

OLDHAM COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

**OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION
PROVISION
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

Adopted 29th September 2008

OLDHAM 
Metropolitan Borough 



OLDHAM COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Supplementary Planning Document

The Government has reformed the system of development planning in England. Development Plans are used to control and guide the development and use of land. As part of the reformed system, Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council must prepare a “Local Development Framework”.

The Local Development Framework will be a folder of different documents, including Development Plan Documents, which set out the Council’s approach to future development in the Borough.

This document is part of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). SPDs are documents that expand on policy outlined in a Development Plan Document or provide more detail on it to help in its implementation. They are not formally part of the statutory Development Plan but are material considerations in determining planning applications.

Supplementary Planning Documents have three supporting documents:

- a Sustainability Appraisal,
- a Habitats Regulations Assessment, and
- an Equalities Impact Assessment.

A document outlining who has been consulted in the preparation of the Supplementary Planning Document, and issues they raised, is also available alongside these documents. This is called a Consultation Statement.

If you would like further help in interpreting this document please contact the Strategic Planning and Information section on the following telephone numbers: 0161 770 1673 / 4151.

You can also email the team on spi@oldham.gov.uk.

All documents connected with the Local Development Framework are available on the Council’s web site at www.oldham.gov.uk.

| Contents | Page |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 2. Brief description of the plan | 2 |
| 3. Identification of European designated sites concerned | 2 |
| 4. Consideration of 'In Combination' Effects with Other Plans and Proposals | 3 |
| 5. Descriptions of European Sites concerned | 4 |
| 6. Impact of the Oldham Open Space, Sport and Recreation SPD on the special features of the South Pennine Moors SAC/SPA | 9 |
| 7. Impact of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision SPD on the special interest of the Rochdale Canal SAC | 14 |
| 8. Conclusions and recommendations | 16 |
| Appendix 1: North West European Sites considered within Greater Manchester screening opinions | 18 |
| Appendix 2: Map showing the location of European Designated sites in Oldham Metropolitan Borough | 19 |

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Screening Opinion on the Impact of the Oldham MBC Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision Supplementary Planning Document on European Protected Sites

1 Introduction

1.1 Article 6(3) of the European Habitats Directive 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 and projects, shall be subject to assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In 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 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.’

1.2 The purpose of Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) of land use plans is to ensure that protection of the integrity of European sites is a part of the planning process at a regional and local level. Habitats Regulation Assessments can be seen as having a number of discrete stages

- Stage 1 - Screening
- Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment
- Stage 3 – Assessment of Alternatives
- Stage 4 – Assessment where no alternatives are available

1.3 This document comprises Stage 1 of the Habitats Regulation Assessment process and contributes to the fulfillment of the Council’s statutory duty as regards Article 6(3); that is, it is a Screening Opinion on whether or not Oldham Councils Supplementary Planning Document on the provision of open space, sport or recreation (hereafter referred to as ‘the Plan’) may have an impact on the special interest of any European designated protected sites and therefore whether the plan needs to undergo further Screening Opinions or more comprehensive Appropriate Assessments (Stage 2) as the Plan develops.

1.4 It should be noted that this document does not comprise a full Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2) under the terms of the Regulations. It is a screening opinion concerned with reaching an opinion as to whether the Plan needs to go forward for further, more detailed Assessment of impacts. In addition it is noted that the Plan being assessed is at the early stages of development and further screening opinions may be required as the Plan develops

1.5 The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU), as the specialist ecological adviser to Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council, has prepared this Screening Opinion. Natural England and the JNCC were consulted for information on the conservation objectives and favourable condition tables for the European Sites concerned (the information is summarised below). GMEU ecologists, who are familiar with the European sites concerned and their special interest, reviewed the ecological information for the site. The key vulnerabilities and sensitivities of the European sites concerned are well 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.

2 Brief description of the plan

The Supplementary Planning Document provides information to assist with the implementation of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies on how the Council will seek open space, sport and recreation provision where it may be lost through alternative development or sought as part of a residential development. The final SPD provides guidance and advice on:

- 1 the mechanisms for seeking a replacement facility and/or financial contribution where an open space, sport or recreation facility is lost as a result of development; and
- 2 the mechanisms for seeking open space, sport and recreation provision as part of a residential development

The intention of the SPD is not to form a Greenspace Strategy, but simply to set out the process for seeking planning obligations that may be sought through policies R1.1 and R2.1 within the Unitary Development Plan.

3 Identification of European designated sites concerned

- 3.1 This Screening Opinion considered the suite of European sites assessed within the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Habitat Regulations Assessment (North West Regional Assembly January 2007 - Table 2.1 and Figures 2.1 & 2.2). Column 1 of Appendix 1 shows all sites that were considered within the RSS. This is a useful starting point for the screening opinion of this document's HRA in order that all sites are considered, but that a number of sites can be screened out of future consideration.
- 3.2 The HRA of the RSS specifically sets out to investigate the infrastructure requirements of the Region's 'developmental policies' as they relate to environmental resource demands (eg water supply, treatment of effluents and energy supply). It also seeks to investigate the impacts of likely products of development (eg increased traffic, atmospheric pollutants - principally car/plane emissions, water borne pollutants – waste products of production and residues of sewage treatment and visitor pressure) on the European sites. The RSS identifies sites that are susceptible to either strategic impacts or 'in combination' impacts. Column 3 of Appendix 1 shows the sites within Greater Manchester, which may be impacted by developmental and/or resource impacts. For example; the River Eden (SAC) does not provide a water resource for Greater Manchester districts, whereas the River Derwent & Bassenthwaite Lake (SAC) can potentially supply water to some districts. Alternatively, sewage and waste water disposal from Greater Manchester does not enter the Solway estuary, but may enter the Dee and/or Liverpool Bay and therefore impact the European sites within these areas.
- 3.3 Within any assessment there is a relationship between the source of any given impact and the potential magnitude of any impacts on distant European sites (ie those further from the administrative boundary of the Greater Manchester Districts). This document therefore has given consideration to potential impact pathways to these distant sites, the European sites' vulnerabilities and sensitivities and their proximity to Oldham Borough Council. To assist in this the Policy Assessment and Tables within the RSS have been used along with GMEU's knowledge base.

- 3.4 For the purposes of this HRA therefore, sites in Column 3 with no 'N' are not considered further unless they are within Greater Manchester or in close proximity to the county. Sites identified with a 'P?' will be considered at a strategic level by the development of the HRA for the North West within the RSS. These sites will not be considered further within this document unless they can be impacted directly by proposals under consideration within Greater Manchester
- 3.5 Finally, European sites, which occur in close proximity or within the administrative boundaries of the Greater Manchester Districts, have also been identified (Columns 4 & 5 respectively). Column 4 identifies proximal sites where any likely significant effects will occur from distal impacts, which are not specifically encompassed by impacts considered in the strategic context of the RSS. For the purposes of this document, these have been termed non-strategic distal impacts. Appendix 2 details the interest of proximal European sites and an initial view on likely impacts from projects or proposals within Greater Manchester.
- 3.6 Column 5 selects those sites which occur within a Greater Manchester district so can either be impacted by direct habitat loss and/or non-strategic distal impacts. Appendix 3 gives the details of the interest of these sites and potential threats to the site's ecological interest.
- 3.7 Given the comments above projects and Plans within Greater Manchester will be screened against a selection of sites taken from columns 4 & 5 of the Appendix.
- 3.8 Appendix 2 briefly describes the sites identified within Column 4 and their vulnerabilities and threats (as taken from JNCC web site). Following consideration of these threats, it is considered unlikely that the Plan currently under consideration will not have an impact on the interest of these European sites.
- 3.9 There are 2 European sites within the administrative boundary of Oldham District and therefore, direct impacts such as habitat loss may occur.
- 3.10 This Screening Opinion considers the effects of the Plan primarily on **2** European designated sites. These are:

- **The South Pennine Moors SAC**
- **The Rochdale Canal SAC**

4 Consideration of 'In Combination' Effects with Other Plans and Proposals

- 4.1 The Habitats Regulation Assessment must consider the likely significant impact of the Plan in relation to other proposals and Plans within other administrative authorities and statutory organisations (e.g. Environment Agency, United Utilities and other Local Authorities) and in combination with the identified impacts of those Plans.
- 4.2 It can be considered that this will fall into two categories; those associated with regional strategic proposals and those in relation to more localised 'in-combination' effects with either adjacent Authorities or geographically localised plans from other statutory agencies.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the Regional Spatial Strategy will consider the 'in-combination' effects of the Region's projects and Plans at a strategic level (Entec January 2007).

- 4.4 With respect to the localised 'in-combination' effects, there is at the current time a challenge at a Regional level with Natural England departments as to which part/parts of the Local Development Framework is to be subjected to the HRA process. The debate is based on whether non-spatial SPDs should be considered, or if it is sufficient to consider the Core Strategies Issues and Options of any particular Authorities' LDF, as this presents the key principles of the proposed SPDs. Following this, once spatial allocations are tabled the HRA can then more accurately consider both the likely significant impacts and the 'in-combination' effects from other plans and strategies on any particular European site. Once this issue has been clarified and a co-ordinated approach for the Region has been decided an Appendix (Appendix 4) will be produced to identify the projects and Plans that are relevant to this HRA.
- 4.5 Therefore, at the current time it is not possible to make any accurate assessment of the likely 'in-combination' effects. However, it is considered that due to the types of European sites in adjacent Local Authority Metropolitan Districts, as discussed earlier in this document, that there is unlikely to be any non-strategic 'in-combination' effects. This view will be confirmed within later iterations of this document as considered necessary.

5 Descriptions of European Sites concerned

5.1 South Pennine Moors SAC/SPA

This site forms part of the Southern Pennines lying between Ilkley in the north and the Peak District National Park boundary in the south. The majority of the site is within West Yorkshire but it also covers areas of Lancashire, Greater Manchester and North Yorkshire. The largest moorland blocks are Ilkley Moor, the Haworth Moors, Rishworth Moor and Moss Moor. The underlying rock is Millstone Grit which outcrops at Boulsworth Hill and on the northern boundary of Ilkley Moor. The moorlands are on a rolling dissected plateau between 300m and 450m AOD with a high point of 517m at Boulsworth Hill. The greater part of the gritstone is overlain by blanket peat with the coarse gravelly mineral soils occurring only on the lower slopes. The site is the largest area of unenclosed moorland within West Yorkshire and contains the most diverse and extensive examples of upland plant communities in the county. Extensive areas of blanket bog occur on the upland plateaux and are punctuated by species rich acidic flushes and mires. There are also wet and dry heaths and acid grasslands. Three habitat types which occur on the site are rare enough within Europe to be listed on Annex 1 of the EC habitats and Species Directive (92/43) EEC. These communities are typical of and represent the full range of upland vegetation classes found in the South Pennines. This mosaic of habitats supports a moorland breeding bird assemblage which, because of the range of species and number of breeding birds it contains, is of regional and national importance. The large numbers of breeding merlin *Falco columbarius*, golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria* and twite *Carduelis flavirostris* are of international importance.

5.1.2 Description of the South Pennine Moors SPA

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are strictly protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the [EC Directive on the conservation of wild birds \(79/409/EEC\)](#), also known as the Birds Directive, which came into force in April 1979. They are classified for rare and vulnerable birds, listed in Annex I to the Birds Directive, and for regularly occurring migratory species. The South Pennine Moors SPA includes the major moorland blocks of the South Pennines from Ilkley in the north to Leek and Matlock in the south. It covers

extensive tracts of semi-natural moorland habitats including upland heath and blanket mire. The site is of European importance for several upland breeding bird species including birds of prey and waders.

5.1.3 Primary reason for designation of the SAC

5.1.3.1 The site supports the following important habitats

European Dry Heaths

The site is representative of upland dry heath at the southern end of the Pennine range, the habitat's most south-easterly upland location in the UK. Dry heath 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 **7130 blanket bogs**. The upland heath of the South Pennines is strongly dominated by heather *Calluna vulgaris*. Its main NVC types are H9 *Calluna vulgaris* – *Deschampsia flexuosa* heath and H12 *Calluna vulgaris* – *Vaccinium myrtillus* heath. More rarely H8 *Calluna vulgaris* – *Ulex gallii* heath and H10 *Calluna vulgaris* – *Erica cinerea* heath are found. On the higher, more exposed ground H18 *Vaccinium myrtillus* – *Deschampsia flexuosa* heath becomes more prominent. 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.

Blanket Bogs

This site represents **blanket bog** in the south Pennines, the most south-easterly occurrence of the habitat in Europe. The bog vegetation communities are botanically poor. Hare's-tail cottongrass *Eriophorum vaginatum* is often overwhelmingly dominant and the usual bog-building *Sphagnum* mosses are scarce. Where the blanket peats are slightly drier, heather *Calluna vulgaris*, crowberry *Empetrum nigrum* and bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* become more prominent. The uncommon cloudberry *Rubus chamaemorus* is locally abundant in bog vegetation. Bog pools provide diversity and are often characterised by common cottongrass *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 (9000 years) of the south Pennine peats.

Old Sessile Oak woods

Around the fringes of the upland heath and bog of the south Pennines 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.

5.1.4 Primary reason for the designation of the SPA

The site qualifies for the designation by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:

During the breeding season:

Golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, at least 3.3% of the breeding population in Great Britain
Merlin *Falco columbarius*, at least 5.9% of the breeding population in Great Britain
Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*, at least 1.4% of the breeding population in Great Britain
Short-eared owl *Asio flammeus*, at least 2.5% of the breeding population in Great Britain

The SPA supports an internationally important assemblage of birds. During the breeding season the area regularly supports:

Actitis hypoleucos, *Calidris alpina schinzii*, *Carduelis flavirostris*, *Gallinago gallinago*, *Numenius arquata*, *Oenanthe oenanthe*, *Saxicola rubetra*, *Tringa tetanus*, *Turdus torquatus*, *Vanellus vanellus*

5.1.5 Natural England lists the conservation objectives for the South Pennine Moors as follows:

to maintain*, in favourable condition, the habitats for the populations of Annex 1 species + of European importance, with particular reference to:

- blanket mire
- dwarf shrub heath
- acid grassland
- gritstone edges

+ golden plover, merlin, short-eared owl

to maintain*, in favourable condition, the:

- blanket bog (active only)
- dry heaths
- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*
- transition mires and quaking bogs
- old oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles

* maintenance implies restoration if the feature is not currently in favourable condition.

5.1.6 Operations that may damage the special interest of the South Pennine Moors SAC/SPA include

5.1.6.1 Cultivation

5.1.6.2 Grazing

5.1.6.3 Mowing or cutting

5.1.6.4 Application of manure, fertilisers or lime

5.1.6.5 Application of pesticides

5.1.6.7 Burning

5.1.6.8 Drainage

5.1.6.9 Extraction of minerals including peat, topsoil and subsoil

5.1.6.10 Construction or removal of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hardstands, banks,

- ditches or other earthworks or the laying or removal of pipelines and cables
- 5.1.6.11 Erection of permanent structures
- 5.1.6.12 Use of vehicles likely to damage the vegetation
- 5.1.6.13 Pollution
- 5.1.6.14 Recreational activities
- 5.1.6.15 Agricultural intensification leading to loss of bird feeding areas outside the designated site

When assessing the Plan for its possible impact on the South Pennine Moors SAC/SPA the potential of aims, objectives and policies in the Plan to cause the above listed damaging operations have been considered when reaching a decision as to whether the plan needs to undergo a full Appropriate Assessment. For example, if it is considered that a particular development described in the Plan (for example, new housing development) has the potential for causing any of the above damaging operations, and no mitigation is described, then it would be considered that either changes should be made to the plan to incorporate appropriate mitigation or the plan should be subject to full Appropriate Assessment.

5.2 Description of the Rochdale Canal SAC

The Rochdale Canal extends approximately 20 km from Littleborough to Failsworth, passing through urban and industrialised parts of Rochdale and Oldham and the intervening areas of agricultural land (mostly pasture). Water supplied to the Rochdale Canal in part arises from the Pennines. This water is acidic and relatively low in nutrients, while water from other sources is mostly high in nutrients. The aquatic flora of the canal is thus indicative of a mesotrophic water quality (i.e. is moderately nutrient-rich) although there is evidence of some local enrichment.

5.2.1 Primary reason for designation

The Rochdale Canal supports a significant population of **floating water-plantain** *Luronium natans* in a botanically diverse waterplant community which also holds a wide range of pondweeds *Potamogeton* spp. The canal has predominantly mesotrophic water. This population of *Luronium* is representative of the formerly more widespread canal populations of north-west England, although the Rochdale Canal supports unusually dense populations of the plant.

5.2.2 Floating water-plantain; description and ecological characteristics

Floating water-plantain *Luronium natans* occurs in a range of freshwater situations, including nutrient-poor lakes in the uplands (mainly referable to 3130 Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or of the *Isoëto-Nanojuncetea*) and slowly-flowing lowland rivers, pools, ditches and canals that are moderately nutrient-rich.

Luronium natans occurs as two forms: in shallow water with floating oval leaves, and in deep water with submerged rosettes of narrow leaves. The plant thrives best in open situations with a moderate degree of disturbance, where the growth of emergent vegetation is held in check. Populations fluctuate greatly in size, often increasing when water levels drop to expose the bottom of the water body. Populations fluctuate from year to year, and at many sites records of *L. natans* have been infrequent, suggesting that only small populations occur, in some cases possibly as transitory colonists of the

habitat. Populations tend to be more stable at natural sites than artificial ones, but approximately half of recent (post-1980) records are from canals and similar artificial habitats. Its habitat in rivers has been greatly reduced by channel-straightening, dredging and pollution, especially in lowland situations.

5.2.3 Operations that may damage the special interest of the canal include operations and activities that affect the growth and survival of *Lurionium natans*

5.2.3.1 Dredging of the canal

5.2.3.2 Draining of the canal

5.2.3.3 Pollution of the canal

5.2.3.4 Shading of the canal

5.2.3.5 Increased boat traffic using the canal

5.2.3.6 Use of herbicides in or adjacent to the canal

5.2.3.7 Physical disturbance of vegetation in the canal

5.2.3.7 Introduction of plants and/or animals into the canal

When assessing the Plan for its possible impact on the Rochdale Canal SAC the potential of aims, objectives and policies in the Plan to cause the above listed damaging operations have been considered when reaching a decision as to whether the plan needs to undergo a full Appropriate Assessment. For example, if it is considered that a particular development described in the Plan (for example, new housing development) has the potential for causing any of the above damaging operations, and no mitigation is described, then it would be considered that either changes should be made to the plan to incorporate appropriate mitigation or the plan should be subject to full Appropriate Assessment.

6 Impact of the Oldham Open Space, Sport and Recreation SPD on the special features of the South Pennine Moors SAC/SPA

| Potentially Damaging Operation | Impact of SPD | Mitigation |
|--|----------------------|-------------------|
| Cultivation | None | None required |
| Grazing | None | None required |
| Mowing or cutting | None | None required |
| Application of manure, fertilisers or lime | None | None required |
| Application of pesticides | None | None required |
| Burning | None | None required |

| Potentially Damaging Operation | Impact of SPD | Mitigation |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Drainage | If new open space, sport and recreation provision is to be provided within the SAC it is possible that such provision will require small parts of the SAC to be drained. | <p>Since the aim of the SPD is to assist the provision of new open space, sports and recreation provision close to existing and new communities, and there are no communities within the SAC or likely to be established within it, the probability of this damaging operation being undertaken is very low.</p> <p>In the unlikely event that such provision is to be required within the SAC the SPD does state that, in line with objectives outlined in the Oldham UDP, the use of sport and recreational facilities will not harm nature conservation and biodiversity interests. Para. 2.3 (i) reiterates the objective within the Oldham UDP that open space, sport and recreation provision should ensure that ‘the use of sport and recreational facilities does not harm nature conservation and biodiversity’</p> <p>The SPD also (in para. 10.1) states that the location and design of any new, replacement or enhanced open space and facilities should comply with the specifications outlined in the Urban Design Guide SPD. The Urban Design Guide SPD specifies that new open spaces should not damage existing important nature conservation features and should contribute to biodiversity enhancement.</p> |
| Extraction of minerals | None | None required |

| Potentially Damaging Operation | Impact of SPD | Mitigation |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Construction or removal of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hardstands, banks, ditches or other earthworks or the laying or removal of pipelines and cables</p> | <p>It is possible that new sport and recreation provision could involve the construction of new roads, tracks, fences, hardstands or other earthworks in the SAC. Should additional built development be allowed in the SAC there will be a direct impact from land-take (habitat and species loss) and indirect impact from habitat fragmentation and increased public pressure.</p> | <p>Since the aim of the SPD is to assist the provision of new open space, sports and recreation provision close to existing and new communities, and there are no communities within the SAC or likely to be established within it, the probability of this damaging operation being undertaken is very low.</p> <p>In the unlikely event that such provision is to be required within the SAC the SPD does state that, in line with objectives outlined in the Oldham UDP, the use of sport and recreational facilities will not harm nature conservation and biodiversity interests. Para. 2.3 (i) reiterates the objective within the Oldham UDP that open space, sport and recreation provision should ensure that ‘the use of sport and recreational facilities does not harm nature conservation and biodiversity’</p> <p>The SPD also (in para. 10.1) states that the location and design of any new, replacement or enhanced open space and facilities should comply with the specifications outlined in the Urban Design Guide SPD. The Urban Design Guide SPD specifies that new open spaces should not damage existing important nature conservation features and should contribute to biodiversity enhancement.</p> |

| Potentially Damaging Operation | Impact of SPD | Mitigation |
|---|---|---|
| Erection of permanent structures | It is possible that new sport and recreation provision could involve the erection of new permanent structures within the SAC. Should additional built development be allowed in the SAC there will be a direct impact from land-take (habitat and species loss) and indirect impact from habitat fragmentation and increased public pressure. | <p>Since the aim of the SPD is to assist the provision of new open space, sports and recreation provision close to existing and new communities, and there are no communities within the SAC or likely to be established within it, the probability of this damaging operation being undertaken is very low.</p> <p>In the unlikely event that such provision is to be required within the SAC the SPD does state that, in line with objectives outlined in the Oldham UDP, the use of sport and recreational facilities will not harm nature conservation and biodiversity interests. Para. 2.3 (i) reiterates the objective within the Oldham UDP that open space, sport and recreation provision should ensure that ‘the use of sport and recreational facilities does not harm nature conservation and biodiversity’</p> <p>The SPD also (in para. 10.1) states that the location and design of any new, replacement or enhanced open space and facilities should comply with the specifications outlined in the Urban Design Guide SPD. The Urban Design Guide SPD specifies that new open spaces should not damage existing important nature conservation features and should contribute to biodiversity enhancement.</p> |
| Use of vehicles likely to damage the vegetation | None | None required |

| Potentially Damaging Operation | Impact of SPD | Mitigation |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Pollution | Built development may cause pollution of the SAC through air water and ground sources. | <p>Since the aim of the SPD is to assist the provision of new open space, sports and recreation provision close to existing and new communities, and there are no communities within the SAC or likely to be established within it, the probability of this damaging operation being undertaken is very low.</p> <p>In the unlikely event that such provision is to be required within the SAC the SPD does state that, in line with objectives outlined in the Oldham UDP, the use of sport and recreational facilities will not harm nature conservation and biodiversity interests.</p> |
| Disturbance to breeding birds | Some recreational activities that could conceivably take place within the SPA could disturb nesting birds (eg flying model planes, orienteering) | <p>Since the aim of the SPD is primarily to assist the provision of new open space, sports and recreation provision close to existing and new communities, and there are no communities within the SAC or likely to be established within it, the probability of disturbing activities being undertaken is considered to be low.</p> <p>However, it is a little unclear whether such activities are covered by the SPD. It is recommended that the SPD make it clear how such activities may (or may not) be covered by the SPD.</p> |

7 Impact of the open space, sport and recreation provision SPD on the special interest of the Rochdale Canal SAC

| Potentially Damaging Operation | Impact of SPD | Mitigation proposed in the SPD or recommended for inclusion |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Dredging of the canal | It is possible that during the development and operation of new open spaces, sports facilities and recreation facilities close to the canal (e.g. marinas) some dredging could be required pollution could be caused to the Canal | <p>Para. 2.3 (i) reiterates the objective within the Oldham UDP that open space, sport and recreation provision should ensure that ‘the use of sport and recreational facilities does not harm nature conservation and biodiversity’</p> <p>The SPD also (in para. 10.1) states that the location and design of any new, replacement or enhanced open space and facilities should comply with the specifications outlined in the Urban Design Guide SPD. The Urban Design Guide SPD specifies that new open spaces should not damage existing important nature conservation features and should contribute to biodiversity enhancement.</p> |
| Draining of the canal | None | None required |
| Pollution of the canal | It is possible that during the development and operation of new open spaces, sports facilities and recreation facilities close to the canal some pollution could be caused to the Canal | <p>Para. 2.3 (i) reiterates the objective within the Oldham UDP that open space, sport and recreation provision should ensure that ‘the use of sport and recreational facilities does not harm nature conservation and biodiversity’</p> <p>The SPD also (in para. 10.1) states that the location and design of any new, replacement or enhanced open space and facilities should comply with the specifications outlined in the Urban Design Guide SPD. The Urban Design Guide SPD specifies that new open spaces should not damage existing important nature conservation features and should contribute to biodiversity enhancement.</p> |

| Potentially Damaging Operation | Impact of SPD | Mitigation proposed in the SPD or recommended for inclusion |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Shading of the canal | It is possible that during the development and operation of new recreational facilities close to the canal (e.g. marinas) some shading of the canal could occur | <p>Para. 2.3 (i) reiterates the objective within the Oldham UDP that open space, sport and recreation provision should ensure that ‘the use of sport and recreational facilities does not harm nature conservation and biodiversity’</p> <p>The SPD also (in para. 10.1) states that the location and design of any new, replacement or enhanced open space and facilities should comply with the specifications outlined in the Urban Design Guide SPD. The Urban Design Guide SPD specifies that new open spaces should not damage existing important nature conservation features and should contribute to biodiversity enhancement.</p> |
| Increase in boat traffic | The Canal is a recreational resource, and it is possible that the provision of new and/or improved recreational facilities could result in more boat traffic on the Canal (although it should be recognised that the main focus of this SPD is the provision of good quality public open space rather than improvements to the Canal as a recreational resource) | <p>Para. 2.3 (i) reiterates the objective within the Oldham UDP that open space, sport and recreation provision should ensure that ‘the use of sport and recreational facilities does not harm nature conservation and biodiversity’</p> <p>The SPD also (in para. 10.1) states that the location and design of any new, replacement or enhanced open space and facilities should comply with the specifications outlined in the urban Design Guide SPD. This SPD specifies that new open spaces should not damage existing important nature conservation features and should contribute to biodiversity enhancement.</p> |
| Use of herbicides | None | None required |

| Potentially Damaging Operation | Impact of SPD | Mitigation proposed in the SPD or recommended for inclusion |
|--|--|--|
| Physical disturbance to vegetation in the canal | It is possible that fishing activity may directly disturb <i>Luronium natans</i> | <p>Para. 2.3 (i) reiterates the objective within the Oldham UDP that open space, sport and recreation provision should ensure that ‘the use of sport and recreational facilities does not harm nature conservation and biodiversity’</p> <p>Nevertheless it is recommended that fishing as a recreational activity be referred to in the SPD and reference made to the need to closely control fishing activity in the canal</p> |
| Introduction of plants or animals into the canal | It is possible that fishing may lead to the introduction of undesirable species into the canal | <p>Para. 2.3 (i) reiterates the objective within the Oldham UDP that open space, sport and recreation provision should ensure that ‘the use of sport and recreational facilities does not harm nature conservation and biodiversity’</p> <p>Nevertheless it is recommended that fishing as a recreational activity be referred to in the SPD and reference made to the need to closely control fishing activity in the canal</p> |

8 Conclusions and recommendations

8.1 South Pennine Moors SAC/SPA

It is considered very unlikely that new or replacement open space, sports or recreation provision associated with new development will be provided within the South Pennine Moors SAC/SPA, because such developments will most likely be associated with existing communities and new residential developments. There are no communities currently within the SAC/SPA boundary and the probability that new communities will be established within the SAC/SPA is very low. It is very unlikely that developers will be asked to contribute to ‘off-site’ open space, sport or recreation provision within the SAC/SPA.

In the unlikely event that such provision is to be required within the SAC the SPD does state that, in line with objectives outlined in the Oldham UDP, the use of sport and recreational facilities will not harm nature conservation and biodiversity interests.

My conclusion is that there will be **no significant damaging effects** arising from application of the principles outlined in this document on the special interest of the South Pennine Moors SAC and therefore carrying out a full appropriate assessment of the document is considered unnecessary.

8.2 Rochdale Canal SAC

It is considered very unlikely that the improvement of existing open space or the creation of new areas of open space, or the provision of enhanced sport or recreation facilities, will have a significant impact on the special interest of the Rochdale Canal SAC, *unless* the provision of recreation facilities is taken to include enhanced provision for boating on the Canal or fishing along the Canal. It is unclear from the document whether such recreational provision on the Canal would be provided for under the policies in the SPD.

If it is intended that recreational facilities could in fact include enhanced boating provision and/or fishing on the Canal then I would **recommend** that the special nature conservation status of the Canal be referred to specifically in the SPD, and that attention be drawn to the need to demonstrate that enhanced recreational provision on the Canal will not harm the special nature conservation value of the Canal.

However, the main focus of the SPD is clearly on the provision of new areas of public open space associated with new residential development, which by their nature are unlikely to have any significant impact on the Canal unless they are immediately adjacent to the Canal.

In the event that a new area of open space or a new sports or recreation facility is in fact to be created adjacent to the Canal, sufficient safeguards are in place in the SPD (para 2.3 and 10.1) to ensure that the nature conservation interest of the Canal will not be damaged.

Providing, then, that the recommendation described above is incorporated into the document, the overall impact of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision SPD on the Rochdale Canal SAC is assessed as **neutral**,

My conclusion is that there will be **no significant damaging effects** arising from the implementation of this document on the special interest of the Rochdale Canal SAC and therefore carrying out a full Appropriate Assessment of the plan is considered unnecessary.

APPENDIX 1: - NORTH WEST EUROPEAN SITES CONSIDERED WITHIN GREATER MANCHESTER SCREENING OPINIONS (SEE EXPLANATION IN SECTION 3 OF THE TEXT)

| Column 1 | Column 2 | Column 3 | Column 4 | Column 5 |
|--|--------------------|---|--|--|
| Site Name (list taken from NWRA January 2007) | Designation | Sites within NW region where strategic impacts/ 'in combination' considered by RSS HRA | Sites in proximity to GM where distal non-strategic impacts could occur | Sites within GM administrative boundary |
| Asby Complex | SAC | N | N | |
| Border Mires, Kielder – Butterburn | SAC | N | N | |
| Borrowdale Woodland Complex | SAC | N | N | |
| Bowland Fells | SPA | P? | N | |
| Calf Hill & Cragg Woods | SAC | N | N | |
| Clints Quarry | SAC | N | N | |
| Cumbrian Marsh Fritillary Site | SAC | N | N | |
| Dee Estuary | SPA/Ramsar | P? | N | |
| Drigg Coast | SAC | N | N | |
| Duddon Estuary | SPA/Ramsar | N | N | |
| Duddon Mosses | SAC | N | N | |
| Esthwaite Water | Ramsar | N | N | |
| Irthinghead Mires | Ramsar | N | N | |
| Lake District High Fells | SAC | N | N | |
| Leighton Moss | SPA/Ramsar | N | N | |
| Liverpool Bay | pSPA | P? | N | |
| Manchester Mosses | SAC | P? | N | P? Wigan |
| Martin Mere | SPA/Ramsar | P? | P? | |
| Mersey Estuary | SPA/Ramsar | P? | N | |
| Mersey Narrows & Wirral Foreshore | pSPA | P? | N | |
| Midland Meres & Mosses – Phase 1 & Phase 2 | 2 x Ramsar | P? | P? | |
| Moor House – Upper Teasdale | SAC | N | N | |
| Morcombe Bay | SAC/Ramsar /SAC | P? | N | |
| Morcombe Bay Pavements | SAC | N | N | |
| Naddle Forest | SAC | N | N | |
| North Pennine Dales Meadows | SAC | N | N | |
| North Pennine Moors | SAC/SPA | P? | N | |
| Oak Mere | SAC | N | N | |

| Column 1 | Column 2 | Column 3 | Column 4 | Column 5 |
|---|-------------|--|---|---|
| Site Name (list taken from NWRA January 2007) | Designation | Sites within NW region where strategic impacts/ 'in combination' considered by RSS HRA | Sites in proximity to GM where distal non-strategic impacts could occur | Sites within GM administrative boundary |
| Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) | SPA | P? | N | P? Tameside & Oldham |
| Ribble & Alt Estuaries | SPA/Ramsar | P? | N | |
| River Dee & Bala Lake | SAC | N | N | |
| River Derwent & Bassenthwaite Lake | SAC | P? | N | |
| River Eden | SAC | N | N | |
| River Ehen | SAC | N | N | |
| River Kent | SAC | N | N | |
| Rixton Clay Pits | SAC | N | P? | |
| Rochdale Canal | SAC | N | N | P? Rochdale & Oldham |
| Rostherne Mere | Ramsar | N | P? | |
| Roudsea Wood & Mosses | SAC | N | N | |
| Sefton Coast | SAC | N | N | |
| Solway Firth | SAC | N | N | |
| South Pennine Moors | SAC | P? | N | P? Rochdale Oldham & Tameside |
| South Pennine Moors Phase 2 | SPA | P? | N | P? Rochdale |
| South Solway Mosses | SAC | N | N | |
| Subberthwaite, Blawith & Torver Low Commons | SAC | N | N | |
| Tarn Moss | SAC | N | N | |
| Tyne & Nent | SAC | N | N | |
| Ullswater Oakwoods | SAC | N | N | |
| Upper Solway Flats & Marshes | SPA/Ramsar | N | N | |
| Walton Moss | SAC | N | N | |
| Wast Water | SAC | N | N | |
| West Midlands Mosses | SAC | N | N | |
| Witherslack Mosses | SAC | N | N | |
| Yewbarrow Woods | SAC | N | N | |

N = Significant effects unlikely

P? = Significant effects possible

P = Significant effects probable

Assessment terms follow that presented in RSS Methodology (Entec 2007)

