze Brook and Sankey Brook to Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar site and via the River Douglas to Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar; surface and groundwater to Manchester Mosses SAC (Astley & Bedford Mosses part only)
- Hydrology – potential groundwater pathways to Manchester Mosses SAC (Astley & Bedford Mosses part only)

7.22 In addition, there is insufficient evidence to determine whether or not functionally linked land or water is present in or adjacent to the Borough of Wigan for qualifying species associated in particular with Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar, but also theoretically the Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar and Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar sites.

7.23 A stage 2 appropriate assessment is therefore required of the potential effects.

8. Appropriate Assessment

8.1 The screening process identifies the following sources of potential for an adverse effect on the integrity of European sites and functionally linked land:

- Air quality (Manchester Mosses SAC, Rixton Clay Pits SAC)
- Recreational pressure (all screened-in sites & functionally linked land);
- Water quality (Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar, Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar and Manchester Mosses SAC);
- Hydrology (Manchester Mosses SAC) and;
- Direct loss or disturbance of functionally linked land (Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar, Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar and Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar).

8.2 Air Quality

- 8.2.1 The air pollutants most likely to have a significant effect on European sites are the oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) resulting from traffic emissions. Modern regulation of commercial emissions makes any other form of air pollutant extremely unlikely. The increased popularity of wood burners is however resulting in an increase in particulate levels in the air. Particulate matter however only impacts on vegetation at very high concentrations through accumulation on leaf structure, blocking pores and stomata and through chemical changes to soil if the particulate source contains other pollutants.
- 8.2.2 NO_x deposition results in an increase in nitrates and can have a significant impact on certain habitats including lowland mosses and upland blanket bogs. Open water habitats can also be susceptible where the importance is linked to low nutrient levels in the water.
- 8.2.3 NO_x can also impact existing vegetation by lowering the pH i.e. acidification analogous to the acidification caused by high levels of SO₂ to the South Pennines from coal fires.
- 8.2.4 Studies indicate that the main impact of NO_x is when within 200m of a pollution source i.e. road or major transport depot.

Manchester Mosses SAC

- 8.2.5 This habitat type is considered sensitive to changes in air quality, especially acidity and nitrogen. Critical values are currently being exceeded at this SAC (APIS, 2016).
- 8.2.6 Exceedance of these critical values for air pollutants may modify the chemical status of its substrate, accelerating or damaging plant growth, altering its vegetation structure and composition and causing the loss of sensitive typical species associated with it.
- 8.2.7 Increase acidity and nitrogen therefore can have is an adverse effect on integrity (AEOI) of all conservation objectives for the Manchester Mosses SAC by impeding the ability of peat forming species to thrive i.e. the structure and function of qualifying natural habitats and the supporting processes leading to a reduction in extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats
- 8.2.8 The part of this SAC most at risk is Holcroft Moss as it lies immediately adjacent to the M62 with an estimated 129,000 vehicle movement per day between the M6 and M60 in 2024. As the critical nitrogen and NO_x levels are already regarded as above the critical load for the Manchester Mosses, theoretically any increase in road traffic along the M62 as a result of the Wigan Borough Local Plan could have a negative impact on this part of the SAC. Both Risley Moss and Bedford Moss are located at significant distance from any trunk road and are unlikely to be impacted upon by traffic issues originating as a result of this plan.
- 8.2.9 Any allocation policies in Wigan could theoretically increase traffic movements on this section of the M62 increasing the level of air pollution. Policies screened in because of

the potential for an AEOI as a result of increased traffic movements and air pollution include:

- Homes Policies H1, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, H8 & H9
- Jobs Policies J1& J4

- 8.2.10 No air quality modelling appears to have been done for the development proposals in the Wigan Borough Local Plan. However, air quality guidance has been produced in the form of a Supplementary Planning Document "Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations Joint Supplementary Planning Document – May 2025 by the nine places for everyone authorities that includes Wigan and Warrington BC in consultation with Natural England.
- 8.2.11 This SPD provides guidance on when mitigation is required for Holcroft Moss as a result of additional vehicle movements along the M62 corridor past Holcroft Moss. (between junction 11 Birchwood and Junction 12 Worsley). The triggers are 100 vehicles or 20 HGV's per day.
- 8.2.12 Wigan has already signed up to this SPD with regards its Places for Everyone (PfE) allocations and the housing and employment targets set PfE for Wigan Council.
- 8.2.13 The Wigan Local Plan housing policies are in-line with the housing target set for Wigan in PfE. It can therefore be seen that policies H1, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, H8 & H9 do not increase the housing targets already assessed under PfE and are therefore covered by the Holcroft Moss SPD. There will be no additional AEOI of the Manchester Mosses SAC as a result of housing policies.
- 8.2.14 With regards employment land, the Wigan Local Plan has set a floor space target in-line with the target for Wigan in PfE. (PfE has 480,321 sqm of warehousing and 2,055 sqm of office, the Wigan Local Plan setting a combined target of 482,326 sqm). This represents effectively no increase on the overall employment proposals covered by PfE across the nine districts. It would therefore appear reasonable to assume the same criteria to assess any additional allocations under the Wigan Borough Local Plan, unless the PfE mitigation was set at a level that was just enough and any additional development beyond the levels predicted for PfE, could not adequately mitigated through the Holcroft Moss SPD financial mechanism ie either higher contribution would start to be required or additional financial contribution towards management no longer be able to prevent an AEOI of Holcroft Moss.
- 8.2.15 There is however no evidence that we are aware of that the SPD was set at level that was just enough. Therefore, in our opinion, any development likely to increase traffic in excess of 100 vehicles or 20 HGV's should there provide mitigation as agreed in the Holcroft Moss SPD and that this would be adequate to prevent an adverse effect on the integrity of the Holcroft Moss part of the Manchester Mosses SAC.

Rixton Clay Pits SAC

- 8.2.16 The supporting freshwater and terrestrial habitat of this feature is considered sensitive to changes in air quality. There may be critical levels for ammonia (NH3), oxides of nitrogen (NOx) and sulphur dioxide (SO2), and critical loads for nutrient

nitrogen deposition and acid deposition. Ie there is the potential for AEOI on the conservation objectives of Risley Moss and in particular:

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely;

8.2.17 Rixton Clay Pits is immediately adjacent to the A57, Manchester Rd linking Junction 21 on the M6 (Warrington north) to the M60 with employment sites such as Northbank Industrial Park in Irlam and Port Salford, located along the Manchester Rd. Some vehicular movements originating in Wigan will therefore occur as a result of:

- Homes Policies H1, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, H8 & H9
- Jobs Policies J1 & J4

8.2.18 in the Wigan Local Plan i.e. people living in Wigan may be employed at Northbank or Port Salford and HGV movements from these employment sites to any new Wigan employment sites would likely occur.

8.2.19 Other assessments have concluded that APIS indicates that it is not clear whether critical loads for overall nitrogen are being exceeded, assuming the habitats are relatively base rich, as a range of critical loads is given. Nitrous oxides are probably below critical loads.

8.2.20 Natural England also does not currently list air quality as a concern for this SAC.

8.2.21 Air quality modelling and assessment for the Warrington Local Plan by AECOM March 2023, concluded that there was no adverse effect on the integrity from vehicle generated air quality issues to Rixton Claypits SAC, the vegetation in ponds phosphate limited as opposed to nitrogen limited. They also concluded that the qualifying species great crested newts, were very unlikely to be affected by increased nitrogen deposition. The local plan has since been adopted and the HRA accepted by Natural England.

8.2.22 Given that the Wigan Borough Local Plan will have a significantly lower impact on the level of traffic on the A57 than the Warrington Local Pan which concluded increased road traffic would not have a significant effect on the qualifying species for the Rixton Clay Pits SAC it is reasonable to conclude no adverse effects on the integrity will occur to Rixton Clay Pits SAC from any reduction in air quality resulting from the Wigan Borough Local plan in isolation.

South Pennine Moors SPA & SAC

8.2.23 As with the Manchester Mosses SAC habitats within the above SAC are known to be particularly susceptible to nitrogen inputs, and in places on the Moors nitrate loads are known to exceed critical thresholds for harm (given as 5-10 kg N/ha/yr for blanket bog, *source* – Apis). There is therefore the potential for an AEOI on the conservation objectives of the South Pennine SAC and SPA through nutrification of habitats and decline of the species assemblage typical of the qualify habitats i.e.

- The extent and distribution of the qualifying natural habitats;

- The structure and function (including typical species) of the qualifying natural habitats and;
- The supporting processes on which the qualifying natural habitats rely.

8.2.24 The M62 crosses the Pennines running close to sensitive habitats and takes a significant amount of traffic from Greater Manchester. Traffic modelling (screening) undertaken to inform Places for Everyone has identified that the Plan may cause effects on the South Pennine Moors Phase 1 European site from increased traffic flows.

8.2.25 Development in the Borough of Wigan will be contributing towards this, particularly employment sites, reliant on freight transport using HGV's to source materials and distribute their products.

- Jobs Policies J1& J4

8.2.26 However Places for Everyone did not identify any strategic allocations within Wigan as having an adverse effect on the integrity of the South Pennines SAC/SPA and concluded that the overall PfE plan would not have any adverse effects on the integrity of the SPA/SAC as a result of air quality effects resulting from increased traffic movements.

8.2.27 As no nett additional levels of employment floorspace are proposed in the Wigan Local Plan above PfE targets it is reasonable to conclude no adverse effects on the integrity will occur to South Pennine Moors SPA/SAC from any reduction in air quality resulting from the plan in isolation.

8.3 **Recreational Pressure**

8.3.1 The impact of recreational pressure varies dependent on the habitat and the qualifying species, some habitats being quickly physically damaged by trampling, other sensitive to nutrient inputs from dog fouling whilst others hold qualifying species sensitive to disturbance.

8.3.2 The likelihood of recreational pressure also varies dependent on the nature of the site, with coastal or upland habitats likely to attract recreational visits from a greater distance than other habitats and sites promoted as recreational destination, likely to attract visitors from even greater distance Those with no official public access or deemed as dangerous are only likely to attract local residents and naturalists.

Manchester Mosses SAC

8.3.3 Mosslands are habitats that do not normally attract significant recreational visits owing to being waterlogged and difficult to walk over. There is also the public perception that such sites are dangerous. Currently there is no public access to Astley and Bedford Mosses or Holcroft Moss, with Risley Moss managed by rangers employed by Warrington Borough Council. Recreational pressure has the potential for adverse effect on the integrity on the conservation objectives of the Manchester Mosses SAC:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats;

- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely

8.3.4 Through trampling of sensitive habitats and loss of vegetation cover, exposing peat to drying out and erosion.

8.3.5 Of the three distinct parts to the Manchester Mosses SAC, Astley and Bedford Mosses falls within the Borough, with Holcroft Moss and, Risley Moss located 2.6km and 3.8km respectively as the crow flies to the nearest point of the Borough.

8.3.6 There are no major allocations within close proximity to the Manchester Mosses SAC:

- All major housing allocations (Homes Policies H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, H8 & H9) are sufficiently distant on foot or by road, from Astley and Bedford Mosses, (the nearest policy H5 – remaining land south of Atherton, is over 4km away as the crow flies), that whether combined with or in isolation from policy EN5 would have no adverse effects on the integrity will occur.
- Homes Policy H1, the general housing policy includes the pfe and major local plan allocation but also includes smaller windfall and windfall developments. These make up around 50% of the predicted housing supply, some of which could be located in proximity to Astley and Bedford Mosses. I am however satisfied that as any such smaller development would be subject to policy EN5 and the lack of access to Astley and Bedford Mosses that no adverse effect n the integrity of the Manchester Mosses SAC will occur.

8.3.7 With regards to Holcroft Moss which has no public access, the closest housing allocation is Policy H5 - Remaining land South of Atherton over 8km from the moss. It is therefore reasonable to conclude no adverse effect on the integrity owing to recreation will occur to Holcroft Moss owing to the combination of distance and lack of access from any policies in the Wigan Local Plan.

8.3.8 With regards to Risley Moss, the closest housing allocation is again policyH5 over 10km from this Moss. Whilst this site is promoted as public open space, it is reasonable to conclude no adverse effects on the integrity owing to the combination of distance and managed access will occur as a result of any policies in the Wigan Local Plan.

8.3.9 It is therefore concluded that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Manchester Mosses SAC from recreational pressure resulting from the Wigan Borough Local Plan as long as policies EN5 – Chat Moss is implemented.

Rixton Clay Pits SAC

8.3.10 As Rixton Clay Pits is over 5km from Wigan at its closest point, over 11km from the nearest housing allocation policy H5, managed as recreational open space and the qualifying species, great crested newt, not regarded as sensitive to recreational disturbance with no adverse effects on the integrity concluded by Places for everyone, (which includes the housing targets within the Wigan borough Local Plan) it is reasonable to conclude no adverse effects on the integrity of Rixton Clay Pits SAC from recreational pressure as a result of any policies in the Wigan Borough Local Plan

Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar Site

- 8.3.11 The qualifying species of the Mersey Estuary SPA a range of waders and wildfowl are regarded as sensitive to recreational pressure. Guidance from Natural England is that coastal sites within 10km should be screened in. The Mersey Estuary is just over 15km from Wigan and whilst in part coastal, would not normally be regarded as more than a local visitor destination. It was also not screened in for recreation as part of places for everyone, which includes the housing targets set for the Wigan Borough Local Plan.
- 8.3.12 It is therefore reasonable to conclude no adverse effects on the integrity of the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar from recreational pressure generated by policies in the Wigan Borough Local Plan

Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar

- 8.3.13 The qualifying species of the Ribble & Alt Estuary SPA a range of waders and wildfowl are regarded as sensitive to recreational pressure. Guidance from Natural England is that coastal sites within 10km should be screened in. The Ribble & Alt Estuary is just over 15km from Wigan. However, the SPA includes the Sefton Coast a regionally important visitor destinations, that includes Southport and Formby. It is therefore likely that day trips by residents of the Borough to these locations will occur, given the journey time by car is around 40 minutes and there is a direct train service from Wigan, Ince, Hindley and Gathurst to Southport. The following policies therefore have the potential for an adverse effect on the integrity of the Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar.

Homes Policies H1, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, H8 & H9

- 8.3.14 Research for the Sefton Local Plan in 2008, found that approximately 50% of visitor were local with a further 17% from other parts of Merseyside. 50% of visits were by dog walkers, with 20% visiting for nature-based reasons. The majority of visitors were focused on Formby and Crosby. This is in line with research by Footprint Ecology in 2020 for Natural England, on the NW coastline, which included the Sefton Coast where 75% of visitor lived with 5.2km of the coast and Formby was identified as the most visited location of the sites surveyed. 63% of visitors were dog walkers. Interviews with visitors identified no visitors from Wigan, with 95% of day visitors travelling less than 15km. However, visitors from localities of similar distance to parts of Wigan were encountered.
- 8.3.15 The Sefton Coast Management Scheme established in 1978, co-ordinates nature conservation and recreational issues along the Sefton Coast including the Ribble & Alt Estuaries from the southern part end of the SPA to north of Southport. To date this has worked adequately i.e. balanced the nature conservation and recreational issues. It concluded in the Sefton Local Plan however that additional recreational pressure from development would need to be accompanied by an HRA and potentially provide recreational mitigation.
- 8.3.16 A joint SPD titled Liverpool City Region and West Lancs Joint recreation mitigation strategy went out for public consultation in 2023, with Sefton Council as the lead.

One objective of the SPD is to protect the European designations from recreational pressure. The web link is however currently inactive, with no evidence that the SPD was ratified. An interim advice note produced by Sefton Council requires recreational contributions based on distance from the Sefton Coast. The Central Lancashire Plan HRA noting the inner zone being set at 5km and outer at 11.5km. As a consequence, the Central Lancashire authorities have taken a precautionary approach and screened in any development within 15km of the coast.

8.3.17 On balance given the majority of visitors are:

- local with the percentage of visitors from Wigan that make up the remaining visitors likely to be below 1%,
- a visitor management strategy is currently in place that is regarded as coping and
- the nearest allocations are over 15km from the coast,

it is reasonable to conclude that no adverse effects on the integrity of the Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar from recreational pressure originating from Wigan in isolation will occur.

Sefton Coast SAC

8.3.18 The Sefton Coast SAC habitats are vulnerable to recreational disturbance, as a result of physical erosion damage to qualifying habitats. The designation however overlaps with the Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA and subject to the same level of recreational pressures as discussed above under sections 7.3.11 to 7.3.15.

8.3.19 It is therefore concluded that no adverse effects on the integrity of the Sefton Coast SAC from recreational pressure originating from Wigan in isolation will occur

Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar

8.3.20 Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar is managed as a regionally important visitor destination. Residents of Wigan will visit this site. It should be noted Martin Mere was a visitor destination prior to its designation as an SPA.

8.3.21 The West Lancashire Plan HRA, in which Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar is located screened out recreational disturbance because it was actively managed as a visitor destination. The Sefton Local Plan HRA notes that Natural England accepted that recreational disturbance of Martin Mere SPA could be screened out.

8.3.22 It is therefore concluded that no adverse effects on the integrity of Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar from recreational pressure will occur as a result of recreational pressure originating from Wigan as a result of any policies in the Wigan Borough Local Plan.

8.4 Water Quality

8.4.1 Negative effects on European sites can be due to a lowering of water quality ie pollution leading to higher mortality of qualifying species, food sources they are reliant on or through accumulation of pollutants; changes in nutrient status such as raised levels of nitrate or phosphate, leading to a change in the vegetation structure of the European site and potentially any qualifying species and; changes in water clarity through increase sediment load or increase levels of algae in the water.

8.4.2 Generally for such an impact to occur there needs to be a hydrological pathway such as a water course or ground water, though high levels of air pollution could in theory impact on water quality. European site with direct hydrological connectivity to the Borough of Wigan include the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar and Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar. The Manchester Mosses SAC is also potentially connected to proposed development via ground and surface water given part of the SAC falls within the Borough.

Manchester Mosses SAC

8.4.3 Part of the Manchester Mosses falls within the Borough of Wigan. There is therefore the potential for surface water and groundwater connectivity to development within the Borough.

8.4.4 Currently no major allocations are located in close proximity to any part of the Manchester Mosses SAC, with no direct surface water or groundwater connectivity likely to any such developments. The closest development policy H5 – Remaining Land south of Atherton is hydrologically linked to the Glaze Brook. This Glaze Brook at its closest point is around 650m to the west of Astley & Bedford Mosses.

8.4.5 The peat mass is also perched above the surrounding farmland with surface water draining away from the site not into it.

8.4.6 With regards to groundwater, the latest peat maps also indicate that the deep peat ends, directly to the north and west of Astley & Bedford Mosses, all allocations are to the north and Glaze Brook to the west, therefore groundwater connectivity through peat will not occur.

8.4.7 The land to the north of Astley and Bedford Mosses is also protected from development under policy EN5 – Chat Moss.

8.4.8 It is therefore reasonable to conclude that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Manchester Mosses SAC from water borne pollutants as a result of any policies within the Wigan Borough Local Plan.

Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar Site

8.4.9 The Mersey Estuary is hydrologically linked to the Borough to the South and East of Wigan Town, via a number of tributaries of the River Mersey such as the Glaze Brook and Millingford Brook.

8.4.10 Proposed allocations covered by Homes policies H3, H4, H5, H6 & H7 and Jobs policies fall within the Mersey catchment. They therefore have the theoretical potential to have negative effects on water quality which could have potential adverse effects on the integrity of the conservation objectives of the Mersey Estuary and in particular:

- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;

- 8.4.11 Environment policies EN3, EN7 & EN12 however are designed to have a positive effect on water quality and there are measures within policies H3 – H7 to protect the environment.
- 8.4.12 The Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar are around 22km downstream of the Borough boundary via the Sankey Brook and well over 30km via the Glaze Brook, with the estuary subject to very large flows each day owing to the ebb and flow of the tide. (a dilution factor, estimated in the Warrington Local Plan HRA at 5 million cubic meters of water between Warrington and the SPA) It also received drainage from the majority of the other districts in Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Warrington and parts of Cheshire.
- 8.4.13 Places for Everyone accepted that adverse effects on the integrity could occur to the Mersey Estuary as a result of Water Quality. This however covered nine Greater Manchester districts, all of which fall within or partly within the Mersey catchment, located at its closest point just 15km from the estuary.
- 8.4.14 Currently the effect of water quality on the SPA is not recorded as a significant risk on the standard data form for the site or an issue raised by the most recent site improvement plan. The main issues being recreational pressures, invasive species (Canada geese and Chinese mitten crab) and changes to the recorded populations of qualifying species. The Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar/SSSI was also not listed in the open letter to LPA's dated 16th March 2022, regarding protected sites at risk from negative water quality effects resulting from nitrates and phosphates, where additional assessment would be required.
- 8.4.15 It is concluded from the above, that despite the pathway and conclusion of PfE, that the distance from the Mersey Estuary, the relative proportion of pollution generated by the Borough of Wigan allocations compared to the entire catchment and the policies in place to safeguard the water environment, that there are no adverse effect on the integrity as a result of water borne pollutants arising from the Wigan Borough Local Plan in isolation on the conservation status of the Mersey Estuaries SPA/Ramsar.

Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar Site

- 8.4.16 The Ribble & Alt Estuary is hydrologically linked to the Borough to the North and west of the town of Wigan, via the River Douglas and its tributaries such as Smithy Brook.
- 8.4.17 Proposed allocations covered by Homes policies H8 & H9 fall within the Douglas catchment. These developments therefore have the theoretical potential for adverse effects on the integrity of the conservation objectives of the Ribble & Alt Estuaries and in particular:
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;
 - The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;
- 8.4.18 Environment policies EN3 & EN7 however are designed to mitigate any potential development effects and to have a positive effect on water quality and there are measures within allocation policies to mitigate potential negative effects on the natural environment.

- 8.4.19 The Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site is around 23km down river from the Borough boundary and subject to very large flows of water each day owing to the ebb and flow of the tide. It also received drainage from Chorley, West Lancashire, South Ribble and Preston.
- 8.4.20 It should also be noted that the impact of water quality on this SPA is not raised as an issue in the latest Site Improvement Plan and screened out in the Central Lancashire Local Plan HRA based on existing policies.
- 8.4.21 It is therefore concluded despite the pathway, that the combination of distance from the Ribble & Alt Estuaries, the relative proportion pollution generated by the Borough of Wigan allocations compared to the entire catchment and the policies in place to safeguard the water environment, that there are adverse effects on the integrity as a result of water borne pollutants arising from the Wigan Borough draft Local Plan in isolation, on the conservation status of the Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar

8.5 Hydrology

- 8.5.1 Impacts on European sites can result from a loss or increase in water supply to the site via surface water or groundwater, particularly where water supply is critical element in the conservation status of the site.
- 8.5.2 Of the European sites screened in, only the Manchester Mosses SAC could theoretically be negatively affected by changes to hydrology, all other sites are either too distant from the Borough for groundwater effects or water supply is not a limiting factor for the site.

Manchester Mosses SAC

- 8.5.3 The Manchester Mosses SAC need to be wet, in order to be in positive condition, the qualifying habitats reliant on a high water-table. This is supplied by a combination of rainwater and potentially groundwater. Any disruption to ground water could result in adverse effect on the integrity of the peat mass and in particular conservation objectives:
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and;
 - The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.
- 8.5.4 Only Astley & Bedford Mosses are at risk of negative effects, with Holcroft Moss and Risley Moss too distant from the Borough for negative effects on the water supply.
- 8.5.5 No major allocations are in close proximity to Astley & Bedford Moss. Policy EN5 – Chat Moss also includes policy that would ensure the protection of Astley and Bedford Mosses.
- 8.5.6 It should also be noted that based on modelling by Natural England, peat does not extend north or west of Astley & Bedford Mosses, it is therefore very unlikely that hydrological connectivity i.e. pathway through peat to any development within the Borough unless proposed on the Moss.

- 8.5.7 I am therefore satisfied that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity as a result of hydrological connectivity arising from the Wigan Borough draft Local Plan on the conservation status of the on the Manchester Mosses SAC.
- 8.6 **Direct loss of disturbance of Functionally Linked Land with the Borough.**
- 8.6.1 Functionally linked land is land utilised by significant numbers of the qualifying species associated with a European site on a regular basis that is not part of the European site.
- 8.6.2 This most often applies to sites where birds are the qualifying species and forage or roost off-site. It could also apply to great crested newts that may move off-site in the winter to hibernate or to forage.
- 8.6.3 With regards to the Wigan Borough draft local plan, only birds are screened in as whilst Rixton Clay Pits and the Sefton Coast include great crested newts as qualifying species both are too distant from the Borough for any possibility of an adverse effect on the integrity of the qualifying species.
- 8.6.4 Of the qualifying bird species associated with Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar at 11-12km and Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar and Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar both over 15km, only Pink-footed geese are regarded as using land up to 20km from their main wintering grounds with curlew and golden plover, known to use land up to 15km from the main roosting sites. Whooper and Bewick Swans have also been considered.
- 8.6.5 Whilst golden plover are a qualifying species for the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar as wintering bird, as the Borough is over 15km from this estuary the risks are low and a data search for golden plover found no significant counts. Pink-footed geese are not a qualifying species for the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar. It is therefore concluded that no land functionally linked to the Mersey Estuary will occur in the Borough.
- 8.6.6 Pink-footed geese are qualifying species for Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar and the Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar. Neither curlew or golden plover are qualifying species for Martin Mere. Further information was checked for pink-footed geese. Only land to the north and west of the town of Wigan is within 20km of Martin Mere with homes policy H9 – Sustainable Growth in Standish the only allocation that has the potential to impact potentially suitable habitat. Whilst whooper and Bewick swans are unlikely to forage more than 10km from Martin Mere, a data search was carried out, which found no records for Bewick swans in Wigan and only occasional low counts for whooper swan.
- 8.6.7 Pink-footed geese forage on farmland away from the main sites in winter including arable and grassland. They could also shelter in-land during storm surges along the coast on for instance the Wigan Flashes.
- 8.6.8 Webs counts for the Wigan Flashes for the last five years indicate the flashes are not functionally linked, with the highest count of pink-footed goose being one and of other qualifying species a maximum count of six whooper swans.
- 8.6.9 A data search for the whole of Wigan found no significant records of pink-footed geese foraging on farmland with all large flocks recorded of birds flying over the borough.

8.6.10 I am therefore satisfied that there is no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site from direct loss of or disturbance to functionally linked land within the Borough as no functionally linked land appears to be present.

8.7 In-Direct disturbance of Functionally Linked Land outside of the Borough

8.7.1 It is theoretically possible that land outside of the Borough, close to the boundary with the Borough of Wigan in West Lancs, Warrington or St Helen's is functionally linked and that development in Wigan could have in-direct effects as a result of disturbance such as recreational disturbance or noise.

8.7.2 Information on one site regarded as functionally linked outside of the Borough of Wigan was identified as a result of desk top information. This was located in the borough of St Helens approximately 8km from the Borough Boundary. This site can be reasonably discounted as it is not a recreation destination.

8.7.3 No allocations are located directly on the Borough boundary. Noise disturbance can therefore be reasonably discounted. No homes or job allocations are close to the Borough boundary and job allocations are unlikely to generate recreational disturbance therefore disturbance due to recreation is reasonably discounted.

8.7.4 It is therefore concluded that it is very unlikely that development within the Borough of Wigan as a result of this plan will have an adverse effect on the integrity of functionally linked land outside of the Borough.

9. Consideration of 'In Combination' Effects with Other Plans and Proposals

9.1 The Habitats Regulation Assessment must consider the likely significant effect of the Plan in relation to other proposals and plans current or planned within the relevant administrative area, other administrative authorities and prepared by other statutory organisations (e.g. Environment Agency, United Utilities) and in combination with the identified effects of those Plans.

Cumulative effects for air quality, recreational pressure, water quality, hydrology and in-direct effects on functionally linked land have been considered. There are no cumulative effects for direct loss of functionally linked land.

9.2 Air Quality

Rixton Clay Pits SAC

9.2.1 Whilst potential cumulative impacts could occur to Rixton Clay Pits SAC, both the Warrington Local Plan HRA and places for everyone HRA, screened Rixton Claypits at stage 1 of the HRA process. I am therefore satisfied that there are no adverse effects in isolation or in-combination to Rixton Clay Pits SAC, resulting from the negative impact of air quality.

South Pennines SPA/SAC

- 9.2.2 Places for Everyone concluded that the cumulative impact of the plan could result in slight increases in airborne pollution to parts of this extensive site along the A6024, A627 and A57. The A57 and A6024 are the Snake and Woodhead Passes across the Pennines with no likely significant pathways from the borough of Wigan. The negative effects also primarily relate to impacts on qualifying species. Contributions to cumulative effects from Wigan are screen out for these two roads.
- 9.2.3 The A627 links Oldham to the M62 at junction 22 with negative effects linked to the A627 around the motorway junction but due to traffic on the A627 as opposed to the M62. This apparent anomaly is presumably due to the A627 actually falling within the SAC/SPA, whereas the M62 with a moderate buffer of around 50m either side excluded from the SPA/SAC. It is very unlikely that traffic generated in the Brough of Wigan would utilise the A627 as the M62 would be a more direct route to Oldham or over the Pennines.
- 9.2.4 I am therefore satisfied that there are no likely significant in-combination to the South Pennines SAC/SPA as a resulting from traffic generated by the Wigan borough draft local plan.

Manchester Mosses SAC

- 9.2.5 Places for everyone screened in air quality for the Manchester Mosses SAC accepting that critical load were already breached for Holcroft Moss and that the additional development across the nine PFE districts would add to this. The Warrington Local Plan also screened in the Manchester Mosses SAC because of additional traffic movements past Holcroft Moss. The Wigan Borough draft local Plan will add further traffic movements.
- 9.2.6 There is therefore the potential for an adverse effect on the integrity of the Manchester Mosses SAC as a result of the in-combination with the development proposals within Places for Everyone and the Warrington local plan as well as other local plans in preparation across Greater Manchester.
- 9.2.7 However as noted in sections 7.2.8 – 7.2.10 an SPD has been produced to that provides measures to mitigate for the increased traffic movements resulting from development proposals in places for everyone and the Warrington Local plan. As Wigan has signed up for this SPD, which has been agreed with Natural England as long as the agreed measures in the SPD are applied to all development in Wigan in our opinion no adverse effects on the integrity of the Manchester Mosses SAC will occur.

9.3 Recreational Pressure

- 9.3.1 Whilst increased recreational pressure due to visitors from the Borough of Wigan has been screened out, as having no adverse effects on the integrity of any Europeans sites in isolation, this does not mean that in combination with other plans that a significant effect could not occur.
- 9.3.2 The sites with pathways from Wigan that were discussed in section 7.3 included, Rixton Clay Pits, the Manchester Mosses SAC, Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar, Mersey

Estuary SPA/Ramsar, Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar and Sefton Coast SAC and as well as functionally linked land. The most relevant in-combination plans are PfE, other GM District Local Plans, Warrington Local Plan, St Helen's Local Plan, West Lancs Local Plan, Sefton Local Plan and Central Lancashire Local Plan.

Manchester Mosses SAC

- 9.3.3 The most relevant in-combination effects will be as a result of development resulting from Places for Everyone and the Warrington Local plan, both of which include parts of the Manchester Mosses SAC, within the geographic area covered by the plan. All other plans are reasonably discounted given the lack of access to Holcroft Moss and Astley & Bedford Mosses and the management measures and distance from any other development in place at Risley Moss.
- 9.3.4 Places for everyone concluded no likely significant effect as a result of recreational access, with Natural England commenting in September 2020 that:
- "We are not concerned about an increase of recreational pressure on these sites as there is a lack of public access. The HRA does not need to try and assess the impacts of possible increased illegal activity"
- 9.3.5 Places for everyone also included the housing targets covered by the Wigan Borough Local Plan.
- 9.3.6 The Warrington Local Plan also concluded no likely significant effects on the Manchester Mosses SAC as a result of recreational disturbance.
- 9.3.7 I am therefore satisfied that there are no adverse effects on the integrity of the Manchester Mosses SAC as a result of recreational disturbance in isolation or in combination with the Wigan borough draft local plan.

Rixton Clay Pits SAC

- 9.3.8 The most relevant in-combination effects will be as a result of housing development proposed by the Warrington Local plan as the SAC lies within in that Borough. Housing development proposed in Places for Everyone, the Salford Local Plan and Trafford Local Plan all of which a geographically closer than Wigan to Rixton Clay Pits SAC are also considered. All other plans are reasonably discounted given the distance of housing within such plans from Rixton Clay Pits SAC.
- 9.3.9 Places for everyone concluded no adverse effects on the integrity of the site as a result of recreational access, in-combination with other plans, concluding that:
- "Visitors to the site tend to be very local (source – Warrington BC). There is a comprehensive management plan in place for the site which includes the management of visitor access, and the site is actively managed for visitors by Warrington Council. Conclusion - there are sufficient safeguards in place to ensure that the Places for Everyone will not cause harm to Rixton Claypits through increases in recreational disturbance."
- 9.3.10 Places for everyone also included the housing targets covered by the Wigan Borough Local Plan.
- 9.3.11 The Warrington Local plan HRA also concluded no adverse effects on the integrity from in-combination recreational pressures to Rixton Clay Pits SAC, when assessed in

combination with adjacent authorities including Wigan, Salford, Trafford, Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Halton. the Trafford Local Plan HRA 2020 also identified no in-combination effects. The Salford Local Plan HRA (2019) did not consider in-combination effects to Rixton Clay Pits SAC.

- 9.3.12 I am therefore satisfied that there are no likely adverse significant effects on the integrity of the Rixton Claypits SAC as a result of in-combination recreational disturbance with the Wigan borough draft local plan.

Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar

- 9.3.13 The most relevant in-combination effects will be as a result of housing development proposed in the West Lancashire Local Plan, the district in which the SPA lies. Other relevant local plans with closer or similar connectivity to this European site include the Sefton Local Plan, Knowsley Local Plan, St Helens Local Plan and Central Lancashire Local Plan as well as Places for Everyone.
- 9.3.14 The West Lancashire Local Plan screened in disturbance as having a likely significant effect on Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar as a result of the West Lancs plan in isolation and therefore by default in-combination with neighbouring authorities. This was however precautionary as the HRA was carried out on policies only and not allocations. The likely significant effect was also only with respect to noise and visual disturbance during construction. Recreational disturbance was screened out based on the existing visitor management.
- 9.3.15 The Central Lancashire Plan HRA discounted direct likely significant effects for the same reasons as West Lancs i.e. visitor management by the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust despite allocations within 7km of the site.
- 9.3.16 The Sefton Local Plan HRA (2016), screened Martin Mere out at stage 1 as whilst within 5km they quote a ruling by Natural England on the St Helen's Core Strategy that recreational management at Martin Mere was such that it could be screened out. As noted the St Helens Plan HRA (2016) also screened Martin Mere out for direct recreational disturbance. The Knowsley Local Plan HRA (2012) also screened out recreational disturbance.
- 9.3.17 I am therefore satisfied that there are no likely adverse significant effects to the Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar as a result of in-combination recreational disturbance with the Wigan borough draft local plan.

Sefton Coast SAC & Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar

- 9.3.18 These two sites overlap and both are susceptible to recreation disturbance, Sefton Coast SAC primarily as a result of trampling of the qualifying habitats and the Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar because of disturbance to the qualifying bird species.
- 9.3.19 The most relevant in-combination effects will be as a result of housing development proposed in the borough of Sefton the district in which the SPA/SAC primarily lie. Other relevant local plans with closer or similar connectivity to this European site include the West Lancs Local Plan, Knowsley Local Plan, St Helens Local Plan and Central Lancashire Local Plan as well as Places for Everyone.
- 9.3.20 Sefton Council, West Lancs Council and the Merseyside districts have screened in likely significant effects and are currently according to planning policy pages producing a joint SPD to provide guidance on recreational contributions for the management of coastal habitats.

- 9.3.21 The Central Lancashire Local Plan has also screened in potential in-combination effect to the Sefton Coast SAC and Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar, noting that whilst guidance on the zone of influence is still to be determined, as the majority of the development is proposed within 15km of the coast in the Central Lancashire Local Plan, the precautionary approach should be taken. They have therefore screened in all housing development up to 24km from the coast.
- 9.3.22 Places for everyone screened the Sefton Coast SAC and Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar out at stage 1.
- 9.3.23 No housing allocations in the Borough of Wigan are located within 15km of these coastal European sites with only parts of policy H9 Sustainable Housing in Standish within 20km. No additional housing sites are located within 24km the distance screened in by the Central Lancashire Plan HRA.
- 9.3.24 The Central Lancashire Local Plan is proposing 23,166 homes over the period of the plan primarily in Preston and South Ribble; Sefton are proposing 11,200, with West Lancs proposing around 16,000. Knowsley and St Helens are proposing around 17,000 and Liverpool 40,000. In contrast the proposals in Standish, whilst not given a number because of the policy criteria in the Standish Neighbourhood Plan, equate to around 1000 new homes based on the area of land allocated. It can therefore be seen that the percentage of houses within the outer zone of influence (24km) located in Wigan is close to 1% and does not taking into account that these houses are at the outer edge, with all development in West Lancs and Sefton significantly closer.
- 9.3.25 I am therefore satisfied that there are no adverse effects on the integrity in-combination to the Sefton Coast SAC and Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar as a result of in-combination recreational disturbance with the Wigan borough draft local plan that are not nugatory.

Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar

- 9.3.26 The most relevant in-combination effects, for comparison will be as a result of housing development proposed in the Boroughs of Warrington, St Helens and places for everyone as these plans are located adjacent/overlap Wigan but closer to the Mersey Estuary. Other relevant local plans with recreational pathway to this European site include Liverpool, Halton, St Helens, Cheshire West, Salford and Trafford Local Plans.
- 9.3.27 Places for Everyone screened the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar out at stage 1 for recreational disturbance and did not consider in-combination effects.
- 9.3.28 The Warrington Local Plan HRA screened the Mersey Estuary in at stage 1 but concluded no adverse effect on the integrity as the nearest accessible part of the SPA was over 10km from the nearest housing allocation in the borough.
- 9.3.29 The nearest housing allocation in Wigan is Homes Policy H7 – remaining land at Landgate over 20km by car from the Mersey Estuary.
- 9.3.30 I am therefore satisfied that there is no adverse effects on the integrity in-combination effect to the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar as a result of in-combination recreational disturbance with the Wigan borough draft local plan that are not nugatory.

9.4 Water Quality

- 9.4.1 Whilst deterioration due to pollutants originating from Borough of Wigan has been screened out, as having no adverse effect on the integrity of any European sites, this

does not mean that in combination with other plans could not result in significant effects occurring.

- 9.4.2 The sites with pathways from Wigan that were discussed in section 7.4 included, Manchester Mosses SAC, Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar and Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar.

Manchester Mosses SAC

- 9.4.3 Salford City and Warrington Borough are both located within 800m of Astley & Bedford Mosses, with Places for Everyone overlapping with the Wigan Borough Local Plan. All other plans can be screened out as having in-combination effects owing to a lack of pathways for surface or groundwater to Astley & Bedford Mosses. There is also no surface water pathway from Warrington with surface water flowing into the Glaze Brook the boundary between the two districts. The situation is less clear with regards surface water connectivity to Salford with an extensive network of drains located throughout the mossland between Salford and Astley & Bedford Mosses.
- 9.4.4 With regards to groundwater, Natural England's peat layer indicates peat extending from Astley & Bedford Mosses south and east into Salford. There is no connectivity through to Warrington, with peat maps indicating no peat to west of Astley & Bedford Mosses and the Glaze Brook acting as a barrier to groundwater movement via peat.
- 9.4.5 In-combination effects with Warrington can therefore be screened out based on a lack of pathways despite the proximity.
- 9.4.6 Places for everyone did not screen in the Manchester Mosses SAC for potential significant effects owing to a reduction in water quality as no pathways existed from the major developments proposed in Salford or other districts. I am therefore satisfied that in-combination effects with places for everyone can be screened out.
- 9.4.7 The developing Salford Local plan also has no allocations on the moss in proximity to Astley & Bedford Mosses, the nearest proposed allocation Land off Heyes Road in Cadishead, not hydrologically linked and 5km from the Astley & Bedford Mosses.
- 9.4.8 I am therefore satisfied that there is no adverse effect on the integrity in-combination effects to the Manchester Mosses SAC as a result of in-combination water quality issues with the Wigan borough draft local plan.

9.4.9 Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar

- 9.4.10 A large number of local authorities have the potential to have an adverse significant effect on the integrity of the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar, as a result of pollutants and sediment entering the catchment that drains into the Mersey Estuary, including the majority of Merseyside authorities, parts of Cheshire West, parts of Cheshire East, all of Greater Manchester authorities, Warrington and Rossendale.
- 9.4.11 Of these, the Merseyside authorities, parts of Cheshire West and Warrington are closer to the Mersey Estuary as are parts of Salford. It should also be noted that only allocations south and east of the town of Wigan will impact the Mersey catchment.
- 9.4.12 Places for everyone screened-in cumulative effects as whilst noting the distance downriver at the nearest point was around 15km, the scale of the development proposed in PfE was such that the contribution towards the overall input of pollutants was such that it could be significant. This related primarily to diffuse pollution i.e. pollution that cannot be attributed to any one source.

- 9.4.13 The Warrington Local Plan however screened the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar out at stage 1 owing to the distance down river from Warrington. Approximately 7km.
- 9.4.14 The St Helen's Local plan however notes in-combination effects could occur, in particular with Warrington and Wigan, if adequate policy was not in place, with the main pathway the Sankey Brook already polluted and supplying approximately 10% of water to the Estuary. The plan also noted that the St Helen's sewage works also discharged into the Sankey Brook with the HRA recommending the LPA worked with United Utilities Ltd to ensure adequate capacity in the sewage works was available prior to development coming forward. If this sewage works was not capable of accommodating the new development, there could be an increased level of diffuse pollution.
- 9.4.15 The Halton Local plan also identified potential in-combination effect as it lies adjacent to the SPA, though concluded it was unlikely, subject to more information that the plan alone would have significant impacts as there was adequate capacity in the drainage system to accommodate the development. It did however conclude there may be in-combination effects from development upstream as far as the Irwell catchment.
- 9.4.16 Policies EN3 – Blue Infrastructure & EN7 – Protecting amenity and the Environment include elements to protect watercourses from the negative effects including pollution.
- 9.4.17 On balance given the lack of agreement between local plans on the potential for an in-combination adverse effect on the integrity as a result of water quality and notwithstanding the policies to protect watercourses in the draft plan, I recommend that a precautionary approach is taken in line with the recommendations of Places for Everyone, the St Helens and Halton Local Plans and additional commitment added to the Wigan Borough plan to work with United Utilities to ensure that capacity within the sewage network keeps ahead of development. This could be added to policy EN3 or H1 or a standalone policy. Once this additional safeguard is in place, I would be satisfied that no adverse effect on the integrity of the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar will occur as a result of the Wigan Borough Local Plan.

Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar

- 9.4.18 A number of local authorities have the potential to have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar, as a result of pollutants and sediment entering the catchment that drains in to the Ribble & Alt Estuaries, including parts of Merseyside, the central Lancashire authorities of Preston, Chorley and South Ribble, West Lancashire, Fylde, Ribble Valley and Blackburn with Darwen.
- 9.4.19 The Central Lancashire HRA screened-out potential effects on the Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar because of safeguarding policies already in place. The West Lancs Plan however screened-in likely significant effects as a result of in-combination effects on water quality.
- 9.4.20 I would tend to agree with West Lancs that in-combination effects between the Central Lancashire Plan, West Lancs Plan and other plans such as Blackburn could have in-combination effects given the scale of the development proposed across these districts. However, for Wigan only development around the Towns of Wigan and Standish will contribute towards the effects a very small percentage of the catchment and the proposed development in the catchment. There are also policies in place to safeguard water quality.
- 9.4.21 I am therefore satisfied that there are no adverse effects on the integrity in-combination effects to the Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar as a result of in-combination water quality issues with the Wigan borough draft local plan.

9.5 Hydrology

9.5.1 Whilst deterioration due to changes in hydrology originating from development within Borough of Wigan has been screened out, as having no likely significant effects on any European sites, this does not mean that in combination with other plans could not result in significant effects occurring.

9.5.2 The only European site with a pathway for hydrological change in the Borough of Wigan is the Manchester Mosses SAC.

9.5.3 Manchester Mosses SAC

9.5.4 As noted under water quality in-combination effects with places for everyone, Salford allocations and Warrington could occur.

9.5.5 However as noted under water quality, there is no hydrological linkage between Warrington and Astley & Bedford Mosses; there is no development on the areas of peat in Salford with potential hydrological pathways to Astley & Bedford Mosses and PfE also has no allocations on the peat in close proximity to Astley & Bedford Mosses.

9.5.6 I am therefore satisfied that there are no adverse effects to the integrity of the Manchester Mosses SAC as a result of in-combination changes to hydrology with the Wigan Borough draft local plan.

9.6 Indirect effects on Functionally Linked Land

9.6.1 Whilst no functionally linked land has been identified in the Borough of Wigan, it is theoretically possible that recreational disturbance resulting from an increased population in the Borough of Wigan could have an adverse effect on the integrity of functionally linked land located in adjacent districts, that are closer to the European sites discussed in section 7.6, Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar, Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar and Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar. The relevant districts are West Lancs, St Helens and South Ribble.

9.6.2 Only housing development on or close to the borough boundary or employment on the Borough boundary are likely to have an adverse effect on the integrity, as the disturbance would either result from noise or informal recreation. There are currently no allocations located in proximity to potential functionally linked land outside of the Borough.

9.6.3 The St Helens Local Plan notes that research by MEAS has identified that land in St Helens is functionally linked for whooper swan, Bewick swan and pink-footed geese, all qualifying species for Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar. These species are associated primarily with arable farmland.

9.6.4 It is also noteworthy that for the nearby Parkside Colliery development in St Helens, neither Natural England nor MEAS raised the issue of functionally linked land.

9.6.5 The Warrington Local plan identifies Arpley Meadows as likely functionally linked to the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar. These fields are located between Moore and Walton, with limited public access, to the SW of Warrington around 7km from Wigan as the crow flies

9.6.6 I am therefore satisfied that there are no adverse effects to the integrity to functionally linked land as a result of in-combination disturbance with the Wigan borough draft local plan.

10. Summary and Recommendations

- 10.1 Stage 1 of the appropriate assessment of European sites established that there were pathways to the following European sites that could transport potential effects generated by the Wigan Borough Local Plan: Draft Consultation:
- Manchester Mosses SAC
 - Rixton Clay Pits SAC
 - Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar
 - South Pennine Moors SPA/SAC
 - Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar
 - Sefton Coast SAC
 - Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar
- 10.2 Rostherne Mere Ramsar, The Rochdale Canal SAC, Liverpool Bay SPA, Dee Estuary SPA/Ramsar and Mersey Narrow & Wirral Foreshore were screened out at stage 1, either because there was no clear pathway or the potential effect would be very unlikely to have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site.
- 10.3 Further, more detailed Assessment of the possible effects of the operation of Policies on the European Sites identified in the Screening process has therefore been undertaken.
- 10.4 A number of the policies within the Plan were initially identified as potentially having a significant effect on European Sites and functionally linked land due to one or more of the following:
- Direct loss (Manchester Mosses SAC only);
 - Changes to Hydrology (Manchester Mosses SAC only);
 - Water Pollution via River Douglas or tributaries of the River Mersey;
 - Air pollution resulting from vehicular emissions and industry;
 - Increased recreational pressure and;
 - Loss or disturbance of functionally linked land.
- 10.5 Following further assessment, stage 2 of the HRA, the following European sites remain screened in:
- Manchester Mosses SAC (air quality)
 - Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar (water quality)
- 10.6 It was concluded that the allocations in the Borough of Wigan, have the potential for significant effects on the Manchester Mosses SAC and Holcroft Moss in particular, alone and in-combination with allocation in places for everyone and Warrington resulting from air quality issues generated by vehicular movements along the M62 between the M6 and the M60.
- 10.7 A joint SPD has already been produced between the PFE authorities, which includes the Borough of Wigan and Warrington Borough Council. As long as the SPD (or future updates) are applied to the allocations in the Wigan Borough Local Plan, in our opinion adequate mitigation for adverse effects on the integrity of Holcroft Moss will occur.
- 10.8 The allocations south and east of the Town of Wigan have the potential for significant effects on the Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar resulting from diffuse pollution in combination with allocations in Places for Everyone, St Helens, Halton, Warrington and other local authorities in Merseyside. Whilst policies within the plan will provide mitigation, both the St Helens and PFE plans questioned the capacity within existing wastewater treatment works which requires further investigation with United Utilities

Ltd. We recommend that development is phased in-line with capacity within the relevant WwTW. We therefore recommend that the Council works with UUL to ensure sufficient capacity exists in the locations required for future levels of development identified in the plan.

10.9 Other European sites screened in at stage 1 have been screened out following further assessment for likely significant effects. These include:

- Sefton Coast SAC
- Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar
- Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar
- Rixton Clay Pits SAC
- South Pennines SPA/SAC and
- Functionally linked land.

10.10 If the measures proposed with regards air quality and water quality are taken, the policies in the plan should have no adverse effect on the integrity of the Manchester Mosses SAC or Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramar.

10.11 However, it is **recommended** that if any changes are made to the policies as a result of either the public consultation or during the Examination in Public, the Holcroft Moss SPD amended or withdrawn or new data come forward on qualifying species, water quality or impacts of recreation then the HRA will need to be revisited and revised to ensure that these changes would not result in a significant effect on any European Sites.

References

1. Warrington Borough Council Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan: Amended HRA – August 2021 AECOM
2. Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (submission) – February 2022 – GMEU
3. Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Impact on European Protected Sites of Salford Local Plan: Development Management Policies and Designations – Dec 2019 – GMEU
4. Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Impact on European Protected Sites of Trafford Local Plan: First Draft Consultation – Dec 2020 – GMEU
5. St Helens Local Plan 2018 – 2033 Preferred options, Habitat Regulation Assessment – December 2016 – AECOM.
6. Habitats Regulation Assessment of the West Lancashire Local Plan – June 2021 AECOM
7. Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Proposed Modifications to Sefton Local Plan – May 2016 AECOM
8. Information Note: Managing and mitigating the impact of recreation pressure on the Sefton Coast – Sefton’s Interim Approach for housing development – May 2023 Sefton Council
9. Central Lancashire Local Plan: Habitats Regulations Assessment Report, Screening and Appropriate Assessment January 2025 LUC
10. Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations Joint Supplementary Planning Document May 2025
11. South Pennine Moors SAC/SPA Joint Supplementary Planning Document May 2025
12. Annual Lockage Report 2024 - Canal & River Trust 2025
13. Recreational activity and interactions with birds within the SSSIs on the NW coast of England - Footprint Ecology, 2017
14. Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Impact on European Protected Sites of Wigan Council’s Core Strategy (Proposed Submission Version) GMEU 2011

Appendix 1 – Location of European Sites

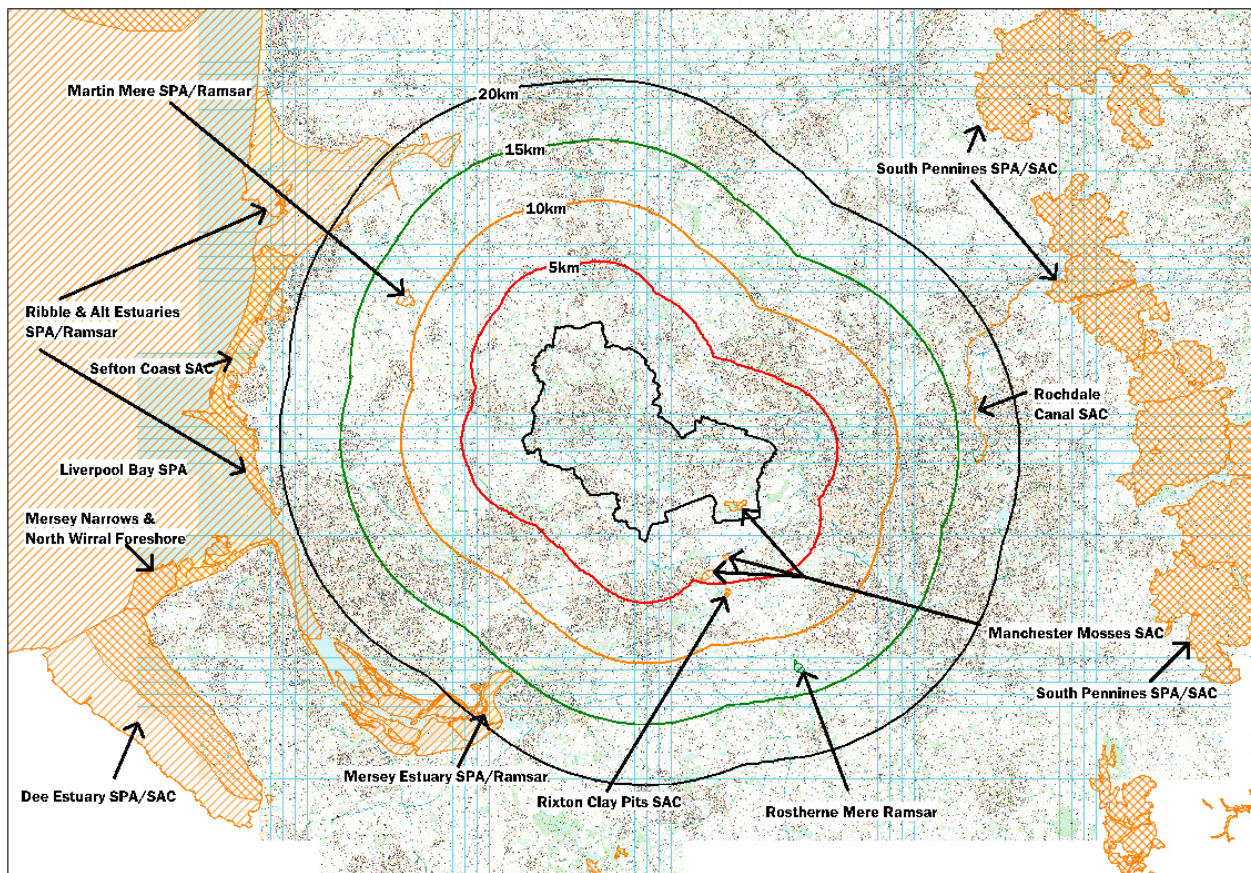


Figure 1 – Location of European Sites considered at Stage 1

Appendix 2 – Pathways to European Sites

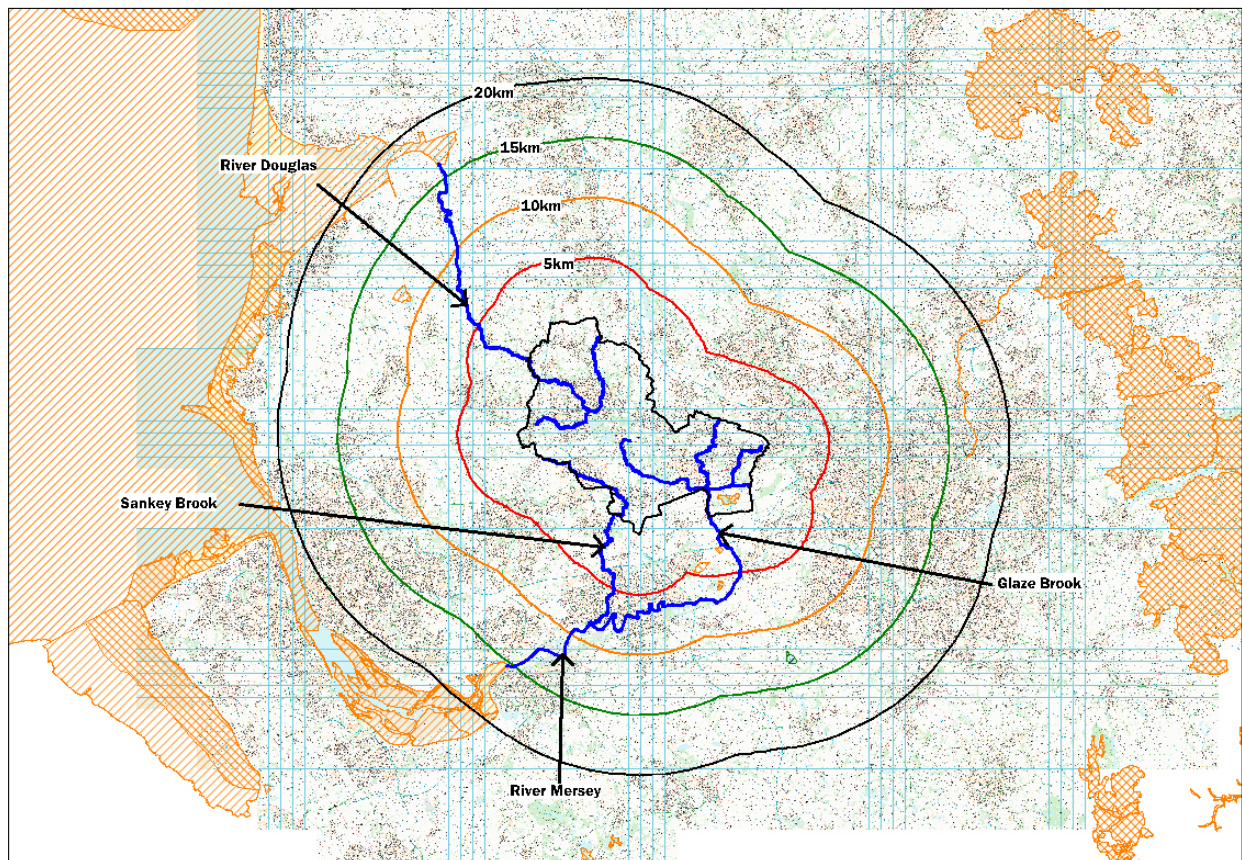


Figure 2 – Surface Water pathways to European Sites

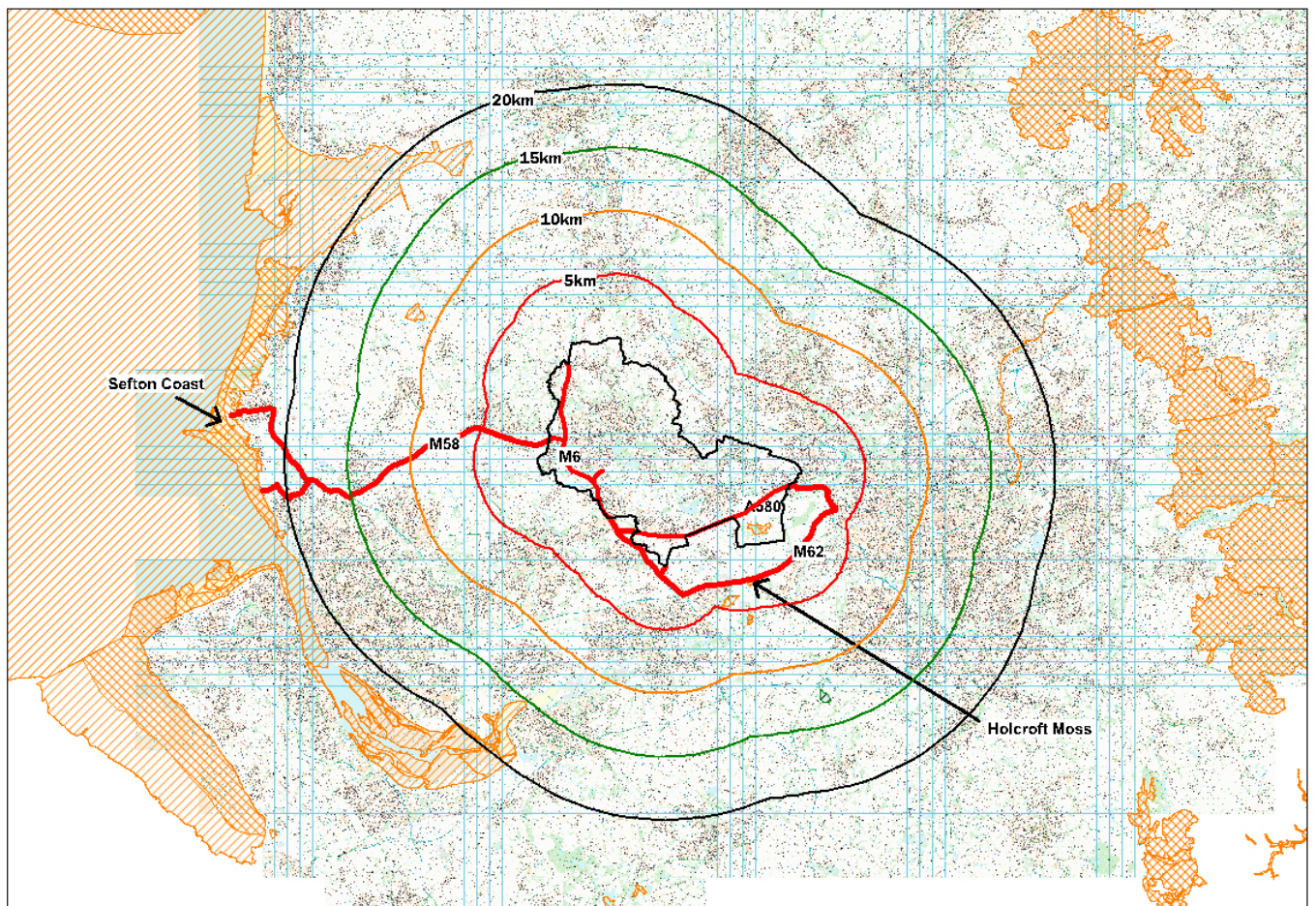


Figure 3 – Major Road pathways to Sefton Coast SAC and Holcroft Moss part of the Mancheser Mosses SAC

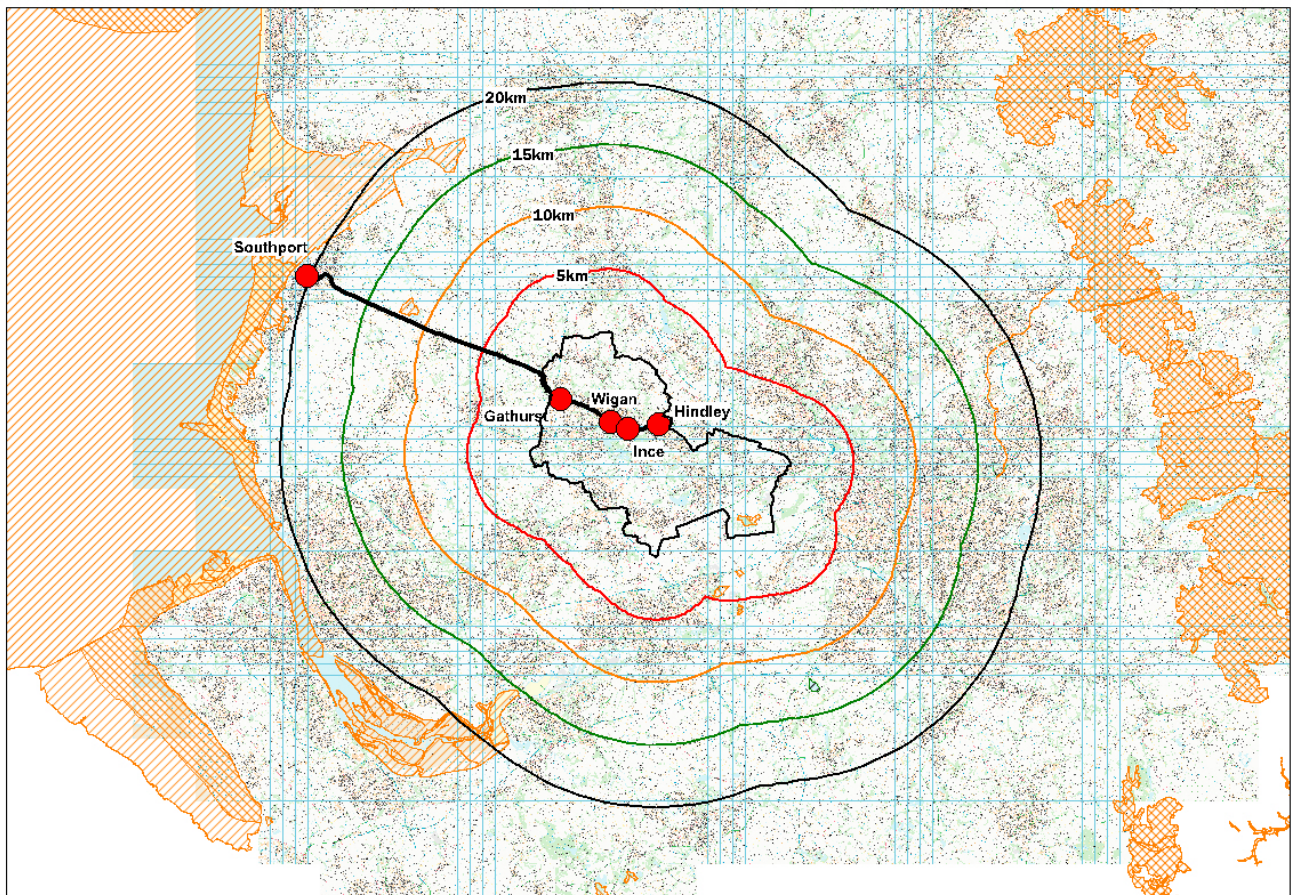


Figure 4– Rail pathway to Sefton Coast SAC

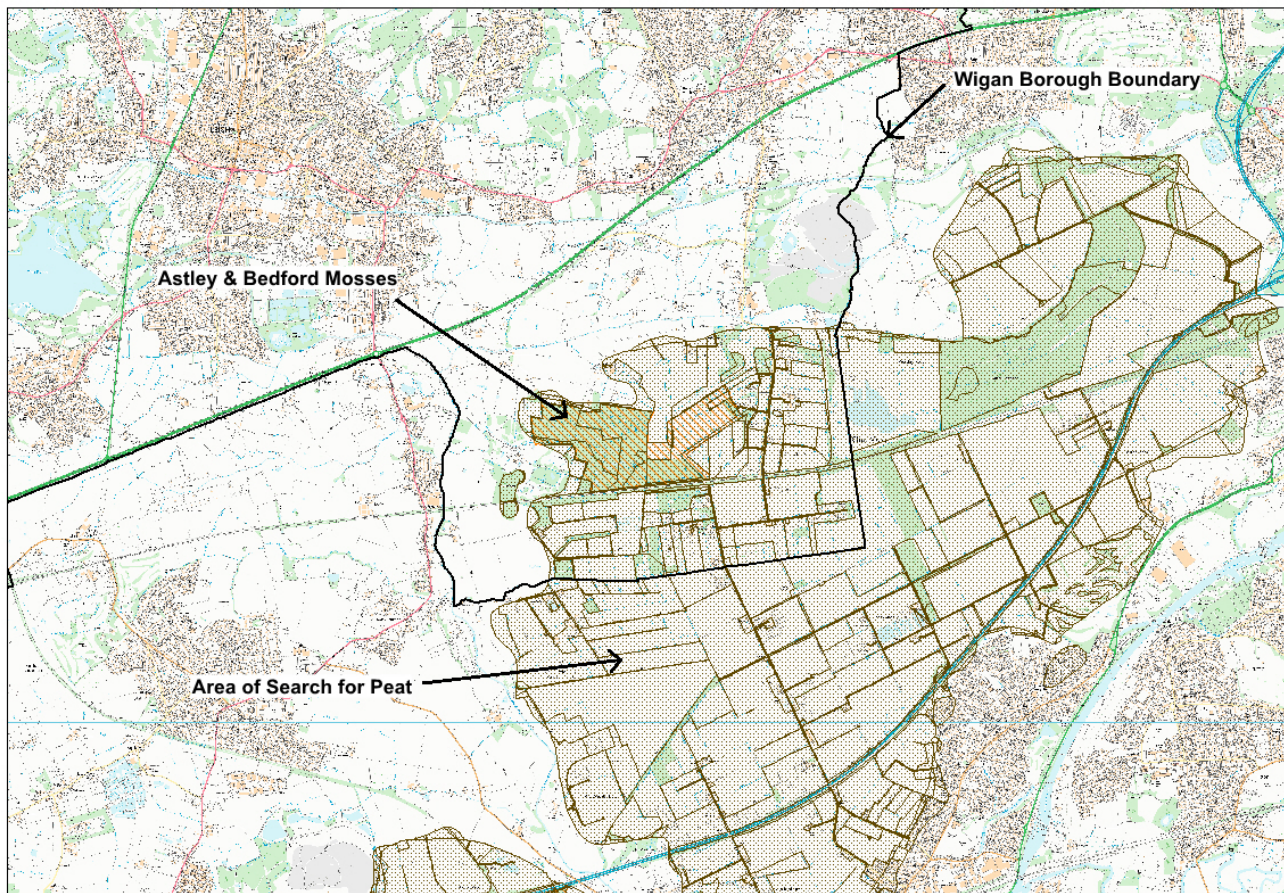


Figure 5 – Hydrological pathways via peat to Astley & Bedford Mosses part of the Manchester Mosses SAC

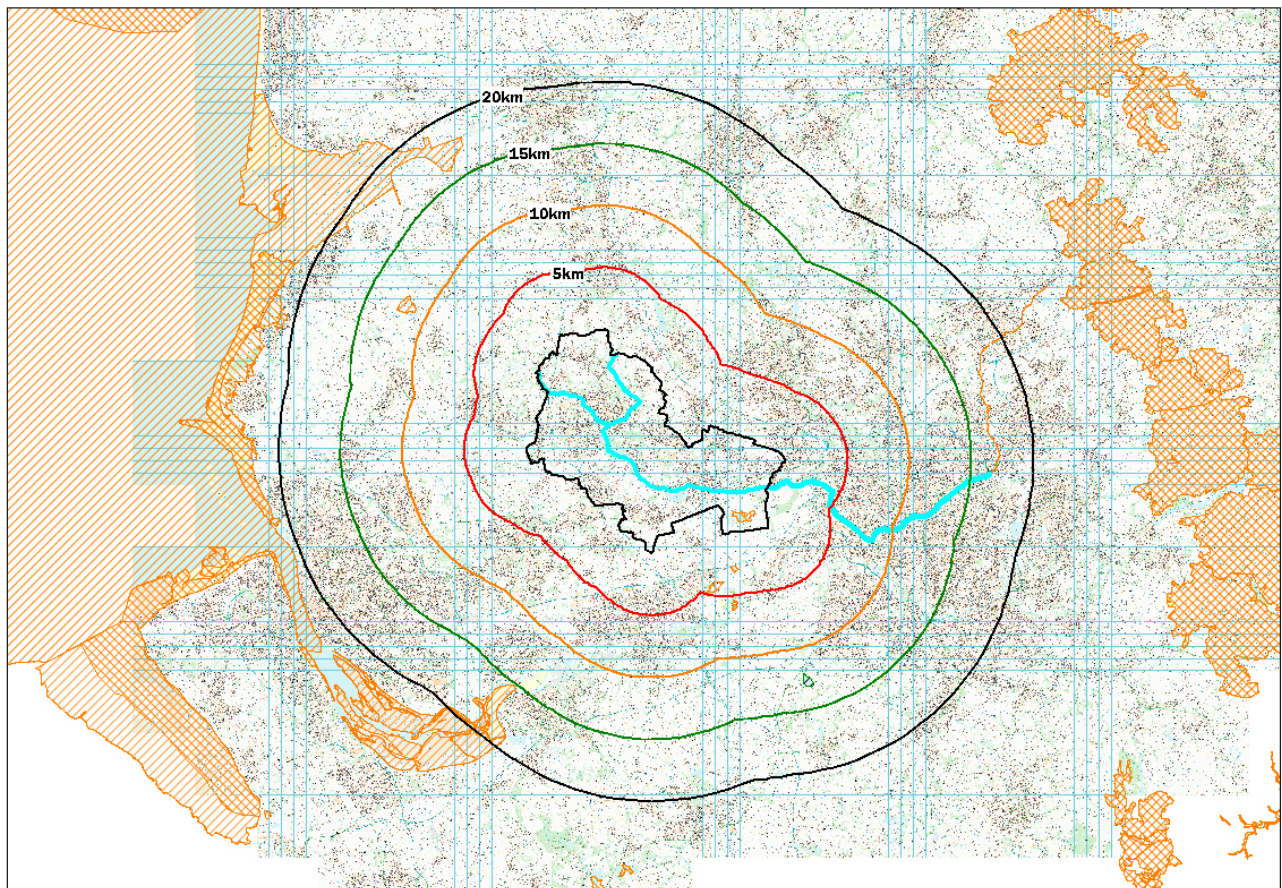


Figure 6 – Canal pathway to Rochdale Canal SAC