

**MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
SALFORD CITY COUNCIL
TRAFFORD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**IRWELL CITY PARK
PLANNING GUIDANCE**

**SUSTAINABILITY AUDIT
MARCH 2008**

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Planning Guidance for the Irwell City Park has been prepared to facilitate the delivery of the Irwell City Park as an exciting and unique waterfront location within the Manchester Regional Centre.
- 1.2 The transformation will create dramatic public spaces, new waterside environments and new connections between the riverside and local neighbourhoods and businesses. New high quality commercial and residential developments and leisure uses along the riverside will provide attractions and activity.
- 1.3 The Guidance has been prepared jointly by Manchester City Council, Salford City Council and Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council to set out the guidelines which the Councils as Local Planning Authorities will use as a material consideration in determining applications for planning permission and other matters in the Irwell City Park area.
- 1.4 The Guidance aims to ensure that new public realm and development in the Irwell City Park is not only of exceptional design quality but also that it is integrated with the surrounding area and that linkages between other regeneration initiatives in the Regional Centre are successfully achieved.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The purpose of a sustainability appraisal is to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the revisions of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and for new or revised Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). Under Section 39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, sustainability appraisal is mandatory for RSS revisions and for new or revised DPDs and SPDs.
- 2.2 The Planning Guidance was prepared as a non-statutory document and therefore does not form part of the three authorities' Local Development Frameworks. Whilst the requirements of Section 39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 therefore do not apply to the Planning Guidance, was considered to be of value to undertake a basic sustainability audit of the emerging Planning Guidance in order to assess the impact of the policies against a broad range of social, economic and environmental objectives.

3 APPRAISAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 Whilst the approach taken in this sustainability audit does not comply with the approach identified in the Communities and Local Government guidance document 'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents'¹, the approach has been derived from the emerging sustainability objectives that Salford City Council will adopt as the basis for the future sustainability appraisal of its Core Strategy DPD and subsequent DPDs and SPDs and it is consistent with Trafford Council's Sustainability Appraisal for its Core Strategy.

¹ Communities and Local Government (formerly Office of the Deputy Prime Minister), November 2005.

3.2 The establishment of sustainability objectives and criteria is central to the sustainability appraisal process and provides a way in which sustainability effects can be described, assessed and compared. Twenty two objectives have been used in total, which reflect the three dimensions of sustainability; social, economic and environmental. These objectives are listed in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Sustainability Objectives

No.	Theme	Sustainability Objective
1	Population	To secure a self-sustaining and balanced population sufficient to support a full range of local services
2	Health	To improve physical and mental health
3	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	To protect and enhance biodiversity
4	Soil and land	To protect and improve soil and land resources
5	Water	To protect and enhance water resources
6		To minimise the risk and impacts of flooding
7	Air	To improve air quality
8	Climatic factors	To reduce contributions to climate change
9	Material assets	To minimise the use of non-renewable resources
10	Cultural heritage	To protect and enable the appreciation of the city's heritage
11	Landscape and townscape	To maintain and enhance the quality and character of the landscape and townscape
12	Amenity	To protect and enhance amenity
13	Crime	To reduce crime and the fear of crime
14	Economic health	To maximise economic growth that can be sustained in the long-term
15	Prosperity	To enhance economic inclusion
16	Education	To improve the city's knowledge base
17	Housing	To ensure that everyone has access to a good home that meets their needs
18	Accessibility	To improve accessibility to facilities and opportunities
19		To reduce the need to travel
20	Community cohesion	To improve community cohesion
21	Decision-making	To increase involvement in decision-making
22	Image	To improve perceptions of the city

- 3.3 The sustainability audit considers two options:
- Option 1 – No change option, where the policies of the Planning Guidance are not applied
 - Option 2 – The policies of the Planning Guidance are applied, facilitating the delivery of the Irwell City Park

- 3.4 Each option has been assessed on the basis of a five-point scale, with an additional 'uncertain' category where the impact is not known:

++	MAJOR POSITIVE
+	MINOR POSITIVE
0	NEUTRAL
-	MINOR NEGATIVE
--	MAJOR NEGATIVE
?	UNCERTAIN

- 3.5 In addition, a broad description has been provided together with the potential for mitigation to either reduce the negative effects or maximise the positive effects. The full assessment is set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.6 The production of this sustainability audit represents the first stage in the sustainability audit process. As the Planning Guidance is not subject to Section 39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, no sustainability scoping has been undertaken prior to the production of this document.
- 3.7 This sustainability audit was subject to consultation alongside the Draft Irwell City Park Planning Guidance during the period 17th August to 27th September 2007. Following the period of public consultation, the sustainability audit has been amended where necessary and finalised for publication together with the adopted Planning Guidance. The timing of key sustainability audit stages is set out in Table 2 below:

Table 2 – Timetable of sustainability audit stages

Stage	Timing
Preparation of Sustainability Audit report	May 2007
Period of 6-week consultation alongside Draft Planning Guidance	17 th August to 27 th September 2007
Preparation of final Sustainability Audit report	Early 2007
Adoption of Planning Guidance (for publication alongside Sustainability Audit, Equality Impact Assessment, and Consultation Statement)	19 th March 2008

4 SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF FINDINGS

- 4.1 **Appendix 1** sets out the detailed option assessment against the sustainability objectives.
- 4.2 It is important to clarify that in assessing the two options against the Sustainability Objectives, this assessment relates to the spatial elements of the Irwell City Park for which the Planning Guidance provides the supportive context for delivery. This sustainability audit is not intended to assess the Irwell City Park project as a whole, recognising that there are non-spatial elements to the project which go beyond the scope of the Planning Guidance. It is however important to acknowledge that the Planning Guidance has been developed in order to provide a supportive context for the delivery of the Irwell City Park and therefore by definition there will be clear linkages between the two which cannot necessarily be separated out in terms of assessment of impact.

Summary

- 4.3 In summary, the application of the Irwell City Park Planning Guidance policies will realise positive impacts across a broad range of social, economic and environmental objectives. In all instances, the application of the Planning Guidance policies would result in impacts that are either the same as, or more positive than, those that would be realised under the no change option.

Option 1 – no change option

- 4.4 Whilst the majority of the impacts under the no change option are neutral, the sustainability audit identifies a number of negative impacts which are currently being realised, and are likely to continue to be realised or potentially exacerbated if no policies are introduced to mitigate these impacts. The negative impacts include those in terms of failure to minimise the risk and impact of flooding, the failure to reduce crime and the fear of crime, the failure to enhance economic inclusion, and the failure to enhance community cohesion. The application of the Planning Guidance policies would mitigate each of these negative impacts, and indeed would ameliorate all of these impacts to realise positive outcomes.

Option 2 – Planning Guidance policies are applied

- 4.5 The application of the Planning Guidance policies would result in positive impacts across a broad range of social, economic and environmental objectives. Major positive impacts would be derived in terms of improvements to physical and mental health, the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, the reduction of crime and the fear of crime,

the improvement of accessibility to facilities and opportunities, the increasing of involvement in decision making, and the improvement of perceptions of the city. In addition to this, positive impacts would also be derived in terms of securing a self-sustaining and balanced population, the protection and enhancement of water resources, minimising the risk and impacts of flooding, reducing contributions to climate change, minimising the use of non-renewable resources, protecting and enabling the appreciation of the city's heritage, maintaining and enhancing the quality and character of the landscape and townscape, protecting and enhancing amenity, maximising economic growth, enhancing economic inclusion and improving community cohesion. There are a number of objectives where the application of the policies is likely to have a neutral impact, however in all cases this is either the same as, or more positive than, the impact that would be derived under the no change option.

Conclusion

- 4.6 In conclusion, the sustainability audit indicates that the application of the Planning Guidance policies will result in positive impacts across a broad range of social, economic and environmental objectives.

Appendix 1 - Option assessment against Sustainability Objectives

No.	Sustainability Objective	Option 1 – no change	Option 2 – Planning Guidance applied	Comments and mitigation
1	To secure a self-sustaining and balanced population sufficient to support a full range of local services	0	+	<p>The creation of the Irwell City Park will result in a new and vibrant part of the city centre with a range of functions including commercial, residential, cultural, retail and leisure uses. This will support the creation of a self-sustaining and balanced population within the surrounding area, as the Irwell City Park will create a highly attractive location for both residents and businesses. The physical decline along stretches of the river has been a factor that contributed to the successive out-migration from inner city area areas such as Ordsall and Trinity. By reversing this decline, the Irwell City Park will help to establish surrounding areas as attractive locations to live, work and invest, and will therefore support their long-term sustainability.</p>
2	To improve physical and mental health	0	++	<p>The no change option would have a neutral impact on physical and mental health. Whilst some elements of riverside walkway would be implemented as sites with river frontage are brought forward for redevelopment, this would be on a piecemeal basis and would not create a continuous recreation route along the river corridor.</p> <p>The realisation of the spatial elements of the Irwell City Park to which the Planning Guidance relates would result in significant benefits to residents, workers and visitors in terms of physical health. It would create a high quality new recreation route with up to 67,500 sqm of public space and 5.4km of pathways that would be highly accessible to those who live, work and visit the Regional Centre and surrounding areas. It would provide an excellent resource for a range of physical activities including walking, cycling, and water based activities. In addition to physical health benefits, research has indicated that positive mental health benefits can be derived from recreation and access to greenspace areas.</p>

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No.	Sustainability Objective	Option 1 – no change	Option 2 – Planning Guidance applied	Comments and mitigation
3	To protect and enhance biodiversity	0 / ?	+ +	<p>The no change option would have a neutral impact on biodiversity as no significant new habitat spaces would be created. An element of new landscaping may be introduced as part of the riverside walkway created incrementally as sites are brought forward for redevelopment, however this would be minimal in scale and may not encourage habitat creation.</p> <p>The realisation of the spatial elements of the Irwell City Park to which the Planning Guidance relates would result in the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. Within Zone 1, the creation of an Ecology Park at the Meadows would be a focus for new habitat creation, creating a matrix of wetland, marginal and woodland habitats, and interpretation facilities within a new Ranger Base / Visitor Centre. Significant stretches of the riverside route will also facilitate the creation of new habitats through planting and landscaping. Policy ICP20 of the Planning Guidance specifically seeks to encourage the creation of habitats along the riverside corridor that will encourage biodiversity. The Planning Guidance would also support the improvement of biodiversity within the river environment through requiring development to contribute to the improvement and regulation of the quality, level and flow of surface and ground water entering the River Irwell (Policies ICP18 and ICP19). This would support the creation of a river environment that can sustain a range of wildlife.</p>
4	To protect and improve soil and land resources	0	0 / ?	It is likely that neither option would have a significant impact on soil and land resources, further to those impacts that may be derived from enhancing biodiversity.
5	To protect and enhance water resources	0 / ?	+	Policies ICP18 and ICP19 of the Planning Guidance will ensure that the design of all proposals for new infrastructure within the Irwell City Park should, where possible, contribute to the

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				improvement and regulation of the quality, level and flow of surface and ground water entering the River Irwell. This could include the use of swales to gather run-off from adjoining roads and urban areas, the filtering of run-off water to remove harmful discharges, and arrangements to deal with litter and illegal dumping in the River. The three partner authorities will work with other agencies including the Environment Agency, Mersey Basin Campaign, Action Irwell, and the Healthy Waterways Trust to continue to develop design and maintenance proposals which address these water quality issues.
6	To minimise the risk and impacts of flooding	-	+	The no change option could increase the risk and impacts of flooding, as development along the river corridor could decrease the lag-time and increase the intensity of run-off into the river following periods of precipitation. Policies ICP18 and ICP19 of the Planning Guidance will ensure that the design of all proposals for new infrastructure within the Irwell City Park should, where possible, contribute to the improvement and regulation of the quality, level and flow of surface and ground water entering the River Irwell. This could include the use of swales to gather run-off from adjoining roads and urban areas and the filtering of run-off water to remove harmful discharges. The application of the policies within the Planning Guidance should therefore have a positive impact in terms of minimising the risk and impacts of flooding.
7	To improve air quality	0	0	It is likely that neither option would have a significant impact on air quality. The Planning Guidance will encourage the introduction of areas of landscaping and planting which could have a positive impact on local air quality, however this impact is likely to be relatively minor in scale.

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8	To reduce contributions to climate change	0	+	<p>The application of the Planning Guidance policies will make a contribution to climate change objectives through promoting energy efficiency and the adoption of environmentally sustainable techniques. Policy ICP17 Environmental Design requires that all proposals for new infrastructure within the Irwell City Park should accord with the principles of sustainable construction and should make a positive contribution to the delivery of a sustainable environment. The policy encourages the use of materials from sustainable sources, the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, the use of benchmark BREEAM ratings as minimum development standards, and the consideration of photovoltaic panels and wind turbines for energy generation. The application of the policies would therefore make a positive contribution to realising climate change objectives through reducing emissions.</p>
9	To minimise the use of non-renewable resources	0	+	<p>As with Sustainability Objective 8 above, the application of the Planning Guidance policies will make a contribution to minimising the use of non-renewable resources through promoting environmentally sustainable design. Policy ICP17 requires that all proposals for new infrastructure within the Irwell City Park should accord with the principles of sustainable construction and should make a positive contribution to the delivery of a sustainable environment. The policy encourages the use of materials from sustainable sources, the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, the use of benchmark BREEAM ratings as minimum development standards, and the consideration of photovoltaic panels and wind turbines for energy generation. The application of the policies would therefore make a positive contribution to minimising the use of non-renewable resources.</p>

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10	To protect and enable the appreciation of the city's heritage	0	+	<p>The River Irwell was once one of the most important commercial and recreational waterways in the North West. The Irwell lies at the heart of where the historic settlements of Manchester and Salford developed. As the cities grew in size and status through the nineteenth century, the wealth of the cities was expressed in their built form. The river corridor is no exception and is lined with many buildings of historic significance. These range from the Grade 1 listed Manchester Cathedral, to listed former warehouse and office buildings, to listed bridges and structures along the route. Where there is currently only limited public access along the riverside, the Planning Guidance policies will facilitate the creation of a continuous riverside walkway along the length of the Irwell City Park. This will enable the appreciation of the heritage of Manchester, Salford and Trafford along its route. Visitor interpretation facilities will provide contextual information to support the understanding of the river's heritage in terms of both its historical significance and its built legacy. Policy ICP9 of the Planning Guidance specifically relates to heritage and requires that new infrastructure schemes will need to respect the historic and architectural importance of listed buildings and structures within the City Park area. Policy ICP10 seeks to ensure a record and evaluation of remains of archaeological interest within the City Park area prior to the development of infrastructure provision, in order to improve the understanding of the evolution and character of historic Manchester, Salford and Trafford.</p>
11	To maintain and enhance the quality and character of the landscape and townscape	0	+	<p>The application of the Planning Guidance policies will make a positive contribution to enhancing the quality and character of the townscape. The Irwell City Park will create a new and vibrant part of the city centre with a range of functions, bringing activity to the waterside throughout the day and into the evening. The Irwell City Park will redefine the role of the River Irwell as a point</p>

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				of interconnection between Manchester, Salford and Trafford and represents a positive addition to the townscape of the three authorities through creating high quality areas of greenspace and civic space.
12	To protect and enhance amenity	0	+	The application of the Planning Guidance policies will make a positive contribution to enhancing amenity. The Irwell City Park will create a new and vibrant part of the city centre with a range of functions, bringing activity to the waterside throughout the day and into the evening. It will enhance amenity through establishing a new high quality recreation route with associated greenspace and civic spaces.
13	To reduce crime and the fear of crime	-	+ +	The do nothing option would result in the continuation of the existing situation where parts of the riverside are susceptible to crime and anti-social behaviour due to their relative isolation and lack of overlooking. The application of the Planning Guidance policies would make a strong positive contribution to reducing crime and the fear of crime within this area. This would be achieved in a range of ways. Firstly, the Planning Guidance encourages activity along the riverside route through active ground floor uses and overlooking, thereby improving perceptions of personal safety. Secondly, the delivery of the Irwell City Park project will develop a high quality recreation resource along the riverside corridor and will bring greater animation and activity to the area in terms of users and visitors throughout the day and into the evening. This will improve casual surveillance of the area and discourage the perpetration of criminal acts. Policy ICP6 of the Planning Guidance specifically relates to Secure Design and requires that the provision of new infrastructure should take into consideration the principles of 'Secured by Design'.

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14	To maximise economic growth that can be sustained in the long-term	0	+	The application of the Planning Guidance policies will encourage economic growth along the River Irwell corridor and surrounding areas. Environmental improvements to the river corridor and the creation of a high quality recreation resource with associated greenspace and civic spaces will establish a positive climate for investment in the surrounding area, recognising the value of the river as an asset. This will enhance the attractiveness of the area as a place to live, work, and invest, and will support sustainable economic growth.
15	To enhance economic inclusion	-	+	The no change option could have a negative impact on socio-economic inclusion as sites may be brought forward in a piecemeal way that does not facilitate public access to the riverside. This could result in a form of 'privatisation' of the riverside environment as a resource for those that can afford to live in surrounding residential blocks. The application of the Planning Guidance policies will establish public access for all along the length of the riverside corridor, thereby ensuring that all of those who live, work and visit the Regional Centre can enjoy the benefits of the river as an asset. The River Irwell runs through communities that suffer from socio-economic exclusion through deprivation, and the Irwell City Park will directly benefit the residents of these communities through creating a high quality recreation resource with associated greenspace and civic spaces that all can enjoy. The creation of an attractive environment to work and invest along the riverside corridor will create new employment opportunities for existing and new residents to access, thereby providing a supportive context to encourage economic inclusion.
16	To improve the city's knowledge base	0	+ / ?	The application of the Planning Guidance policies will support the economic renaissance of the Regional Centre, and create a

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				high quality environment for people to live, work and invest. A high quality environment is recognised as one element that can support the growth of the knowledge-base of cities. The Irwell City Park could therefore indirectly support the development of the Knowledge Capital, and the identified Arc of Opportunity for the development of the Knowledge Capital has close spatial linkages with the River Irwell corridor area in enhancing connections across the Regional Centre.
17	To ensure that everyone has access to a good home that meets their needs	0	0 / ?	The Planning Guidance does not have direct implications for ensuring access for all to quality housing. In establishing a high quality recreation route, there are however indirect benefits in terms of enhancing amenity of existing and future residents of the surrounding area (see Sustainability Objective 12 – Amenity, above).
18	To improve accessibility to facilities and opportunities	0	+ +	The application of the Planning Guidance policies will establish a new high quality recreation resource for those who live, work and visit the Regional Centre. In doing this, it will establish new recreation facilities, including the riverside walkway, new civic spaces, new and improved greenspaces and the creation of an Ecology Park at the Meadows with associated visitor and interpretation facilities. The Planning Guidance will also facilitate the introduction of new retail and leisure facilities at key points along the river corridor. The Irwell City Park will clearly enhance connections across and between Manchester, Salford, and Trafford thereby facilitating movement and improving accessibility.
19	To reduce the need to travel	0	+ / ?	The creation of the Irwell City Park will create a high quality route that will establish new linkages and enhance existing connections between Manchester, Salford and Trafford. The route has been designed to foster new connections with the

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				surrounding areas so that stretches of the route can be utilised for shorter journeys, as well as the utilisation of longer stretches of the route for recreation and leisure purposes. In realising this, the City Park could reduce the need to travel by car through encouraging those who live and work around the area to walk or cycle along part of the route as an alternative to using vehicular means of transport.
20	To improve community cohesion	-	+	The no change option could have a negative impact on community cohesion as sites may be brought forward in a piecemeal way that does not facilitate public access to the riverside. Existing communities could see this as the ‘privatisation’ of the riverside environment. The application of the Planning Guidance policies will establish public access for all along the length of the riverside corridor, thereby ensuring that all of those who live, work and visit the Regional Centre can enjoy the benefits of the river as an asset. The River Irwell runs through communities that suffer from social exclusion through deprivation, and the Irwell City Park will directly benefit the residents of these communities through creating a high quality recreation resource with associated greenspace and civic spaces that all can enjoy, thereby encouraging community cohesion.
21	To increase involvement in decision-making	0	++	The development of the Irwell City Park project has involved extensive communication and involvement. Community and stakeholder involvement has been fundamental to shaping the way that the Irwell City Park proposals have developed. The Consultation Statement which is a supporting document to the Planning Guidance sets out the scale and range of participatory activity, but in summary, over 50 events and activities were held, and over 40,000 leaflets, postcards and brochures were distributed through consultation events and various public

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				outlets including schools, community centres, libraries and museums. The comprehensiveness of the approach to communication and engagement enabled over 1500 people to contribute their ideas to help shape the proposals for Irwell City Park. The project has therefore already made a major positive contribution to increasing involvement in decision-making. In the future there will be further opportunities to participate in the design and development of the City Park’s infrastructure, for example at the Meadows.
22	To improve perceptions of the city	0	+ +	The application of the Planning Guidance policies in enabling the creation of the Irwell City Park could realise transformative benefits for parts of the Regional Centre. Whilst the renaissance of the Regional Centre has already done much to transform perceptions of the Manchester City Region, the existing environmental degradation of large stretches of the riverside has served to hold back areas from realising their full potential. The creation of the Irwell City Park would facilitate the transformation of these areas, and perceptions of them, through creating a high quality environment and recreational resource that is an attractive location to live, work and invest. The Irwell City Park represents an opportunity to reconnect Manchester, Salford and Trafford through turning the tide on years of neglect and embracing the River Irwell as a fundamental part of the Regional Centres’s heritage and the key to its future economic and social growth.