

Rochdale Township Green Infrastructure Action Plan draft: May 2013



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Chapter 1: Why a Green Infrastructure Plan for Rochdale Township?

Introduction

Rochdale Township is home to the largest proportion of the borough's population and is the main centre for shopping, services, leisure, local government and employment within the Borough. It has a strong sense of identity with distinct ambitions to create sustainable communities for its people, environment and economy. The quality of the environment including its green spaces, watercourses and surrounding countryside is important in shaping how the Township is perceived and experienced both by residents and visitors, along with potential investors. The environment is also part of the essential infrastructure for the Township, Borough and beyond including the core of Greater Manchester. This Action Plan sets out Rochdale Township's particular green infrastructure assets and a series of key objectives and projects to ensure that their value to the Township is fully realised in supporting economic growth, community health and well being and a sustainable environment which can help address the impacts of climate change.

What is green infrastructure?

The green spaces, open water, trees and gardens which surround, connect and form part of the built environment in Rochdale Township provide a number of essential environmental services that support daily life, health, well-being and which supports the township's regeneration and economic growth aspirations. Together, the green environments and services they provide are known as the township's 'green infrastructure', and will be explained in more detail in chapter 2, page 4.

Opportunities for Rochdale Township

The countryside surrounding much of the urban area of Rochdale Township is important for wildlife and industrial heritage and there are a number of significant green infrastructure features. These include Healey Dell Local Nature Reserve, open moors and a number of reservoirs to the north. The Roch Valley is a key landscape feature within the Township and provides an opportunity for green infrastructure improvements and links with the countryside via tributary valleys and green corridors. These connect inner urban neighbourhoods with the wider countryside to the north and south, particularly the Spodden Valley and Naden Brook. There are a range of recreational open spaces including four town parks and many have active community groups associated with them. Some open spaces form green corridors that extend into the urban areas, connecting with the countryside to the north and south. There are significant areas of ancient woodlands in the Township, particularly along the Cheesden and Ashworth valleys. The moors to the north of the Township is important for biodiversity and accessible countryside as well as providing support for flood risk management and also includes the Scout Moor wind farm. The Rochdale Canal and National Cycle Network Route 66 along it connects to other strategic routes and to the wider countryside and beyond. It is also important habitat for a wide range of wildlife and has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). There are fourteen sites of biological interest (SBIs) wholly within the township, the largest being Knowl Moor in the north and there are six SBIs that cross borders with other townships.

There are challenges in some of the inner urban neighbourhoods which have relatively dense housing but few accessible open spaces and there are areas of poor

environmental quality within inner wards. However Rochdale Township also has some high quality housing and employment areas along with a rich built heritage. There has been a significant amount of investment in the Township in recent years and this is continuing with key areas of development and regeneration including Metrolink, Kingsway Business Park and Rochdale town centre development. Green infrastructure opportunities and challenges within Rochdale Township are discussed further in chapter 4, page 12.

Objectives of the Green Infrastructure Plan

The Rochdale Green Infrastructure Action Plan will help ensure green infrastructure achieves its full potential to support Rochdale's objectives for growth, regeneration and well being in the community. It will help to deliver the Rochdale Township Plan along with the plans and policies of Rochdale borough and Greater Manchester. This Plan sets out the key objectives for green infrastructure, outlined below:

- **Growing Rochdale:** A high quality environment will support the Township's aspirations for economic growth, regeneration and health and well-being.
- **Active, Healthy Rochdale:** Provide more opportunities for active and healthy lifestyles.
- **Accessible Rochdale:** Enhance and increase routes for walking and cycling to promote active transport, improve health and reduce pollution.
- **Living Rochdale:** Enhance wildlife habitats and increase biodiversity and improve access to the natural environment and wildlife for the community.
- **Resilient Rochdale:** Ensure that green infrastructure enables Rochdale to tackle the effects of climate change and helps with flood risk management.
- **Visit Rochdale:** Ensure that Rochdale's environment creates a positive impact by improving gateways and access to the countryside, parks and heritage features to enable the Township to promote a stronger visitor package.
- **Distinctive Rochdale:** By delivering all of the above themes Rochdale will become a community and township with a high quality environment and a stronger sense of place.

More detail of the green infrastructure objectives for Rochdale can be found in chapter 6, page 51. These objectives

Delivering the Plan

The Rochdale Green Infrastructure Plan will be delivered through three long term strategic projects that will help to deliver good green infrastructure where it is needed most. These projects are set out in detail in chapter 6, from page 53, but are outlined below:

1. Rochdale Greenways Network:

Enhancing and improving active transport routes to Rochdale Township's key heritage assets, countryside and green spaces, particularly from the town centre as well as prioritising routes for commuting and access to schools, employment and services.

2. Roch Valley River Park:

River re-opening in town centre, accessible, high quality environment, links to borough and beyond,

3. Growing Greener Neighbourhoods in Rochdale:

Increasing the range of services, products and functions provided by green infrastructure in Rochdale so that it can meet the needs of the community,

particularly for flood risk management, adapting to climate change, increasing biodiversity and improving health and well being.

These strategic projects will be delivered through a series of large and small actions throughout the life of the Action Plan to 2028. This will maximise the opportunities arising from the borough's Local Development Framework and a range of other plans, strategies and programmes. It will be reviewed on a three yearly basis to ensure that all plans, strategies and programmes important to Rochdale's future prosperity, growth and well-being are captured and green infrastructure delivery opportunities maximised.

The Green Infrastructure Action Plan will provide a strong and wide-ranging evidence base to help target opportunities for delivering improvements. This evidence will be updated as new studies and surveys e.g. for flood risk management and trees and woodlands are published. The Plan will support funding bids to external grant programmes e.g. to the Forestry Commission and Environment Agency and help to inform new development and regeneration proposals so that green infrastructure requirements and opportunities can be built into the planning and delivery of schemes. The Plan will also provide a basis to identify opportunities for voluntary sector led projects and those proposed and driven by local communities which will include opportunities for training, education and building local capacity to improve and manage the environment.

The Action Plan will be supported by an annually updated work programme, a separate document running in conjunction with the Rochdale Green Infrastructure Plan which includes short, medium and long-term projects and details of how they will be delivered. This structure will ensure that new opportunities, funding and delivery mechanisms for green infrastructure projects, which may arise at different times can be included to deliver the plan.

The Plan cannot be delivered overnight and to be successful it requires the support and ownership of all interests including the local authority, government agencies, volunteer and community groups, healthcare organisations, residents, school children, developers, businesses and landowners. A positive approach to increasing the benefits of green infrastructure to our communities involves looking at what we need green spaces to do both now and in the future. We need to ensure that through good management, design and location we have enough of the right types of green infrastructure in the right places and doing all the things we need it to do.

Chapter 2: What is Green Infrastructure?

Green infrastructure is the ‘natural’ outdoor environment all around us and is part of the life support system of the community. It can include all green spaces and open water in and around our communities from private gardens and street trees, ponds and playing fields to the extensive river valleys and open countryside surrounding our towns. Natural England, the Government’s advisor on the natural environment defines Green infrastructure as:

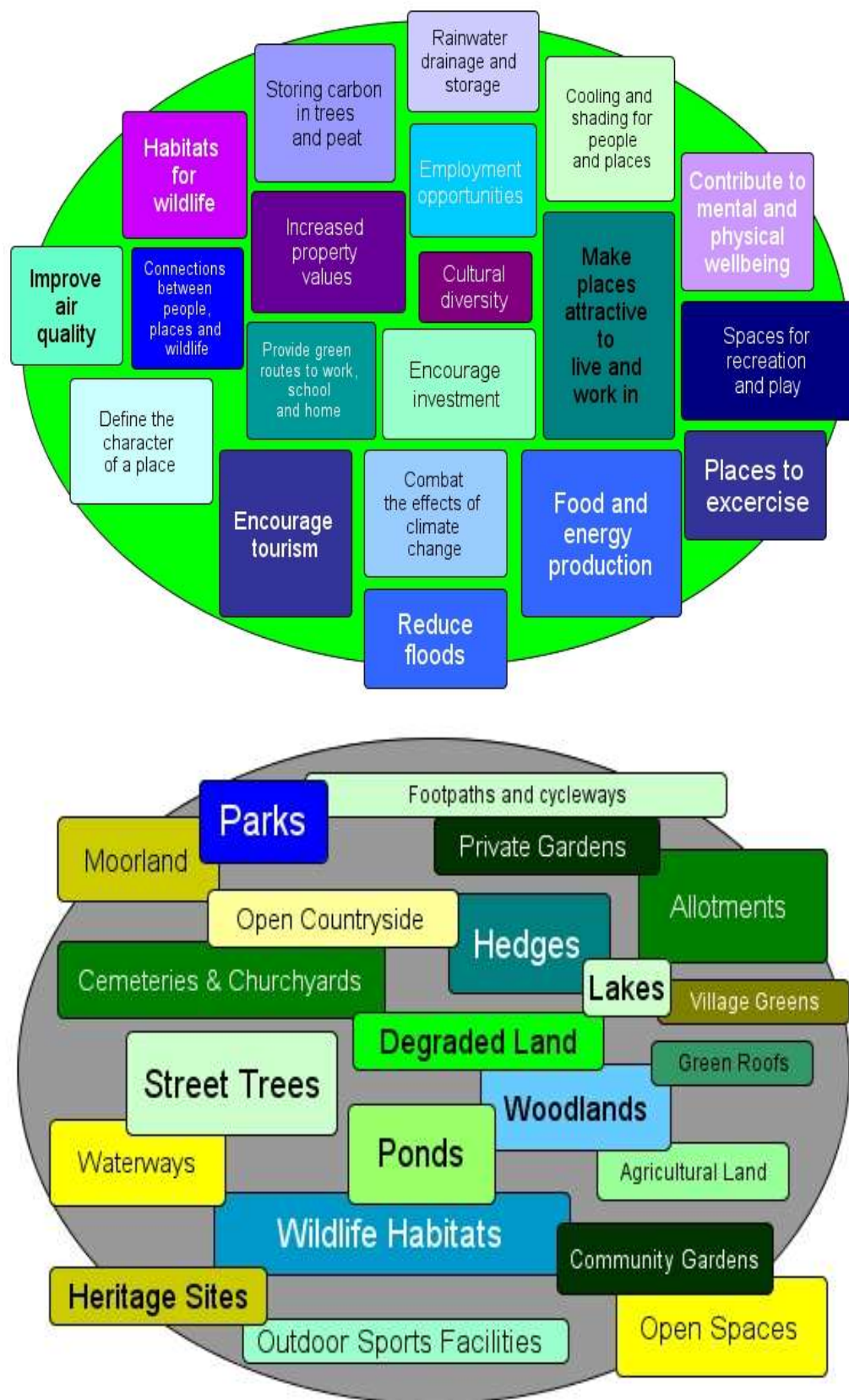
“Green infrastructure is a strategically planned and delivered network of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Green infrastructure includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, allotments and private gardens.”

Green infrastructure functions include conserving and enhancing the natural environment, providing wildlife corridors, reducing noise and air pollution, helping communities adapt to climate change by managing water and carbon, providing green routes in and around communities, managing flood risk and providing space for play, quiet relaxation, sport and leisure. Many of the elements, which make up our green infrastructure and the function it provides are shown in figure 2.1, page 5.

An example of a multi-functional landscape along the Rochdale Canal & National Cycle Route 66: Providing a pedestrian, cycling and waterway route, a place for recreation, habitat and access for wildlife and important heritage and cultural features.



Figure 2.1 Functions and Components of Green Infrastructure

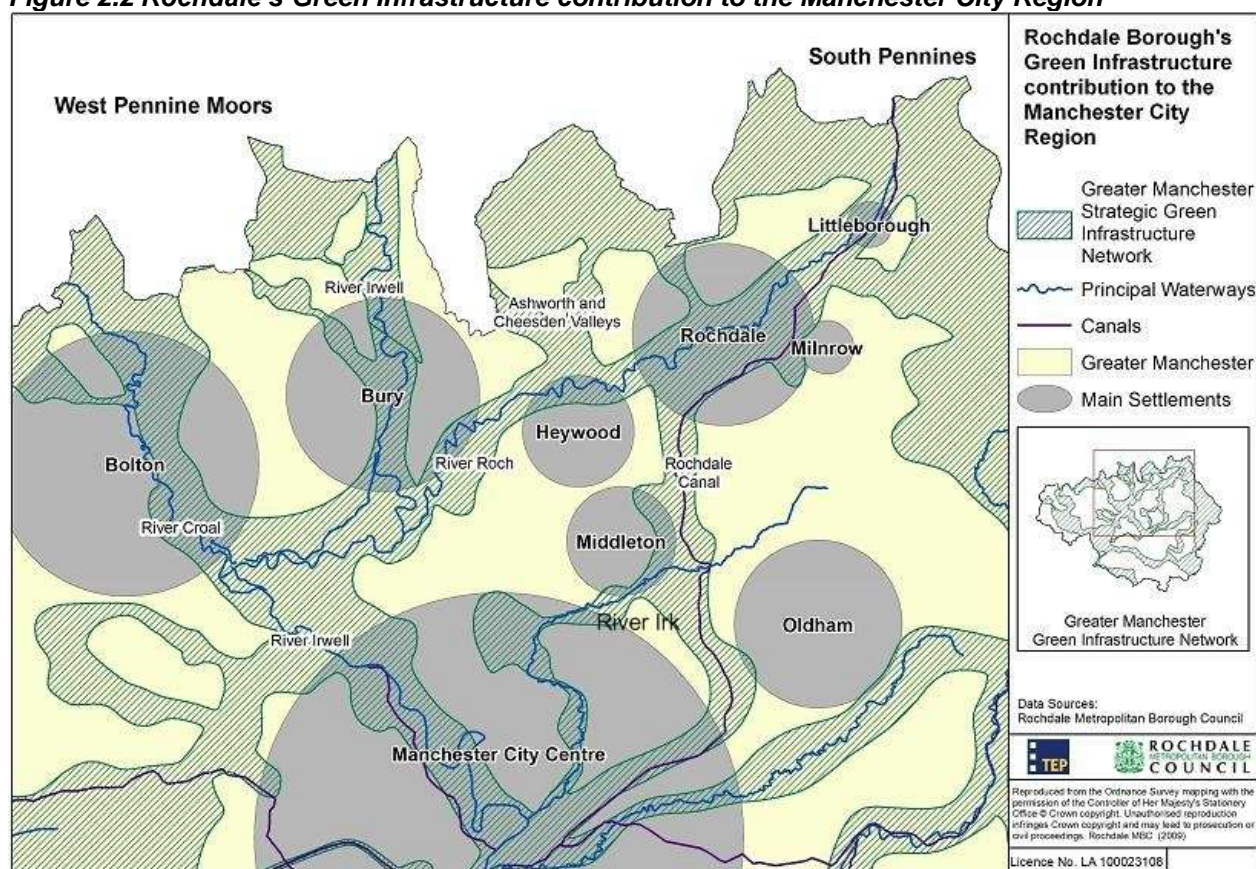


Green infrastructure is therefore not simply concerned with the amount of green spaces that we have but in its quality and ability to perform the environmental services they provide supporting everyday life, our economy and the future well-being of our communities. Access to high quality, well maintained urban green spaces promotes physical activity, positive mental wellbeing and healthy childhood development.

Well located, designed and managed green space and water bodies can bring many benefits to a community and make places attractive to live in and to invest in. Low quality green spaces which are poorly located, badly managed with no clear functions for the community can discourage investment in an area and can attract problems such as anti social behaviour and fly tipping.

Each green space or water body however small can be multi functional, which means that it can perform a number of different roles. These different functions are performed by individual spaces but also as part a larger network of green infrastructure, which can extend well beyond the Rochdale Township. For example the Rochdale Canal, which connects the township with Middleton and Pennines Townships and beyond, is part of National Cycle Route (NCR) 66, on the strategic national cycle network across the country. It is also a popular walking route providing access into the South Pennine Moors from many urban neighbourhoods. It is recognised as a site of European importance for biodiversity and has been designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) because it contains important habitats for submerged and aquatic plants. It also acts as a wildlife corridor, allowing wildlife to move between habitat areas. The canal is also valued for its heritage and cultural importance by the communities along its route. Rochdale Township's green infrastructure contribution to the wider borough and Greater Manchester is shown below in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2 Rochdale's Green Infrastructure contribution to the Manchester City Region



An introduction to Rochdale Township

Half of the Borough's population live within Rochdale Township and it is the main centre for services, leisure, local government and employment for the Borough. The urban centre is surrounded by attractive countryside, particularly to the north and west. The township has good transport connections, which have been recently increased by the Metrolink extension into the town centre. The River Roch flows through the township and is one of the key landscape features through the urban core. Major green infrastructure features within the township include Healey Dell Local Nature Reserve, major river valleys including the Roch and the Spodden, and a number of reservoirs including Naden and Greenbooth. The four town parks include Broadfield Park and Falinge Park and there is a range of other open spaces within the urban areas, many have active community groups associated with them. Some of the Township's open spaces form green corridors that extend into the urban areas, connecting with the wider countryside, for example Cronkyshaw Common and Falinge Park form a green corridor connecting Spodden Valley with Buckley Moor and the wider South Pennines Moors. There are significant areas of ancient woodlands in the Township, particularly along the Cheesden and Ashworth valleys. Rooley Moor, to the north of the Township has a good network of rights of way connecting with the outer urban areas. These moors are vital in terms of biodiversity and providing support for flood risk management, they also include the Scout Moor wind farm. The Rochdale Canal provides a number of different services for the Township, not only as a waterway but also a cycle route (National Cycle Network Route 66), a walking route and habitat for a wide range of wildlife. Rochdale Canal is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). There are fourteen sites of biological interest (SBIs) wholly within the township, the largest being Knowl Moor in the north and there are six SBIs that cross borders with other townships. The Roch Valley is one of the key river valleys forming a part of Greater Manchester's strategic flood risk management and its biodiversity network. It is also a key landscape feature within the Township and provides an opportunity for green infrastructure improvements and links with the countryside via tributary valleys and other green corridors.

There are challenges in some of the inner urban neighbourhoods which have relatively dense housing but few accessible open spaces and there are areas of poor environmental quality. However Rochdale Township also has some high quality housing and employment areas along with a rich built heritage. There has been a significant amount of investment in the Township in recent years and this is continuing with key areas of development and regeneration including Metrolink and Rochdale town centre development, which includes the reopening of sections of the River Roch to reveal the historic bridges.

Kingsway Business Park to the south east of the Township is one of the largest developments in the North West and is still developing. There are a number of opportunities for green infrastructure improvements building on the high quality work already done as part of the Kingsway masterplan and the Stanney Brook corridor.

Rochdale Township has substantial advantages because of its location, surrounded by attractive landscape and its abundance of rich industrial heritage but there are, in green infrastructure terms, many challenges to be addressed including:

- Access to the countryside and high quality open space from parts of the urban core;
- Urban open spaces vary in quality and in some locations do not provide a distinctive, positive character or required public benefits for Rochdale Township and its neighbourhoods;
- Parts of the Township are subject to fluvial and surface water flood risk;

- Some areas of Rochdale Township are poorly adapted to the effects of climate change;
- There is a need to improve the physical environment of some of the Township's more urban neighbourhoods;
- Ensuring that economic growth, new development and delivering good green infrastructure are mutually supportive activities and help to protect and enhance the Township's unique character and green infrastructure assets.

The Rochdale Township Plan, the Local Development Framework and other plans and strategies prepared by the Council and other agencies have recognised these challenges but more needs to be done to ensure that Rochdale gains lasting benefits from its green infrastructure. The Rochdale Green Infrastructure Action Plan will help to address these challenges by delivering the three strategic projects Rochdale Township's green infrastructure and how it relates to the Township and its community can be clearly seen from the aerial view shown in figure 2.3, page 9.

Figure 2.3 Rochdale Green infrastructure from the air



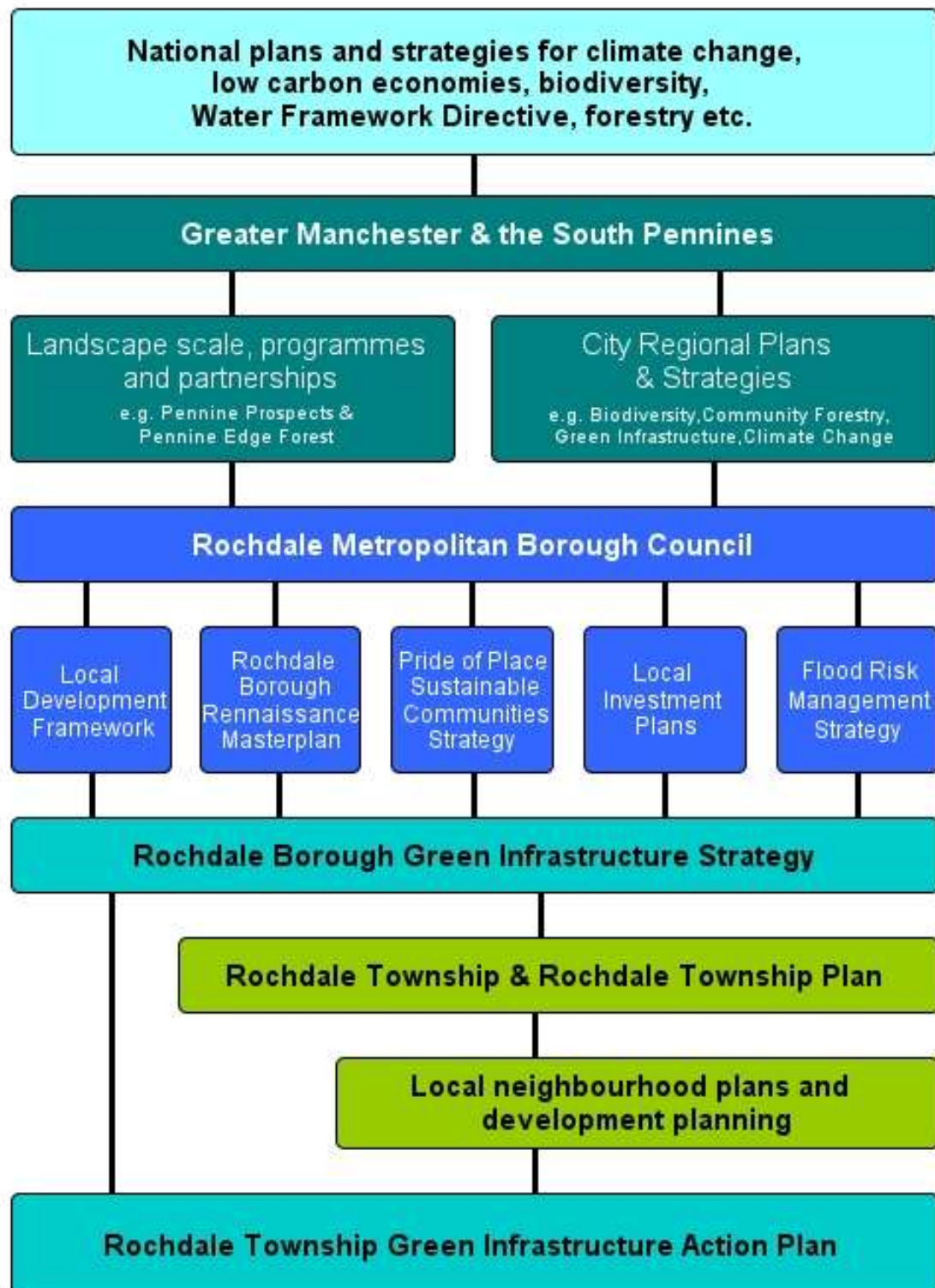
Chapter 3: A Policy Context for Green Infrastructure in Rochdale Township

Green Infrastructure is part of a complex policy mosaic and cuts across a range of objectives at all levels including the North West region and Greater Manchester down to plans for individual neighbourhoods. Through the life of this action plan, it is expected that policy guidance and drivers for green infrastructure plans will have grown and changed and will be much more explicit as new or revised plans, policies and programmes from Government and its agencies, local authorities and major delivery bodies such as health providers, emerge and recognise the importance of green infrastructure in their delivery.

A diagram highlighting the main components of a policy and strategy framework for delivering green infrastructure is shown in Figure 3.1 on page 11. Within this framework it is worth highlighting some key documents which provide strong policy support and guidance for green infrastructure and highlight the importance of green infrastructure to support economic growth, quality of life for communities and a high quality, resilient environment in Rochdale Township, Rochdale Borough and Greater Manchester. See appendix, page 65 for further discussion of policy context.

At a local level the Rochdale Borough Renaissance Masterplan recognises the value of the borough's green infrastructure to growth, regeneration and quality of life in Rochdale borough. The Local Development Framework will ensure green infrastructure supports local communities, housing and economic development by maximising the functions and services it provides. The Township Green Infrastructure Action Plans will be an important vehicle for targeting, supporting and enabling delivery of key green infrastructure actions at all scales to help deliver the borough's priorities for the physical environment and sustainable development.

Figure 3.1 Policy context



Chapter 4: What do we want Green Infrastructure in Rochdale Township to do?

Green infrastructure in Rochdale Township must help deliver the Township's objectives for economic growth as well as providing an attractive and healthy environment for residents, workers and visitors both now and into the future. The Township's green infrastructure must also provide benefits for the wider borough and for Greater Manchester where possible. The functions we want green infrastructure in Rochdale Township to perform are:

Provide a sense of place and positive identity and image for Rochdale Township and the borough of Rochdale

Green spaces, parks and gardens, the countryside, gateways and corridors all significantly influence perceptions about image and the quality of place and the quality of life it will provide and this can have a direct impact on tourism and the attraction of a place to live, work and invest in. The Township has a range of attractive open spaces such as Broadfield Park and Healey Dell Local Nature Reserve (LNR) along with high quality open countryside, access land and peat upland moors to the north. The Township also has a strong built heritage interest, particularly around Rochdale Town Hall and Toad Lane. These places provide a high quality environment and a strong sense of place for the community and give a good first impression of Rochdale Borough for visitors and for potential investors. However, there are places within the Township where the environment is poor through dereliction, neglect or lack of visual interest.

(Photo: Memorial gardens)

Provide access for all ages and abilities to good quality urban green space and the countryside around Rochdale Township for recreation and tourism

Good quality urban green spaces, parks, gardens, recreational facilities and countryside are major assets for promoting a town for tourism, recreation and leisure activities. The market for tourism is diverse, ranging from leisurely pursuits to more active recreation such as cycling and climbing. These assets are also important to current residents and people who may be considering Rochdale Township as a place to live. It is important to ensure that people of all ages and abilities can enjoy as wide a range of activities and experiences as possible whether they are visiting, living or working in the Township. The school grounds, parks, woodlands and countryside in and around Rochdale Township also provide a diverse and stimulating 'outdoor classroom' resource where children of all ages can experience and learn about wildlife, local food and healthy eating as well as climate change and local heritage.

The countryside in and around Rochdale Township contains a wealth of wildlife and built heritage with attractive moorland landscapes close to many neighbourhoods to the north of the Township. However access to the countryside from some neighbourhoods is poor and there are environmental problems such as fly tipping and dereliction at some existing and potential key gateways to the countryside, which needs to be tackled.

There are opportunities to create a more extensive green routes network in Rochdale Township, which links tourist and recreation destinations such as Healey Dell LNR, town parks, the Rochdale Canal and the upland reservoirs through a series of urban and rural routes providing good quality access for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Opportunities to use existing initiatives such as the Connect 2 cycle project, will provide the basis for delivering the network.

Encourage walking and cycling for everyday journeys, healthy lifestyles and well being

Access to good quality green spaces near to where people live within urban areas along with accessible routes to the wider countryside is important to the ability of local people to lead a healthy and active life. Visiting green spaces can give a range of benefits for mental health and tackling obesity as well as helping reduce the incidence of respiratory and cardiac problems. Making walking and cycling a more attractive alternative to using the car involves creating greener streets and an open space network with clearly identified routes for recreation, routes to school, shops and services and employment. These should provide a safe and welcoming environment where people feel confident and safe. There are good walking routes within the countryside, such as the Rochdale Way and the Pennine Edge Forest Trail but at present there are some barriers to movement and a lack of defined urban green routes in some neighbourhoods within the Township.

(Photo: Chadwick Lane)

Help manage flood risk and improve water quality

Flooding can cause significant harm to communities through damage to property, danger to the public and disruption to travel and the local economy. Flood risk in the Township can arise from watercourses and a range of other sources, sometimes in combination, including drainage from the moors to the north, surface water run off and the local sewer system. As the climate changes there is a greater likelihood of more extreme rainfall events which may be more frequent and also more damaging.

An indication of the most significant areas of potential flood risk in Rochdale Township are shown in figure 4.1, *(to be inserted)*. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Rochdale Borough (2009) identified areas of fluvial risk based on the rivers network and also an indication of surface water flood risk. The River Roch and its tributaries such as Hey Brook, pose significant flood risk to some communities and their local economy within the township. The Council is working with the Environment Agency (EA) to identify opportunities to deliver improved flood risk management using green infrastructure as part of potential flood storage solutions in the upper Roch Valley north of Littleborough. More effective flood storage would reduce the need for more substantial 'hard' flood defences in and around current and future areas of risk and can also provide local benefits for recreation and biodiversity. New development and regeneration projects within the Township will also provide an opportunity to create and deliver green infrastructure to support flood risk management on site and downstream.

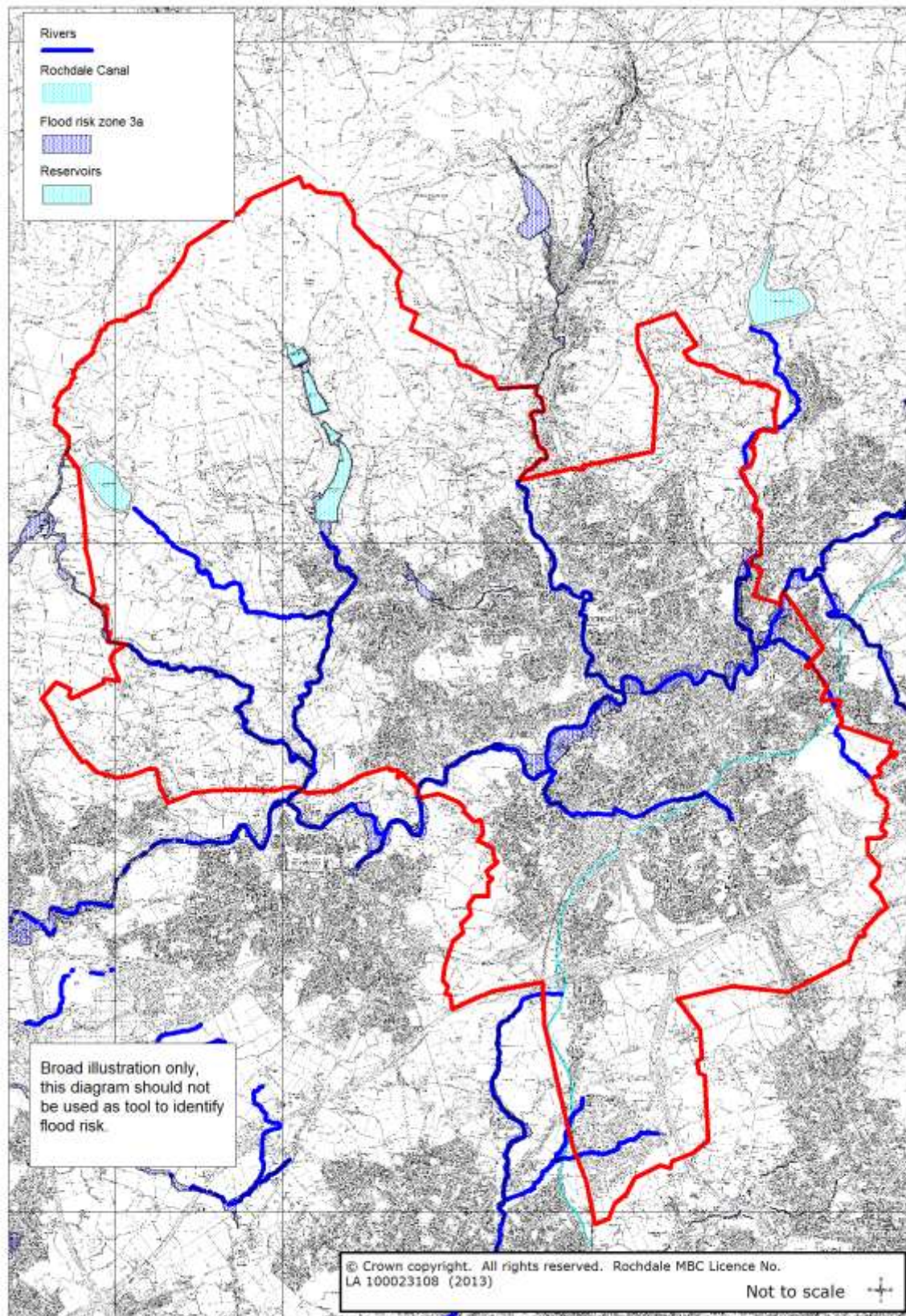
A Greater Manchester Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) was completed in 2013 and identifies surface water flood risk in more detail and options as to how it may be addressed. Green infrastructure will be an important component of how surface water flood risk is reduced and managed more effectively in the future and green assets from gardens to parks, playing fields and other open spaces and water bodies either adapted or created to assist sustainable urban drainage will form a part of a surface water management network, which the Council will work with the EA and United Utilities (UU) to develop as appropriate.

A local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Rochdale borough will be produced by the end of 2013 setting out objectives and priorities for flood risk management and how it is proposed to deliver them including by the use, enhancement and creation of green infrastructure for this purpose. It will support actions, including opportunities for working

with the EA, UU and developers, that could improve the ability to manage flood risk such as de-culverting water courses, improvements to the sewer network, creating or enhancing Sustainable Urban Drainage and appropriate land management.

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) requires all EU countries to manage and maintain water quality to a consistent standard which includes achieving a 'good' status for all water bodies by 2015. This requires actions to ensure improvements in water quality or to stop decline as necessary and includes the effect of pollution from discharges, groundwater and roads, maintaining and improving biodiversity and promoting recreation and enjoyment of the water environment in a sustainable way. The EA have produced River Basin Management Plans to help deliver WFD requirements. Green infrastructure is recognised as a major opportunity to help maintain and improve both the quality of water courses through intercepting pollutants and also to achieve sustainable management of the water environment including river valleys. The Green Infrastructure Action Plan will provide a basis for identifying partnership opportunities for delivering the River Basin Management Plan and a good quality water environment in Rochdale Township.

Figure 4.1 Principal watercourses and indicative areas of significant flood risk



Support biodiversity sites and networks

Rochdale Township is important in terms of biodiversity. Healey Dell LNR lies to the north of the Township and there are also currently twenty areas designated as Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) and several significant areas of ancient woodland including Jowkin Wood within the Ashworth Valley. The Rochdale Canal is recognised as a site of European importance for biodiversity and has been designated a Special Area of Conservation because it contains important habitats for submerged and aquatic plants. All of these designations recognise their value to the biodiversity of Rochdale Borough and Greater Manchester and they form part of the Greater Manchester biodiversity network helping to deliver the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) (2009) and the Rochdale BAP. They also provide a collection of assets providing local communities with access to high quality biodiversity for enjoyment and education.

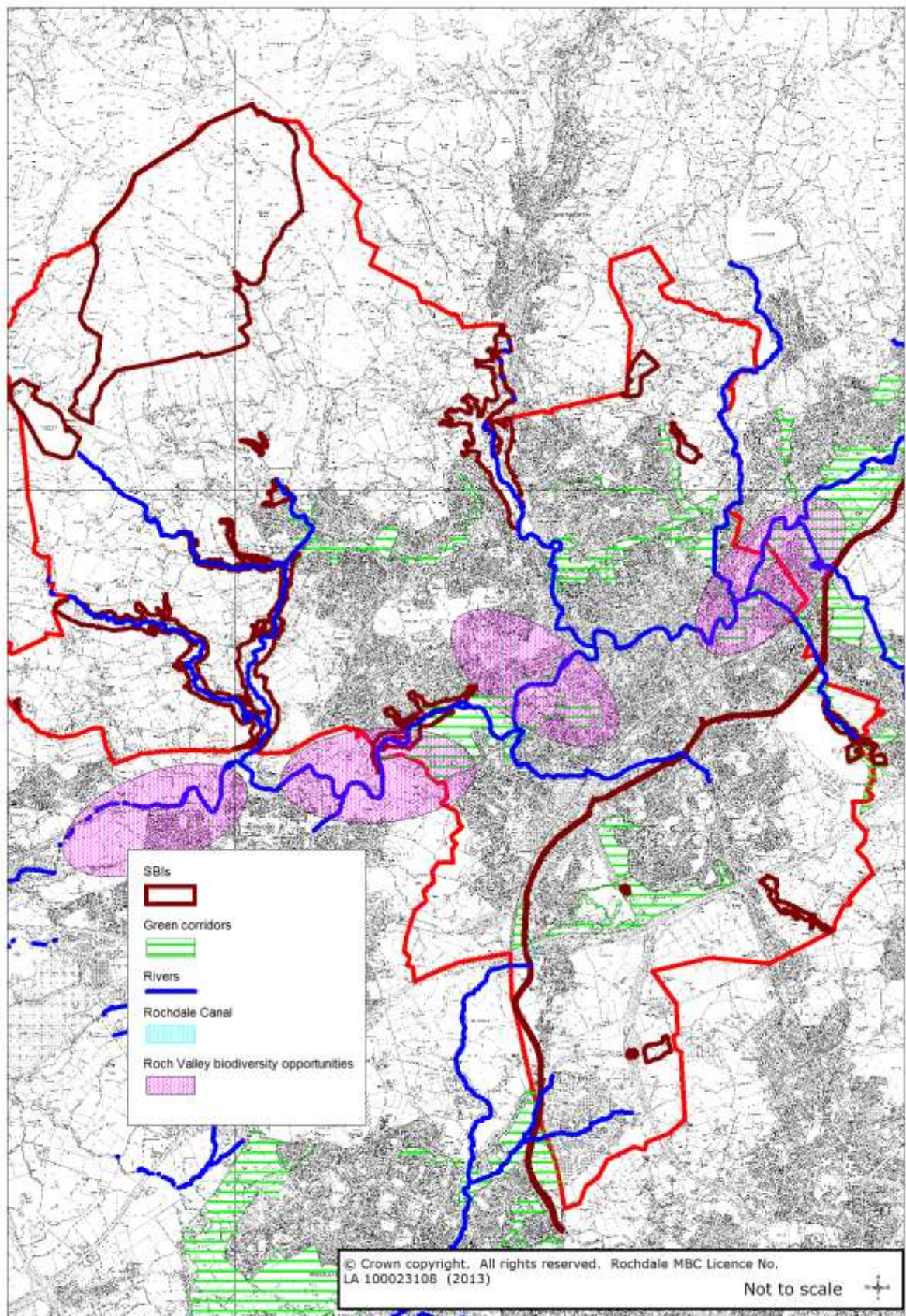
(Photo: Ashworth Valley bluebells)

The Roch Valley, running through the Township is also biologically diverse, although habitats frequently occur in small patches and can be fragmented by built development. The Ecological Network for the Roch Valley (GMEU 2011) has identified 'Biodiversity Opportunity Areas' along the Roch Valley. This includes proposals for habitat improvement and creation to develop a more integrated and linked network along the valley to be delivered or enabled as required through specific land management and habitat creation projects, flood risk management and new development or regeneration projects.

Biodiversity within the township faces challenges from non-native invasive species, particularly along watercourses, which out-compete native species and reduce the habitat available to them and can cause considerable financial burdens on landowners. These species require careful monitoring and management wherever possible.

These areas can also be viewed as forming natural corridors that host a range of species and habitats as well as enabling wildlife to move between sites. These areas are shown on figure 4.2 (*to be inserted*). The urban parts of the Township have a number of green spaces with existing biodiversity value including public open spaces, small urban woodlands and mature residential gardens but many have limited value due to a lack of features or management that would encourage biodiversity. Urban areas and are brought to life by greener streets and wildlife interest through the seasons and people are much more likely to use these routes. Further opportunities to deliver the Rochdale and Greater Manchester BAP and to improve opportunities for access to and enjoyment of the natural environment will be included in the Green Infrastructure Action Plan.

Figure 4.2 Rochdale Township's Biodiversity Network



Providing food and fuel for the community

The upland farms to the north of the township carry out a range of livestock and crop growing activities as well as adding value to their farm business in some cases through direct sales of local produce and other activities based around tourism. The urban environment can also provide valuable growing space for fruit and vegetables as highlighted in such initiatives as Incredible Edible Todmorden. In addition to private gardens, there are opportunities for local food growing within schools, public open spaces and along streets, which can also enhance the unique character of a local environment as well as greening. This may be more important within urban neighbourhoods where there are higher proportions of mown 'green desert' and higher levels of deprivation. Some of these mown areas may be particularly suitable for community orchards. Growing a wide range of fruit, vegetables and herbs in these places can also provide opportunities for education, healthy eating and community enterprise as well as reducing 'food miles' and transport costs. It can also provide a chance for people to get to know each other and co-operate as a neighbourhood. There may also be potential for some of the woodlands, farmland and urban spaces within Rochdale Township to provide biomass for woodfuel. An objective of the Green Infrastructure Plan will be to identify what potential exists for local food initiatives and woodfuel and biomass production and how they may be realised through local, Greater Manchester or South Pennine initiatives and markets.

(Photo: Jubilee Orchard)

Help Rochdale Township adapt to climate change

The changing climate will bring challenges to life in the township as extreme weather events such as heavy rainfall become more likely and temperatures increase, particularly within urban neighbourhoods, town centres and employment areas. Increasing the area of permeable surfaces, which allow rainfall to drain into the ground and increasing vegetation, such as green roofs and street trees help to delay runoff and absorb water from increased rainfall.

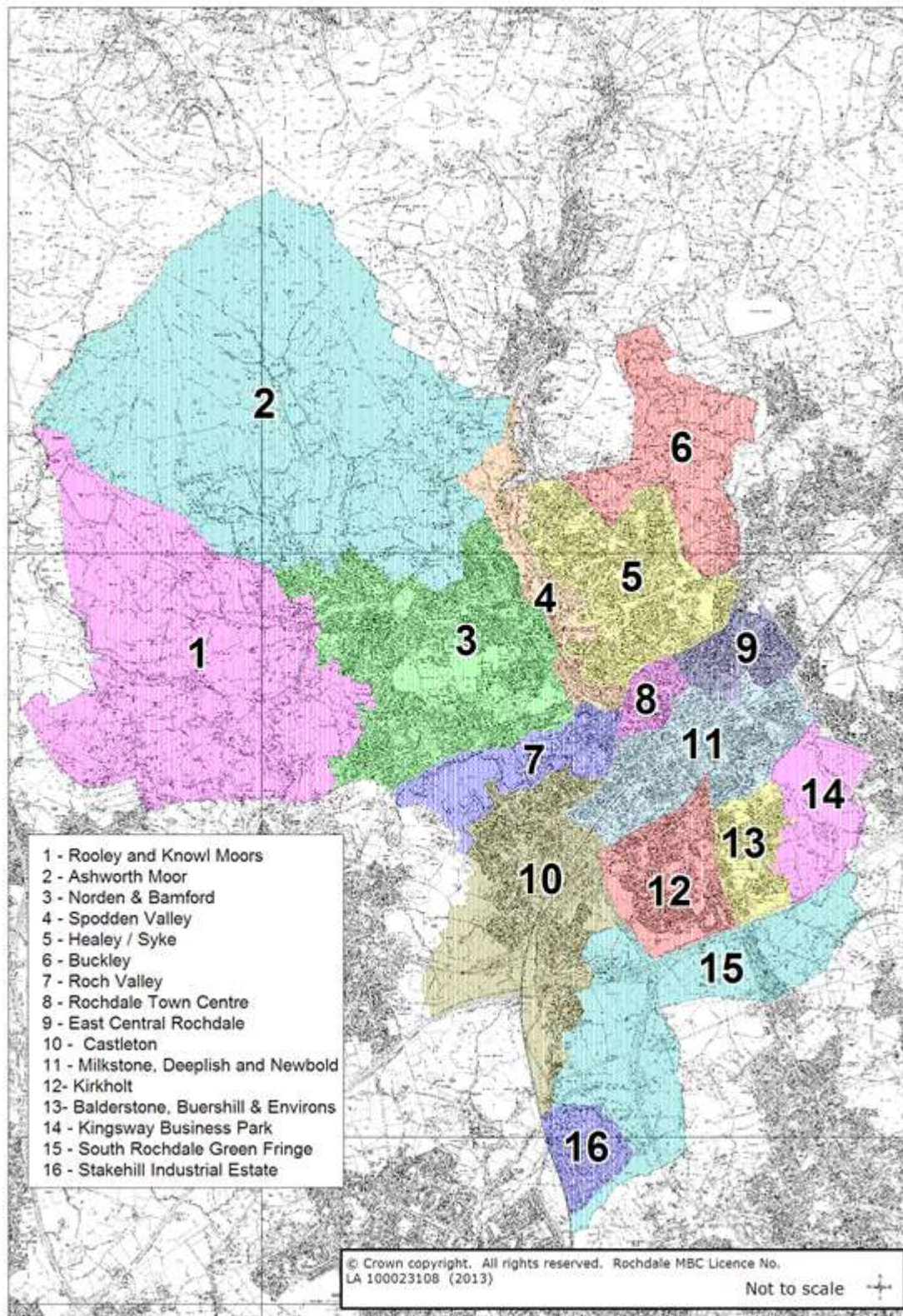
The urban heat island effect is caused by large areas of hard surfaces such as concrete or tarmac storing the sun's heat and releasing it overnight, increasing the temperature significantly higher than the surrounding countryside. This has been known for nearly two hundred years but it is now becoming more of an issue as urban centres grow and the climate changes. Increased planting, particularly of trees within built up areas reflect the heat of the sun and cool the air very effectively.

High quality, appropriate green infrastructure will improve the township's ability to reduce the impact of these changes and improve the ability to conserve natural resources, reduce CO₂ emissions, reduce flood risk and provide cooling and shade. As the green infrastructure matures the effectiveness and benefits increase. This will make Rochdale Township more resilient to future climate change and a safer, more comfortable environment to live in, work in and visit.

Chapter 5: Green Infrastructure in Rochdale Township by area

Rochdale Township has a diverse character and each area or neighbourhood has its own specific challenges and opportunities for green infrastructure. These 'character areas' provide a focus for better understanding need and opportunity and developing effective local actions. Figure 5.1 on page 18 illustrates the character areas in Rochdale Township. These character areas enable residents and service providers to understand and influence how actions in their area can contribute to local quality of life and also help to deliver bigger, more strategic actions such as improving the access within and around urban areas and out to the wider countryside. The sixteen character areas are described in more detail on pages 19 to 50.

Figure 5.1: Rochdale Township Character Areas



Character Area 1: Rooley and Knowl Moors

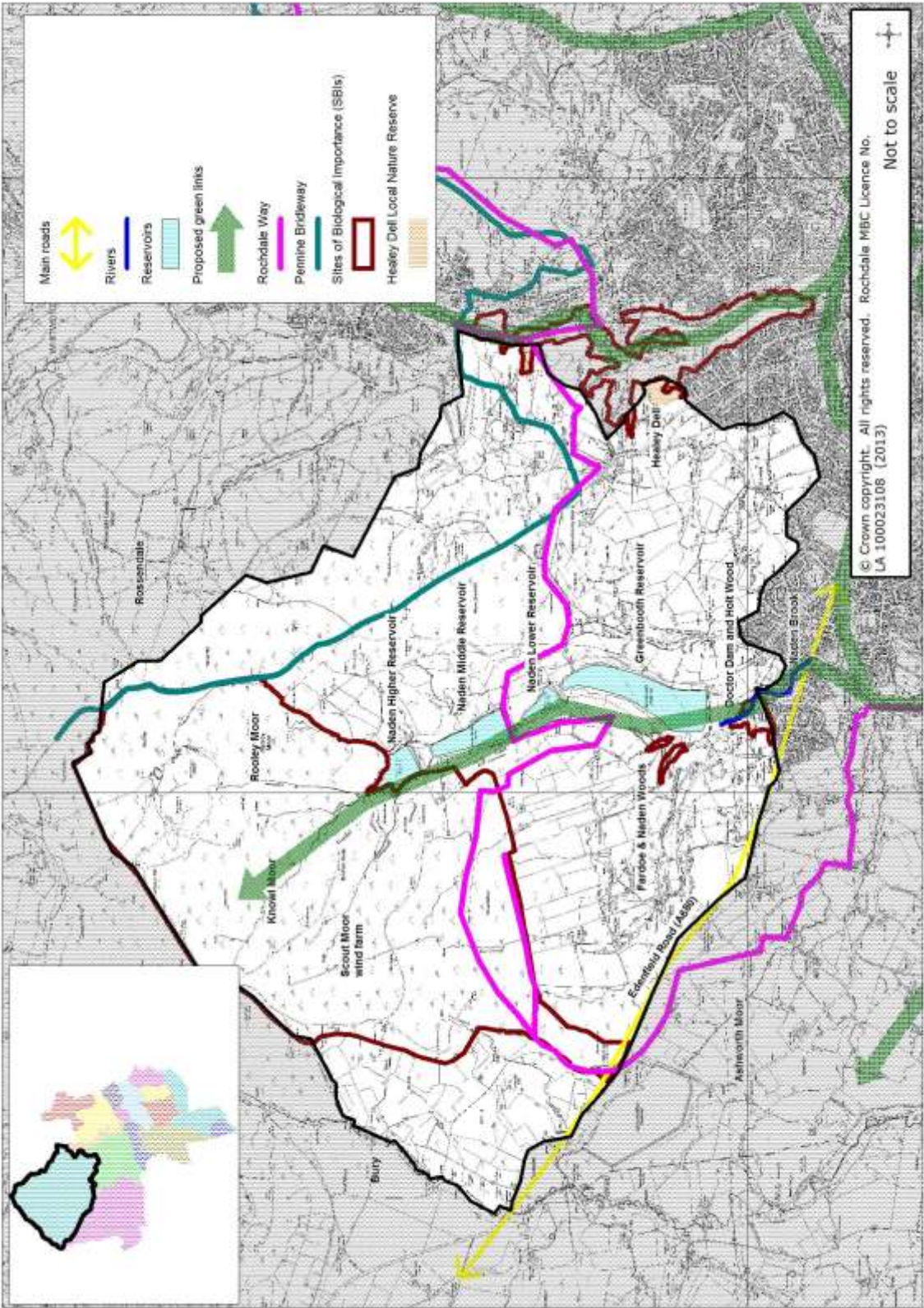
This is a largely rural landscape with upland farms, open moorland with areas of blanket bog and several isolated hamlets. The moors also include the Scout Moor wind farm. The area is bordered on the north by Rossendale BC and Bury MBC to the west. A number of reservoirs, the largest being Greenbooth, are fed by Naden Brook and managed by United Utilities (UU). Below this there is an area of clough woodlands including Wolstenholme Wood, which is an area of ancient woodland within the Doctor Dam and Holt Wood site of biological importance (SBI). There are two other SBIs wholly within this area; Knowl Moor and Fardoe & Naden Woods, along with part of Healey Dell SBI and part of Healey Dell Local Nature Reserve (LNR). There is an extensive access network over the moors including the Pennine Bridleway and the Rochdale Way. However signposting and interpretation is limited, particularly for connections to the town centres. Management of this watershed area could have implications for flood risk downstream.

(Photos: Naden Reservoir, Knowl Hill)

Main Issues & Opportunities

- Maximise the tourism potential whilst protecting the fragile landscape by improved signposting and interpretation of the landscape, particularly highlighting priority routes connecting Ashworth Moor, Healey Dell LNR & reservoirs with urban neighbourhoods and town centres.
- Ensuring that the biodiversity is protected and continues to carry out important recreation and environmental functions such as carbon capture within the peat moorland.
- Explore opportunities to improve woodland management by encouraging the take up of Forestry Commission (FC) grants and Countryside Stewardship by private landowners and promoting Woodland Certification.
- Ensure that partnership working, particularly with Bury MBC and UU, maximizes any opportunities for land management to support priority green infrastructure actions including flood risk management, biodiversity and climate change mitigation.

Figure 5.2: Character Area 1: Rooley and Knowl Moors



Character Area 2: Ashworth Moor

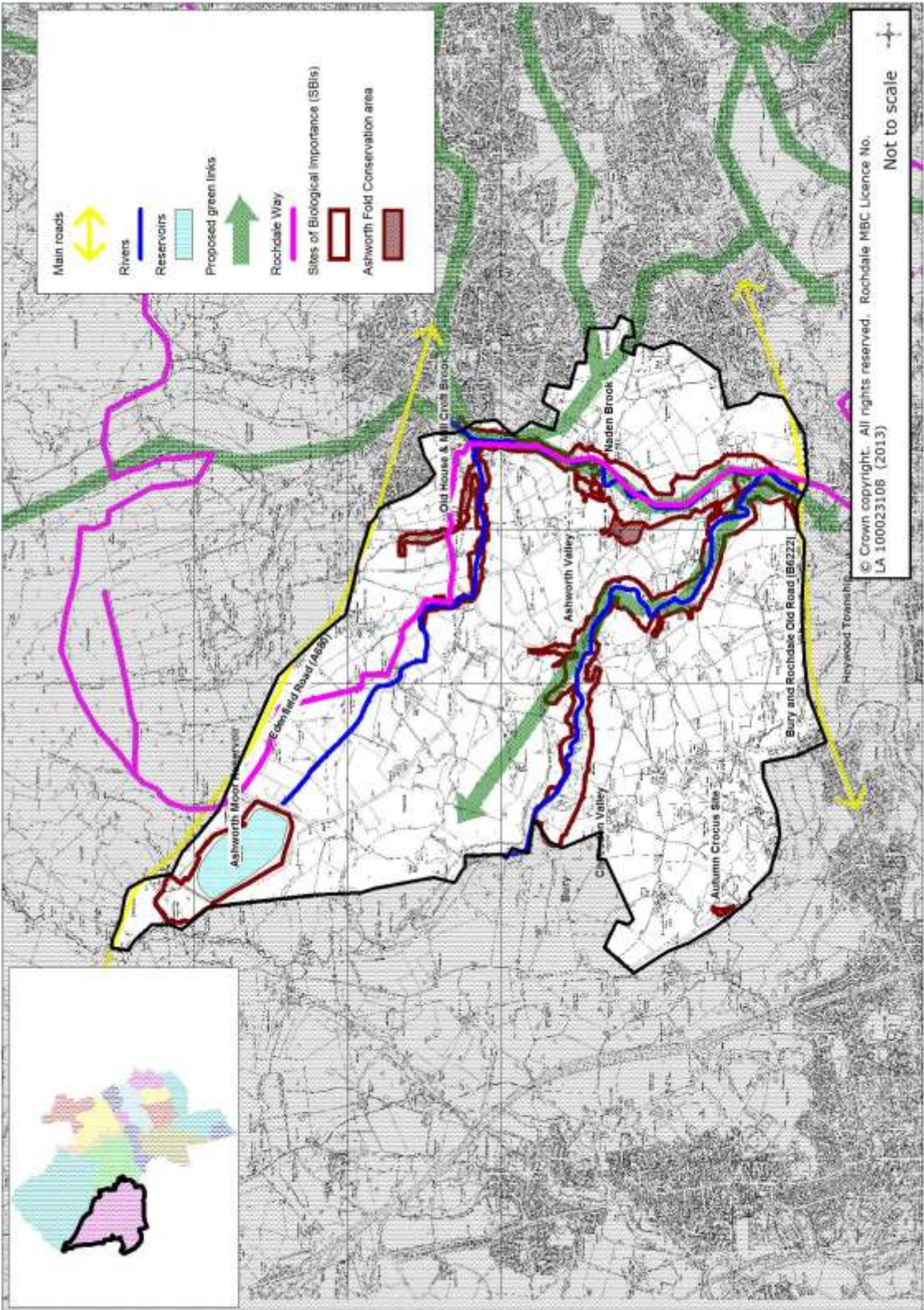
This is a largely rural landscape with enclosed farmland and several isolated hamlets. There are strong industrial heritage sites including the Ashworth Fold Conservation area. Bury MBC borders the area to the west and Heywood Township in the south. UU manage Ashworth Moor reservoir, and the surrounding area. There are significant areas of clough woodland particularly Ashworth Valley, Cheesden Valley and Naden Brook and all include areas of ancient woodland. The area has five SBIs including a site important for autumn crocus. There is an extensive access network including the Rochdale Way, however signposting and interpretation is limited, particularly for wider connections to the town centres and the wider countryside. Management of this watershed area could have implications for flood risk downstream.

(Photos: Ashworth Valley Mill, Pond off Ashworth Rd)

Main Issues & Opportunities

- Maximise the tourism potential whilst protecting the fragile landscape by improved signposting and interpretation of the landscape, particularly in regard to industrial heritage sites.
- Ensure that partnership working, particularly with Bury MBC and UU, maximizes any opportunities for land management to support priority green infrastructure actions including flood risk management, biodiversity and climate change mitigation.
- Explore opportunities to improve woodland biodiversity and management by encouraging the take up of FC grants and Countryside Stewardship by private landowners and promoting Woodland Certification.
- Highlight priority routes connecting the open moors to the north, Healey Dell & the reservoirs with local neighbourhoods.

Figure 5.3: Character Area 2: Ashworth Moor



Character Area 3: Norden & Bamford

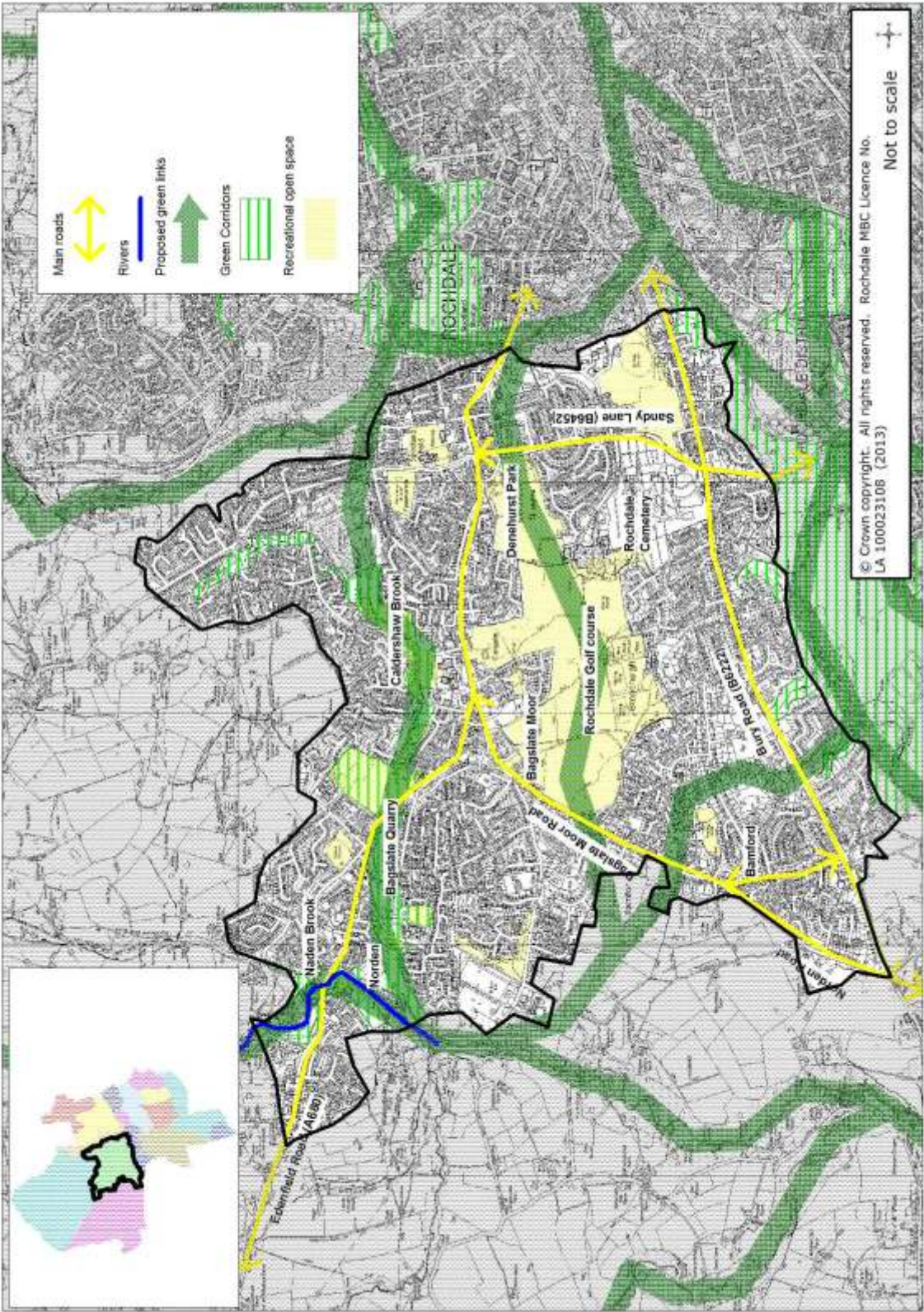
This is a largely residential area surrounded by countryside and bisected by a number of main roads including Edenfield Road and Bury Road. Many properties have mature gardens, particularly within Norden and Bamford, creating a green, leafy environment. There are several significant areas of good quality publicly accessible open space including Bagslate Moor and Denehurst Park. There are also a number of sports related open spaces, which have only limited public access including Rochdale Golf Course. Although this is largely a residential area there is a good rights of way network but no major named routes. Caldershaw Brook and Bagslate Quarry form a green corridor, which may provide opportunities for an accessible route between the Spodden and Ashworth Valleys. Rochdale Cemetery in the south of the area is an important site for biodiversity and contains a number of significant tree species.

(Photos: Norden, Bagslate Quarry)

Main Issues & Opportunities

- Improve the number of functions performed by existing green spaces, particularly maximising opportunities biodiversity improvements.
- Develop opportunities for green routes along brook valleys, particularly east to west through Bagslate Quarry and Caldershaw Brook and utilising the stepping stones of open spaces and rights of way through the area to link up with Route 92, the Pennine Bridleway and Ashworth Valley.
- Explore opportunities partnership working with private landowners to improve land management to support priority green infrastructure objectives including flood risk management, biodiversity and climate change mitigation.

Figure 5.4: Character Area 3: Norden & Bamford



Character Area 4: Spodden Valley

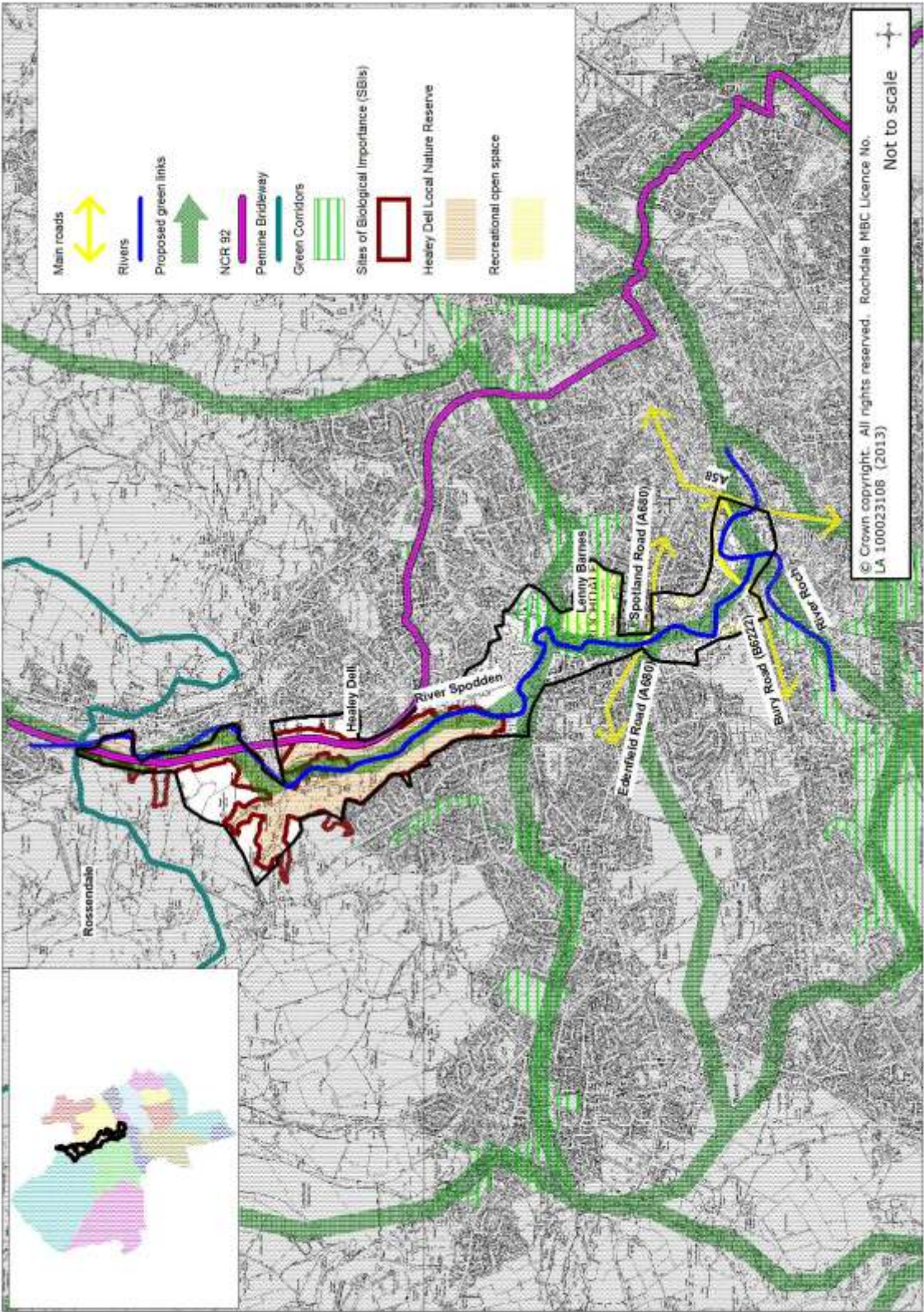
This area contains very little residential property but includes significant areas of industrial heritage. The valley follows the steep sided, wooded clough along the route of the River Spodden to where it joins the River Roch close to Rochdale town centre. Over one third of this area lies within the Healey Dell LNR but it becomes more industrialised and less green towards the River Roch, particularly beyond Spotland Bridge. Healey Dell LNR is jointly managed with Rossendale Borough Council. Much of the LNR area has been designated an SBI and contains significant areas of ancient woodland. Lenny Barns is the only formal recreational area and forms part of a green corridor which links to the wider moors via Cronkyshaw Common. Healey Dell is an important tourist destination within the borough and is linked by National Cycle Route 92 running between Rochdale town centre and Whitworth, and is an important green link from the moors in the north. There are areas of flood risk, particularly down the valley towards the town centre.

(Photos: Healey Dell, Spod Valley)

Main Issues & Opportunities

- Maximise opportunities for linking green spaces along the valley and improving the accessibility to Rochdale Town Centre from Healey Dell as well as improving links to Norden in the west and the South Pennine Moors to the east.
- Investigate opportunities to create a green route to Rochdale town centre, particularly beyond Spotland bridge, along the river eventually linking to Broadfield Park as well as improving the gateway into Spodden Valley from the Roch Valley.
- Develop a comprehensive approach to maximising green infrastructure benefits through appropriate development opportunities.
- Through partnership working with Rossendale BC and other stakeholders, investigate opportunities to improve visitor facilities within Healey Dell LNR.
- Maximise opportunities to enhance and protect the important biodiversity and heritage of the valley.

Figure 5.5: Character Area 4: Spodden Valley



Character Area 5: Healey & Syke

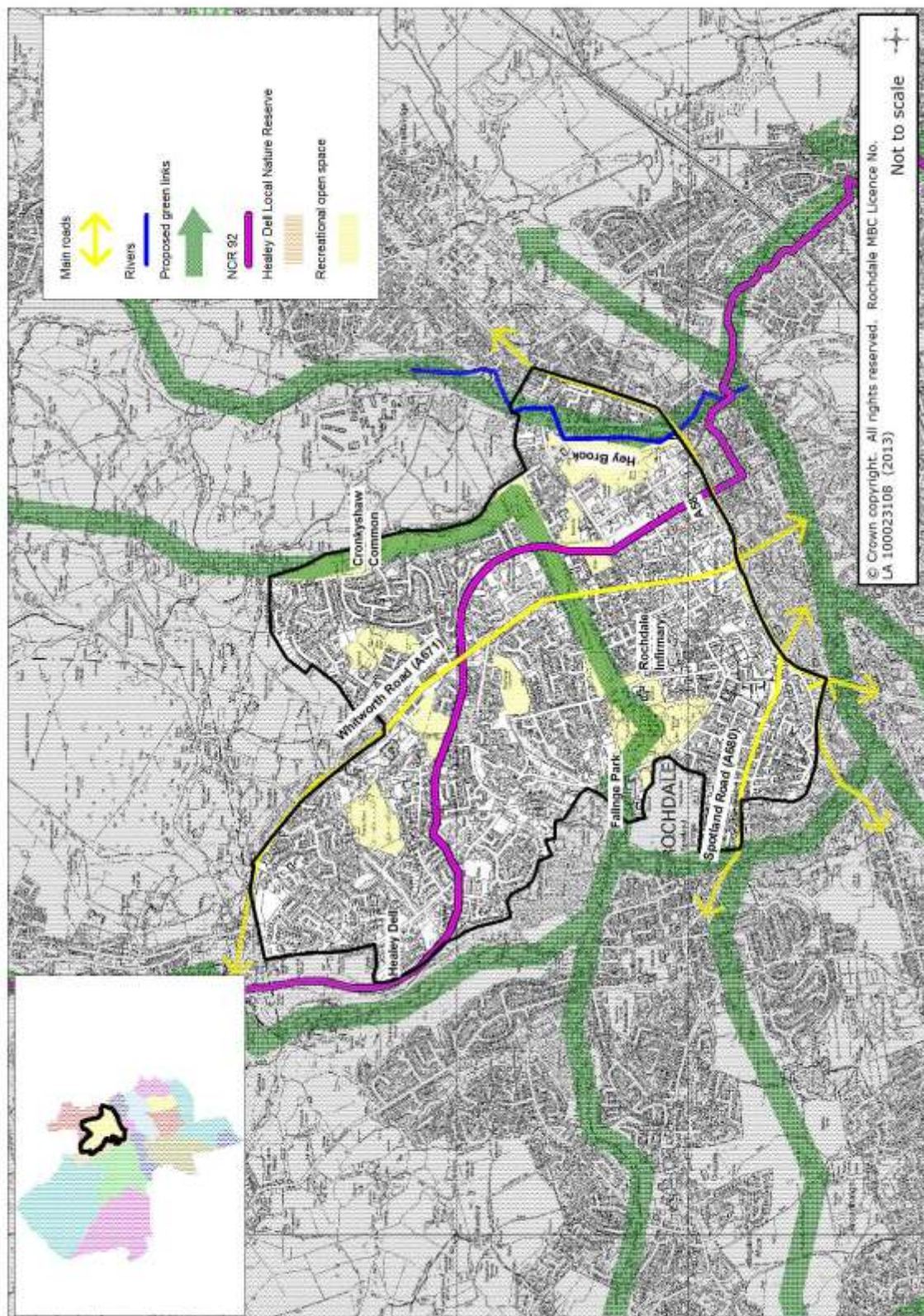
This is a largely residential area with high number of properties with gardens. There are more commercial properties in the south towards the town centre. The Rochdale Infirmary is in the south of this area, adjacent to Falinge Park, which is one of the significant open spaces along with Cronkyshaw Common. These two spaces form a greenspace corridor between Spodden Valley and the South Pennine Moors. There are also a number of smaller areas of underused open space of varying quality and generally poor in terms of biodiversity. National Cycle Route (NCR) 92 follows the route of a disused railway through the centre of the area and links Healey Dell and Cronkyshaw Common with Wardleworth and eventually to the NCR 66 on the Rochdale Canal. There are some flood risk management issues at Heybrook.

(Photos: Falinge Park, Route 92)

Main Issues & Opportunities

- Improve the number of functions performed by existing green spaces, particularly maximising opportunities for biodiversity.
- Maximise opportunities to improve links to the surrounding open spaces and countryside, particularly to Spodden valley and Buckley Moor, by enhancing and improving access through Cronkyshaw Common.
- Investigate the possibility of developing green routes around the Infirmary.

Figure 5.6: Character Area 5: Healey & Syke



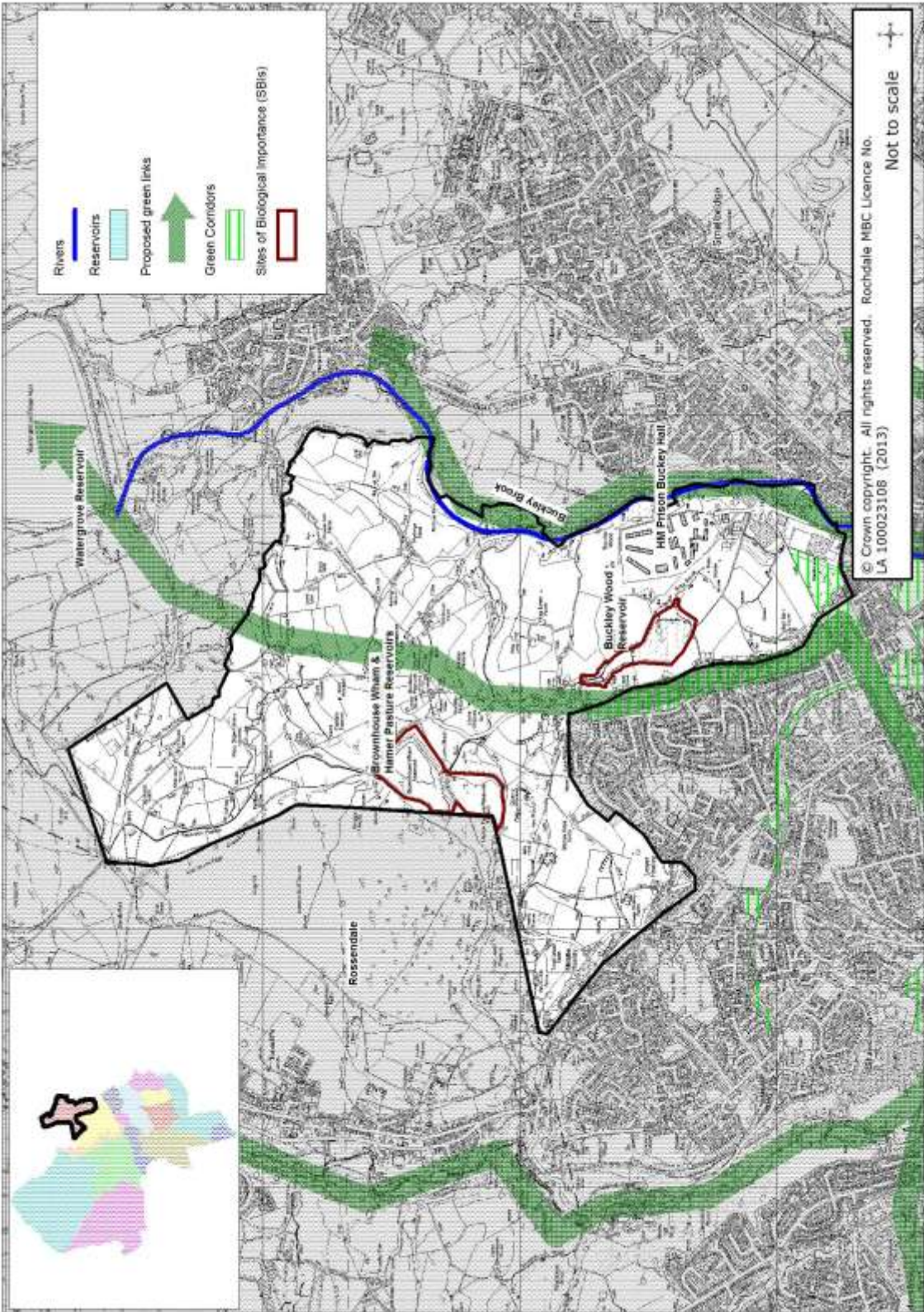
Character Area 6: Buckley

This area is enclosed agricultural farm enclosures in a moorland fringe landscape bordered by Rossendale BC to the west. To the south of the area there is a small industrial estate and HM Prison Buckley Hall. There are no formal open spaces but there is an extensive rights of way network with good links to Watergrove Reservoir and the South Pennine Moors, however signposting and co-ordination of routes for different users is inconsistent. There are two SBIs: Brownhouse Wham & Hamer Pasture Reservoirs and Buckley Wood Reservoir managed by United Utilities. Buckley Wood includes an area of ancient woodland. Buckley Brook represents a flood risk management issue downstream to Rochdale Town Centre.

Main Issues & Opportunities

- Explore opportunities for improved access from urban areas to the open moors within this character area and coordinate the signposting routes, particularly to primary destinations such as Watergrove Reservoir.
- Through partnership working with Rossendale BC and other stakeholders, investigate opportunities to improve land management for biodiversity and green infrastructure functions.
- Investigate opportunities for woodland creation and bringing woodlands back into management.
- Explore opportunities for flood risk management of Buckley Brook.

Figure 5.7: Character Area 6: Buckley



Character Area 7: Roch Valley

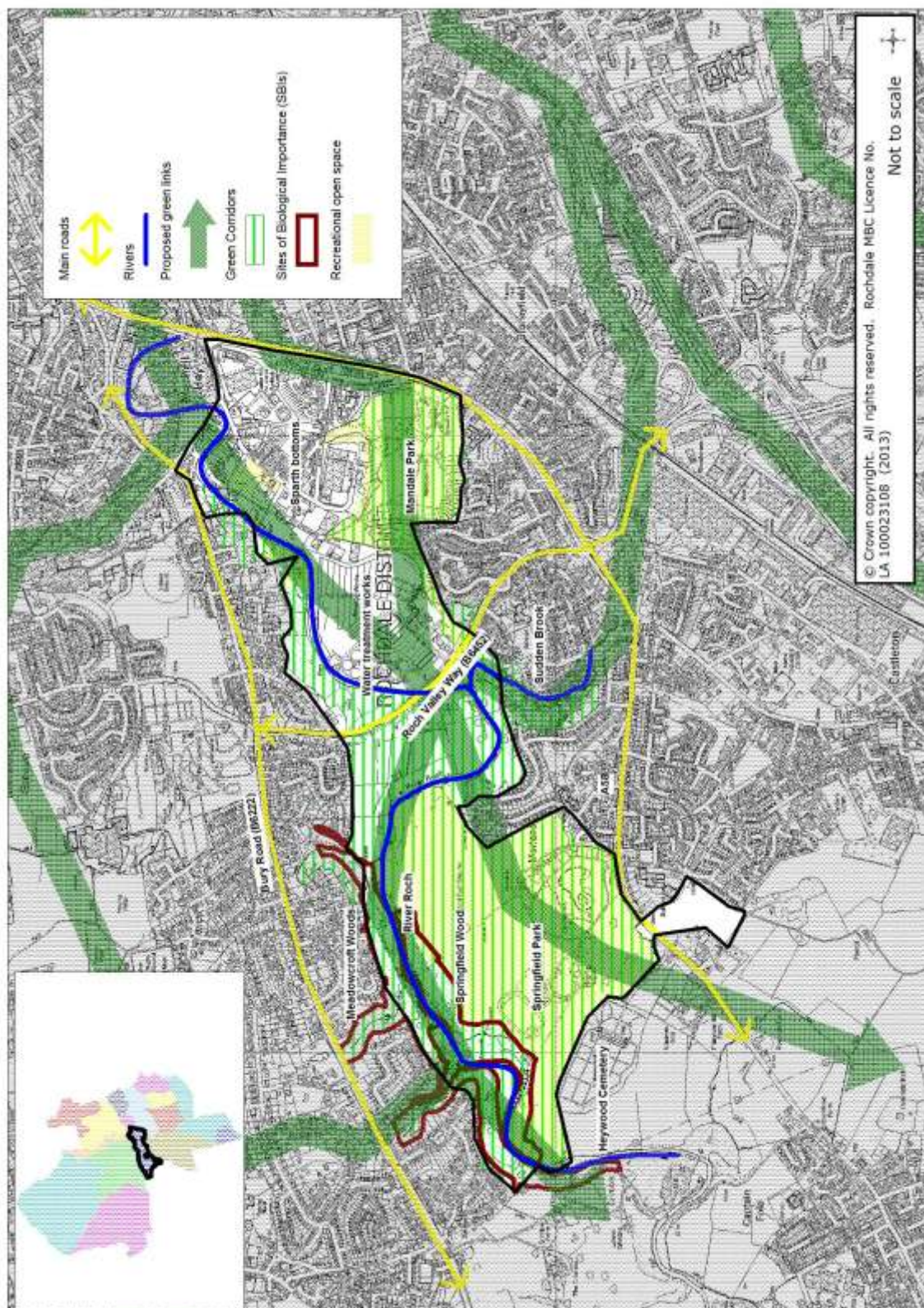
This is a partially industrialised corridor with large open spaces including Springfield Park and Mandale Park. Both of these parks have strong community involvement. To the west, the area is bordered by Heywood Cemetery and surrounding parkland landscape. There are significant areas of industrial heritage, particularly along the River Roch and areas of current industrial use, including waste management. The small residential area of Sparth Bottoms is characterised by closely terraced housing with a local park adjacent to the community centre, the area has a strong identity. The Sparth Masterplan identifies a number of green infrastructure improvements. UU own many of the green areas along the stretch of the river between Roch Valley Way and Sparth Bottoms, associated with the water treatment works. Mandale and Springfield Parks form an important biodiversity corridor with Marland Wood. There are two SBLs Meadowcroft and Springfield Woods, both including areas of ancient woodland. There is a good access network along the western edge along the River Roch and through Mandale Park however there are significant blockages to access between Roch Valley Way and Sparth Bottoms. The River Roch presents some fluvial flood risk management issues.

(Photos: Mandale Park, Springfield Woods, Sparth)

Main Issues & Opportunities

- Develop a comprehensive approach to maximising green infrastructure benefits through area regeneration and appropriate development opportunities.
- Develop the Roch Valley River Park linking to the rest of the borough and beyond with coordinated signage routes and interpretation of the landscape including built and natural heritage.
- Improve the number of functions performed by existing green spaces, particularly maximising opportunities for the management of flood risk, biodiversity and recreation as well as increasing tree cover within the valley.
- Investigate opportunities to improve access along the Roch Valley, particularly between particularly between Springfield Park, Mandale Park and Sparth as well as developing Mandale Park as a gateway to the Roch Valley from Rochdale Town Centre.
- Ensure that all opportunities to support flood risk management are explored, by working with the Environment Agency, UU and other stakeholders such as developers.

Figure 5.8: Character Area 7: Roch Valley



Character Area 8: Rochdale Town Centre

This area is the main commercial centre for the Borough and is undergoing a significant investment programme including new civic offices, bus and metrolink stations and opening up sections of the currently culverted River Roch. There is a strong built heritage protected by three conservation areas. There are high quality formal open spaces surrounding the Town Hall and civic quarter including Broadfield Park, Packer Spout and Memorial Gardens. These spaces are important for biodiversity and help to maintain a small population of owls and peregrine falcons. There is a lack of greening, significant areas of hard surfacing and few opportunities for tree planting within the rest of the character area. Access through the town centre to wider destinations should be an important function of this character area, particularly with recent public transport improvements however signage is limited for pedestrians and cyclists. Access north to south is poor, particularly when the main indoor shopping centre is closed. The River Roch represents a significant flood risk to the town centre.

Main Issues & Opportunities

- Develop a comprehensive approach to maximising green infrastructure benefits through appropriate development opportunities including increasing green routes.
- Increase the number of functions performed by the existing green spaces and the links between them and ensure that improvements support Rochdale Town Centre's built heritage.
- Identify opportunities to ensure that the town centre is better adapted to the effects of climate change and maximises opportunities for flood risk management, biodiversity and reducing the heat island effect.
- Improve signposting of greenspace, countryside and wider destinations, particularly to National Cycle Route 66 and the Rochdale Canal.

Character Area 9: East Central Rochdale

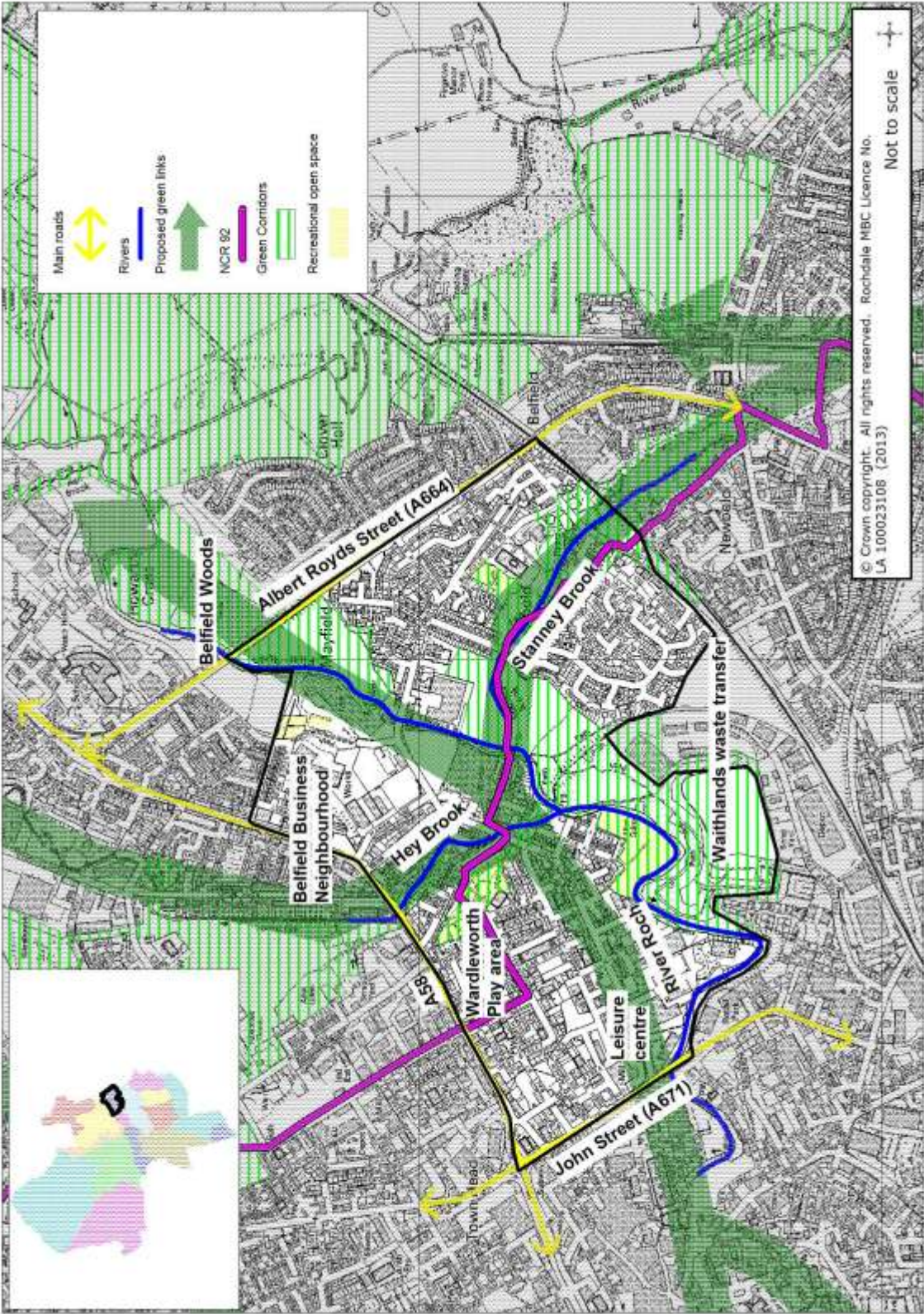
This is largely residential with a number of commercial sites including Belfield Business Neighbourhood and Waithlands waste transfer site. There are some sites awaiting development and many of these have been landscaped and planted with wildflowers as temporary treatments. Recent commercial investment includes the development of the new Rochdale Leisure Centre. The River Roch runs through the area and is bordered along significant parts of its length by open space, including Belfield Woods, which is important for biodiversity within this area but there are difficult management issues. Wardleworth Play area is the only area of recreational open space and is good quality and very well used. National Cycle Route (NCR) 92 provides an important green link through the area and links with other green routes in to the north and Rochdale Canal and NCR66 in the south. The River Roch represents significant flood risk.

(Photos: Belfield Woods, Wardleworth Play Area, Entwistle Rd1)

Main Issues & Opportunities

- Develop a comprehensive approach to vacant and underused land.
- Maximise green infrastructure benefits through appropriate development opportunities including increasing green routes.
- Identify opportunities to improve biodiversity and access through woodland management in Belfield Woods area working in partnership with Forestry Commission and other stakeholders.
- Enhance the river corridor by improving biodiversity and increasing access by creating green routes to the valley using good practice established in the Pennine Edge Forest natural signposting initiative and Red Rose Forest's green streets project.
- Identify opportunities for green infrastructure to support flood risk management.

Figure 5.10: Character Area 9: East Central Rochdale



Character Area 10: Castleton

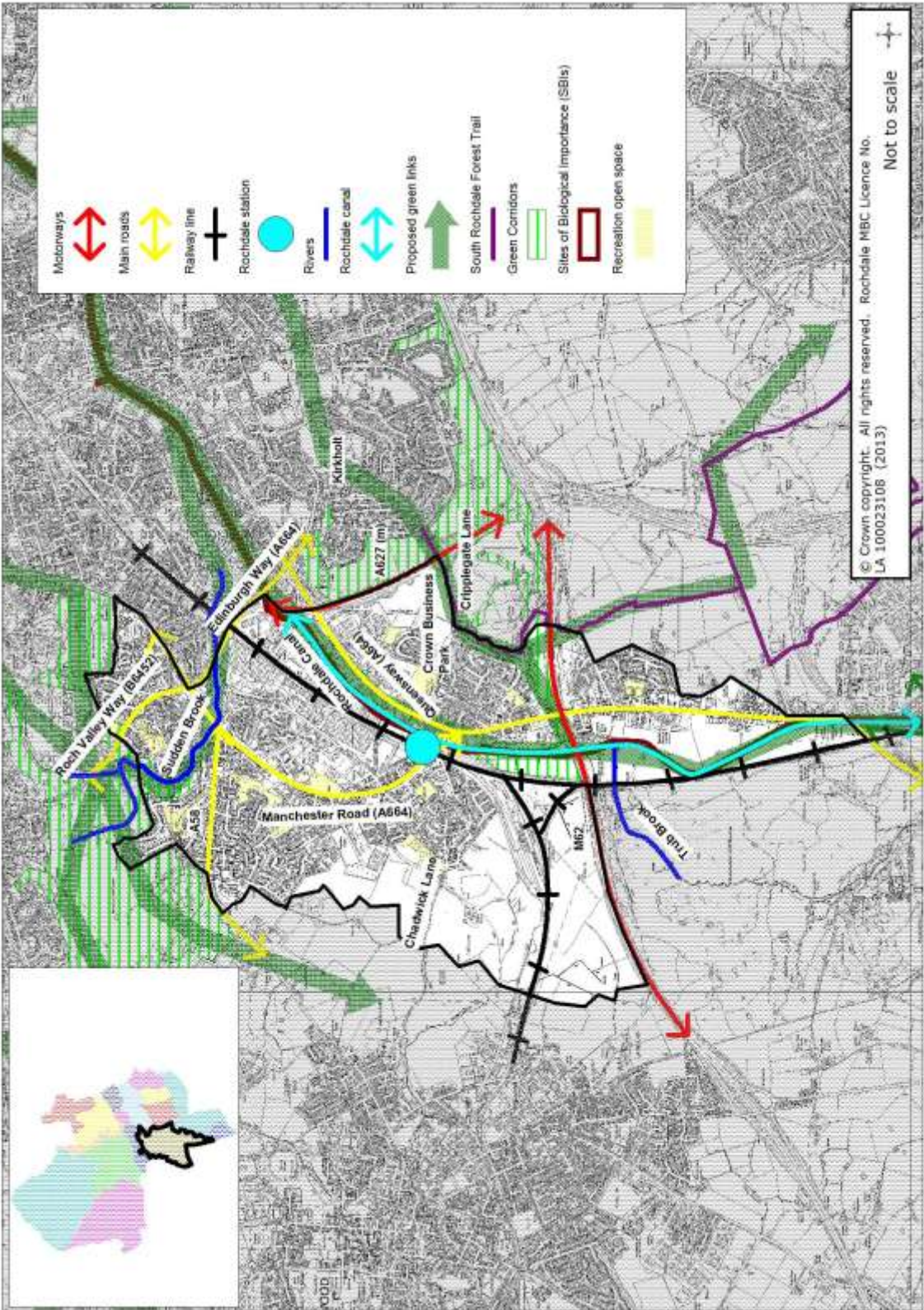
This is a largely urban area with industrial and commercial premises surrounded by residential neighbourhoods, including Castleton and Sudden. Manchester Road and the A58 are the main highways through the area but represent significant physical barriers between neighbourhoods. The Caldervale railway line connects this area to Manchester and Leeds. There are a number of possible development opportunities within the area including the business park at Cowm Top. There is limited open space within the urban core. Towards the south the area becomes greener with larger, mature domestic gardens. The Rochdale Canal is a special area for conservation (SAC) and is also National Cycle Route (NCR) 66 linking with other townships and the wider countryside. The western edge of the area forms part of the Heywood parkland area and has a good rights of way network including the cycle route along Chadwick Lane. Cripple Gate Lane forms part of the South Rochdale Forest Trail route between Kirkholt and Tandle Hill in Oldham.

(Photos: Canal, Cowm Top, Chadwick Lane)

Main Issues & Opportunities

- Identify opportunities to ensure that the urban area is better adapted to the effects of climate change and maximises opportunities for biodiversity improvements.
- Develop a comprehensive approach to maximising green infrastructure benefits through appropriate development opportunities including increasing green routes.
- Develop a comprehensive approach to accessibility through the urban core to improve current blockages such as the main roads.
- Improve signposting of greenspace, countryside and wider destinations, particularly from the Railway station to NCR 92, the Rochdale Canal and other routes out to local greenspaces, countryside and wider destinations.

Figure 5.11: Character Area 10: Castleton



Character Area 11: Milkstone, Deeplish and Newbold

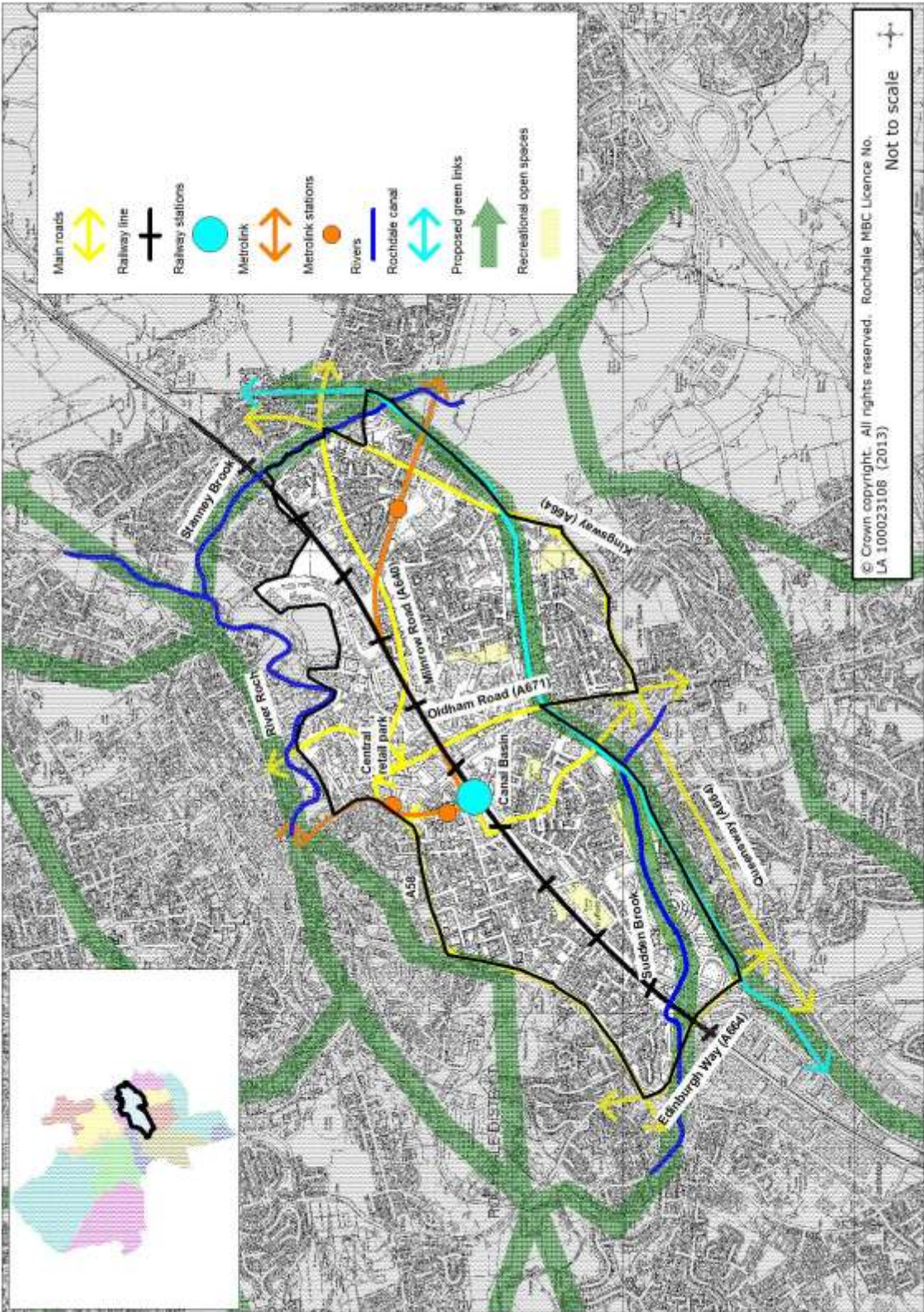
This area is a mix of commercial and residential, with relatively few domestic gardens. It is bisected by Caldervale Railway Line, with the main Rochdale Railway and Metrolink stations providing intercity links to Manchester and Leeds. The line represents a significant physical barrier between neighbourhoods. This area has seen significant infrastructure investment in recent years with further opportunities for regeneration such as the canal basin and the central retail park. There are a high number of 'green deserts' and areas of fallow land, which are frequently tipped on. There are limited open spaces in the area, generally of poor quality and there are few street trees. Sudden Brook Valley in the south is an important area of natural green space and woodland within this area and is important for biodiversity along with the Rochdale Canal SAC. Signposting and green access routes to open spaces in neighbouring areas are poor. The Rochdale Canal and NCR 66 runs along the southern boundary linking with other townships and the wider countryside.

(Photos: Rochdale Canal, Sudden Brook)

Main Issues & Opportunities

- Ensure that opportunities for green infrastructure improvements are maximised through any development proposals and Metrolink investment.
- Sudden Brook and the Rochdale canal provides an opportunity for biodiversity improvements by developing green corridors and street greening to create wildlife links between the wider Roch Valley through to the Beal Valley in the south.
- Develop improved green linkages through the area including Sudden Brook valley, links to Kingsway via the Stanney Brook corridor and along the Rochdale Canal using good practice established in the Pennine Edge Forest natural signposting initiative and Red Rose Forest's green streets project.
- Identify opportunities to increase accessibility through the urban core to improve current blockages such as the railway line.
- Develop a comprehensive approach to green deserts, fallow land and the problem of fly tipping.

Figure 5.12: Character Area 11: Milkstone, Deeplish and Newbold



Character Area 12: Kirkholt

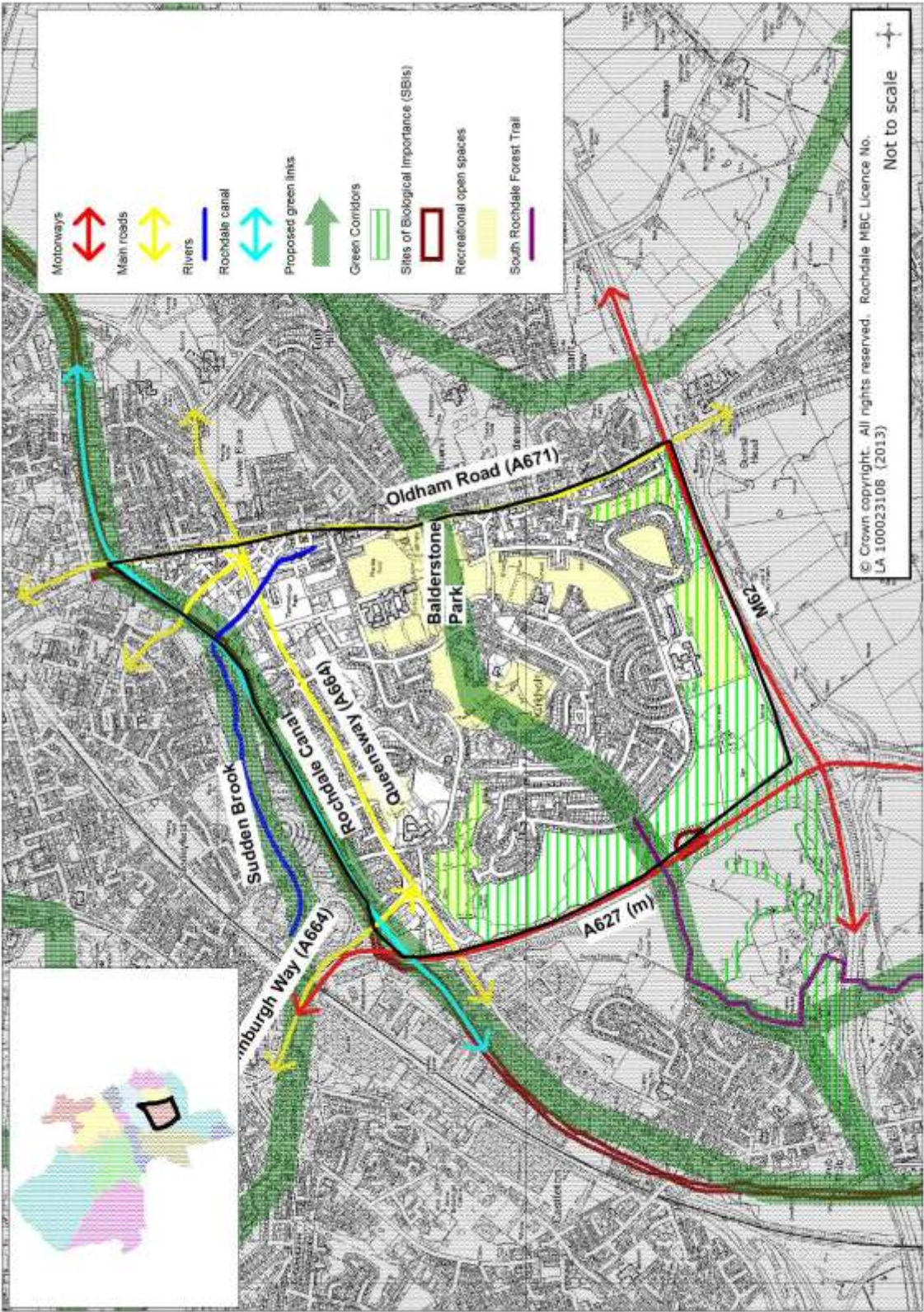
This large housing estate was built in the 1940s and has three schools and the Eagle Technology Park to the east. The estate has been undergoing significant redevelopment over the last decade and this is continuing. The area is bounded on the south and west by M62 and A627(M) respectively. These roads are a major barrier to access on two sides of the estate. There are four local parks and a number of open spaces, which are mainly mown 'green desert' with limited green infrastructure functions, low biodiversity and areas of poor drainage. There is a large area of steep sided, scrubby grazing land between the motorways and the housing with no public access. There is a small SBI on the border with the motorway. The South Rochdale Forest Trail (SRFT) begins in Kirkholt but there is a poor network of green transport routes through the estate and out to the countryside in the south and signage is also poor. There has been significant master-planning in recent years to address some of these issues

(Photos: Open grazing land, Balderstone Park)

Main Issues & Opportunities

- Ensure that opportunities for green infrastructure improvements are incorporated through the master planning work, particularly in relation to the quality of open space and accessibility.
- Promoting and enhancing existing links from the estate via the SRFT, the Rochdale Canal and Sudden Brook out to the wider countryside.
- Creating a high quality, multi-functional greenspace network that provides more functions, particularly improving biodiversity and flood risk management to create a more distinctive character for the estate.
- Explore opportunities via partnership working to develop local food growing projects within the estate, particularly with the local schools and community groups.

Figure 5.13: Character Area 12: Kirkholt



Character Area 13: Balderstone, Buershill & Environs

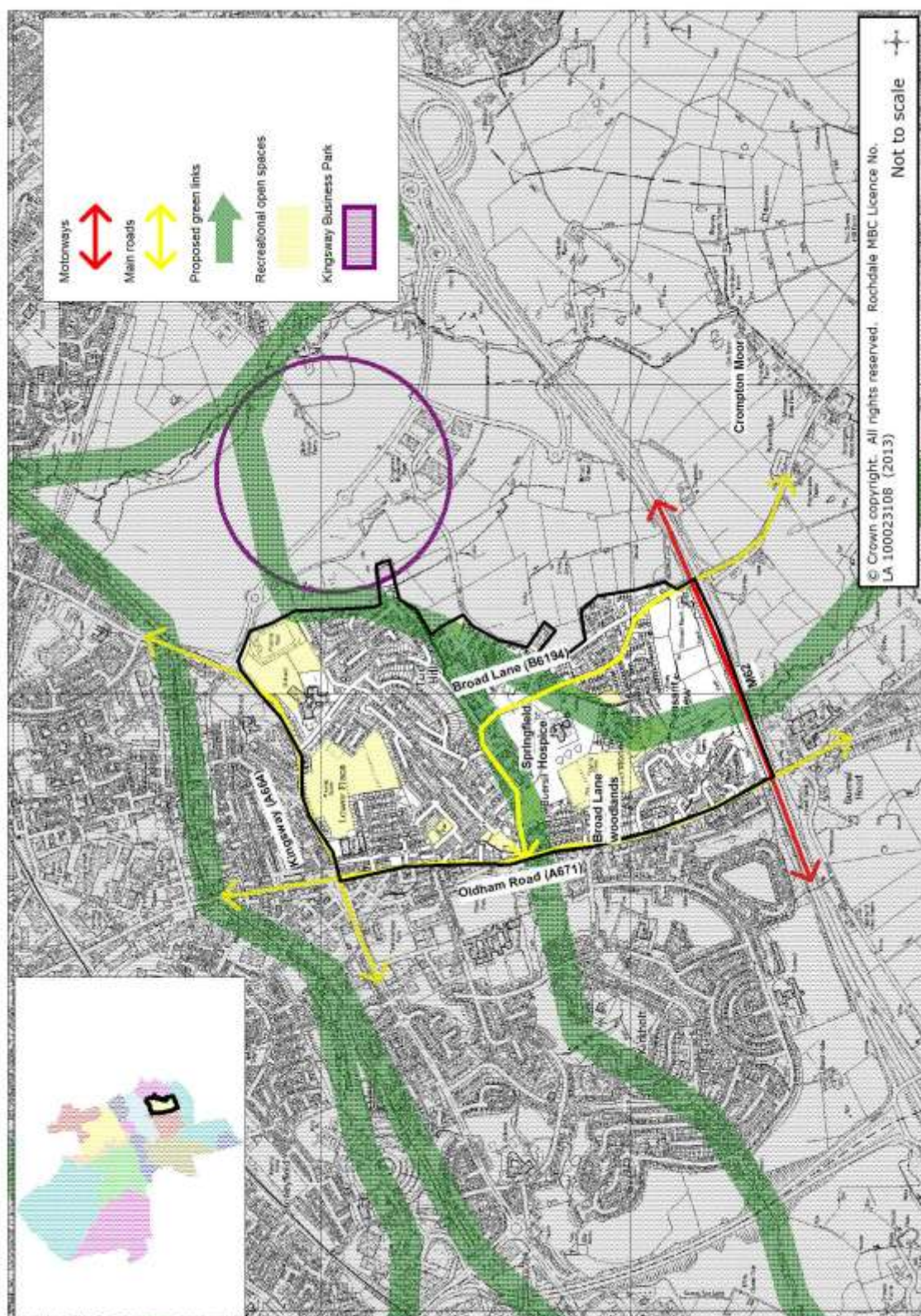
This is a mainly residential area with a mixture of social and private properties including the Springfield Hospice, which is surrounded by mature parkland grounds. There are a number of open spaces, mainly playing fields but also including Broad Lane Community Woodlands, which contains a number of important mature trees. This reserve and Springfield Hospice grounds are important for biodiversity within this area. The area is bounded on three sides by the M62, Kingsway Road and Oldham Road and these represent a barrier to access to other areas. There is a good access network on the east side towards Kingsway Business Park. There are issues with localised surface water flooding to the south.

(Photos: Community woodland, Hospice grounds)

Main Issues & Opportunities

- Increase biodiversity linkages between the existing green spaces, particularly between Broad Lane Community Woodlands, the Hospice grounds and Pleasant View.
- Explore opportunities to create better green links to the south towards Crompton Moor and the wider countryside.
- Increase the advantage of the area's proximity to Kingsway Business Park's employment opportunity by developing improved green linkages using good practice established in the Pennine Edge Forest natural signposting initiative and Red Rose Forest's green streets project.

Figure 5.14: Character Area 13: Balderstone, Buershill & Environs



Character Area 14: Kingsway Business Park

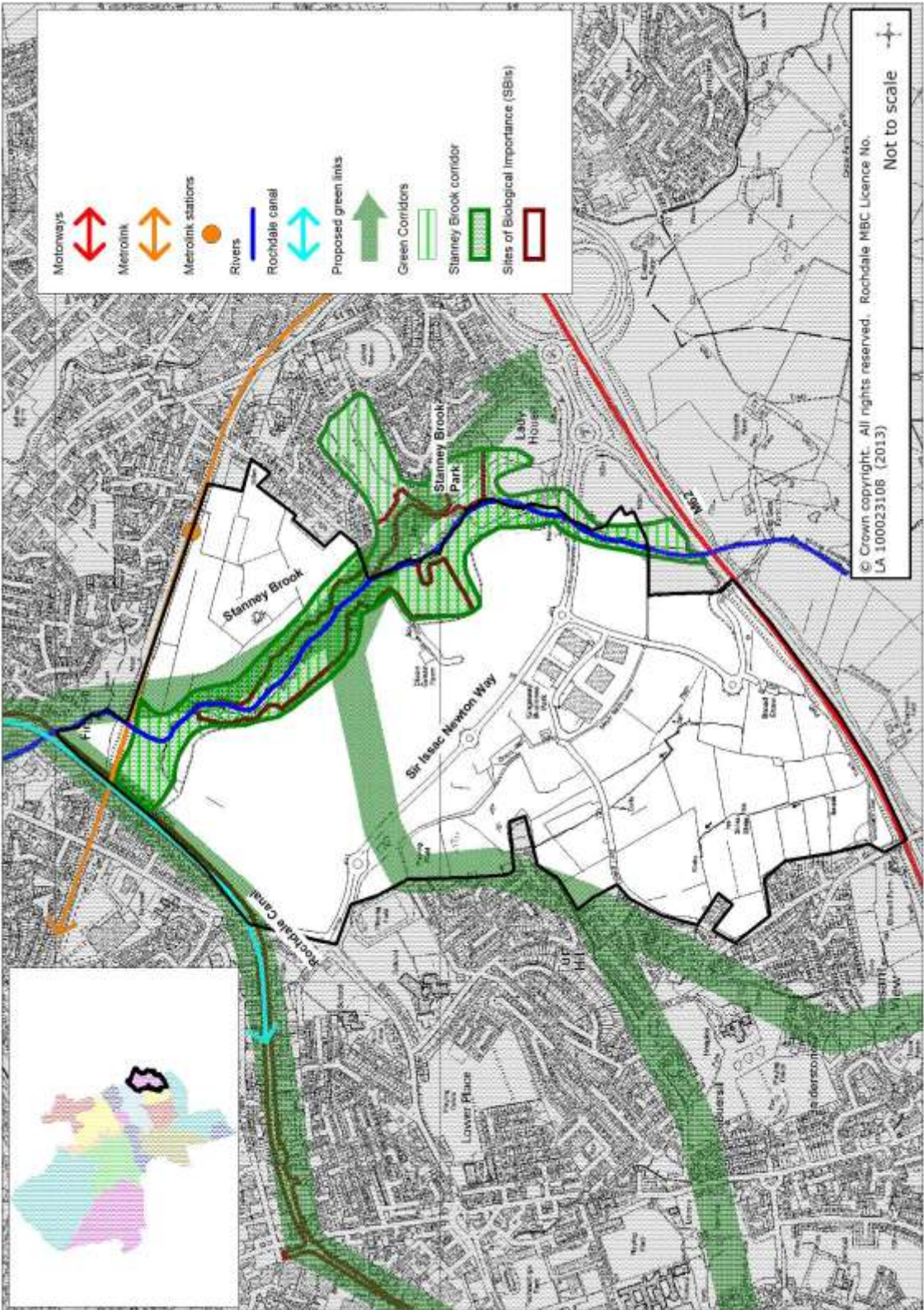
Kingsway Business Park is one of the largest employment developments in the north west and strategically important for the Borough of Rochdale. The business park is still developing and will include areas of housing. Stanney Brook runs through the northern end, forming an important ecological corridor including an SBI and Stanney Brook Local Park, this corridor links with the Rochdale Canal SAC. This corridor is the only recreational space within the character area and has received significant green infrastructure investment in recent years including new cycleways, planting and landscaping. Stanney Brook Park provides good views over to Crompton Moor in the south. The Rochdale Canal and NCR 66 runs along the northern boundary. High quality planting and landscaping schemes have been incorporated within the main transport network through the centre of the site. NCR 66 links with other townships and the wider countryside and there is also a Kingsway Metrolink stop. There are issues around surface water drainage on the site.

(Stanney Brook Park, Cycle Path, Sir Issac Newton Way)

Main Issues & Opportunities

- Explore opportunities to incorporate further greening and access routes as part of the on-going development ensuring high quality green infrastructure is incorporated into the design of the industrial area such as green roofs.
- Ensure that green access routes are incorporated into the residential areas to provide access to employment, services and recreation as well as increasing identity and a sense of place.
- Promote the existing access network and develop this further within and around the business park and beyond, linking to key routes and public transport such as the Rochdale Canal, NCR 66, Metrolink and the Beal Valley.
- Continue biodiversity improvements through enhancement of Stanney Brook Corridor and Park and increase links to other biodiversity networks such as the Beal Valley and Crompton Moor.
- Explore opportunities to incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) within new developments in reducing surface water drainage issues.

Figure 5.15: Character Area 14: Kingsway Business Park



Character Area 15: South Rochdale Green Fringe

The largely agricultural landscape of dairy farms is dominated by the M62 and A627(M) motorways. The area includes the distinct urban area of Buersil along Oldham Road with large houses and mature gardens. There are three SBIs, one along the A627(M) which is split into two separate areas, Gerrard Wood SBI adjacent to Tandle Hill and Stanney Brook SBI, which is an important biodiversity link to the Crompton area in the south. The woods and lodges around Trows Lane are also important for biodiversity. There is a good network of access routes including the South Rochdale Forest Trail (SRFT) to Tandle Hill, although the motorways are a significant barrier to movement and signage is inconsistent.

Main Issues & Opportunities

- Explore opportunities to work in partnership with farmers and land managers to increase biodiversity, such as surrounding Gerrard Wood and create access improvements, particularly to the north of the area, around Buersil Head.
- Working with the Highways Agency to explore opportunities for biodiversity improvements to the motorway verges and improvements to the gateway to Rochdale.
- Improve signposting of routes from urban areas particularly out to Hopwood Woods, Tandle Hill and Crompton Moor, to help mitigate the barrier to movement of the motorways.

Legend:

- Motorways (Red double arrow)
- Main roads (Yellow double arrow)
- Rivers (Blue line)
- Rochdale canal (Cyan double arrow)
- Proposed green links (Green arrow)
- Green Corridors (Green outline)
- South Rochdale Forest Trail (Green outline)
- Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) (Purple outline)
- Other (Red outline)

Map Labels: Broad Lane (B6194), Sudden Brook (Weald), Bursill, Ordism Road (A671), Trows Lane, A627 (m), White Brook, Hopedale Woods, Tandle Hill, Greenfield, Broad Lane (B6194), Sudden Brook (Weald), Bursill, Ordism Road (A671), Trows Lane, A627 (m), White Brook, Hopedale Woods, Tandle Hill, Greenfield, Broad Lane (B6194), Sudden Brook (Weald), Bursill, Ordism Road (A671), Trows Lane, A627 (m), White Brook, Hopedale Woods, Tandle Hill, Greenfield.

Scale: Not to scale

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Character Area 16: Stakehill Industrial Estate

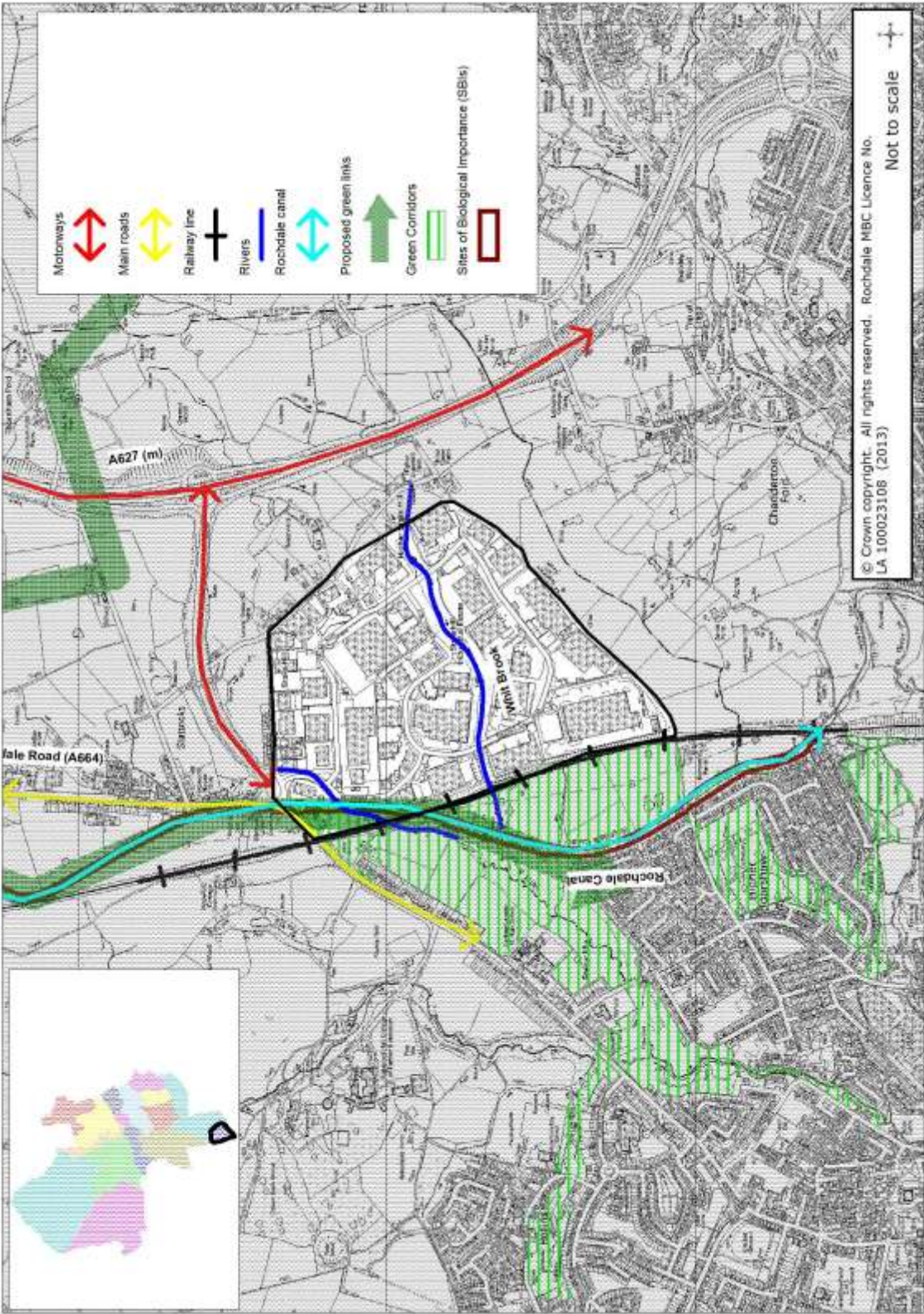
This is a privately owned industrial estate with large units and heavy goods vehicle movements via a single entrance point. The estate is surrounded by open farmland with good access routes. There are a number of wooded areas between the units. There is significant area of impermeable surface within the site, particularly roofs and vehicle servicing areas. Whit Brook Valley runs through the site and is important for biodiversity however it is currently undermanaged. A central pedestrian access route also runs along this valley but the surface is poor and signage is inconsistent. This path connects to the Rochdale Canal SAC and NCR 66 with its wider connections.

(Photos: Whit Brook valley, wooded areas)

Main Issues & Opportunities

- Explore opportunities to work with site owners and managers to improve and enhance the Whit Brook Valley as a biodiversity corridor.
- Explore opportunities to improve the Whit Brook Valley through increased signage and physical works to improve access for cycling.
- Explore ways of increasing the amount of permeable surface area such as introducing green roofs and SuDS.

Figure 5.17: Character Area 16: Stakehill Industrial Estate



Chapter 6: Green Infrastructure Objectives for Rochdale Township

We can see from the policy framework outlined in this plan (Page 11) that delivering good green infrastructure in Rochdale Township has to bring many benefits and contribute to positive change for local people and businesses and also for Rochdale Borough and Greater Manchester. What we want green infrastructure in Rochdale to do cuts across many traditional areas of activity. The multi-functional nature of green infrastructure enables it to support daily life in the Township by improving its attractiveness as a place to live, work and invest in and helping to ensure that it is resilient to flooding and the future impacts of climate change.

The priority objectives for green infrastructure, which this Action Plan will deliver seeks to ensure that we have the right green infrastructure in the right place and that it delivers the range of functions that Rochdale Township requires. These objectives aim to ensure that land managers, developers and all relevant delivery partnerships and organisations invest in and deliver high quality green infrastructure so that it achieves its cross cutting public benefits. Well-designed and well-managed green spaces bring benefits for social cohesion, recreation and well being, increasing usage and discouraging anti-social activity.

Our green infrastructure objectives are:

Growing Rochdale Township

High quality green infrastructure will support economic growth, health and wellbeing and other township priorities, enabling the Township to grow in a sustainable way.

Active, Healthy Rochdale

More active lifestyles will help to deliver improvements to the health and wellbeing of the community in Rochdale Township. We need to encourage physical activity in a safe and welcoming environment for all ages and abilities to promote healthy lifestyles.

Encouraging local food growing will help to promote better eating habits, increase gardening skills and provide opportunities for community gardening, food sharing and trading projects. Locally grown food also reduces the need for long journeys and the reliance on fossil fuels.

(Photo: Jubilee Orchard)

Accessible Rochdale

Encouraging walking and cycling for leisure and as a daily journey to school, work, shops and services will tackle health priorities as well as reducing pollution and greenhouse gas production. Greener streets, accessible urban green routes and better signage to important destinations in the Township and links to open spaces and other destinations will provide a better and more attractive environment for active travelling. Ideas such as Pennine Edge Forest's (PEF) Natural Signposting Initiative and Red Rose Forest's (RRF) Green Streets project, which use landscape features, trees and other types of planting, as landmarks will enable people to find their way around and follow the greenways network.

Living Rochdale

Improving access to the Township's countryside, woodlands and open spaces for education and enjoyment will support learning, natural play and encourage better use and appreciation of urban green space and the countryside. Low diversity 'green deserts'

of mown grass will be improved by introducing a more diverse flora and a more varied mowing pattern, which will provide a variety of interest and increase the functions they provide. Improving urban wildlife corridors will add interest and environmental quality to our neighbourhoods and help to protect and enhance wildlife habitats and species, which are important for local and regional biodiversity. These areas also provide a window on local wildlife to be enjoyed by residents, school children, workers and visitors.

(Photo: Falinge Park)

Resilient Rochdale

Green infrastructure will help to manage and reduce flood risk from the rivers such as the River Roch, River Spodden and Sudden Brook and their tributaries and also from surface water. This will benefit communities and businesses within and downstream of the Township. Trees, woodland and other green assets in the Township will help it to adapt to the impacts of climate change and may provide opportunities for sustainable wood fuel or biomass in the future. Green Infrastructure will also help Rochdale Township to meet the requirements of the European Water Framework Directive in ensuring that local watercourses and the water environment supports good water quality, biodiversity, public enjoyment and helps to reduce the impacts of pollution

Visit Rochdale

High quality public realm will encourage a positive first impression and make a lasting impact on visitors to the Township. Distinctive gateways and corridors, which enhance views of attractive countryside that surrounds the Borough and the Township's architectural heritage, will project a positive image for visitors. Identifying opportunities to promote the strong architectural heritage, particularly surrounding Rochdale Town Hall as well as developing and improving routes from the urban centre to other visitor attractions such as the open moors to the north will enable the Township to broaden the already strong visitor package.

Distinctive Rochdale

By delivering the above themes, Rochdale Township has the opportunity to make its green infrastructure work harder to create a distinctive and sustainable settlement that will achieve the Township's vision for growth, health, well-being and the quality of life for its residents, workers and visitors. Rochdale Township will become a stronger community with an enhanced sense of place and where the value of its green infrastructure is increased.

(Photo: Memorial Gardens)

Our Strategic Projects

Green Infrastructure will be delivered through a range of actions both large and small over the period of this Action Plan to 2026. The Action Plan has a long term vision that accommodates proposals which will be delivered at a later date as opportunities emerge and also 'quick wins' where there is an opportunity to do something more immediately. The Action Plan is based on a series of long term strategic projects, so they will be delivered incrementally through the life of the Green Infrastructure Action Plan linked to development opportunities, area based regeneration and opportunities for external funding. Smaller scale activities may be centred on how the Council and others who manage public and private green spaces can contribute to Rochdale Township' green infrastructure needs.

All of the Township' neighbourhoods and villages have a part to play in delivering these projects. The annual work programme supports the Rochdale Township Green Infrastructure Action Plan and will provide an opportunity to check progress, update information about the Township's environment and issues affecting it and will respond to new opportunities and challenges as they emerge. The three strategic delivery projects along with their key proposals are outlined below.

1. Rochdale Township Greenways Network

A high quality access network is vital within the Township to enable local people and visitors to access services, schools and places for recreation as well as green links between communities and neighbourhoods. This strategic project provides an opportunity to enhance access routes throughout the Township and to provide a co-ordinated 'Greenways' network. Rochdale Township has a poor health record and encouraging more active lifestyles and opportunities for exercise will help to address this problem. Developing more walking and cycling routes and improving existing routes will help healthy lifestyles as well as reducing the number of car journeys and carbon emissions. The Greenways Network will develop priority commuter routes, particularly linking to strategic green routes including National Cycle Route 66 (NCR 66) along the Rochdale Canal and public transport hubs such as Rochdale Railway and Metrolink Stations. By using landscape features and planting to mark the routes together with conventional clear signage the network will be easy to negotiate and will encourage wider use. The network will also utilise the Township's river valleys, particularly the Roch and the Spodden Valleys, linking with the wider Roch Valley River Park (this will be discussed in more detail in strategic project 3).

(Photo: Greenbooth path)

The open countryside to the north of Rochdale Township has a comprehensive and well-used access network in place. However, accessing these areas from the urban neighbourhoods is not always straightforward without using a car due to physical barriers such as roads. The Greenways Network will also link the Township's rich architectural heritage, visitor attractions and river valleys with the surrounding natural landscape of the moors, helping to contribute to economic growth and prosperity by increasing its visitor offer. The development and regeneration opportunities through schemes such as the River Roch opening will further enhance and develop the Greenways Network.

This project will provide:

- A high quality network of active transport routes connecting the urban areas and neighbourhoods with services, recreational facilities and schools along signposted commuter routes.
- Clear and welcoming recreational routes that link with neighbouring townships, the wider South Pennine countryside and beyond, via promoted routes and trails, architectural and leisure attractions, helping to improve the tourism offer.
- Accessible, attractive routes along the main river valleys, particularly along the Spodden and Roch Valleys, with signposted connections to the countryside and reservoirs from urban neighbourhoods and town centres.
- Increased opportunities for physical activity by encouraging more active transport methods to improve the health and wellbeing of the community.
- A framework for new development proposals to ensure that appropriate opportunities for linkages and improving routes are in place.
- Reduce carbon emissions by encouraging more journeys without using the car.

Key proposals for delivering the Rochdale Township Greenways Network:

- 1.1 River Valley Routes:** Maximise the tourism potential of the Township's river valleys as accessible routes to recreation and heritage attractions. This includes developing the strategic Roch Valley River Park and incorporating enabling development and regeneration led opportunities such as Rochdale Town Centre redevelopment.

- 1.2 Recreational routes:** Improve the existing network and develop new routes by improved signposting and using good practice established in the Pennine Edge Forest's (PEF) Natural Signposting Initiative and Red Rose Forest's (RRF) Green Streets project.
- 1.3 Improve the Greenways Network:** Improve active transport links between and within neighbourhoods and to the countryside, employment, local facilities and transport hubs by utilising the river valleys, Rochdale Canal Corridor, NCR 66 and identifying critical blockages and conflicts within the network.
- 1.4 Routes to Play:** Establish better routes to play, sports and recreation facilities to encourage active play and healthy lifestyles.
- 1.5 Rossendale & Rochdale Greenway and Cycle Route:** Improve and upgrade the route between Rossendale and Rochdale Railway Station via Healey Dell.
- 1.6 Rochdale Heritage Leisure Trails:** Develop a series of attractive and accessible trails linking the Township's industrial and social heritage with signage and interpretation.
- 1.7 Development Opportunities:** Ensure that appropriate linkages and improvements are provided through new development proposals and regeneration projects.

This Strategic project will use the good practice established in the PEF Natural Signposting initiative and RRF's Green Streets project. Delivering Rochdale Township Greenways Network is a long-term project involving a wide range of actions large and small. It will be delivered through contributions through new development opportunities, environmental regeneration programmes, highway management and rights of way improvements carried out by the Council and others. It will also capture a number of smaller actions, which may be linked to greenspace management and volunteering activities, with the co-operation and involvement of delivery partners and environmental agencies. An illustration of the Greenways network is shown in figure 6.1, page 56.

Figure 6.1 Rochdale Township' Greenways Network and countryside



2. Growing Greener Neighbourhoods in Rochdale Township

This strategic project will improve the range of services, products and functions that are provided by the green infrastructure within the Township so that it meets the needs of the community more effectively. A network of new and existing multi-functional green spaces will be managed for a variety of uses. The Greener Neighbourhood's Network will include local food growing, outdoor classroom areas, natural play, quiet relaxation, flood risk management, accessible urban wildlife and biodiversity, employment opportunities and climate change adaptation. Public spaces, private gardens, allotments, parks, cemeteries and employment sites are all part of Rochdale Township's Greener Neighbourhoods and all have a part to play in increasing functions and benefits to the Township's neighbourhoods and community. New developments and regeneration initiatives along with the Roch Valley River Park will enable improved connectivity between and within green networks and principal destinations for local people and visitors. The network of spaces will form 'stepping stones' to the countryside and will be linked by the Townships Greenways Network project. The existing network of green spaces will be enhanced and improved, new spaces will be created through opportunities from development and regeneration projects, directed by the priorities of the community. Neighbourhoods will define their own distinct character by using different ideas such as signature trees or particular planting designs along verges. Ways of developing initiatives that could provide biomass fuel including wood waste, willow coppice and harvesting community wood fuel will be investigated as part of this strategic project. Community woodland management schemes and planting sites for biomass could also provide a resource for education and training within the green economy as well as producing locally grown fuel.

Wildflowers in the Memorial Gardens



This project will provide:

- A network of high quality, multi-functional green spaces and green infrastructure assets that create distinctive neighbourhoods, better adapted to the effects of climate change and provide flood risk management as well as tackling the urban heat island effect.
- Opportunities to develop local food and fuel growing initiatives which will promote healthy eating, gardening skills and reduce carbon emissions as well as developing a resource for education and training.
- Increased opportunities for enjoyment of high quality open spaces, physical activity and natural play along with access to the Borough's wider countryside, which will encourage healthy lifestyles.
- Protection and enhancement of biodiversity as well as creating and protecting wildlife corridors helping to deliver Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) (2009) and the emerging Rochdale BAP priorities.
- Improved privately owned and public woodlands, opportunities for woodland management training and also investigate ways of stimulating the green economy.
- Improve flood risk management by working with the Environment Agency (EA), United Utilities and others to explore river corridor management opportunities and improved green infrastructure based flood risk management such as sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS).
- Guidance and evidence to support and inform development opportunities to ensure that appropriate green infrastructure is provided and linked to improved recreation and biodiversity values of such areas.

Key proposals for delivering Growing Greener Neighbourhoods:

- 2.1 Enhancing the Natural Environment:** Biodiversity, woodland and landscape features will be protected and enhanced whilst protecting fragile upland environments, particularly areas within and surrounding designated sites such as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to ensure that these areas continue to perform important functions such as the biodiversity corridor of Healey Dell LNR and carbon capture within the peat moorland.
- 2.2 Connecting Wildlife:** Explore new opportunities to create an extended and better connected biodiversity corridor along Healey Dell LNR, Stanney Brook and the Roch Valley along with identifying areas suitable for new woodland planting and also develop initiatives to monitor and manage non-native invasive species.
- 2.3 Flood Risk Management Opportunities:** Working with partners including the EA to identify opportunities for improving flood risk management along the river and stream valleys including SUDs. Assess green spaces to maximise their contribution to sustainable urban drainage and surface water flood risk management.
- 2.4 Adaptable Spaces:** Improve the number of functions performed by existing green spaces including cemeteries and verges as well as exploring opportunities to design new formal open space to provide a focus for community activities in neighbourhoods with limited or poor quality open space such as Wardleworth, Sparth Bottoms and Milkstone and Deeplish.
- 2.5 New Development Opportunities:** Develop a comprehensive approach to maximising green infrastructure benefits through new development

proposals such as Rochdale Town Centre, East Central Rochdale, Castleton and Kingsway Business Park.

- 2.6 Local Food Growing:** Identify opportunities to develop and support initiatives for community orchards, local food growing and other produce within managed public spaces and facilities, involving the Council, schools, the community and businesses.
- 2.7 Develop Educational Opportunities:** Maximising the education and training opportunities available from green infrastructure improvements and accessing local wildlife. Initiatives such as the Forest Schools Programme and the PEF Schools Arboretum will help deliver this proposal.
- 2.8 Increase Greening:** Maximise opportunities for tree planting, green walls and roofs and SUDS to help conserve natural resources and help communities adapt to climate change, particularly within more urban areas to address the urban heat island effect.
- 2.9 Distinctive Neighbourhoods:** Enhance the locally distinctive character of the neighbourhoods and towns by using signature trees, planting and enhancing local heritage and landscape features.
- 2.10 Woodland Enhancement:** Improving woodland management in partnership with farmers, landowners, Forestry Commission (FC), Forestry Stewardship Council and Natural England to encourage better management of land.
- 2.11 Biomass Opportunities:** Identify opportunities for wood fuel and biomass through woodland management and sites for planting short rotation coppice, exploring opportunities to develop a resource for education and training within the green economy.
- 2.12 Spodden Valley:** Enhance this important link between Rochdale Town Centre and Rossendale both for biodiversity including addressing blockages for the movement of wildlife and improvements to visitor facilities and interpretation of the landscape and heritage.
- 2.13 Improving Gateways:** Environmental improvement to key gateways into the Township such as A58, motorway junctions, Railway & Metrolink stations, Oldham Road, Castleton and Sudden.
- 2.14 Improvements to Vacant and Fallow Land:** Use of temporary treatments such as wildflowers to provide green infrastructure value to vacant land and also managing community expectations in its final delivery.
- 2.15 Improved Tourism Offer:** Ensure that the area's tourism potential is developed without compromising its existing green infrastructure or damaging fragile landscapes such as the Ashworth Valley or Rooley Moor.

3. Roch Valley River Park

This strategic project provides an opportunity to create a major landscape destination for recreation and tourism, stretching from the South Pennine Moors through Rochdale borough along the Roch Valley to Bury and beyond to the Irwell River Park and Manchester Ship Canal in Salford. The River Park will provide a high quality landscape, which is close to and accessible from local communities and is also a major destination for visitors to the borough. The River Park will also enable improved connections between Rochdale Township, its river valleys and the wider borough's core natural and built heritage destinations. The high quality park environment will act as a 'green spine' joining the uplands of the South Pennines with the regional core of Greater Manchester. The Roch Valley is also one of the key river valleys forming a part of Greater Manchester's strategic flood risk management and its biodiversity network.

The project will enable significant improvements to the green infrastructure services and functions provided by the Roch Valley, particularly in terms of flood risk management, biodiversity networks, access and climate change adaptation for Rochdale Township. The Roch Valley is important in helping to protect and deliver sustainable development throughout the borough providing many environmental functions to support economic development, neighbourhood regeneration and housing growth in Rochdale Township and the rest of Rochdale borough. As well as for local communities it also provides flood risk management and other functions for Bury and Salford as part of the City Region's strategic Green Infrastructure. This strategic project will closely link to the development of the Roch Valley River Park in other township Green Infrastructure Action Plans and the borough wide green infrastructure framework and strategy.

The footpath through Springfield Woods in the Roch Valley



It is important to ensure that investment along the valley is targeted and co-ordinated as effectively as possible. This will include ensuring that investment programmes and development proposals are informed by and help to deliver Rochdale Townships' Green Infrastructure Plan. An illustration of the Roch Valley River Park boundary is shown in figure 6.2, page 62.

This project will provide:

- A high quality parkland destination with walking and cycling routes, recreational facilities and educational opportunities, which will help to increase the health and well-being of the Township's residents and visitors as well as encouraging new investment in the Township.
- As strategic green link route connecting neighbourhoods and communities with Rochdale Township and the wider borough to high quality accessible countryside, including the Spodden and Ashworth Valleys along with links to other strategic green routes such as NCR66 (Connect 2) and destinations beyond the borough.
- A network of high quality, multi-functional green spaces and green infrastructure assets, which will help Rochdale Township to create distinctive neighbourhoods, better adapt to the effects of climate change, provide flood risk management and local food growing and educational opportunities.
- Opportunities for residents, schools, community and volunteer groups, the Council, local businesses and landowners to work together in shaping the Roch Valley River Park.
- A framework for improvements to green infrastructure as part of any development proposals and regeneration projects to ensure that actions to support and deliver climate change adaption, flood risk management, access and biodiversity are embedded in design and proposals as they come forward.
- Improved gateways into the Roch valley, particularly at Mandale Park, Belfield Woods and Springfield Park.
- Opportunities to develop a resource for education and training within the green economy.
- Enhance the tourism offer and infrastructure to attract more visitors to Rochdale Township whilst managing and protecting fragile landscapes.
- Improve flood risk management by working with the Environment Agency and other partners to explore river corridor management opportunities.
- Improved planning and monitoring of biodiversity to ensure better networks and habitats for wildlife by developing a Roch Valley Biodiversity Action Plan and utilising the Rochdale Biodiversity Opportunities map.
- Improved public realm within Rochdale town centre and through opening up sections of the River Roch and associated green infrastructure improvements.

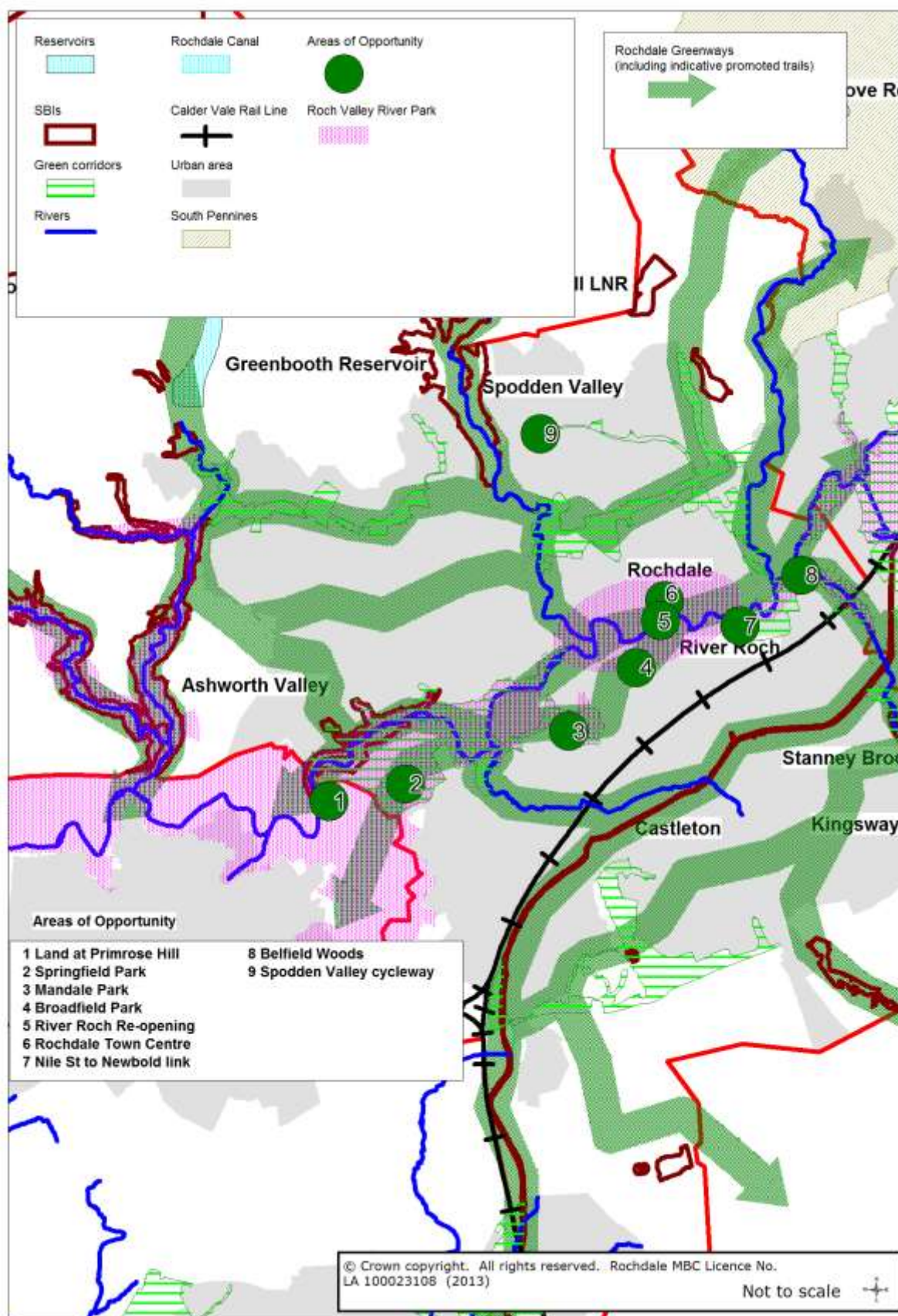
Key proposals for delivering the Roch Valley River Park:

- 3.1 Roch-Irwell Corridor:** Working with neighbouring townships and boroughs to deliver a strategic Roch-Irwell valley corridor providing significant landscape transformation and enhancement, particularly in areas of greatest need through initiatives and opportunities such as Natural Improvement Areas and Water Framework Directive programmes of the EA.
- 3.2 Roch Valley Trail:** Support to deliver the trail and key linkages via Connect2, Pennine Edge Trail, Rochdale Way creating and promoting links with local services, facilities and attractions within and beyond the borough also enhancing links with tributary river valleys such as the River Spodden and Ashworth Brook.
- 3.2 New Development Opportunities:** ensuring that appropriate green infrastructure is provided and enhanced through new development and

regeneration proposals such as in Rochdale Town Centre and new housing and employment proposals.

- 3.3 Flood Risk Management Opportunities:** working with partners including the EA to identify opportunities for improving flood risk management in Rochdale Town Centre and the Roch Valley including flood water management and sustainable urban drainage. Assess all greenspace within and adjacent to the River Roch and its tributaries to maximise their contribution to managing fluvial and surface water risk.
- 3.4 Roch Valley Biodiversity Plan:** Deliver an action plan for priority habitat improvements to increase and strengthen habitat corridors and networks in partnership with local communities and organisations such as the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit in line with the Rochdale Biodiversity Action Plan and the Rochdale Biodiversity Opportunities Map.
- 3.5 Improving Valley Woodlands:** Identify opportunities for improved woodland management and planting with the FC and other partners such as Groundwork Trust, BTCV and the Woodland Trust through the Pennine Edge Forest, particularly clough woodlands along connecting valleys.
- 3.6 River Roch Re-opening :** Uncovering sections of the River Roch within the town centre to reveal historic bridges as part of the town centre re-development, enhancing the public realm and the historic town centre environment.
- 3.7 Green Economy:** Working with schools and training providers to develop educational opportunities for engaging with Rochdale's landscape and heritage for education and as a link to the green economy.
- 3.8 Improving Gateways:** Environmental improvements and signposting at existing gateways along with developing strategies to remove blockages to access at other points.

Figure 6.2 Roch Valley River Park



Chapter 7: Key Partnerships for Delivery

Delivering the plan is not the responsibility of one single organisation or individual. For example over the life of the plan actions will be delivered by:

- Individuals in how they manage their private space, how they chose to be involved in improving and using their local environment;
- Developers and land managers by how they design and manage land and buildings based on green infrastructure need and opportunity;
- Local businesses and service providers also have a delivery role in how they promote and use Rochdale Township's environment as an asset for health, well being and sustainable economic growth;
- Community organisations and the voluntary sector also have an important role in delivery of the plan.

Funding streams are likely to change frequently through the life of the action plan in terms of their scope, criteria and availability. Funding opportunities relating to specific actions will be included in the annual work programme, which can be more easily kept up to date.

Rochdale Township will have a key role in ensuring appropriate political and community support for projects to be delivered so that funding opportunities can be pursued with confidence and opportunities for delivery are maintained and strengthened. This Green Infrastructure Action Plan will help to deliver key priorities in the Rochdale Township Plan and its delivery structures for example those relating to health and well being, physical regeneration and quality of place.

In addition to the central role of Rochdale Township, there are a number of established delivery partnerships and bodies which will be central to ensuring that funding opportunities for green infrastructure projects are maximised and that key projects are developed and delivered effectively and with maximum value for Rochdale Township and, as appropriate, Rochdale Borough and Greater Manchester. These include:

- Pennine Prospects
- Pennine Edge Forest
- Community Forest Trust
- Voluntary sector organisations including Groundwork Trust and Woodland Trust

It is important to ensure that the Township's green infrastructure priorities gain strong support from key agencies and organisations who have a Greater Manchester or regional remit for supporting or investing in green infrastructure which, supports sustainable low carbon growth, urban renewal, environmental regeneration, nature conservation, health services, environmental services such as climate change adaptation, surface water or flood risk management. These currently include:

- Forestry Commission
- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- United Utilities
- British Waterways
- Sustrans
- Association of Greater Manchester Authorities
- Neighbouring districts

At a local scale it is important that green infrastructure is central to and embedded in the delivery of sustainable growth, regeneration and quality of life as set out in the Rochdale Township Plan, Rochdale Borough Renaissance Masterplan, Pride of Place, Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and the Local Development Framework in order that funding and delivery opportunities can be maximised.

The borough Green Infrastructure Strategy (to be completed in autumn 2013) will provide a framework for each of the four Township Green Infrastructure Action Plans and how they individually and collectively deliver green infrastructure priorities for Rochdale borough and the Manchester City Region. The voluntary sector, such as Groundwork Oldham & Rochdale, community groups and Friends of groups has an important role to play in ensuring that local communities are given opportunities to help shape and improve their environment. The voluntary sector can also access unique funding opportunities and has particular expertise in working with volunteers and young people who are a major resource for delivering green infrastructure actions.

Making Progress

The Rochdale Township Green Infrastructure Action Plan will be delivered through a series of large and small actions through the life of the strategy to 2026. The accompanying annual work programme sets out details of actions that are proposed, who will deliver them and by when. It will also include details of outputs, outcomes and key milestones against which progress and performance can be measured and corrective action taken where needed. New evidence and information relevant to the Township's Green Infrastructure and issues affecting it will be used to review and inform projects and priorities where necessary.

'Quick win' projects will often result from small changes to how green space is managed or by identifying projects to be delivered within the next one to three years, which can be linked to a specific development, regeneration project or funding source. Medium term projects which will be delivered within timescales between three to five years will be developed in detail and their status or progress reviewed on an annual basis.

Projects which are proposed for more than five years into the future are currently aspirational but all are linked to potential enabling development, regeneration or opportunities which, although currently without a firm timescale, are likely to come forward through the life of the Action Plan. It is important to ensure these proposals are part of the long term vision and planning process so that they can be moved forward more quickly should circumstances allow. Ongoing consultation will also be carried out for key projects as they move forward to ensure they meet the needs of the community and provide opportunities to get involved in planning, delivering and managing projects wherever possible.

Progress in delivering the action plan will be reviewed annually with Rochdale Township through the annually updated work programme and presented to key Township working groups dealing with physical change, health and the environment.

Appendix: Policy Context

Rochdale Township Plan (2012-15)

Rochdale Township Plan 2012-2015 tackles priorities based on the issues raised by local residents in each of the four Township wards; and consultation with residents; community groups and partner organisations.

- To support the creation of local jobs by developing tourism opportunities/business development;
- Improving our services for children and young people;
- To enhance the quality of life and community safety for local people by seeking improvements to the environment and
- Improving leisure and recreation opportunities and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Pride of Place: The Community Strategy for Rochdale Borough (2011-15)

Pride of Place (PoP) brings together and drives the delivery of the social, economic and environmental priorities for the borough to create:

“a thriving place where people want to live, work, visit and do business – a place in which we can all take pride”

The PoP priorities include a cleaner, greener environment and a focus on well being, health and community safety for which a high quality and accessible environment is essential. There are objectives for good green infrastructure for recreation, tourism, biodiversity, managing flood risk, encouraging sustainable travel such as cycling and walking and climate change adaptation.

The borough's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is led by the council and includes eleven of the major agencies and service deliverers in the borough who will oversee the implementation of the strategy. The LSP will be supported by a performance board, which will ensure we stay on track to achieve our objectives.

Prosperity for All: The Greater Manchester Strategy (2009)

The Greater Manchester Strategy sets out the vision for the Manchester City Region to achieve sustainable economic growth for all ten Greater Manchester districts. It aims to secure the place of Manchester City Region as one of Europe's premier city regions with a good quality of life, a thriving low carbon economy and a strong commitment to sustainable development. At the heart of this vision and the supporting objectives for its delivery is a commitment to achieving a greater sense of place with a strong and positive image. This focuses on improvements to the public realm, particularly through green infrastructure enhancements to create a high quality environment including better flood risk management and adaptation to climate change impacts.

Rochdale Local Development Framework (Text to be finalised)

Rochdale Borough Renaissance Masterplan (2005)

The Masterplan sets out a vision for the borough with the key priorities and projects that will help to deliver physical, economic and quality of life changes to transform the borough. The vision is that:

“Rochdale borough will offer an attractive location in a successful city region with a distinctive lifestyle and identity”

The role of the borough’s natural environmental assets is highlighted in helping to create a borough that can grow sustainably and create a strong sense of place. The borough will be physically attractive, distinctive and healthy with good accessible countryside, high quality public spaces and parks in and around our neighbourhoods and town centres, effective flood risk management and which is well placed to address the impacts of climate change.

Rochdale Borough Transport Strategy (2009)

The Rochdale Borough Transport Strategy is a framework to guide the development of transport improvements across the borough for the period up to 2026. The strategy strongly supports increased provision of green transport networks and prioritises the travel needs of people with mobility impairments, pedestrians and cyclists and supports the borough’s environment, sustainability and health agendas.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Rochdale Borough (2009)

(Text to be finalised)

Greater Manchester Surface Water Management Plan (due to be published 2012)

(Text to be finalised)

Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester (2010)?

The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) has carried out work to identify a framework to support housing and economic growth taking on board the need to manage flood risk, create accessible recreational landscapes, adapt to climate change and conserve biodiversity. The Roch and Irwell river valleys are a significant part of this, helping to provide essential green infrastructure functions both locally and for the city region. This work will inform the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, which is currently being produced by the AGMA to provide a land use planning basis for sustainable growth and regeneration of the city region.

Glossary

Active transport: Modes of transport such as walking and cycling, which are based on physical activity rather than driving a car. Public transport is also described as active transport because it often involves walking or cycling to or between pickup points.

Adaptation to climate change impacts: Practical steps to protect towns and communities from the likely disruption and damage that will result from effects of climate change.

Biodiversity: The variety of all plant and animal life and the wider the range of animals, plants, fungi and micro-organisms in any given area, the higher the biodiversity. High biodiversity enables a population to be healthier and more resilient.

Biomass: Plant and animal waste materials used as a renewable fuel.

Climate change: Changes in long term weather patterns primarily associated with increases in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Connect2: A project run by the sustainable transport charity Sustrans funded by the Big Lottery, which will connect isolated walking and cycling routes into the national network.

Critical Drainage Area: An area which has a significant degree of surface water flood risk.

De-culverting water courses: To open up rivers and streams that have previously been covered to flow underground through large pipes.

Environmental services: Benefits that society can gain from the wider environment (green infrastructure) such as protection from flood risk, land values and air quality.

Flood Zones: Areas zoned according to the probability of fluvial flood events occurring.

Zone 1- Low probability, less than 1 in 1000 year fluvial flood event.

Zone 2- Medium probability, between 1 in 100 year and 1 in 1000 year event

Zone 3a- High probability, 1 in 100 year or greater.

Zone 3b- Functional floodplain, land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood.

Low carbon economy: An economy that produces a minimal amount of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Infrastructure: Network of communications and utility services such as roads, drains, electricity, water, gas and telecommunication, required to enable the development of land.

Local Development Framework: A portfolio of local development documents which will provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for Rochdale up to 2026.

Local Strategic Partnership: A single, non-statutory, multi-agency body, which brings together different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors within the local authority boundary.

Manchester City Region: A statutory partnership between the local authorities of Greater Manchester to support strategic planning, economic growth, environmental improvement and protection and investment in infrastructure and transport.

National Cycle Network: A comprehensive network of safe cycling routes running throughout the UK.

Non-native invasive species: Species that have been brought from their natural range into a new area where they outgrow and out-compete species natural to the new area.

Pennine Edge Forest: The woodland and environmental initiative for the east of Greater Manchester conurbation and includes the boroughs of Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport and Tameside.

Public realm: Outside space, that is accessible to the public such as streets, pavements, parks and squares.

Quick wins: Initiatives and projects that can be funded and implemented quickly, usually within one year.

Red Rose Forest: Community forest covering the Metropolitan Boroughs of Bolton, Bury, Trafford and Wigan and the Cities of Manchester and Salford.

SBI, Sites of Biological Importance: A non-statutory designation for a site. It is used to protect locally important and valued sites of high wildlife value.

SAC, Special Areas of Conservation: These are areas which have been given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive, classified for habitat types and species (excluding birds) most in need of conservation.

SPA, Special Areas of Protection: Strictly protected sites classified under the European Union's Habitats Directive for rare and vulnerable birds and regularly occurring migratory species.

SSSI, Site of Special Scientific Interest: A designation of legal protection for sites of particular wildlife or geological importance in England.

Sustainable development: Development that ensures that the use of resources and the environment today does not restrict their use by future generations.

Urban green route: An accessible walking or cycling route through an urban area, which may be fringed with trees and other vegetation.

Urban heat island: The increased temperature of urban environment compared to the surrounding rural area. This is largely due to increased hard surfaces, which absorb and trap heat and a reduced number of trees and green areas that cool air effectively.

Wood Fuel: Timber, woodchip or waste wood, which is used for burning as fuel.

Voluntary sector: Organisations, other than local authorities that carry out activities not for profit.

Abbreviations

(Text to be finalised)

BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
CABE	Commission for the Built Environment
EA	Environment Agency
FC	Forestry Commission
GMEU	Greater Manchester Ecology Unit
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
NCR	National Cycle Route
PEF	Pennine Edge Forest
RRF	Red Rose Forest
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SBI	Site of Biological Interest
SFRA	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SUDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage System
SWMP	Surface Water Management Plan
UU	United Utilities
WFD	Water Framework Directive