



Strategic Significance in Liverpool City Region & West Lancashire prior to publication of LNRS

Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) January 2026

The Liverpool City Region comprises the local authorities of Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral.

Merseyside EAS also provides planning advice to West Lancashire. Lancashire’s LNRS is now adopted and therefore Strategic significance should be informed by the LNRS. (See specific West Lancashire section).

If the development site meets any of the habitat descriptions and strategies described, then they should be assigned “Formally identified in local strategy”.

As this document sets out Strategic significance for the Liverpool City Region and West Lancashire then in line with the BNG metric user guide¹ the middle strategic significance category of “Locally ecologically desirable but not in a local strategy” should not be used.

The following habitats are identified as having High Strategic Significance on the basis of being identified in the documentation named in the LCR BNG Guidance Note (MEAS 2024).

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¹ [The Statutory Biodiversity Metric - User Guide - July 2025.pdf](#)

1. Strategies, plans and designations which apply across the LCR

1.1 **Protected sites**

Any semi-natural habitat within a designated site is considered strategically significant this includes:

- SPA;
- Ramsar
- SAC;
- SSSI;
- National Nature Reserve;
- Local Wildlife Site;
- Local Nature Reserve

1.2 **LCR Ecological Network**

Any semi-natural habitat identified as a priority within the following:

- Core Biodiversity Area
- Nature Improvement Areas
- Stepping Stone Sites
- Linear features

See the [LCR ecological network website](#).

2. Local Biodiversity Action plan habitat action plans

2.1 **North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan**

(covering Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Knowsley)

The [habitat action plans](#) should be referred to fully in determining a habitat strategic significance. NMBAP habitats:

- Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land (must meet the JNCC priority habitat definition see [here](#))
- Wet woodland
- Coniferous woodland = Sefton coast pine woods and coniferous woods on mosslands only due to their importance for red squirrels
- Other woodland mixed

- Other woodland broadleaved
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
- Wood-pasture parkland
- Urban Trees (not rural)
- Urban grasslands = any medium or higher distinctiveness grassland in an urban setting (not rural), this will usually be other neutral grassland but does not include modified grassland
- Lowland acid grassland
- Ponds (non-priority and priority, not ornamental)
- Reedbeds
- Arable field margins pollen and nectar (included within the field boundaries habitat action plan)
- Arable field margins tussocky (included within the field boundaries habitat action plan)
- Arable field margins game bird mix (included within the field boundaries habitat action plan)
- Arable field margins annually cultivated (included within the field boundaries habitat action plan)
- Native hedges, treelines and any higher distinctiveness hedges that form a field boundary in a rural setting (included within the field boundaries habitat action plan)
- Ditches that form a field boundary in a rural setting (included within the field boundaries habitat action plan)
- Canals
- Coastal sand dunes
- Lowland raised bog

2.2 Halton Biodiversity Action Plan:

The [habitat action plans](#) should be referred to fully in determining a habitat strategic significance. Habitats:

- Reedbed
- Coastal Saltmarsh

2.3 Wirral Biodiversity Action Plan

The [habitat action plans](#) should be referred to fully in determining a habitat strategic significance. Habitats:

- Coastal Saltmarsh
- Coastal Sand Dune
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
- Field Boundaries (any type of native hedgerow or treeline in a rural setting)
- Lowland heath
- Lowland Meadows
- Lowland mixed broadleaved woodland (Lowland mixed deciduous woodland)
- Mudflats
- Ponds (pond (non-priority), pond (priority))
- Maritime cliff and slope
- Reedbeds

3. Other district specific strategies which are also identified as strategically significant

3.1 Knowsley- Knowsley Strategic green links

Knowsley Strategic Green links are detailed within the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy 2016 under policy CS8: Green Infrastructure.

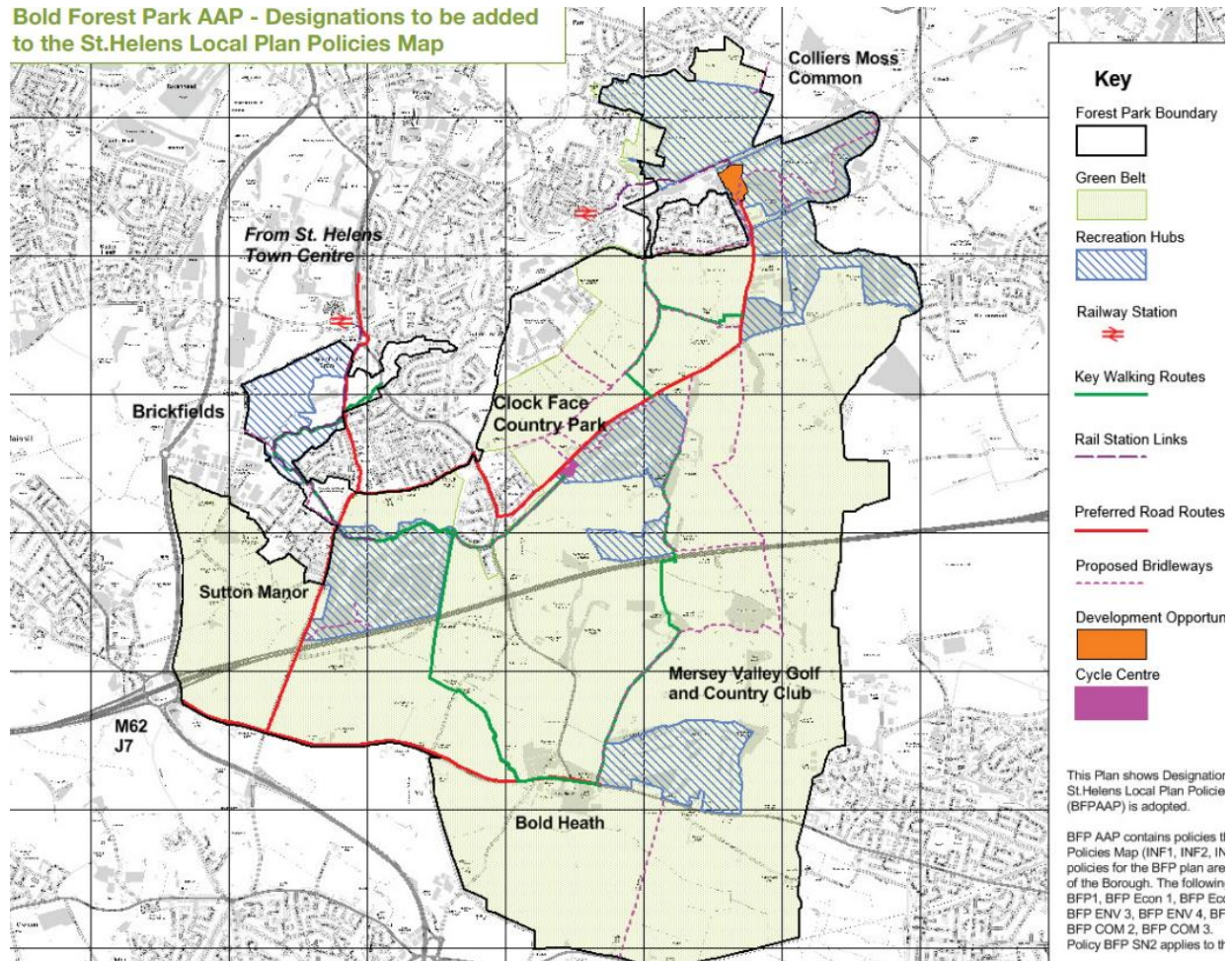
Any semi-natural habitats located within a strategic green link. Knowsley's strategically important green links are:

- a) Alt Corridor (Huyton) – stretching from Huyton Village through South Alt Park, Alt Park, Alt Meadows and into Stockbridge Village;
- b) Valley Corridor (Kirkby) – stretching through Valley Meadow, St. Chad's Park, Millbrook Park, Millennium Green and Mill Dam;
- c) Whiston to Cronton Corridor – stretching through Cronton, Stadt Moers Park and Whiston Greenway;
- d) Halewood Triangle – Halewood Park linkage with the Trans-Pennine Trail and to the national cycle network;
- e) M57 Green Belt Corridor;

- f) f) Knowsley Hall Estate – including Knowsley Safari Park and Local Wildlife Sites.

3.2 St Helens- Bold Forest Park

Any semi-natural habitat within [Bold Forest Park](#) in St Helens

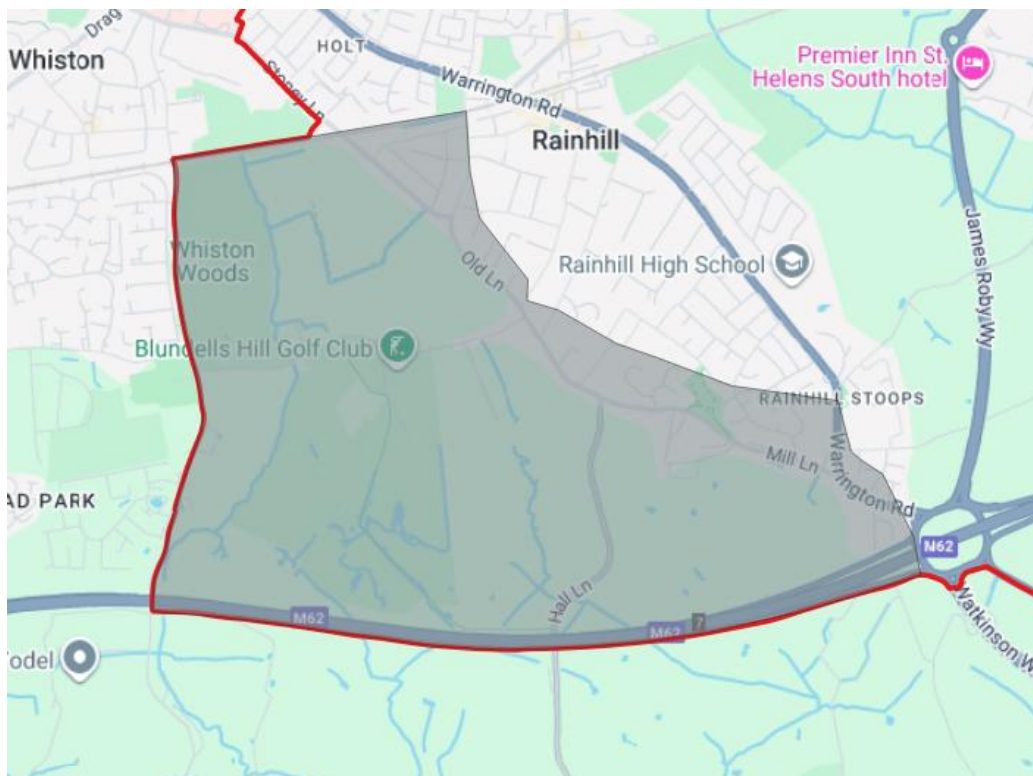
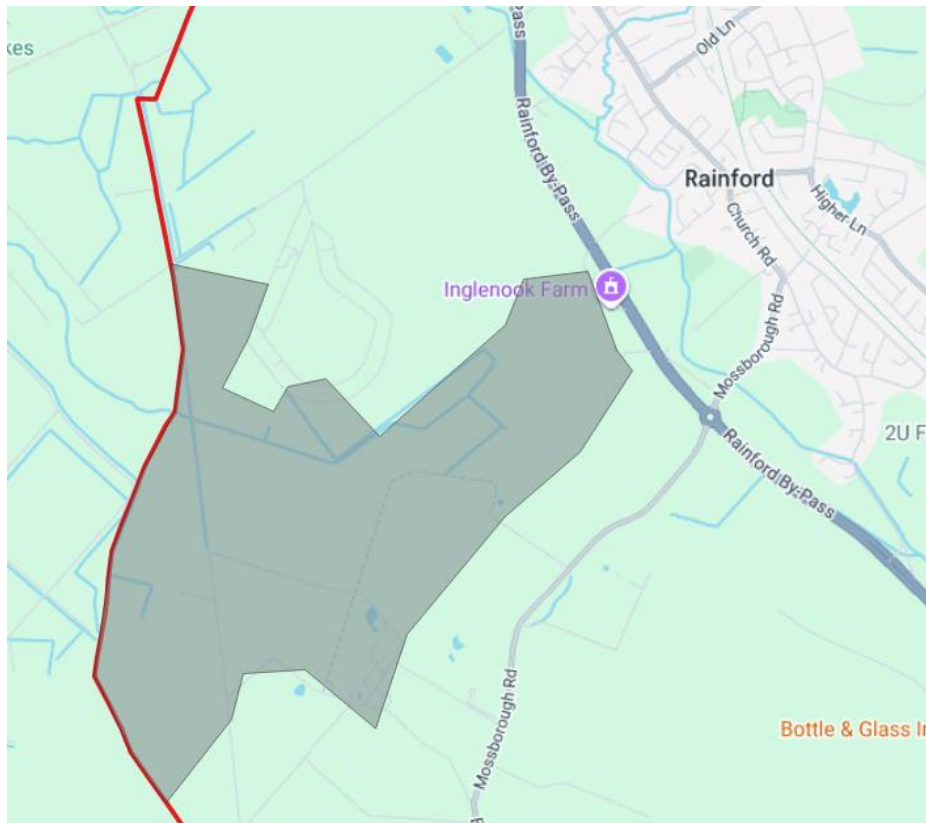


3.3. St Helen's- Sankey Catchment Action Plan habitats

Any of the following located within the Sankey Valley catchment (see the maps below and the [Sankey Valley Catchment Action Plan](#))

- Reedbed
- Lowland Raised Bog
- Wet Woodland
- Watercourse and riparian zone enhancement (on all watercourse types, and removal of culverts)
- Woodland creation (see woodland types above)
- Suds and bioswales (in urban environments)

The catchment covers all of St Helen's borough **except the small areas shown greyed out below** (redline is St Helen's borough boundary)



3.4 Liverpool - Green Wedges

Any semi-natural habitat within the Liverpool Green wedges as designated by the Local Plan– See [Local Plan Map](#).

Green wedges are located at:

- Calderstones/ Woolton; and
- Otterspool

3.5 Wirral- Draft Wirral Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy:

Any semi-natural or Priority habitats identified as priorities or opportunities within the [Wirral Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy](#).

3.6 Wirral – Tree, hedgerow and woodland strategy 2020 – 2030 (see here)

- Any tree planting (urban and rural individual trees)
- Woodland creation (any woodland category except coniferous)
- Native hedgerow creation (any hedgerow category except non-native and ornamental)

3.7 Wirral Pollinator Strategy (see document here)

- Creation of any medium or higher distinctiveness grassland

4. West Lancashire

Lancashire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) was formally adopted on 16 January 2026 and should therefore now be used to inform the Strategic Significance element of any Statutory Defra metrics submitted with planning applications after this date². Further guidance is provided within the Statutory Biodiversity metric user guide³.

Lancashire LNRS can be found at the following website [Local Nature Recovery Strategy 2026 - Lancashire County Council](#) We advise the following:

² [LNRS & Strategic Significance Multiplier Transition | Local Government Association](#)

³ [Statutory biodiversity metric tools and guides - GOV.UK](#)