

GREEN ENVIRONMENT

THE GREEN BELT

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Green Environment

On a world scale, our increasing population and rising material standards of living are placing a great strain on the environment and its ability to support us. Action at the local level is needed to help tackle global environmental problems.

Consumption of non-renewable resources, pollution of air, water and land and damage to wildlife habitats, are of increasing importance as planning considerations. Attention must be given to the interests of future generations. Those developments which have impacts on the environment which may be irreversible, or which are difficult to undo, must be treated with particular care.

This chapter aims to reconcile the need for development with conservation of the 'green' or natural environment. The Policies cover issues such as Green Belt, landscape quality, agriculture, nature conservation, water resources, pollution control and energy resources.

THE GREEN BELT

The Green Belt Plan was statutorily adopted in 1983 and many of its Policies have been included in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). This maintains the City Council's firm commitment to both the principles and policies of the Green Belt Plan.

The UDP has only made two small changes to the Green Belt boundary, to include land off Rushley Avenue, Dore (Proposals Map 9) and a site at Clifton Lane, Handsworth (Proposals Map 6). In these cases it was considered that exceptional circumstances existed which warranted changes to the boundary.

GEI DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT

In the Green Belt, development will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances, where it would:

- (a) lead to unrestricted growth of the built-up area; or**
- (b) contribute towards merging of existing settlements; or**
- (c) lead to encroachment of urban development into the countryside; or**
- (d) compromise urban regeneration.**

Reasons for the Policy

The Government's national and strategic planning guidance states the purposes of Green Belts. These purposes are broadly set out in this

Definition

'Green Belt' - countryside and large open spaces where there is a general presumption against inappropriate development. This area in Sheffield is shown on the Proposals Map.

Other information

For the Government's national planning guidance, see Planning Policy Guidance Note ►

PPG2 (Revised), Green Belts, Department of the Environment, 1995, paragraphs 1.5 and 2.1.

For the Government's strategic guidance, see Regional Planning Guidance Note RPG5, Strategic Guidance for South Yorkshire, Department of the Environment, 1989, paragraph 21.

Policy. The guidance also advises that Green Belts are permanent features and their protection must be maintained as far ahead as can be seen.

Nationally, large amounts of countryside are being lost to development at the same time as vacant urban land remains undeveloped. If new building in the countryside is limited, investment and development are more likely to be concentrated in built-up areas of Sheffield. This will encourage the regeneration of run-down inner areas. It will also help to protect the open character of the countryside.

Two of the City Council's basic objectives are to concentrate investment and development in the most disadvantaged areas of Sheffield and to conserve and enhance the landscape, recreational and natural history value of the countryside. Maintaining a strong Green Belt can help achieve these objectives.

The use of land in Green Belts has a positive role to play in preserving areas of open land extending into the urban area which have existing or potential recreational value. It also helps to preserve easy access to open countryside for outdoor recreation.

How it will be put into practice

By:

Deciding planning applications.

Providing a countryside management and open space management service in the Green Belt areas of Sheffield. For information on priority areas, see Putting the Plan into Action, page 302.

Liaising with voluntary organisations, local firms and landowners, the Forestry Authority, the Countryside Commission, English Nature, the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food and the Environment Agency, as appropriate.

GE2 PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE GREEN BELT LANDSCAPE

In the Green Belt, measures will be taken to:

- (a) maintain and enhance those areas with a generally high landscape value; and**
- (b) improve poor landscapes in priority areas.**

Reasons for the Policy

The Government's strategic guidance states that UDPs should continue to conserve what is best in the rural environment and reclaim and improve land despoiled by former industrial activity. The improvement of damaged and derelict land around towns is identified as a positive objective for the use of land in Green Belts in the Government's national planning guidance.

Definition

'Priority Areas' - as in Policy BE4, page 62.

Other information

For the Government's strategic guidance, see Regional Planning Guidance Note RPG5, Strategic Guidance for South Yorkshire, Department of the ➤

The Green Belt should be attractive to look at, whether it is used for farming, recreation or other uses.

Much of the Green Belt looks very attractive and should be protected and enhanced. However, there are certain areas where the landscape is spoilt by land dereliction, waste disposal, river pollution and fly-tipping.

Because resources are limited, priority is given to those areas of the Green Belt where the landscape is most severely degraded and in those areas which are close to disadvantaged communities.

How it will be put into practice

By:

Deciding planning applications.

Providing a countryside management and open space management service in Green Belt areas of Sheffield. For information on priority areas, see Putting the Plan into Action, page 302.

Liaising and working with voluntary organisations, local firms and landowners, schools and community groups, the Forestry Authority, the Countryside Commission, English Nature and the Environment Agency as appropriate.

Carrying out agricultural development and improvement schemes on land owned by the City Council in a way which does not adversely affect the landscape and wherever possible enhances the environment of the area. The scope for this may be limited by tenancy agreements.

Encouraging tree planting in the Green Belt, particularly in areas with a generally low landscape quality.

Continuing to support the South Yorkshire Forest initiative (see Policy GE14, page 103).

GE3 NEW BUILDING IN THE GREEN BELT

In the Green Belt, the construction of new buildings will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances, for purposes other than agriculture, forestry, essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, cemeteries, and other uses which would comply with Policy GE1.

Reasons for the Policy

The Government's national planning guidance sets out the types of development which are considered appropriate in the Green Belt. There is a general presumption against inappropriate development. All the acceptable uses are largely dependent on, and maintain, the open character of the Green Belt.

New building for purposes other than those uses listed in the Policy is inappropriate in the Green Belt. Where inappropriate development is proposed, very special circumstances will have to be demonstrated to

Environment, 1989, paragraph 17.

For the Government's national planning guidance, see Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG2 (Revised), Green Belts, Department of the Environment, 1995, paragraph 1.6.

For protection and improvement of the Green Belt landscape, see also Policies GE3 to GE6 below, and LR10, page 232.

See also the following documents published by the City Council:

- *A Strategy for Countryside Management in Sheffield, 1987;*
- *Out and About in Sheffield's Countryside, 1987;*
- *Sheffield Nature Conservation Strategy, 1991.*

Definition

'Essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation' - facilities that are genuinely required for such uses of land, and which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it.

Other information

For the Government's national planning guidance, see Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG 2 (Revised). ➤

Green Belts, Department of the Environment, 1995, paragraphs 3.1 to 3.5 and Annex C.

For uses which help to support the rural economy, see Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG7, The Countryside - Environment Quality and Economic and Social Development, Department of the Environment, 1997, paragraphs 3.1 to 3.17.

For housing development which is permissible in the Green Belt, see Policies GE5 and GE6, pages 93-94.

For development and the Green Belt environment, see Policy GE4 below.

Other information

For the Government's national planning guidance, see Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG2 (Revised), Green Belts, Department of the Environment, 1995, paragraph 3.15.

justify it.

No special provisions have been made in the Policy for existing major developed sites in the Green Belt. Development proposed on such sites will be considered against this and other relevant Policies and having regard to national planning guidance. The merits, or otherwise, of identifying such sites will be addressed at the next review of the UDP having regard to their impact on the openness of the Green Belt and on the environment.

The Policy would also allow for the possibility of developments which help support or diversify the rural economy, provide for the needs of existing residents and communities and are essential to that location (e.g. nature reserves). The re-use and adaptation of rural buildings can also assist in diversifying the rural economy (see Policy GE9, page 96).

How it will be put into practice

By deciding planning applications.

GE4 DEVELOPMENT AND THE GREEN BELT ENVIRONMENT

The scale and character of any development which is permitted in the Green Belt, or would be conspicuous from it, should be in keeping with the area and, wherever possible, conserve and enhance the landscape and natural environment.

Reasons for the Policy

The Government's national planning guidance states that the visual amenities of the Green Belt should not be injured by proposals for development within or conspicuous from the Green Belt.

There is a need to ensure that any development that does take place in the Green Belt has regard for the existing character of the area and is appropriate in terms of siting, materials and design.

Particular attention should be paid to conserving and enhancing the quality of the landscape and nature conservation sites, retaining the visual character of the location of any proposed development, and preventing pollution.

How it will be put into practice

By:

Deciding planning applications.

Requiring developers to provide landscaping schemes, as appropriate.

Consulting local residents and voluntary groups.

GE5 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT

New houses in the Green Belt, other than those needed to support agricultural and other acceptable uses, will be permitted only where this would involve either:

- (a) infilling of a single plot within the confines of an existing village, group of buildings or substantially developed road frontage; or**
- (b) replacement of an existing house on the same site, providing that the new house is not significantly larger than the one it replaces.**

Reasons for the Policy

Provision has been made for housing in the urban area and living conditions are protected there. Housing is the preferred use in defined Housing Areas and the required use on specific sites (see Policies H10 to H13, pages 154-161).

An additional house may sometimes be needed in the Green Belt when an extra worker is needed for the proper functioning of a farm or other rural enterprise. The Government's national planning guidance gives detailed advice on the special considerations which may arise in relation to agricultural and forestry dwellings.

As a general rule the Policy restricts infilling to a single plot in order to strictly control further built development in the Green Belt. However, much will depend on the character and appearance of a site and its surroundings. In existing villages, infilling of larger areas of land may be justified where it would meet an identified local need for affordable housing.

How it will be put into practice

By:

Deciding planning applications.

Considering when it may be appropriate to allow more than one house on an infill site or where it would be appropriate to prevent construction of even a single house.

GE6 HOUSE EXTENSIONS IN THE GREEN BELT

In the Green Belt, extensions to existing houses will be permitted only where the proposed extension would:

- (a) form a minor addition to the original house; and**
- (b) use matching materials and be sited and designed to complement the style of the original building or in the local building style, as appropriate.**

Definitions

'Acceptable uses' - as set out in Policy GE3, page 91.

'Existing village and substantially developed road frontages' - Bolsterstone; Brightholmlee; Dungworth; Ewden Village; Midhopstones; Storth Lane/Owler Gate/Hilltop Drive at Wharncliffe Side; Whitley; Chapeltown Road; Whiteley Wood Road; Long Line, Ringinglow.

Other information

For the Government's national planning guidance, see Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG7, *The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development*, Department of the Environment, 1997, paragraph 3.2 and Annex 1.

For more information on affordable housing, see Policy H4, *Housing for People on Low Incomes*, page 148.

Other information

See also, *Designing House Extensions: Supplementary Planning Guidance*, Directorate of Planning and Economic Development, Sheffield City Council, 1996.

Reasons for the Policy

Extensions which result in a substantial increase in built development on a site can detract from the generally open character of the Green Belt. The impact will depend on the design, siting and size of the existing house, and its general location.

Extensions will look intrusive if they are out of keeping with the rest of the house or its surroundings or are not constructed of materials which blend into the rural landscape.

How it will be put into practice**By:**

Deciding planning applications.

Providing appropriate guidance to developers.

THE COUNTRYSIDE AND RURAL ECONOMY

Agriculture is by far the main use of land in Sheffield's countryside. It is fundamental to the rural economy and the well-being of communities living in rural areas, but also to the conservation and improvement of the quality of the landscape in the countryside.

Much of the rural landscape around the City is of a high visual quality and is characterised by patchworks of fields bordered by stone walls in the west and hedges in the east. Long established villages and clusters of buildings also constitute an integral and important part of the landscape.

This section seeks to promote the rural economy and agriculture and provide guidance on the re-use of rural buildings. However, it also seeks to safeguard areas of the countryside which have a high visual quality, especially those areas adjoining the Peak National Park.

GE7 THE RURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE

The rural economy and agriculture will be maintained and enhanced. Development will not be permitted where it would:

- (a) result in the permanent loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land; or**
- (b) seriously harm agricultural activities or the viability of a farm.**

Reasons for the Policy

The Government's national planning guidance states that development plans should take account of the quality of any agricultural land that would be lost through development proposals. The guidance advises that

Definition

'Best and most versatile' - land classified as grade 1, 2 or 3a in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's Agriculture Land Classification system. It represents the most productive land and can be used for a range of agricultural uses.

considerable weight should be given to protecting the best and most versatile land because it is of national importance.

In national terms, agricultural land in Sheffield is generally not of the highest quality. Nevertheless, it makes an important contribution to local food supplies and farming is the main source of employment in Sheffield's countryside. It is essential to the well-being of most rural communities.

The Government's national planning guidance also recognises that considerable weight should be given to protecting lower quality agricultural land in areas such as hills and uplands, where particular farming methods contribute to the quality of the environment. In Sheffield, this is particularly true of Areas of High Landscape Value (see Policy GE8, below). Nature conservation and archaeological interests in rural areas are also closely related to future farming practices.

The national guidance lists other factors which should be taken into account when development would affect agricultural land. For example, it notes that the loss of part of a farm holding can have serious consequences for the remainder.

Farms which have other types of development close to them may suffer from fly-tipping, trespass and other forms of disturbance which may affect the efficiency and upkeep of holdings. This is especially true where agricultural land adjoins the urban area.

As well as safeguarding existing farming operations, proposals for diversification will be encouraged provided they comply with other Policies in the Plan, particularly those concerned with protection of the rural landscape. Enterprises such as farm tourism and farm shops can supply both important services and additional jobs.

How it will be put into practice

By:

Deciding planning applications.

Consulting with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and National Farmers' Union.

GE8 AREAS OF HIGH LANDSCAPE VALUE AND THE PEAK NATIONAL PARK

In Areas of High Landscape Value, protection and enhancement of the landscape will be the overriding consideration. Development which is permitted:

- (a) in Areas of High Landscape Value; or**
- (b) on land conspicuous from Areas of High Landscape Value or the Peak National Park;**

must protect, and wherever appropriate enhance, the appearance and character of the Area of High Landscape Value and Peak National Park.

Other information

For the Government's national planning guidance, see Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG7, The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development, Department of the Environment, 1997, paragraphs 2.16 to 2.20 and Annex B.

Definition

'Areas of High Landscape Value' - areas of the countryside which are very attractive and which have a special character.

Other information

For the Government's strategic guidance, see Regional Planning Guidance Note RPG5, Strategic Guidance for South Yorkshire, Department of the Environment, 1989, paragraph 19.

Reasons for the Policy

The Government's strategic guidance states that UDPs should include policies that help to conserve the countryside and protect areas of high landscape value for amenity, sport and recreation, nature conservation and tourism. The scale and character of new developments should be in keeping with their surroundings.

The strategic guidance also advises that the special status of the Peak National Park should be taken into account when proposals are drawn up for areas adjoining the Park. The National Park contains some of the country's wildest and most beautiful landscape. If these special qualities are to be protected, careful control needs to be exercised over harmful development, not only within the Park's boundary, but also on land which is conspicuous from the Park.

In Areas of High Landscape Value it is appropriate not only to maintain the open character of the land but also to protect its special landscape quality. Agriculture is likely to remain the main use of land in such areas (see Policy GE7, above).

In view of the difficulties currently facing farmers particularly in areas close to cities and in upland areas, it is appropriate to allow uses other than agriculture in Areas of High Landscape Value. Other uses must, of course, be appropriate to a rural location and protect or enhance the high landscape character.

How it will be put into practice**By:**

Deciding planning applications.

Consulting local residents and voluntary groups.

GE9 RE-USE AND ADAPTATION OF RURAL BUILDINGS

The re-use and adaptation of rural buildings for new uses will be permitted particularly where this would help to diversify the rural economy and provided that:

- (a) the existing building is capable of such conversion without significant alteration, extension or structural rebuilding; and**
- (b) the new use would not harm the landscape or character of the countryside; and**
- (c) where the building already has a damaging effect on the appearance of the landscape, conversion proposals would secure appropriate improvements to the building's external appearance; and**
- (d) in the case of a building of local interest, the conversion would not harm its historic character, fabric, essential features or setting.**

Reasons for the Policy

The Government's national planning guidance states that there are often opportunities for re-using or adapting existing rural buildings for new commercial, industrial or recreational uses. Such re-use or adaptation can help to reduce demands for new building in the countryside, can encourage new enterprises, and can provide jobs needed in rural areas.

Most of Sheffield's countryside is included in the Green Belt where there are strict controls over new built development (see Policies GE1 to GE6, pages 89-94). It is also important that any development which is permitted in the countryside is sympathetic to the character of such areas and does not harm the environment. This will include not only the new use of the building but also any external works associated with it, such as means of access, parking, garden enclosures and storage areas.

Sheffield's countryside contains some buildings which detract from the visual quality of the landscape. The national planning guidance advises that when considering proposals for the re-use of such buildings efforts should be made to secure improvements to the building's external appearance.

Sheffield's countryside contains many historic buildings which form an important part of the rural landscape. It is often the way they were designed and built for their original uses which makes them interesting and important and these qualities should not be damaged or destroyed by inappropriate or insensitive conversions. Conversions to housing can be particularly disruptive if they require alterations to external walls, openings and roofs or involve access improvements or introduction of domestic amenities like gardens, garages and greenhouses. Proposals to convert or adapt Listed Buildings are considered under Policy BE19 (page 82). Those affecting buildings of local interest, as defined in Policy BE20 (page 83) are considered with reference to their particular architectural or historic qualities.

Conversion of rural buildings to housing needs to be strictly controlled. The harmful effect of conversions is likely to be far greater for isolated buildings in open countryside. The impact will usually be less if the building to be converted is part of a village, group of buildings or substantially developed road frontage.

Residential conversions also do little to benefit the rural economy and once converted, the building is no longer available for more beneficial uses such as agriculture, business, community or recreational uses.

How it will be put into practice

By:

Deciding planning applications.

In exceptional circumstances, making or seeking a direction under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Orders 1995, restricting permitted development rights.

Other information

For the Government's national planning guidance, see Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG2 (Revised), Green Belts, Department of the Environment, 1995, paragraph 3.7-3.10 and Annex D. See also Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG7, The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development, Department of the Environment, 1997, paragraphs 3.14-3.17 and Annex G.

GREENING THE CITY

Sheffield is one of the greenest cities in the country. It has a dramatic hilly setting and a rich and varied natural history. There are high open moors, ancient woodland, reservoirs, rivers, marshes and urban parks.

A high quality green environment provides many benefits. It promotes Sheffield's image and this encourages economic regeneration. A pleasant environment promotes health and a sense of well-being. It provides for many kinds of leisure activities and it sustains a rich wildlife.

Although much of Sheffield is green, many areas are still heavily built-up. So, there is a need to maintain and provide green open space, water areas and woodland which are accessible to everyone. Over the last 50 years, development and land management changes have caused enormous losses in wildlife habitats and species. So, there is a need to maintain areas for nature itself. Opportunities created by new developments to conserve nature and improve Sheffield's environment need to be taken.

The Green Network contains corridors along which wildlife can move and live. The continuity of such features is important to many wildlife species: the more isolated the site the more restricted the range of species able to colonise it. The Green Network plays an important role in linking habitats and allowing the movement of plants and animals in both rural and urban areas.

GE10 GREEN NETWORK

A Network of Green Corridors and Green Links will be:

- (a) protected from development which would detract from their mainly green and open character or which would cause serious ecological damage; and**
- (b) enhanced by encouraging development which increases their value for wildlife and recreation; and**
- (c) extended by creating new open space in areas of Desired Green Links.**

Reasons for the Policy

Sheffield has an important legacy of open space, water areas and countryside which has been further supplemented by new open space. Many of these open areas link together to form a Green Network (see Map 4 opposite) which provides an attractive urban environment in which to live and work.

Green Corridors are often significant wildlife areas in their own right. The Network as a whole plays a vital role in linking important habitats and allowing the movement of plants and animals into Sheffield from the countryside.

Definitions

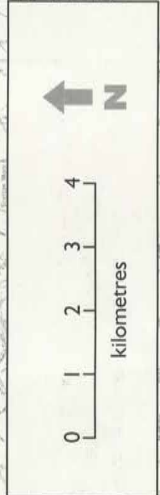
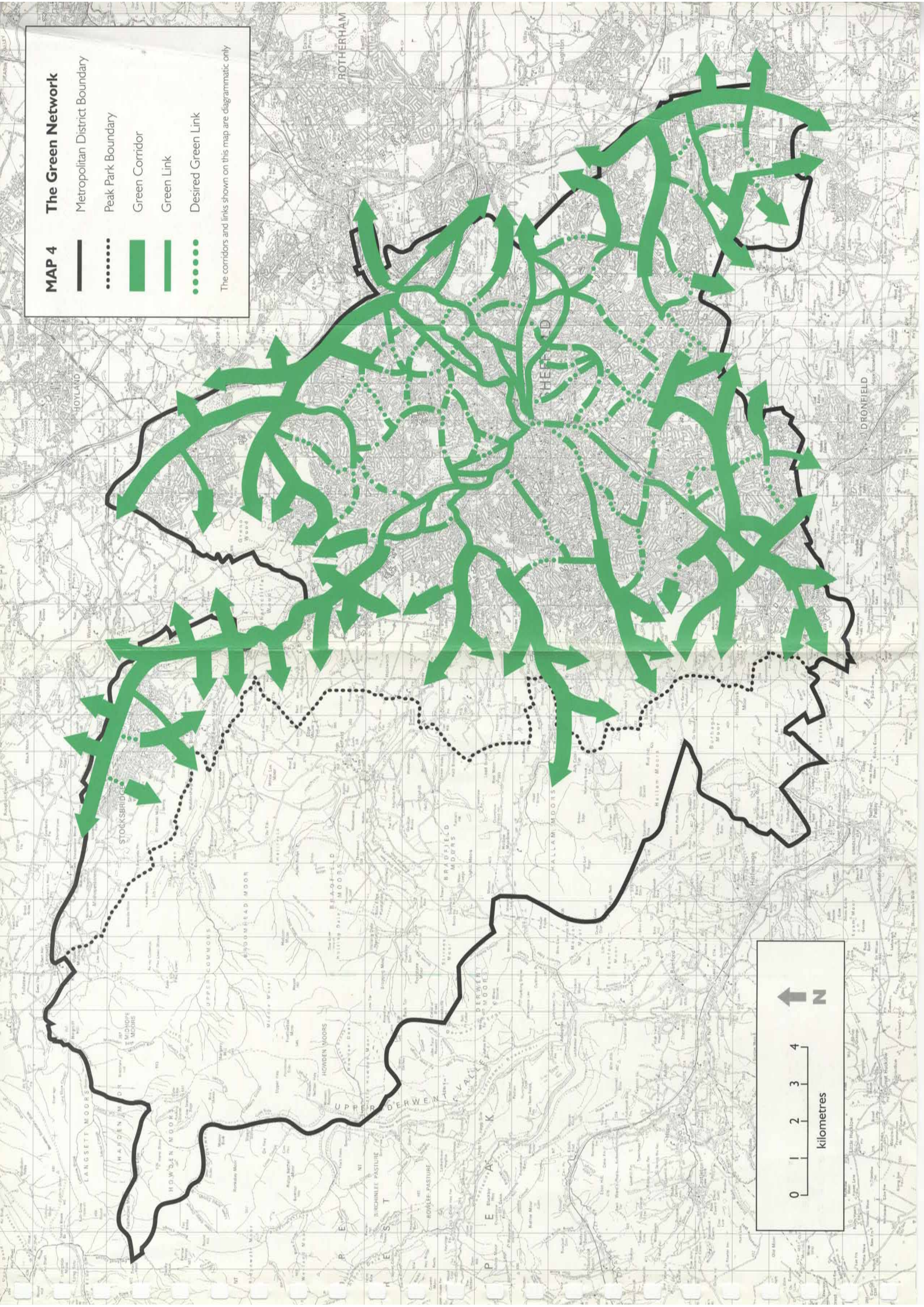
'Green Corridors' - large swathes of open land which extend into the built-up area. They include Green Belt land together with large open spaces on the edge of the City which are connected to the wider countryside.

'Green Links' - strips of open space within the built-up area which are usually narrower than Green Corridors. They may only be several metres wide (e.g. railway embankments, road verges, hedgerows, small streams) or they may be more extensive (e.g. parks, school playing fields, sports pitches, rivers). ➤

MAP 4 The Green Network

- Metropolitan District Boundary
- Peak Park Boundary
- Green Corridor
- Green Link
- Desired Green Link

The corridors and links shown on this map are diagrammatic only



The Green Network provides a variety of recreational experiences. It provides pleasant routes for walking and cycling, both for recreation and as a means of getting to work, school, shops or social facilities.

In many areas of the City there are breaks in the Green Network. It is sometimes possible to create new open space which will complete the chain in a broken Green Link. Existing Green Links can also be strengthened by improved landscaping and changes in open space management.

How it will be put into practice

By:

Protecting open spaces which are part of the Green Network from development.

Encouraging developments and land management changes which enhance the ecological, recreational and amenity value of open space and the countryside.

Creating, where opportunities arise, new open spaces which will form links between existing areas.

Involving voluntary groups, local residents and businesses in the provision and maintenance of existing and new open spaces, wherever possible.

Carrying out the City Council's environmental improvements programme (priorities for which are set out in Policy BE4, page 62).

Deciding planning applications.

Providing appropriate advice to developers, which could include supplementary planning guidance or planning briefs.

Negotiating with developers.

Funding projects through grant aid from bodies such as English Nature and the Countryside Commission.

Continuing to support the South Yorkshire Forest initiative (see Policy GE14, page 103).

Providing a countryside management and open space management service throughout Sheffield. For information on priority areas, see Putting the Plan into Action, page 302.

Designing parks and landscape schemes so that they are safe for all users (see Policy LR10, page 232).

GE11 NATURE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The natural environment will be protected and enhanced. The design, siting and landscaping of development should respect and promote nature conservation and include measures to reduce any potentially harmful effects of development on natural features of value.

'Desired Green Links'

- areas where there is currently a break in the Green Network where the wildlife and recreational value could be enhanced by the creation of a Green Link between existing open spaces.

Other information

For other aspects of the natural environment of the Green Network, see Policies GE15 to GE18, pages 104-109, and LR4 to LR11, pages 224-235.

For landscape design, see also Policy BE6, page 65.

For more information on the Green Network, see also Sheffield Nature Conservation Strategy, Sheffield City Council, 1991.

Definitions

'Natural environment' - the range of habitats that support plants and animals and which reflect geology, landforms, climate ➤

and land use. The habitats in Sheffield include moorland, woodland, reservoirs, rivers, marshes, meadows, gardens and urban green space.

'Nature conservation' - the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

Other information

For the Government's national planning guidance, see *Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG9, Nature Conservation, Department of the Environment, 1994, paragraphs 14 to 19.*

For nature conservation sites, see also *Policies GE12 and GE13, below.*

For landscape design, see also *Policy BE6, page 65.*

Reasons for the Policy

Many people are now concerned about the damage being done to the environment both locally and globally.

The Government's national planning guidance recognises that the country's natural heritage is not confined to a few important sites. There is a gradation of nature conservation interest throughout the countryside and in urban areas. Wildlife depends on the wise management of the land resource as a whole.

The national guidance requires the City Council to take account of nature conservation in deciding planning applications and in preparing development plans.

Regular contact with nature improves the quality of life for people living in cities like Sheffield. Everyone should be able to live close to areas where the natural environment has been conserved.

The City's natural environment forms a small but important part of the global natural resource. Globally this has declined alarmingly which increases the need for development to protect and enhance the remaining sites and features. Nature conservation is one of the stated aims in the South Yorkshire Forest area (see Policy GE14, page 103).

Landscaping schemes can enhance the wildlife of a site (e.g. by using locally native plant species or by linking wildlife habitats as part of the Green Network (see Policy GE10, above).

How it will be put into practice

By:

Implementing policies and proposals in the Nature Conservation Strategy.

Providing a countryside management and open space management service throughout Sheffield. (For information on priority areas, see *Putting the Plan into Action, page 302.*)

Continuing to support the South Yorkshire Forest initiative.

Deciding planning applications.

Promoting and lobbying for nature conservation.

Negotiating with developers and entering into legal agreements to conserve significant natural features (see Policy CF5, page 173).

Managing land for nature conservation.

Carrying out environmental improvement schemes and nature conservation projects.

Consulting and working in partnership with local residents and voluntary groups.

Applying Environmental Assessment legislation, as appropriate (see *Putting the Plan into Action, pages 305-306.*)

Requiring developers to provide an ecological survey for any development proposals on greenfield sites.

GE12 SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AND LOCAL NATURE RESERVES

Development which would damage Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Local Nature Reserves will not be permitted.

Reasons for the Policy

The Government's national planning guidance places a particular emphasis on the protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest. There are only a few such sites in Sheffield and it is important that they are protected.

Further Sites of Special Scientific Interest may be designated by English Nature during the period of the Plan. It is intended that this Policy should also give protection to sites designated after the Plan is adopted.

Some important wildlife sites (e.g. wetlands) may be protected in the future through Britain's international obligations. It is anticipated that these internationally recognised sites would be protected as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

There are currently no Local Nature Reserves in Sheffield but six sites are proposed (see Map 5 facing page 102) and a number of others are being investigated. All the sites are currently designated as Areas of Natural History Interest (see Policy GE13, below). Official declaration of these sites as Local Nature Reserves will increase opportunities for use by local people. They will provide full access for people with disabilities and they will also become valuable sites for school fieldwork.

During public consultation on the Draft UDP many organisations and individuals stated their strong support for a firm Policy which protects important nature conservation sites.

How it will be put into practice

By:

Deciding planning applications.

Consulting with English Nature on any planning application which is likely to affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Complying with international obligations in relation to designated or proposed Wetland sites of International Importance (Ramsar sites), Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation.

Seeking to declare the following sites as Local Nature Reserves:

- Blackburn Meadows
- Bowden Housteads Wood
- Loxley and Wadsley Common
- Shirebrook Valley
- Wheata Wood area

Definitions

'Sites of Special Scientific Interest' - a statutory designation by English Nature for wildlife or geological sites of regional, national or international significance. These are protected by law.

'Local Nature Reserves' - a statutory designation which is placed on sites by the City Council and confirmed by English Nature. They must be owned or leased by the City Council and provide strong protection against adverse future development. Proposed Local Nature Reserves for Sheffield are shown on Map 5 facing page 102.

Other information

For the Government's national planning guidance, see *Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG9, Nature Conservation, Department of the Environment, 1994, paragraphs 29 to 36 and Annex A.*

For other nature conservation sites, see also Policy GE13, below.

See also, *Sheffield Nature Conservation Strategy, Sheffield City Council, 1991.*

- Woolley Wood

and identifying additional sites where the main use of land will be nature conservation.

Applying Environmental Assessment legislation, as appropriate (see Putting the Plan into Action, pages 305-306).

Requiring an environmental buffer between nature conservation sites and development (see Policy IB14, page 139).

Implementing policies and proposals in the Sheffield Nature Conservation Strategy which relate to:

- promoting nature conservation and lobbying others.
- managing land for nature conservation.
- environmental improvement schemes and nature conservation projects.
- public participation, consultation and information.
- monitoring and review.

GE13 AREAS OF NATURAL HISTORY INTEREST AND LOCAL NATURE SITES

Development which would damage Areas of Natural History Interest will normally not be permitted. Development affecting Local Nature Sites should, wherever possible, be sited and designed so as to protect and enhance the most important features of natural history interest.

Where development would decrease the nature conservation value of an Area of Natural History Interest or Local Nature Site, that decrease must be kept to a minimum and compensated for by creation or enhancement of wildlife habitats elsewhere within the site or local area.

Reasons for the Policy

In the past there has been little formal protection for sites of nature conservation value, particularly outside Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Many have suffered from unwitting or deliberate damage and destruction due to pressures from development, inappropriate management and pollution.

The Government's national and strategic guidance states that areas other than Sites of Special Scientific Interest should be safeguarded and enhanced. Public consultation on the Draft UDP indicated widespread support for designation and protection of Areas of Natural History Interest.

Many Local Nature Sites lie in areas which are needed for development. However, there may be opportunities to conserve or enhance some features of greatest wildlife or community value in any development

Definitions

'Areas of Natural History Interest' - areas designated by the City Council in consultation with local natural history groups and the regional office of English Nature. They may be of regional, City-wide or local nature conservation value and may be particularly appreciated by the local community. The term 'Area of Natural History Interest' combines the designations 'Site of Scientific Interest' and 'Community Wildlife Area' in the Sheffield Nature Conservation Strategy, 1991.

Other information

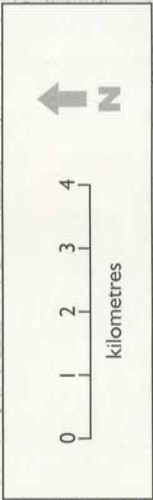
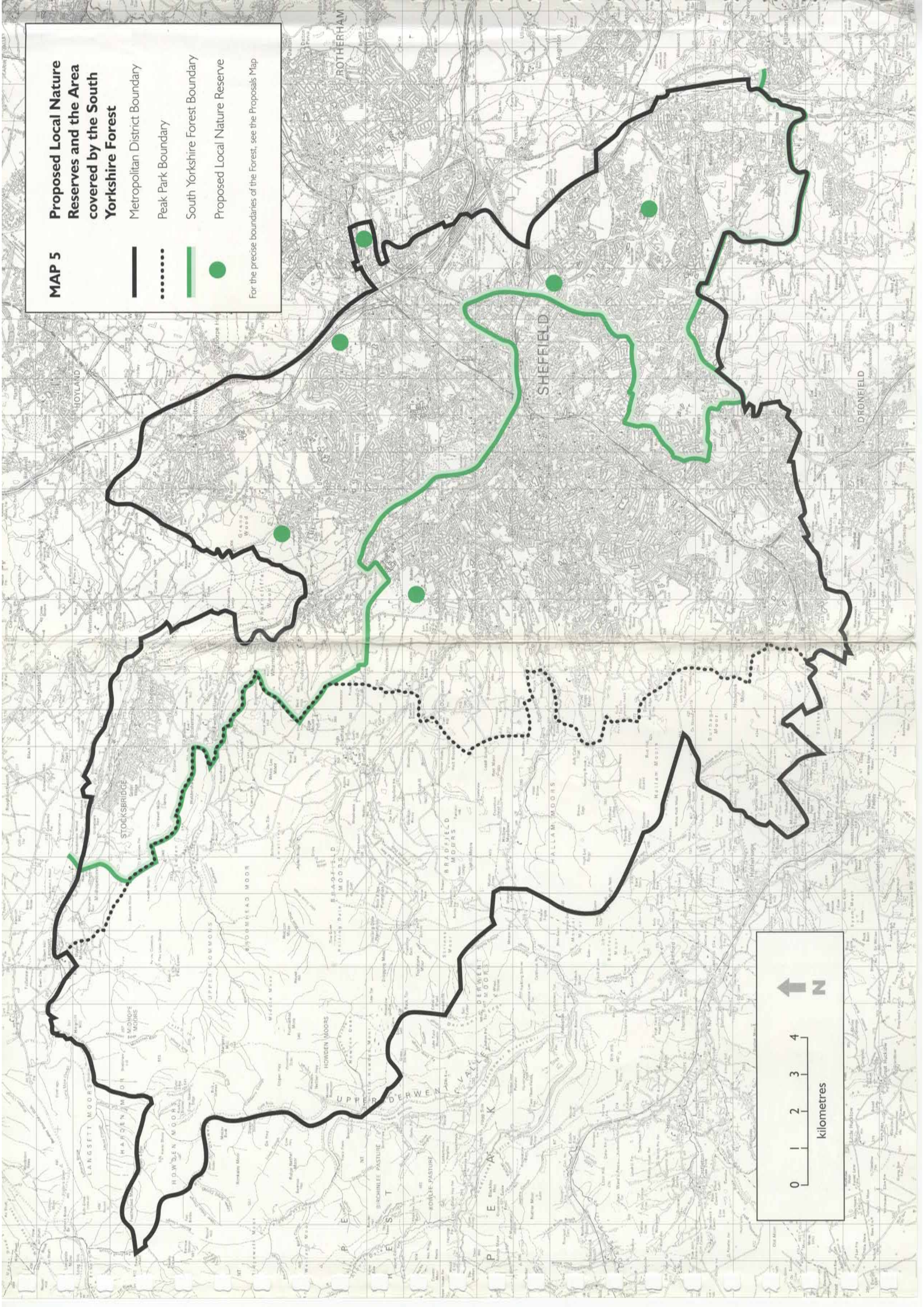
For the Government's national planning guidance, see Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG9, Nature Conservation, Department of the Environment, 1994, paragraphs 14 to 18. ➤

MAP 5

Proposed Local Nature Reserves and the Area covered by the South Yorkshire Forest

- Metropolitan District Boundary
- Peak Park Boundary
- South Yorkshire Forest Boundary
- Proposed Local Nature Reserve

For the precise boundaries of the Forest, see the Proposals Map



scheme and compensate for any damage which is caused.

The criteria for designating Areas of Natural History Interest and Local Nature Sites are set out in detail in the Sheffield Nature Conservation Strategy. Criteria include the rarity, size and diversity of sites, as well as their community and recreational value and their contribution to the Green Network (see Policy GE10, page 98).

Exceptionally, economic or recreational requirements may mean that development is permitted which causes damage to an Area of Natural History Interest. Such development is only environmentally sustainable if it includes measures to minimise the damage and the developer compensates for any losses to wildlife habitats or valuable natural features.

How will it be put into practice

By:

Deciding planning applications.

Applying Environmental Assessment legislation, as appropriate (see Putting the Plan into Action, pages 305-306).

Requiring an environmental buffer between nature conservation sites and development (see Policy IB14, page 139).

Negotiating with developers and entering into legal agreements to protect important features (see Policy CF5, page 173).

Implementing policies and proposals in the Sheffield Nature Conservation Strategy which relate to:

- promoting nature conservation and lobbying others.
- managing land for nature conservation.
- environmental improvement schemes and nature conservation projects.
- public participation, consultation and information.
- monitoring and review.

GE14 SOUTH YORKSHIRE FOREST

Support will be given for the creation of part of the South Yorkshire Forest on the northern and eastern sides of the City.

Reasons for the Policy

Developing a new Forest is a way of creating a greener and more attractive landscape across a large area of Sheffield. Within the Forest area extensive new tree planting can be linked to existing woodland to provide a green setting for other development.

The Forest initiative aims to restore derelict land (see Policy MW8, page 246). This helps to provide land for industry and make Sheffield a more

For the Government's strategic guidance, see Regional Planning Guidance Note RPG5, Strategic Guidance for South Yorkshire, Department of the Environment, 1989, paragraph 18.

'Local Nature Sites' - sites of lesser nature conservation value than sites of Special Scientific Interest or Areas of Natural History Interest. They include sites resulting from industrial dereliction, as well as locally important geological sites.

Definition

'South Yorkshire Forest' - a partnership programme which seeks to influence land management and land uses to create a wooded landscape from Stocksbridge across the north and east side of the City, to Mosborough (see Map 5 facing page 102). It is supported by the Countryside >