

The aim of this leaflet is to outline principles for biodiversity conservation in planning design within Warrington. The leaflet is based on the RTPA Design Guidance report "Biodiversity by Design", 2004 (www.tcpa.org.uk), which is recommended reading.

What is Biodiversity and why is it important to us?

Biodiversity is simply the variety of life forms encountered on the earth from the exotic and rare to the common place encountered daily in our towns and countryside. There is increasing recognition of the benefits of contact with nature to our quality of life and well being in urban areas, as well as stimulation of economic investment and prosperity. Warrington's 'New Town' development and associated landscaping over the past thirty years has been based on sound ecological principles to integrate new homes and business within an attractive, nature-rich and sustainable environment. These design principles have subsequently been widely adopted elsewhere. Central government has recently re-focused attention again on the real benefits of integration of ecological networking principles into strategic urban planning.

This advice note highlights the general issues and opportunities as they affect Warrington, and gives some indication of the policy approach which can be expected to be taken by the Council's Environment Service to relevant development applications.

BIODIVERSITY BY DESIGN IN WARRINGTON



The protection and enhancement of the existing green infrastructure within Warrington is important to conserve natural assets, protect local distinctiveness and minimise habitat fragmentation.

Warrington is already blessed with a good green infrastructure. Our Green Infrastructure is simply the network of parkland, nature reserves, woodlands, 'greenway' linkage, transport corridors including roads and railway lines, and our rivers, brooks and canal network.

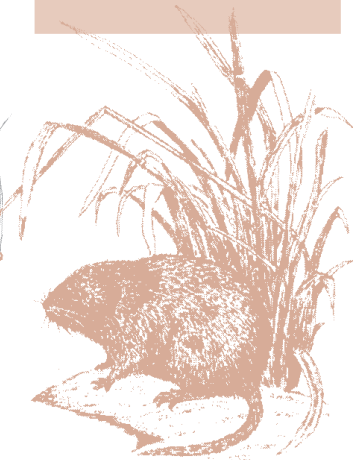
The River Mersey is our most important green corridor, and links us into the green networks of neighbouring Boroughs. In addition there has been increased appreciation of the potential of our brownfield sites to support a wide range of habitats and species. Many important sites however, remain isolated thus restricting the establishment and dispersal of wildlife. To increase the overall capacity of the Borough for wildlife it is important to take every development and regeneration opportunity to link neighbouring sites.

New green infrastructure should be designed to complement our existing green spaces and advance a green network of community forest, parks, greenways, waterways, wildlife corridors and communal green spaces throughout Warrington. (LUT15, GRN16, GRN17 & GRN24, HOU 3 & GRN 3)

Landscaping associated with development can serve as a powerful tool to advance green infrastructure.

Every effort will be made to protect and enhance the existing greenspaces and natural habitats within Warrington. The potential value of brownfield land for enhancing the existing urban greenspace will be exploited at every opportunity to strengthen the network of habitats and greenspaces in the Borough.

Developers are expected to ensure that whenever possible, soft landscaping proposals link into adjacent green spaces to provide a network of continuous open spaces through the borough. rich and diversity ecological habitats within a sustainable green infrastructure. (DCS8, DGS9 & GRN26)



Warrington contains wildlife sites of international, national and local importance, and supports legally protected and locally important biodiversity target species.

Development of a site will invariably have some impact on the local environment. It is the responsibility of developers and their professional advisors to avoid damage to functioning ecosystems and their valued habitats and species. Development adjacent to protected sites will receive special attention to protect established ecosystems and enhance linkage of sites to the green infrastructure. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, measures must be pursued to mitigate and compensate for those impacts.

All high value ecological areas must be preserved and enhanced within the development to provide rich and diversity ecological habitats within a sustainable green infrastructure. (DCS8, GRN21, GRN22, GRN23, GRN25)

The creation of community woodland through the Mersey Forest initiative can generate quality urban fringe habitat and bring biodiversity into the town centre.

The building blocks for Warrington's green infrastructure are the existing woodlands, wetlands and grassland habitats which form the green mosaic linking the Green Belt around the town to the urban area. The Mersey Community Forest is the lead environmental initiative in the Warrington area and the Forest Plan gives special attention to green networking especially associated with our motorway and major road corridors.

The Council supports the Mersey Forest Plan including the creation of quality woodland habitats in priority greenways. Developers are expected to pursue these aims in their own proposals. (GRN28 & GRN29)

The enhancement of Warrington's established parks and the design features incorporated into new parks and open spaces can increase biodiversity.

Our traditional urban parks provide residents with access to recreational green space and nature. Ecologically valuable habitats can be incorporated into these parks through new planting or simple management changes. The ecological principles seen in the 'New Town' parks can be adopted, as appropriate, in other more formal parks, and new development in proximity to established parks will be expected to incorporate quality natural landscaping to bring urban wildlife and the community closer together.

The Council expects new development proposals to include high quality landscaping schemes based on sound ecological principles which will enhance adjoining greenspace and parkland. (GRN13 & GRN26)

The enhancement of existing wetland 'Greenways' can maximise biodiversity linkage.

Warrington has an extensive waterway heritage and natural river system. These watercourses represent the best examples of wildlife corridors. The culverting of watercourses to assist development results in loss of riparian habitats and alternative soft engineering options should be pursued. Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUD) will be encouraged where possible and the resulting wetland features will add to the overall urban wetland network (REP5)).

The Council will normally challenge all proposals to culvert or divert natural water courses. Riparian development proposals will be expected to enhance habitats and avoid the disruption of wildlife corridors. (GRN16, GRN17 & GRN18)



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Warrington UDP

The Council will refer to the following policies within its Unitary Development Plan when considering development proposals. Relevant policy coding can be found throughout this statement.

LUT15 The Greenway Network, GRN3 Environmental Protection & Enhancement, GRN13 Protection and Enhancement of Urban Greenspace, GRN16 The Riverine Environment, GRN17 Canalside and Riverside Development, GRN18 Watercourses, GRN21 Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation, GRN22 Key Biodiversity Habitats and Priority Species, GRN23 Protected Species, GRN24 Wildlife Corridors, GRN25 Protection of the Nature Conservation Resource, GRN26 Protection and Enhancement of Landscape Features, GRN28 The Mersey Forest, GRN29 Woodland Planting, REP5 Surface Water Run-off and Sustainable Drainage Systems, HOU3 Open Space Provision in New Housing Developments, DCS8 The Design of Open Space & Plan Areas, DCS9 Provision and Enhancement of Landscaping in New Development.

Warrington Borough Council



The Council will give special attention to meeting Planning Policy Statement (PPS 9) 'Biodiversity & Geological Conservation' directives on ecological landscaping and wildlife corridors.

For further information contact the Planning Environment Team , Warrington Borough Council
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