

# Tameside Countryside Strategy

2009 - 2019

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For people, for wildlife



Osborne Naturetrail  
**Insects**  
& other creepy-crawlies

They have millions of different kinds, and that's just in one tiny kingdom. Even your skin is made of insects and other creepy-crawlies. Discover the most interesting insects and learn how they live. It's a world of insects and other creepy-crawlies. It's a world of insects and other creepy-crawlies. It's a world of insects and other creepy-crawlies.



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# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1

Tameside's countryside is increasingly valued by all sections of the community and is a major asset to the environment of the Borough. It makes a vital contribution to our quality of life by providing an attractive environment where people live and work, by helping to reduce pollution, by encouraging wildlife and by providing health and wellbeing, leisure and recreation opportunities.

*“The Vision for Tameside’s countryside is of a place where landscape, heritage, nature conservation and recreation are in balance. It is a place where heritage and the natural beauty are safeguarded, where wildlife thrives and where visitors, regardless of their ability or background, can spend an enjoyable, healthy and fulfilling time.”*

## 1.2

The Strategy has an important role to play within the context provided by the Council's Community Strategy key themes through:

- **Supportive Communities**

Reducing the barriers to the countryside to encourage greater use, enjoyment and involvement by the whole community.

- **A Safe Environment**

The management of a countryside where people feel safe and secure, reducing anti-social behaviour through positive access and intervention projects.

- **A Prosperous Society**

The support of groups and individuals in the provision of training opportunities involving traditional countryside skills and crafts.

- **A Learning Community**

Use of the natural environment to provide opportunities for lifelong learning.

- **A Healthy Population**

Encouraging the people of Tameside to use the countryside for both active recreation and passive enjoyment, leading to good physical and mental health and wellbeing.

- **An Attractive Borough**

Managing and promoting the countryside of Tameside as an attractive place to live, work and visit.

## 1.3

The countryside contributes to the cultural development of the Borough and as such this document is one of a suite of strategies and policies that deliver the aims of the overarching Cultural Strategy.

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## 1.4

This document is primarily concerned with the countryside managed by Tameside Council, through its Countryside Service, although issues around biodiversity in areas not directly managed or owned by the Council will, where resources allow, be championed by the Countryside Service.

## 1.5

For the purposes of the Strategy, the countryside is defined as 'those parts of the Borough which are not built up'. It includes Country Parks, River Valleys, Local Nature Reserves, the Eastern Moorlands and areas of urban open space used for informal recreation, but excludes formal parks, amenity grassland, urban gardens and allotments.

## 1.6

It is important to maintain consistent messages through this strategy and we have identified a series of six key themes, which are:

- Physical Access
- Recreation, Health and Wellbeing
- Engaging People
- Biodiversity
- Landscape
- Historic Environment



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## 1.7

Under each of these themes, the strategy sets out the current position and priorities for action for the Countryside Service and its partners.

## 1.8

The Countryside Strategy contributes to two of the new national indicators, more specifically around Volunteering (NI6) and Biodiversity (NI197).

## 1.9

A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the Countryside Strategy. This assessment has identified certain groups that have traditionally not used the countryside. The draft strategy has been reviewed in light of this, to ensure that the Council positively engage with all sections of the community.

## 1.10

Consultation with the Economy and Environment Service has identified that the Countryside Strategy would not have any major planning implications and is compatible with existing policies and strategies. The Peak District National Park is one of the most visited parks in Britain and it is important that visits to the park have minimal environmental impact. The future Mottram bypass will assist greatly in reducing congestion in Tameside whilst still allowing visits to the National Park.

## 1.11

Tameside's last Countryside Strategy was produced in 2002. The new strategy which is the subject of this report, sets out how the Countryside Service will meet the needs of residents and visitors in the future, as well as ensuring that National agendas are met.

## 1.12

The Countryside Strategy for Tameside sets out aspirations for the countryside over the next 25 years but has a strong focus for delivery over the next 10 years and will at that point be completely reviewed to reflect any changes within the Community Strategy. Progress of the Strategy to meet agreed actions will be reviewed annually through key performance indicators.



# 2. Background

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## 2.1

Lying between the heart of the Greater Manchester conurbation and the Peak District National Park, Tameside has a great variety of countryside to enjoy, from the meadows and woodlands of the valleys in the south, to high open moorland in the east. It is a countryside rich in heritage and wildlife. As well as the valleys of the Rivers Tame, Medlock and Etherow, Tameside has three Country Parks, eight Local Nature Reserves and a fine canals network.

## 2.2

No part of the built up area of the Borough is more than 1.5 kilometres from accessible countryside, providing everyday contact with landscape and nature, important for the health, well-being and quality of life of the local community. In addition to the 214,000 residents of Tameside, this opportunity is also available to a population of around 2.5 million people who live within an hour's drive of the Borough.

## 2.3

Some 46% (48 sq km/18½ sq miles) of the Borough's 104 square kilometres/40 square miles is countryside. Of this the Council itself, or in partnership with others, manages around 960 hectares/2370 acres. This includes Stalybridge Country Park and adjoining land (alongside United Utilities), Werneth Low Country Park (jointly with the Hyde War Memorial Trust), Daisy Nook Country Park (jointly with Oldham Council), land at Park Bridge, Broad Mills, Great Wood and Hurst Clough, Roaches Wood, Knott Hill Reservoir, Haughton Dale and various other areas.

## 2.4

The Countryside Service manages visitor centres at Park Bridge (Ashton-under-Lyne), Werneth Low Country Park, and Lymefield (Broadbottom).

## 2.5

Tameside's Countryside Ranger Service is responsible for the management of Council owned countryside sites and has long been recognised through its work in nature conservation and in involving the community and visitors alike to appreciate, enjoy and care for the natural environment.

## 2.6

The Countryside Service comprises of rangers, information officers, administrative support and an estate team. Additionally, up to 75 voluntary rangers provide invaluable support and assistance to the Service.



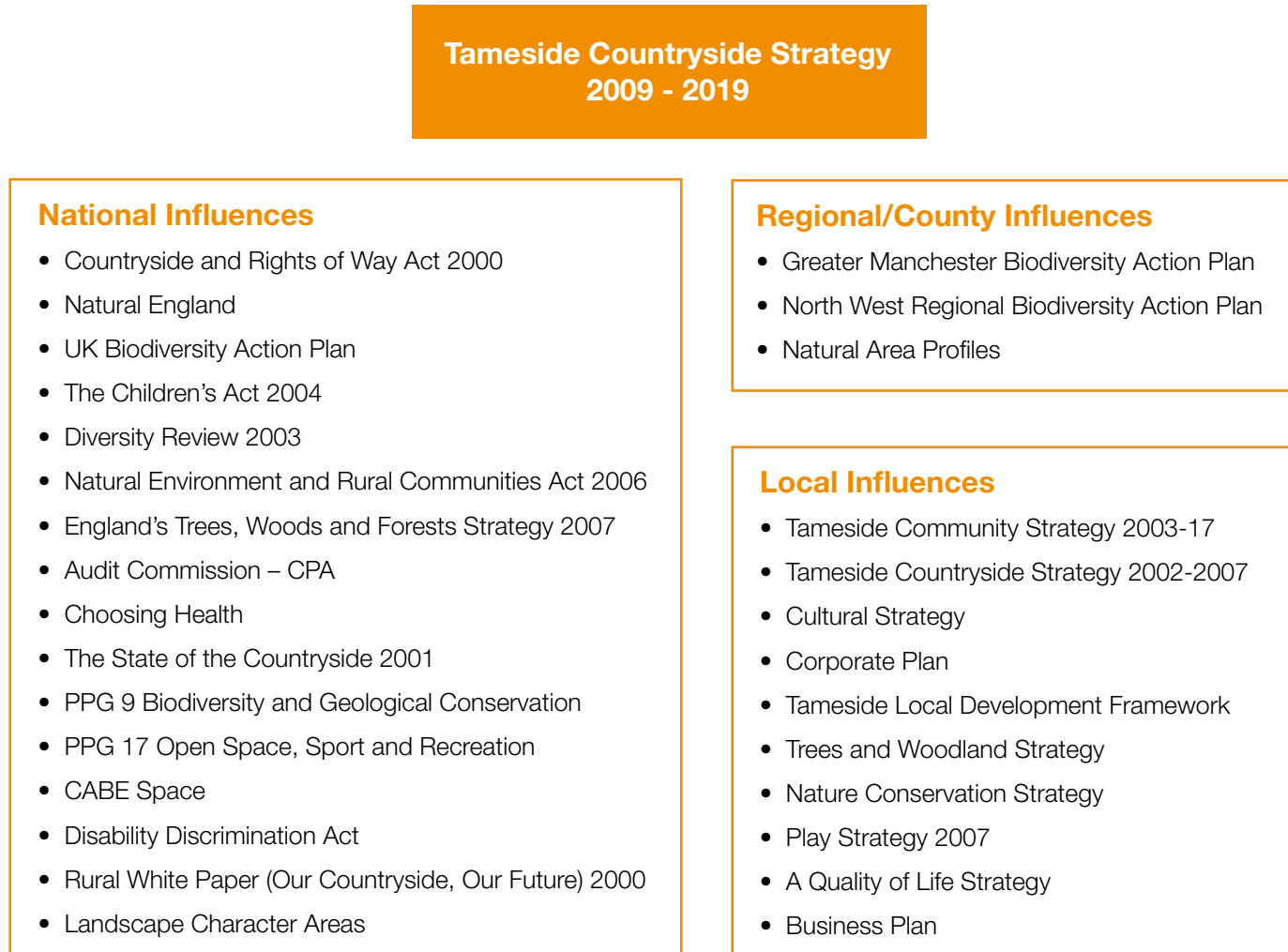
# 3. Strategic Context

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## 3.1

### Other Plans and Strategies

The diagram below shows the strategic documents that have helped to shape this Countryside Strategy and its priorities for action.





## 3.2

### Key Demographic Information

#### 3.2.1

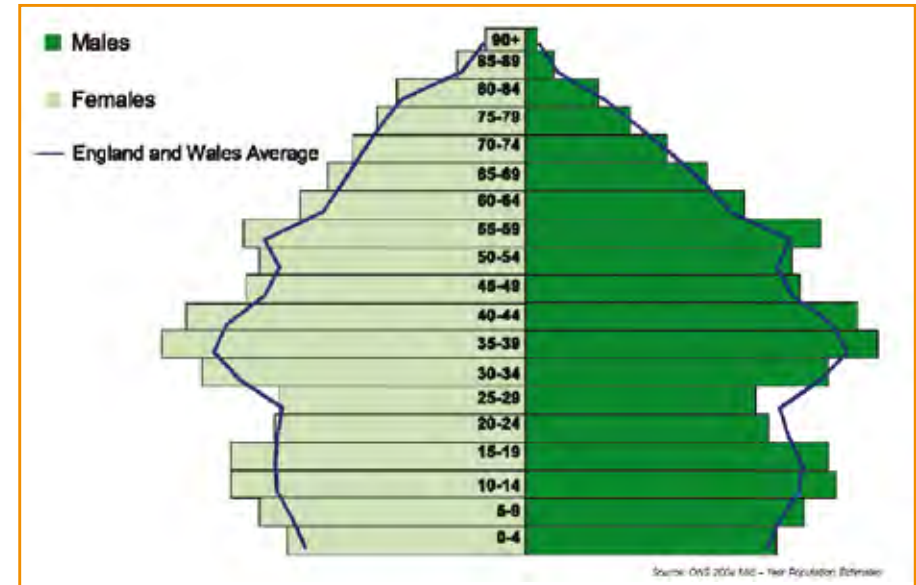
The Borough of Tameside lies to the East of Greater Manchester, stretching inland from the urban hub of Manchester to the moors of the Peak District. Tameside shares borders with Oldham, Manchester, Stockport and the Derbyshire Borough of High Peak. Tameside is well connected to the region and beyond by the M60 and M67 motorways and quality rail links to Manchester and Yorkshire.

#### Wards in Tameside



#### 3.2.2

Tameside is home to 213,043 people (2001 Census). The age breakdown is as shown below.



#### 3.2.3

The number of older people is increasing in Tameside as it is nationally, yet Tameside has a higher proportion of young people and 35 to 45 year olds than the national average for both genders. In particular, Tameside has a higher proportion of 10-19 year olds.

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### 3.2.4

The percentage of young people in each ward is between 17 and 22 percent, but the proportion of young to old does vary with two wards having a higher proportion of old people compared to young. Seventeen wards out of nineteen have a higher proportion of young people than old, emphasising the need for strong provision for children and young people.

### 3.2.5

Just over 95% of Tameside residents were born in the UK and a small proportion of the overall population (5.4%) classes itself as being non-white, although there are significant pockets of black and minority ethnic communities within the Borough.

### 3.2.6

Measuring residents with a limiting long-term illness is the closest that the 2001 Census came to a disability question and is considered a good approximation. Almost 21% of Tameside residents have a long term limiting illness as opposed to an England and Wales average of 18.2%.

### 3.2.7

In Tameside, crime is reducing overall, but reports of anti-social behaviour in the countryside are increasing.

### 3.2.8

There are considerable opportunities in the promotion of the benefits of the countryside for health. Recreational activities such

as walking and the encouragement of children's 'natural' play will contribute to positive impacts on the Borough's main long-term health issues such as heart and lung disease, obesity and mental health.



# 4. Key themes and strategic objectives

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## 4.1

### People in the countryside

#### Physical Access

##### 4.1.1

There is an extensive network of rights of way and concessionary paths in Tameside's countryside amounting to some 203 kilometres (126 miles). These paths range from field paths to surfaced tracks, and from local paths to National Trails (Trans Pennine Trail, Pennine Bridleway). The majority of the rights of way are footpaths, with a more limited choice of routes for cyclists and horse riders.

##### 4.1.2

The public rights of way network is increasingly used for access to the countryside by the local community and visitors alike. Some of the routes, particularly in urban areas, can be well used, but in the more rural locations the rights of way network can sometimes become overgrown and hard to use through lack of use. The Countryside Service and Rights of Way Officer have been working hard, in partnership with landowners to improve the network, with opportunities for closer working to develop a standard approach across the Borough.

##### 4.1.3

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that all public rights of way are open and available for use within Tameside's countryside. This includes ensuring that they are all signposted and adequately waymarked along their length and regularly maintained to keep

paths clear of vegetation and to ensure that structures, such as gates, stiles and bridges, are safe. Surfacing improvements and drainage will also be needed in some cases.

##### 4.1.4

The Council must also ensure that landowners who have rights of way across their land respect the public's right to use those paths and do nothing to hinder their use. It regularly negotiates agreements with landowners concerning the replacement of structures, some of which the landowner has a duty to maintain.

##### 4.1.5

The Definitive Map and Statement (DMS) is the legal record of all public rights of way, which is held and maintained by the Rights of Way Officer within the Council. The DMS should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure that legal changes to the rights of way network are properly recorded. This information is then made available to the public, to other Council departments, to the Ordnance Survey and to any government or non-government organisation which requires it.

##### 4.1.6

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) has also put in place measures which will improve people's access to and enjoyment of the countryside, and will also encourage more people to have a voice in the management of rights of way and countryside access.



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### 4.1.7

Introduced under the CRoW Act was the establishment of a Local Access Forum for each authority area, which advises and informs the Council on issues relating to the management and improvement of the Borough's rights of way. Tameside has formed a partnership with Oldham, Rochdale, Bolton and Bury in setting up the Greater Manchester Pennine Fringe Local Access Forum. Membership of the Local Access Forum comprises of rights of way user groups, countryside-based organisations with an interest in rights of way, landowners and individual members of the public.

### 4.1.8

The Crow Act also introduced rights of access to mountain, moorland and heathland for walkers from September 2004. In Tameside this area includes all of the eastern moorlands and small pockets of land around the Borough, such as on Werneth Low and Brown Edge. Tameside Council's role as the Access Authority gives it duties to manage access, in partnership with landowners, across designated land.

### 4.1.9

Another important element of CRoW Act legislation is the requirement for local authorities to draw up Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIPs) by November 2007. The particular aim of the Improvement Plan is to encourage and promote countryside access for people for whom recreational access to the countryside is currently difficult. These might be people with mobility problems, or with low incomes, or with limited access to private or public transport. This inclusive approach is fundamental

not only to the Council's public rights of way work, where our aim is to provide access for all wherever possible, but also to its delivery of the whole Countryside Strategy. While supporting and encouraging access and rights of way in and to the countryside from urban areas, the Council will also seek to protect people's rights and if necessary seek to close rights of way that enable antisocial behaviour or a breach in the duty to safeguard children such as those paths crossing school grounds.

### 4.1.10

Tameside has a number of key recreational routes which form a framework to which the rest of the rights of way network connects. These key routes include the Trans Pennine Trail, the Pennine Bridleway, the Tameside Trail, the Tame Valley Way, and the Etherow Valley Way. All have had considerable resources put into their development over the past ten years, and are intensively used by walkers, horse riders and cyclists. To reflect their importance in the Borough's rights of way network, these key countryside routes need to be managed and maintained to a high standard.

### 4.1.11

There is also a need to continue to improve and develop the network of multi-user routes where appropriate, enabling people from urban areas to reach the countryside either by foot, horse or cycle.

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#### 4.1.12

Access links should dovetail with the public transport system where possible, via train, bus and metrolink stations for example, both to promote sustainable transport and to make it easier for those without cars to access the countryside.

#### 4.1.13

In addition, the Council acknowledges that people will continue to access the countryside by car and will make provision for limited car parking where appropriate.

#### 4.1.14

A number of serious problems affect the public rights of way and concessionary route network which are not directly rights of way issues. The most important of these are the misuse of motorcycles in the countryside, fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour and youth disorder. While at times these problems may be alleviated to some degree by public rights of way management measures, in general they are issues of law and order which cannot be addressed solely by the Council's Countryside Service. They affect the whole Borough and their incidence is increasing.

### Recreation, Health and well-being

#### 4.1.15

Tameside's countryside offers opportunities for a wide range of recreational activities and the promotion of healthier lifestyles.

#### 4.1.16

Informal recreation is the most popular activity undertaken in Tameside's countryside. Site visitor surveys in 2006 and a Citizens Panel survey in 2007 have indicated that the majority of visitors use Tameside's countryside for peace and relaxation, enjoying the views and to see wildlife.

#### 4.1.17

In addition to the public rights of way network, there is a range of countryside sites which are available for people to use, many of which are owned and managed by the Council. These are very popular with visitors and are used for a variety of quiet recreational pursuits. They include three Country Parks at Werneth Low, Stalybridge and Daisy Nook, and visitor centres at Park Bridge and Lyme field, between them attracting some 450,000 visitors each year.

#### 4.1.18

There are also a number of other sites owned and managed by the Council, including the Local Nature Reserves at Haughton Dale, Great Wood, Knott Hill, Hulmes and Hardy Wood, Hurst Clough, Rocher Vale and Castle Clough and Cowbury meadows.

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These sites often act as ‘gateways’ to the wider countryside, providing people with a ‘first taste’ of this experience, before they gain confidence to go on and explore further afield using the public rights of way network.

#### 4.1.19

Resources for the development of new or additional recreational sites are limited and often dependent on securing additional funding. A priority in this context is the development of facilities where they are currently lacking, close to urban areas and particularly in the west of the Borough, which is relatively impoverished in terms of accessible countryside.

#### 4.1.20

While most people visit the countryside for informal recreation, there is also a demand for more formal, active recreation. Current facilities include the Council’s Visitor Centres, which provides opportunities for basic wayfaring and orienteering, angling at Knott Hill Local Nature Reserve and along the canal system and a mountain bike trail close to Park Bridge.

#### 4.1.21

The Council’s role is to encourage the provision of facilities for active recreation, while ensuring that locations are carefully chosen to avoid conflict with other land uses or countryside users.

#### 4.1.22

There is an increasing recognition that the use of the countryside brings wider benefits for people, promoting a sense of well being

and improving both mental and physical health. It is important that in encouraging the use of the countryside, these wider benefits are also considered. The Council will support initiatives such as Healthy Walking and Green Gyms to achieve this.



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### 4.1.23

It has long been known that participation in sport activities can help to maintain physical fitness. However, recent studies have shown that informal recreational pursuits can also improve a person's health. For example, research cited in the Health Development Agency National Service Framework for Coronary Heart Disease has demonstrated that physical activity has been shown to have the following benefits:

- A decreased risk of cardiovascular disease mortality in general and coronary heart disease in particular;
- The prevention or delay in the development of high blood pressure;
- A reduced risk of osteoporosis;
- Regulating weight and as a controlling factor of obesity.

### 4.1.24

It is not just physical health benefits that are associated with access to the countryside. For many people the enjoyment of their activity can be connected to a sense of achievement. It may also provide opportunities to relax, find peace and inspiration and contemplation; thus improving the sense of wellbeing. In addition, numerous educational benefits can be gained.

### 4.1.25

For children, recreational activity is especially important. The majority of studies on young people indicate declining participation in physical activity not least through a combination of the attractions of TV and personal computers, and the fears of

parents for the child's safety outdoors. This may account for 20% of children being classed as overweight. Meanwhile, the health issues associated with the elderly are also increasing. Population forecasts expect the number of people aged 65 and over to grow, thereby increasing the pressure on reactive treatment.





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## Engaging People

### 4.1.26

The success of the Countryside Strategy is dependent on local people being fully engaged in its delivery. Providing an effective rights of way network and good facilities in the countryside is not a complete answer. There is also a need to increase awareness, enjoyment and appreciation of the countryside by those who visit it and to promote a sense of caring and ownership.

### 4.1.27

The countryside provides an opportunity for people to become involved in conservation work, to contribute to caring for their local environment. This also enables participants to gain practical skills and vocational qualifications to enhance their employment prospects. The Countryside Service has supported and developed its own Voluntary Ranger Service, as well as supporting various 'Friends Of. . .' groups. It also provides appropriate work for other 'volunteer' groups, such as Business in the Community, and Community Service groups.

### 4.1.28

Although Tameside has high quality countryside, the countryside is still out of reach to many of its residents. The countryside is a place that everyone should be able to enjoy. Some sections of the community have greater difficulty in taking up the opportunities that the countryside offers. This includes people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, the young and people from socially disadvantaged areas.

### 4.1.29

Surveys of visitors to countryside sites in the Borough, and indeed the country as a whole, have shown that the majority of participants are typically white, middle aged, middle class and able bodied. Outside this 'participation profile' is a significant proportion of the Borough's population under represented in countryside recreational activities, proportionate to their numbers in society. This includes young adults (<25 yrs), low-income groups, those from different cultural backgrounds, people with disabilities (including those with visual impairments), older people, those without access to a private car, and women. As these groups account for a significant number of the population it is important that their needs are considered alongside those of existing users.



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### 4.1.30

As part of the national Diversity Review (Countryside Agency, 2003), it has been found that ‘barriers’ to access and participation in countryside recreation activities include:

- Financial costs incurred;
- Lack of time and other commitments;
- Lack of appropriate activities to attract excluded groups and provide a positive experience;
- Lack of awareness of local initiatives and lack of perceived relevance;
- Physical difficulty of access;
- Lack of confidence and negative perceptions of the environment – including fears of getting lost, not knowing where to go, lack of support, feelings of vulnerability, fears for personal security, and negative perceptions of regular users and groups;
- Lack of (appropriate) interpretative information at sites, inadequate signage, and lack of publicity;
- A neglected or poorly maintained environment;
- Negative feelings associated with previous experiences of the countryside;
- Lack of (accessible) transport.

### 4.1.31

A Tameside Citizen’s Panel survey in 2007 correlated with these national findings highlighting lack of time (46%), health problems (30%) and lack of transport (27%) as the main reasons people don’t visit the countryside in Tameside.

### 4.1.32

With careful planning, community involvement and a positive attitude, many of these barriers can be overcome. Firstly, however, it should be recognised that different barriers apply to different sectors of society. Similarly, it should not be inferred that under representation of a particular group implies it is excluded. In practice, our knowledge is limited concerning the reasons for under representation of particular groups, such as ways in which ethnic minorities relate to the countryside as a place for enjoyment or how to encourage young people to make better use of the countryside. In contrast, a wide variety of excellent initiatives, past and current, have been undertaken to enable greater access to the countryside for people with disabilities or those with limited mobility. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) has the overriding principle requiring all service providers, including those involved in countryside access and site management, to take reasonable measures to provide access for people with disabilities.

### 4.1.33

Significant work in this area has been undertaken by the Fieldfare Trust and the Countryside Agency resulting in two key publications: the BT ‘Countryside for All Good Practice Guide’ (1997) and ‘Sense and Accessibility’ (2000) from the Countryside Agency.

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### 4.1.34

In the meantime local research is needed to ascertain reasons for under representation and then to identify where there are opportunities in provision to overcome the 'barriers'. Solutions are unlikely to solely rely upon physically improving access facilities. Less tangible methods that foster understanding, a sense of belonging and a welcome, include:

- Ensuring information is effectively communicated to under-represented audiences, the opportunities that exist in terms of what's on, where to go, when to go, what you can and can't do when you get there, including the level of facilities and 'access' arrangements at particular locations. This aims to assist all visitors to make an informed choice about the suitability of a destination for their needs and increasing their confidence on arrival.
- Supporting local communities and empowering any excluded groups and individuals, whilst recognising that differing areas of the Borough have different community sectors experiencing difficulties with accessing the countryside.
- Integrating countryside activities with other activities such as art and educational projects.

### 4.1.35

The Council produces a range of leaflets and guides about Tameside's countryside, including walks, particular countryside sites and historical information. They promote both Council facilities and the wider countryside. The range of available material will be reviewed and further developed, with particular emphasis on those sections of the population who do not currently use the

countryside. A priority should be the production of a single leaflet providing basic information on all countryside sites and facilities within the Borough.





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#### 4.1.36

The local media in the form of television, radio and newspapers provide an effective method of reaching this wider target audience.

#### 4.1.37

The Internet provides an opportunity to further extend this approach. This option has come a long way since the last Strategy was produced and it remains an area of largely untapped potential in countryside interpretation.

#### 4.1.38

The Countryside Service has run a programme of events and activities at countryside sites since 1979. Numbering between 150 and 200 events each year, ranging from all day rambles to family craft events, the programme is very popular and reaches a wide audience.

#### 4.1.39

There is also a need to provide on-site interpretation, in the form of signposting and information panels, on countryside sites, or highlighting particular features of interest in the wider countryside. Nationally, on-site interpretation has increasingly included art in the countryside, through initiatives working in partnership and developing artistic and cultural links between local people and their environment. While several projects have in the past been undertaken in Tameside, there are opportunities to develop this programme.

#### 4.1.40

The Council's Visitor Centres at Park Bridge, Werneth Low and Lymefield provide an established and successful focus for visitors requiring information, attending events and to access countryside interpretation work. As staffed visitor centres they act as important links between Tameside Countryside Service and the community. Opportunities should be developed to become more 'mobile' and take this service into towns and urban communities, accessing people who don't currently use the countryside.

#### 4.1.41

For younger people the Countryside Service operates a Kids In The Environment (KITE) group for 7 to 11 year olds which aims to raise awareness of the countryside in a fun and interactive manner.

#### 4.1.42

The Council also recognises the importance of environmental education and provides a countryside education service for students of all ages. This offers an opportunity for studying a wide range of environment-related subjects. While often based from Visitor Centres, the service also utilises sites across the Borough, including Local Nature Reserves and Country Parks. Environmental awareness raising in schools is also supported by the LA21 process, and through projects such as Eco Schools.

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### 4.1.43

There is also a desire on the part of local community groups to develop environmental projects of their own to improve their local environment. In Tameside, they include groups such as the Friends of Gorse Hall, Gower Hey Wood Conservation Group and Currier Lane Residents Association. As part of the Council's commitment to LA 21, such community initiatives will be actively encouraged and supported.

### 4.1.44

While it is essential that the Council ensures that local people benefit from Tameside's countryside, it is also important that its wider potential for tourism is developed. Countryside tourism is, in Tameside, a relatively untapped potential and one which could be developed.

## Strategic objectives for people in the countryside

### P1

**Encourage people of all ages, ability and background to enjoy and experience the countryside**

People of all ages and abilities, regardless of social, economic or physical constraints, should be able to enjoy and experience the countryside of Tameside in a safe and healthy manner. This means that a range of opportunities should be available and promoted, from organised activities to informal exploration, from guided or way-marked routes through to unmarked routes, and from quiet

enjoyment to adventurous activities. The quality and co-ordination of outdoor access infrastructure, information and interpretation should be enhanced so as to be accessible and appropriate for a range of different users and appropriate to the landscape, natural and cultural heritage setting.

### P2

**Encourage responsible enjoyment of Tameside's countryside so that its qualities are understood, appreciated and safeguarded, now and for future generations to enjoy**

The use and enjoyment of the countryside must be accompanied by an understanding of responsibilities to other visitors, land managers, communities and the natural and cultural heritage. This should ensure that the very qualities people come to enjoy are safeguarded and enhance the quality of visitors' experiences. Those enjoying outdoor access should develop an understanding of their potential impacts and responsibilities and ensure that they help to maintain and enhance the countryside.

### P3

**Work in partnership with others to provide an integrated approach towards access and recreation which is sustainable and socially inclusive**

The strong links between land management, access and tourism

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in the countryside, together with the presence of some vulnerable habitats, requires a pro-active approach to managing countryside access and recreation. Building on the approach to responsible management identified in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, support should be given to land managers and access providers to share knowledge and experience in developing good practice in access management.

## P4

### **Support and encourage local community involvement in the planning and management of outdoor access throughout the countryside**

People in communities have a particular interest in local outdoor access routes surrounding their homes. Often these provide access facilities for residents' recreation, dog walking, routes to schools or shops, as well as being part of a wider access network used by others. It is, therefore, desirable that communities play a key role in developing and managing the outdoor access routes around their homes to maximise the potential benefits.

## P5

### **Protect the fragile areas of Tameside's countryside from pressures arising from outdoor access and recreation**

There are areas of Tameside's countryside, particularly parts of the moorlands and native woodlands, in which there are nationally

important, but fragile, habitats or species. These are a key part of the countryside's natural heritage and underpin its designation and attraction.

There are also many important sites of cultural and historic significance in the countryside, some of which are vulnerable. These areas must be protected from the physical pressures arising from outdoor access and recreation and sites that are currently suffering from these pressures should be addressed through sound and unobtrusive management wherever possible. Protecting these areas does not mean that they cannot be enjoyed for recreation, but that access should be managed and enjoyed responsibly to avoid adverse impacts. Those enjoying the outdoors can also contribute to this protection through responsible behaviour and taking positive action to conserve these important interests.

## P6

### **Develop the educational opportunities offered by the countryside of Tameside**

Tameside's countryside can be both a place and a focus for life-long learning. Opportunities to develop learning resources and materials that draw on the special qualities of the countryside and its management should be pursued, building on the existing provision of outdoor education, training and outreach work.

## P7

**Encourage people of all ages, abilities and communities to get outdoors frequently and experience the physical and mental wellbeing associated with the countryside**

There is an increasing recognition that the use of the countryside brings wider benefits for people, promoting a sense of well being and improving both mental and physical health. It is important that in encouraging the use of the countryside, these wider benefits are also considered. The Council will support initiatives such as Healthy Walking and Green Gyms to achieve this.

## P8

**Develop and support opportunities for volunteering in the countryside**

A Voluntary Ranger Service has been in operation within Tameside's countryside since 1976 and remains the best example of the use of volunteers in Greater Manchester. There is, however, the opportunity to better co-ordinate volunteering across all sectors, and to develop more local initiatives to allow residents, visitors and students to take part in caring for the countryside of Tameside and to develop a greater awareness and understanding of the area.

## P9

**Capture knowledge and factual information about Tameside's countryside in a range of appropriate ways so that it is easily accessible to anyone who wants to use it and can be passed on to future generations**

Information about the countryside and its management needs to be widely available and accessible to anyone who wants it. As well as the information held by the Countryside Service there is a great deal of information held locally or by individuals that is not formally recorded, but that contributes greatly to our understanding of the area's history, use and communities. Finding ways to capture and transfer both oral and written information is important in developing understanding about the countryside and in informing its future management.

## P10

**Improve and maintain the quality of experience within Tameside's countryside for all visitors**

Quality of experience is key to the long-term sustainability of countryside tourism. This includes the experience that visitors enjoy when they come to the countryside. Good practice should be recognised and become the benchmark for everyone involved in countryside management.



## P11

**Promote awareness of access and recreation opportunities within the countryside and respect for its special qualities.**

Giving information to visitors about the countryside, its qualities and ways in which they can be experienced is key to developing an appreciation and understanding of the countryside and what it offers. It is, therefore, an important process for managing countryside tourism and encouraging greater exploration, longer stays, increased spending, responsible behaviour and repeat visits. The health benefits of the countryside should be promoted as part of the overall marketing of the countryside.

## P12

**Ensure a cohesive countryside-wide approach to Ranger Services which meets the needs of visitors, communities and land managers.**

The Ranger Service is a valuable contact between visitors, communities and land managers and contribute to many other strategic objectives through their roles in promoting enjoyment and understanding and managing the interactions of visitors with the places and communities they come to see. To the visitor, Ranger Services are a popular point of contact for information about the countryside.



## P13

**Collect, analyse and use the best available information on visitor numbers, distribution, activities and perceptions to inform visitor management.**

To deliver all objectives relating to people in the countryside, from the quality of experience to resource protection, requires up-to-date information about visitor numbers, distribution, activities and perceptions. Although some information is currently collected, there are opportunities to put it to better use. Everyone involved in visitor services should seek to source and use the best available information in their planning and decision-making and the information should be widely available in a variety of forms.



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## 4.2

### **Conserving and enhancing the countryside**

Conservation and enhancement should include both the ‘natural’ and built environment: biodiversity, landscape quality and our historic and archaeological heritage. There are often overlaps and direct links between these aspects. Park Bridge for example, contains fine architectural heritage and links directly to Rocher Vale, a Site of Biological Importance, in the Medlock Valley, containing archaeological remains of the nineteenth century ironworks.

### **Biodiversity**

#### 4.2.1

Biodiversity is the term used to encompass the variety of life that exists all around us, locally and globally. It exists everywhere.

#### 4.2.2

The concept of biodiversity was first introduced at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development which was held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (known as the Earth Summit). This is where over 140 nations, including the UK, signed a commitment to conserve their nation’s biodiversity. Global responsibilities were highlighted and the phrase to ‘think globally and act locally’ became established.

#### 4.2.3

From the Earth Summit, a Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) was held and in response to this the UK government published THE UK BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN (UKBAP). The overall goal of the UKBAP is to ‘conserve and enhance biological diversity within the UK and to contribute to global biodiversity through all appropriate mechanisms.’

#### 4.2.4

The UK Biodiversity Steering Group report listed a total of 1149 species that were considered to be in special need of conservation and 65 habitats for which action plans will be developed.

#### 4.2.5

Conserving biodiversity is not just about rare and threatened species and habitats, but all species and habitats. The maintenance of biodiversity is vital to the quality of all our lives and as such everyone is encouraged to become involved in it.

#### 4.2.6

Based on national and local consultation, the attraction of the countryside for many people lies in it being a place in which to see and enjoy wildlife. Tameside falls within the overarching coverage of the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (GMBAP) and as such are partners in the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Network.



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### 4.2.7

The Plan highlights priority and important species and habitats which occur in Tameside, and to which efforts could be targeted. Species action plans which are relevant to Tameside include Water Vole, Brown Hare and Skylark. Habitats include Upland oak woodland and Ancient species rich hedgerows.

### 4.2.8

In order to foster a more local awareness and ownership within the Council and amongst Tameside residents, it is recognised that there is a need to produce a Tameside specific Biodiversity Action Plan/Statement. Based on and complimenting the information contained within the GMBAP the proposed Plan/Statement will identify and prioritise local objectives and targets within the Borough.

### 4.2.9

A number of sites in Tameside have been designated for their nature conservation interest. Three sites have been given national statutory protection as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Over 50 sites have also been designated as Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, in partnership with the Council. These sites, of local or regional importance, do not have statutory protection, but they are protected from development wherever possible through the Local Development Framework (formerly UDP).

### 4.2.10

The Council is a very significant landowner and manager in this context, owning one of the SSSIs and about 33% the SBIs.

### 4.2.11

The first SBIs were identified by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit in 1985. Since then, some sites have been lost through development or a lack of appropriate management, while new ones have been identified. Poor management on privately owned sites is the greatest threat to SBIs in the Borough. A review of how SBIs are designated is currently in progress.

### 4.2.12

There are also eight Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) in the Borough, which were designated between 1999 and 2009. These are:

- Great Wood, Broadbottom
- Knott Hill Reservoir, Ashton
- Haughton Dale, Denton
- Hollinwood Branch Canal, Droylsden
- Castle Clough and Cowbury Dale, Carrbrook
- Hurst Clough, Mottram
- Hulmes and Hardy Woods, Denton
- Rocher Vale, Ashton

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LNRs are designated by Local Authorities, in consultation with English Nature (now Natural England). While they have some nature conservation and/or geological interest, they must also provide opportunities for people to enjoy and learn about wildlife. To designate an LNR, a Local Authority must secure a legal interest in the land.

Natural England's target for LNRs is that they should be provided at the level of 1 hectare for every thousand people. Currently Tameside has 150 hectares of designated LNR. There is, however, potential to increase this amount and it is recognised that several other sites in Tameside have the potential to be designated as LNRs.

### 4.2.13

It is important that the biodiversity of the wider countryside is also considered, as over-reliance on designated sites could result in them becoming isolated, reducing their ecological value. The Local Development Framework (formerly UDP) acknowledges the importance of 'Wildlife Corridors', which form a network to enable wildlife to spread throughout the countryside. Such corridors often follow river valleys or swathes of woodland.

### 4.2.14

There is also potential to look beyond remnant surviving habitat, by recreating or creating from scratch areas for wildlife and people.

Over the last 30 years the Council has created several such areas. An example of this approach is the Council's acquisition of the site of Mossley Gas Works in 1980. Renamed Roaches, trees

were planted, paths and seating installed and a pond created. This site is now becoming a valuable habitat, directly linked to the Huddersfield Narrow Canal SSSI.

### 4.2.15

Ancient woodlands are irreplaceable and therefore particularly important habitats. While the Council directly manages a number of sites, many of the ancient woodlands in Tameside are privately owned and their landowners need to be encouraged to undertake positive management to safeguard the future of such woodlands. If they remain under threat, however, Tree Preservation Orders offer an additional form of protection.

### 4.2.16

The Council's ability to conserve and enhance biodiversity is dependent upon having accurate ecological data available. We can only conserve wildlife if we know what species and habitats are present in any given area. It is therefore essential that the Council supports biological recording, both by making a direct contribution through the work of its Countryside Service, and by supporting others, including volunteers, in their recording work.

## Landscape

### 4.2.17

Tameside's landscape is a varied one, ranging from the pronounced high ground of the eastern moorlands to the upland grasslands of Werneth Low and Hartshead, down to the river valleys of the Tame, Medlock and Etherow.

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### 4.2.18

The Borough contains landscapes of high quality, particularly the wooded river valleys and upland pasture and heathland. Most of this is within Green Belt and policies to protect those landscapes of highest and high visual quality are included in the UDP.

### 4.2.19

Natural England are encouraging a radically different approach to dealing with landscape considerations in development plans, and in design and management. It favours 'landscape character assessment'. This aims to provide an understanding of the character and potential for enhancement of all landscapes, while continuing to protect and enhance the best. This approach is likely to be adopted in the Council's future Local Development Framework.

### 4.2.20

Tameside falls within the Pennine Edge Forest area and is a partner in its delivery. Established in 2004 the Pennine Edge Forest covers the boroughs of Tameside, Oldham, Rochdale and Stockport and aims to be a catalyst to creating a new landscape character and environmental resource for the communities of eastern Manchester.

### 4.2.21

There are many areas of the Borough which have suffered in the past from large scale dereliction, including landfill and the remnants of a once industrial past. Some of the derelict sites have now been reclaimed, creating areas such as Haughton Dale LNR, Jet Amber Fields and Roaches Woodland. During and following restoration,

such sites offer the opportunity to create attractive landscapes and increase the nature conservation value of areas.

### 4.2.22

There are many sites, with a 'countryside feel' in amongst the urban environment, such as the woodland cloughs around Hartshead and Hattersley and within urban parks, such as the woodlands within Hyde Park and Pole Bank. Sites such as these form important landscape features and are contribute to the biodiversity of the Borough. Such areas often receive only cursory and reactive management and lack other forms of protection, such as SBI status. Many are owned by the Council but don't sit with any particular service area.

## The historic environment

### 4.2.23

The present-day landscape is the product of thousands of years of human activity. It is almost impossible to find anywhere in the countryside that has not been altered by humans. As a result, a wealth of sites and landscapes, buildings and settlements remain, from earliest prehistory, through the Roman and Medieval periods to Post-Medieval, Industrial and Modern times. Together, these elements make up the 'cultural heritage' or 'historic environment' of Tameside's countryside.

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## 4.2.24

The Borough's countryside is rich in archaeology. Important features include the Park Bridge Ironworks site, the industrial heritage remains at Broad Mills, Hodge Lane, and Glasshouse Fold, Roman features on Werneth Low and the bronze age Buckton Castle.

## 4.2.25

The countryside also contains many smaller buildings and sites of architectural and historic interest, such as traditional farm buildings and industrial archaeological remains. These have a close historic relationship to their rural setting. Whilst some benefit from statutory protection, many do not. The value of this built heritage should be recognised as an integral part of the countryside.

### **Strategic objectives for conserving and enhancing the countryside:**

#### **CE1**

**Conserve and enhance the condition and diversity of habitats and species present throughout Tameside's countryside, through a landscape-scale approach to habitat networks**

The habitats and species within Tameside are special qualities which contribute to make the landscape of the Borough. Many are of national and regional importance and their conservation,

and where possible enhancement, is key. Nature conservation efforts should therefore seek to bring all habitats in the countryside into good condition and increase their potential to adapt to climate change.

The Council should take a strategic view to identify and enhance linked networks between habitats to minimise fragmentation.

#### **CE2**

**Ensure all designated nature conservation sites are in favourable condition.**

Within the network of habitats within Tameside's countryside, some are designated as being of local, national or international importance for particular nature conservation features including biodiversity, geology and landforms. These sites should be exemplars of good management where the natural heritage interest is secure within a long-term management plan. Public support and resources should seek to engage managers, local communities and visitors in understanding and caring for these sites.





### CE3

**Engage the community of Tameside in meeting or exceeding international, national and local biodiversity targets.**

The Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan identifies a range of management issues and opportunities to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the area. Building on this, all sectors involved in managing, living and working within Tameside should be engaged in helping to deliver the aims of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (once produced), thereby conserving and enhancing the biodiversity qualities of Tameside.

While biodiversity objectives apply to all native species and semi-natural habitats throughout Tameside's countryside, some species and habitats require extra effort to protect and enhance them either because of their particular ecological requirements or because they are threatened with extinction. In Tameside's countryside, species such as water vole, or habitats such as upland oak woodland, require extra effort.

## CE4

**Ensure that populations of species given special protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act are stable or, where appropriate, increasing.**

In addition to ensuring that the habitats necessary for those species given special protection are in good condition, a co-ordinated effort between public agencies, land managers, the police and public to address wildlife crime and irresponsible actions is required. These bodies need to develop partnerships with local communities to help prevent all forms of wildlife crime including poaching and illegal killing or taking of protected species. This will be supported by communications about the law, the nature of the species at risk and advice as to how everyone can help to safeguard them.

## CE5

**Promote access to appropriate policy and funding mechanisms to support nature conservation.**

Public policy and support for nature conservation should be targeted at all interests that can contribute, including land managers, landowners, businesses, communities and visitors. The support should focus on the nature conservation interests and opportunities particularly relevant to Tameside's countryside and should be accessible and easily understood. Public support should be based on compliance with good management practice.

## CE6

**Identify, prioritise and take action to address non-native species that pose a threat to the natural heritage and land management of Tameside's countryside**

Non-native species can be introduced either deliberately or accidentally, and some have the potential to damage the existing species, habitats and ecosystems, as well as affecting the landscape and land management. Examples include Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed, Spanish bluebell, terrapins and garden rubbish. To tackle these threats, resources and incentives for implementation, awareness raising and monitoring are needed.

## CE7

**Promote appropriate reintroduction of species and reinstatement of habitats and identify the likely ecological and management impacts**

Consideration will be given to the reintroduction of some species which, through human intervention, are currently extinct or very localised in the area, as well as the reinstatement of certain habitats in key areas. These may include, for example, upland oak woodland, and reinstatement of water vole habitat (once mink are controlled). Where restoration measures are being considered, their potential impacts should be researched to inform decision making and mitigation measures.

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## CE8

**Identify and carry out a research programme designed to provide the information and monitoring on the habitats, species and ecosystems required to guide future decision-making.**

There is a specific need to address the monitoring and research in relation to the status of species, habitats and ecosystems as well as the key influences including climate change scenarios and recreational disturbance.

## CE9

**Raise awareness and safeguard the outstanding geological features that contribute to the landscape of Tameside's countryside.**

The physical evidence of geological features should be safeguarded as part of an approach that seeks to allow its natural processes to continue, and seeks to minimise disturbance to important ground features.

Within Tameside there are a number of regionally important geological sites, such as Rocher Vale. To encourage its long-term conservation, together with increasing understanding and enjoyment of geology, greater effort is required in raising awareness through research, interpretation and education.

## CE10

**Maintain and enhance the distinctive landscapes across Tameside.**

The distinctive landscape character in Tameside is a result of the interaction of landforms, geophysical processes, habitats, species and land management. It is one of the prime reasons people enjoy the countryside.

## CE11

**Understand, increase awareness and conserve the archaeological features, historic landscapes and historic built environment.**

The archaeological remains and historic landscapes of Tameside are the best source of information about the development between the people and places of the area and the shaping of the modern landscape.



# 5. Priorities for action 2009 - 2019

It is critical to the success of the Strategy that its strategic objectives and aspirations are translated into a clearly prioritised action plan that identifies the important areas of activity for the Council and partner organisations to pursue, with a clear focus on working towards achieving the identified outcomes for the next nine years. The Countryside Service has a strong role in delivering much of what is in this Strategy, but it cannot achieve all of the desired outcomes alone. The role of partners in delivery and in the success of the Strategy is crucial.

The ten-year action plan has been developed as programmes of activity structured around the six key themes of the Strategy. Each programme identifies and seeks to deliver, or contribute to the desired outcomes of the Strategy, and contribute to helping to deliver current government policy priorities, such as sustainability, biodiversity, health and wellbeing, lifelong learning and social inclusion.

## Physical Access

<b>Outcome by 2019</b>
An increase in the number of people using well-designed and maintained paths, cycle routes and bridleways
<b>Links to Strategic Objectives</b>
P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P7, P10, P11, P12

Ref	Planned areas of activity 2009-2019	Performance indicators
1	Contribute to the production of the Tameside Rights of Way Improvement Plan and its implementation.	Number of people using the countryside Establishment of a Rights of Way Improvement Plan
2	Ensure that the countryside public rights of way network and other recreational routes are well managed and maintained.	
3	Work in partnership to develop and improve a strategic network of trails for walking, cycling and horse riding based on a 'connected countryside' to reduce the need for motorised transport.	

4	Promote new walks and routes which provide opportunities for health improvement and develop links to existing recreational trails.	<p>Percentage of countryside service managed rights of way and recreational routes easy to use</p> <p>Number of 'health walks' promoted</p> <p>Establishment of a Countryside Forum</p>
5	Review path networks linkages to public transport systems and seek to create new links where necessary.	
6	Provide opportunities for regular liaison with representatives of access groups and individuals.	
7	Continue to maintain and enhance existing facilities, including car parks, picnic sites, signage and trails recognising the need for access for all.	
8	Contribute to the development of the Local Access Forum.	
9	Continue to work with landowners and land managers to develop access opportunities under the 'right to roam' legislation	
10	Work in partnership with the Police and other agencies to tackle the incidents of anti social behaviour in the countryside	

## Recreation, Health and Well-being

### Outcome by 2019

Increased opportunities for access and recreation will be developed for as wide a range of people as possible to derive a sense of health and well-being from their experiences

### Links to Strategic Objectives

P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P10, P11, P12

Ref	Planned areas of activity 2009-2019	Performance indicators
11	Develop and encourage more opportunities for the use of sustainable transport for access and recreation purposes.	Percentage of journeys to main countryside sites using sustainable transport  Number of 'health walks' promoted  Sum of grant aid sourced for access and recreation projects
12	Secure additional funding for maintaining and developing recreational opportunities, focusing on drawing additional support from external sources.	
13	Maintain, extend and improve existing recreation facilities and seek new sustainable opportunities, especially in areas currently lacking.	
14	Provide opportunities for regular liaison with representatives of key recreational activities.	
15	Provide information on recreational opportunities in the countryside including their potential benefits to health and well-being.	
16	Encourage 'natural play' in the countryside.	
17	Develop a network of well waymarked and easy to use circular 'health' walks on the urban fringe.	
18	Continue to develop partnerships with other Council services and health authorities to contribute to improving the health of the community.	

## Engaging People

### Outcome by 2019

An increase in the number of people experiencing Tameside's countryside and getting involved in the care and management of it.

### Links to Strategic Objectives

P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13

Ref	Planned areas of activity 2009-2019	Performance indicators
19	Continue to provide high quality countryside facility, measured externally through initiatives such as Green Flag Awards.	Achievement of Green Flag Awards Number of days undertaken by volunteers in Tameside's countryside Percentage of visits to main countryside sites by under represented groups
20	Further develop the Voluntary Ranger Service to include a wider range of volunteer opportunities and experiences.	
21	Undertake access audits on countryside sites, identifying a programme of site improvements to encourage access for all.	
22	Seek to specifically engage with communities that currently do not visit the countryside to identify and address barriers to participation	
23	Develop a programme of initiatives to address the barriers to participation.	
24	Identify and where possible develop a series of short wheelchair friendly routes linked to areas of population.	
25	Undertake user and non-user surveys to identify accessibility issues.	
26	Produce and implement a borough-wide countryside Interpretation Strategy.	



27	Continue to develop a range of website material that promotes Tameside's countryside and opportunities to get involved.	Number of wheelchair friendly accessible routes Production of an Interpretive Strategy Number of people actively engaged on countryside events Establishment of a Countryside Forum
28	Continue to develop and implement a countryside events and activities programme, encouraging targeted events and outreach programmes to promote opportunities for wider participation.	
29	Develop a programme of outreach work including the establishment of a mobile information point visiting town centres and public events in the Greater Manchester area.	
30	Develop partnerships and a more structured approach to the Education Service including investigation of establishing an Education Officer post.	
31	Establish a Countryside Forum for Tameside.	
32	Continue to develop site based user group forums where appropriate	
33	Investigate the potential for further environmental art projects in the countryside	
34	Identify opportunities to develop the 'countryside tourism' potential of the Borough	

## Biodiversity

### Outcome by 2019

An increase in the number of priority species and habitats which have increased in extent, health and connectivity.

### Links to Strategic Objectives

CE1, CE2, CE3, CE4, CE5, CE6, CE7, CE8, P2, P5, P6, P8, P10, P12

Ref	Planned areas of activity 2009-2019	Performance indicators
35	Revise the Nature Conservation Strategy, identifying all key partners and develop local area action plans in partnership with local communities.	Production of a Nature Conservation Strategy Area of LNR per thousand population Percentage of SBIs in positive management
36	Identify potential Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and designate sufficient to meet Natural England's greenspace standard.	
37	Identify all Council Sites that are Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) and produce plans that will achieve favourable condition/BAP targets.	
38	Identify owners/managers of non council owned SBIs and promote management to achieve favourable condition.	
39	Ensure all private woodlands which are ancient or Key BAP habitat types or SBIs are covered by Tree Preservation Orders.	
40	Draw up management principles for particular habitat types to ensure a consistent approach across Tameside's Countryside.	
41	Identify key sites that form important habitat links and networks.	
42	Assess the potential for restoring Hollinwood Branch Canal SSSI to favourable condition and implement work needed if feasible.	

43	Identify 'core biodiversity areas' and develop landscape scale projects e.g. Pennine fringe project.	<p>Percentage of Ancient Woodlands covered by TPOs</p> <p>Number of woodlands achieving UKWAS certification</p> <p>Ecological database established</p>
44	Work with local communities to identify a range of projects that would enable both visitors and local people to get actively involved in the implementation of the local BAP.	
45	Work with partners on developing and implementing the GMBAP.	
46	Identify areas for potential enhancement of key habitats and species.	
47	Develop a proactive approach and take every opportunity to promote biodiversity issues within the borough, through education and media programmes.	
48	Work with others to achieve UK Woodland Assurance Standard certification on all key BAP council woodlands and seek Woodland Grant Scheme funding.	
49	Investigate the Biodiversity Benchmark Scheme as a quality standard.	
50	Establish a Tameside Biodiversity Network.	
51	Determine the extent of key invasive/damaging non-native species and develop a strategy for their management by 2010.	
52	Establish a robust dataset for protected species.	
53	Develop existing partnerships with the Police to ensure more effective wildlife liaison initiatives in the GMP area.	
54	Continue to support local species conservation groups ie. badger group, bat group and barn owl project.	
55	Ensure adequate guidance on protected habitat/species issues is included in relevant Council strategies and plans.	

56	Establish an essential ecological database in partnership with other Greater Manchester Authorities and partners.	Number of external grants sourced for Biodiversity projects
57	Identify all key BAP resources and seek funding to support targeted achievement.	
58	Develop appropriate favourable condition monitoring methods for keys BAP habitats.	

## Landscape

### Outcome by 2019

The distinctive character and 'sense of place' of Tameside's countryside will be maintained and conserved through the ongoing interaction between nature and the people who live and work there.

### Links to Strategic Objectives

CE1, CE5, CE6, CE9, CE10, P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P10, P12

Ref	Planned areas of activity 2009-2019	Performance indicators
59	Ensure that geological conservation sites and issues are addressed in our range of interpretive media and where appropriate educational provision.	Successful completion of the Environmental Stewardship Scheme at werneth Low
60	Undertake the 10 year Werneth Low Country Park landscape restoration project through the new Higher Level Environmental Stewardship.	
61	Continued programmes to maintain and increase the pattern of traditional field boundaries such as hedgerows and dry stone walls.	Length of fences replaced with hedges and dry stone walls
62	Designate Park Bridge and Rocher Vale as a Country Park.	

63	Develop a partnership with Oldham Council to guide the future management of Daisy Nook Country Park.	Number of Country Parks with an active management plan
64	Ensure that all Country Parks are being managed in line with a current Management Plan.	
65	Identify the most important geological features and designate as RIGS where appropriate.	
66	Maintain the overall tranquillity within Tameside's countryside.	

## The Historic Environment

### Outcome by 2019

An increase in the number of people aware of the rich cultural and historic environment of Tameside's countryside.

### Links to Strategic Objectives

CE11, P1, P5, P6, P9, P10, P11

Ref	Planned areas of activity 2009-2019	Performance indicators
67	Continue to work with GMAU to further reveal, consolidate, understand and interpret the archaeological heritage in the countryside	Number of historic and archaeological countryside features interpreted Archiving procedure in place at Park Bridge
68	Continue to investigate the possibility of discovering and interpreting new sites of archaeological interest within Tameside's countryside in partnership with GMAU	
69	The establishment of a conservation programme at Park Bridge	
70	Development of the archaeological potential of Broad Mills Heritage Site in partnership with GMAU	
71	The establishment of an archiving procedure at Park Bridge in partnership with the Museums Service	



# 6. Making it happen

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## 6.1

### **Project Implementation**

The ability of the Council to lead by example is fundamental to the Strategy's success. The Council should therefore continue to develop innovative projects and manage its own land to a high standard, for the benefit of people and wildlife.

In order to achieve this, the Council needs to maintain and develop countryside services with the capacity to deliver these benefits. Effective countryside management is labour intensive and there is usually no substitute for a site presence, providing face to face communication, both to engage people positively and seek to prevent conflict and misuse.

## 6.2

### **Influencing Others**

There is also a need to extend this work beyond the Council itself, by helping and advising others towards achieving the Strategy's aims. This can also be done by the Council's Countryside Service, which should continue to provide technical advice, both directly to individuals, such as land owners, and through the planning system, in, for example, responding to planning applications.

## 6.3

### **Monitoring and Review**

The Countryside Strategy is a 'working tool' in that it will guide future projects by providing a clear framework for obtaining

funding and establishing partnerships to enable achievement of the objectives.

Due to the long timescales associated with achieving positive results in areas such as nature conservation, the Countryside Strategy is looking forward 25 years with realistic targets for that period. However, it has a strong focus for delivery over the next 10 years and will at that point be completely reviewed to reflect any changes in the Community Strategy. Progress of the Strategy to meet agreed actions will be reviewed annually.

Success of this Strategy and achievement of the objectives is obviously on condition that finances are available.

## 6.4

### **Measuring Success**

The performance of the Countryside Strategy in relation to achieving the 10-year outcomes and longer term targets will need to be directly measured. Section 5: Priorities for Action, identifies specific indicators of progress for each key theme. Progress on the performance will be monitored through the corporate Performance Indicator reporting procedure over the next 10 years. An Annual Report will continue to be produced which will feature the progress of the Strategy and feed into the Council's Business Plan.

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If you would like any further information about Tameside's countryside or have any comments about this document then please contact us at:

**Tameside Countryside Service**

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