

## **Delegated Cabinet Member Decision Report**

**Decision Maker  
and Portfolio area:** Councillor Robert, Cabinet Member for Housing

**Date of Decision:** 13 February 2020

**Subject:** Report on Update of Sites of Biological Importance

**Report Author:** Georgina Brownridge

**Ward(s) Affected:** Saddleworth South and Saddleworth North

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**Reason for the decision:** The reason for this decision is to adopt changes, which have occurred to designated Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) within the borough.

**Summary:** This report outlines changes to SBIs from site surveys carried out by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU).

Designation of an SBI brings no statutory protection and does not allow the authority any additional powers of control over the land. The land also remains in its present ownership. Designation does, however, mean that the sites are given consideration under the NPPF and the Local Plan which seeks to avoid harm to ecology.

***What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):***

Option 1 - To adopt the changes to the SBIs listed in Table 1. The advantage of this option is that the changes to SBIs will be subject to the principles set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to avoid, mitigate and as a last resort compensate any harm. There are no disadvantages to this option. If development was proposed it would be expected to comply with NPPF and Local Plan policies.

Option 2 - Not to adopt the changes to the SBIs listed in Table 1. There are no advantages to this option. The disadvantage is that boundary changes will not have been adopted and therefore the full extent of the SBI's may not be given due consideration under NPPF and the Local Plan.

**Recommendation(s):**

Option 1 - To adopt the changes to the SBIs listed in Table 1. The advantage to this option is that the changes to SBIs will be subject to the principles set out in NPPF of avoid, mitigate and as a last resort compensate any harm.

**Implications:**

*What are the **financial** implications?*

There are no direct financial implications arising from the changes in designation of land as a Site of Biological Importance.

(James Postle)

*What are the **procurement** implications?*

None.

*What are the **legal** implications?*

Designating land as a Site of Biological Importance enables appropriate planning policies in the NPPF and the Council's Local Plan to be applied in respect of planning applications affecting the land. In accordance with the revised scheme of delegation for Local Development Framework matters agreed by Council in September 2012, updates to the Sites of Biological Importance can be regarded as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and therefore the report can be approved by the Portfolio Member in consultation with the Executive Director. (A Evans)

*What are the **Human Resources** implications?*

None.

***Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment** attached or not required because (please give reason)*

None as report relates to biodiversity and reports on assessments carried out by Greater Manchester Ecology Unit.

*What are the **property** implications*

There are no direct property related matters associated with this report (P Wood).

**Risks:** No risk comments (M Stenson).

**Co-operative agenda** The Report on Updates to Sites of Biological Importance follows the values of the Cooperative Agenda. When surveying sites GMEU follow the guidelines set out in the GMEU 'SBI Selection Guidelines'. This Report is presented in an open and transparent manner. The Report demonstrates the council working together with GMEU to identify any changes to SBIs so that they can be given consideration under NPPF and the Local Plan.

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Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution? Yes

Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget? Yes

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? No

**Reason why this is a Key Decision** (2) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards or electoral divisions in the area of the local authority.

The Key Decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **five working days** have elapsed from the publication date of the decision, i.e. before 6 March 2020, unless exempt from call-in.

This item has been included on the Forward Plan under reference HSG-01-20.

**List of Background Papers under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:**

Title	Available from
Greater Manchester Sites of Biological Importance Selection Guidelines (revised 2016)	Room 310 or <a href="https://www.tameside.gov.uk/ecologyunit/sbi/guidelines.pdf">https://www.tameside.gov.uk/ecologyunit/sbi/guidelines.pdf</a>

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<b>Report Author Sign-off:</b>	
	<i>G.Brownridge</i>
<b>Date:</b>	06 February 2020

Please list any appendices:-

<b>Appendix number or letter</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Sites of Biological Importance Maps. Maps are shown for sites where SBIs have had a site boundary change.

### **Background:**

This report provides an update on changes, which have occurred to designated Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) within the borough. These are sites which have been surveyed by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU).

SBIs are given protection through section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and in our Local Plan through Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (Joint DPD) Policy 6 'Green Infrastructure' and Policy 21 'Protecting Natural Environmental Assets'.

NPPF sets out the following two paragraphs:

174. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

175. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles: a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

GMEU periodically surveys the sites as part of a continuous process, and notifies the council when there are changes, such as boundaries or gradings being changed, or where new sites are identified, or existing sites deleted.

### **Proposals:**

Changes to individual SBIs for are summarised in Table 1 below. Maps are attached for SBIs where there are boundary changes in Appendix 1.

**Table 1: Changes to Sites of Biological Importance**

Site	Grade	Change	Area Change (Hectares)	Reason
Dick Clough	B	SBI boundary	+1.2	Agricultural improvement of grassland
Castleshaw Pasture	B	SBI grading change (from C to B)	+2.0	Survey of additional areas

The following SBIs were visited but had no changes:

- a) Armit Road Lodge; and
- b) Royal George.

**Conclusions:**

To adopt changes, which have occurred to designated SBIs within the borough.

In consultation with

(Relevant Executive Director/Director



Date: 13/2/20

