

# Manchester Tree Action Plan

Part of the Green and Blue Infrastructure  
Strategy for Manchester

2016–20

JANUARY 2017

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## Introduction

Trees are a valuable and prominent part of the city's green assets and have a key role to play in a healthy, attractive, resilient city. The contribution they make is set within the wider context of green and blue infrastructure<sup>1</sup> across the city. The understanding of the importance of green infrastructure to a thriving city has increased over recent years. This has been recognised in several approved key policy documents.

- **The Manchester Strategy: Our Manchester** sets out a long-term vision for Manchester's future. It recognises that world-class cities of the future will have access to beautiful green spaces, and emphasises the need for a liveable city that is clean, safe and attractive.
- **The Manchester City Council Climate Change Action Plan** sets out the Council's contribution to delivering the city's priorities with regard to climate change. Green and blue infrastructure within the city has a key regulating role to play in terms of air and water quality, climate-change adaptation and mitigation, carbon storage and flood control.
- **Manchester's Great Outdoors** is a Green and Blue Infrastructure (G&BI) Strategy, which was adopted in July 2015. It is the key document and mechanism that will help deliver the liveability agenda. This strategy covers all types of green and blue infrastructure but contains a key headline action that requires 'Effective and appropriate tree and woodland management and planting'.

This Action Plan provides more details about what this means for the city's trees.

Within the context of the wider Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, the vision for Manchester's trees continues to be to:

**Secure a long-term future for our trees and woodlands for generations to come, providing the right management and strong protection, and ensuring their positive contribution to our growing world-class city, which is recognised for its dynamic and sustainable economy and high quality of life.**

The Manchester Tree Action Plan is set out under the same objective headings used in the original Manchester Tree Strategy:

1. Managing sustainably
2. Planting appropriately
3. Protecting strongly
4. Involving creatively

It also aims to follow the key principles set out in the Trees and Design Action Group publication 'Trees in the Townscape'.

The Trees and Design Action Group is an open collaborative forum facilitating cross-sector and cross-disciplinary dialogue and projects promoting the role of the urban forest throughout the United Kingdom.

The Action Plan also takes on board best-practice approaches suggested by partners, including the Woodland Trust and City of Trees (formerly Red Rose Forest). The Action Plan has been developed collaboratively, working with a range of organisations and agencies, referencing existing and new partner commitments. It is a list of actions to be delivered by all partners and stakeholders, demonstrating true commitment to a sensible, sustainable and essential future for trees and woodlands in the city.

<sup>1</sup>Definition of green and blue infrastructure: parks, woodlands, informal open spaces (including amenity grass areas, allotments), nature reserves, lakes and reservoirs, historic sites and natural elements of built conservation areas, civic spaces and accessible countryside, outdoor sports facilities (with natural surfaces), river valleys and canals, pathways, cycle routes, tram routes and railway lines (used and disused), and networks of 'urban green' (the collective resource of private gardens, pocket parks, street trees, verges, green roofs and green walls)

Source: Manchester Local Plan (Core Strategy)

## Ecosystem Services

Trees are intrinsic to the appeal of Manchester's parks and open spaces. They add to the sense of place, character and attractiveness of our neighbourhoods.

They also provide a variety of unseen functions, often referred to as Ecosystem Services:

### WHAT DO TREES DO FOR US?

Ecosystem Services is the term we use to describe the benefits that nature provides for us – free of charge, 24/7.

1

#### REGULATING SERVICES

- Air and Water Quality
- Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation
- Carbon Storage
- Flood Control

2

#### PROVISIONING SERVICES

- Food Production
- Timber Production
- Pollination
- Fuel

3

#### SUPPORTING SERVICES

- Soil Formation
- Habitat Provision
- Photosynthesis
- Biodiversity

4

#### CULTURAL SERVICES

- Health and Wellbeing
- Recreation and Leisure
- Education
- Aesthetic
- Tourism
- Quality of Place

“A mature oak tree supports hundreds of life forms – more than any other native tree in the UK”

**Woodland Trust**

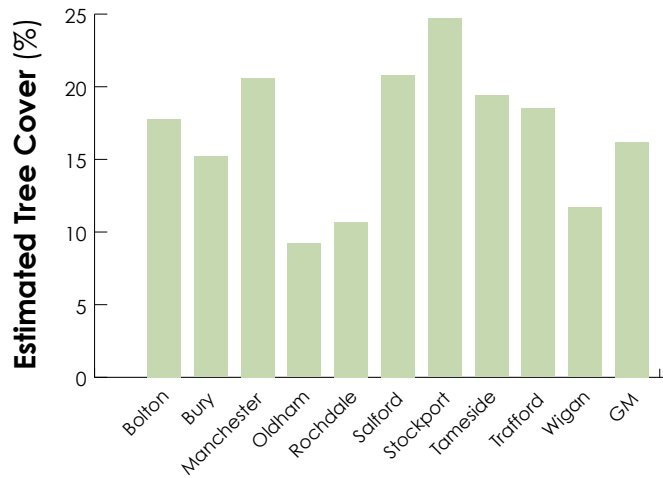


# Manchester's Tree Coverage

A detailed understanding of the city's tree resource is fundamental to a healthy, thriving treescape. Manchester has one of Greater Manchester's highest percentages of tree cover:

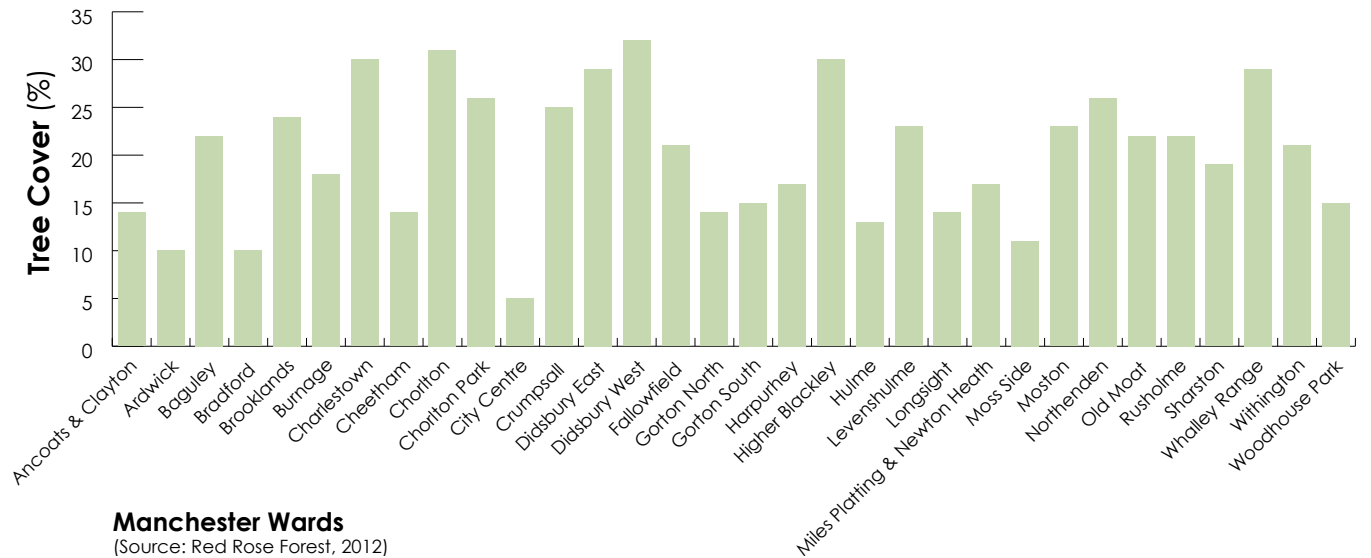
This can be broken down to ward level:

**Greater Manchester – Estimated Tree Cover (2013)**



**Greater Manchester Districts**  
(Source: Red Rose Forest, 2012)

**Tree Cover by Ward (%)**



**Manchester Wards**  
(Source: Red Rose Forest, 2012)

Both north and south Manchester have significant areas of tree cover. The Irk and Moston Brook catchment, along with Heaton Park, provides extensive woodland cover in the north, as do the Mersey Valley and Wythenshawe Park in the south. The wards with the highest tree cover in the city are Higher Blackley, Charlestown and Didsbury West – all having approximately 30% or more tree cover. The wards with tree cover of 10% or less are Ardwick, Bradford and the City Centre. The average tree cover for the city across all 32 wards is 20.6% (source: Red Rose Forest).

Access to woodland has been studied in detail, and Manchester compares favourably with the English National and Regional National Average in this regard (Woodland Trust: Spaces for People, March 2015):

- 31.5 % of Manchester's population have access to a two-hectare woodland site within 500m, compared to a regional average of 25.4%.
- 87% of Manchester's population have access to a larger 20-hectare site within 4km, compared to a regional average of 73%.

### Street and highway trees

At present, Manchester City Council has responsibility for approximately 80,000 street and highway trees.<sup>2</sup> Trees are planted on roadsides, verges and pavements where appropriate. The resource is managed directly by the Council's specialist arboricultural section, which oversees a programme of checks, routine maintenance and emergency work throughout the year. The team manages

a database of all street tree stock in the city. Each tree is registered individually and checked approximately every two years.

The trees planted on our streets and highways today are generally ornamental species. These trees are typically non-fruiting, will normally grow to a maximum height of 20–25 feet, and have small crowns that grow vertical and straight. Planting on the boundaries of properties is encouraged to avoid locating them in front of windows and blocking light.

### Trees in parks and open spaces, cemeteries, churchyards and allotments

Trees, woodlands and plantations within the city's parks, river valleys and other open spaces make up the largest proportion of tree cover in the city. The size of plantation ranges from small copses to large tracts of mature woodland. Many are important ecosystems in their own right and provide valuable biodiversity connectivity. Manchester has many distinct woodlands: from Blackley Forest and the woodlands of Heaton Park and Boggart Hole Clough in the north, to Kenworthy Wood, Chorlton Ees, Stenner Woods in the Mersey Valley, Southern Cemetery in Chorlton, and a further 30 known woods in Wythenshawe.

### Trees on private land

There are a significant number of trees on land that are not owned or controlled by the Council. These could be trees in private gardens or on private property. Major landowners, including organisations such as Network Rail, United Utilities, Transport for Greater Manchester, Registered Housing Providers and universities, have their own guidance on safeguarding and managing their tree stock. Trees in the city's 35 Conservation Areas are covered by group Tree Preservation Orders, regardless of ownership. The Council will continue to work with private landowners and managers through the Action Plan to support the sustainable management of trees and woodlands on private land.

### Monitoring, review and progress-reporting

The Action Plan will be monitored and reported on annually by both the Council and the Manchester: Green Infrastructure (GI) Group as part of the wider Green and Blue Infrastructure Implementation Plan. It is intended to be an accessible and easily updated document to capture tree-related activity from statutory bodies and community groups.

The success of the Action Plan will ultimately be driven, not just by the realisation of the activity illustrated below, but by all of us recognising and supporting the true value of trees to the city. These commitments will enhance and protect the treescape in Manchester for many years to come.

<sup>2</sup>Source: Manchester Arboricultural Team

## Part 1: Objectives and headline actions

### Objective 1: Managing sustainably

Headline action	Potential projects/activities	Delivery agencies	Timescales
<b>Map and monitor changes in the amount and distribution of trees across the city</b>	Refine datasets of tree and woodland cover	Universities, CoT	2017–20
	Refresh Manchester Tree Audit	GM partners, CoT, FC	2017–20
<b>Develop a fuller understanding of the city's tree resource</b>	Develop Manchester City Council's tree management system	MCC	2016
	Deliver annual highway tree inspection programme	MCC	2016–20
	Investigate online mapping tool of planned tree work in the city	MCC, universities	2017–19
	Encourage network of data-gathering and information-sharing, eg. university access to canopy data for research	MCC, CoT, FC, universities	2016–20
	Investigate opportunities for valuing Manchester tree stock, including the development of an ecosystem services valuation of treescape	Universities, CoT	2017–20
<b>Ensure continued and sustainable management of all trees and woodland, and best practice approaches employed</b>	Develop, agree and embed principles of tree management in Manchester	MCC	2018–19
	Develop tree and woodland management plans for the Council's parks and green spaces, which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No waste timber going to landfill</li> <li>Consideration of sustainable uses of woodland by-products</li> </ul>	MCC, CoT, GMEU, CGs	2016–20
	Develop tree-focused opportunity mapping for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parks and open spaces</li> <li>City centre</li> <li>Neighbourhoods</li> </ul>	MCC, CoT	2016–20
	Encourage the development of tree and woodland management plans by all landowners and managers of trees in Manchester	RPs, universities, Network Rail, other landowners	2016–20
	Develop good-practice tree-management case studies as part of MCR GI Group	MCR GI Group	2016–20

<b>Ensure green and blue infrastructure (including trees and tree management) is considered part of major new developments and retrofits, policy and strategy reviews where appropriate</b>	Major development projects to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport infrastructure changes</li> <li>• Eastern Gateway</li> <li>• Northern Gateway</li> </ul>	MCC, TfGM, developers	2016–20
	Local Plan Review, Park Strategy	MCC	2016–19
<b>Develop climate-resilient approaches to tree and woodland management</b>	Encourage use of trees within broader climate-resilient adaptive plans, eg. sustainable urban drainage projects, public-realm improvements	GM, CoT, MCC, RPs	2016–20
	Develop Ash Dieback Strategy in partnership with the Natural Capital Group	GM, CoT, MCC, FC	2016–20
	Encourage diversity of tree stock, eg. appropriately diverse species and age ranges to help increase resilience to pests and disease	MCC, CoT	2016–20
<b>Develop partnership projects that sensitively improve the functionality of the treescape</b>	Develop appropriate projects to deliver the City of Trees vision in Manchester, including:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage Trees</li> </ul>	CoT	2016–17
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forest Schools</li> </ul>	LWT, MBP, MVP	2016–20
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Orchard planting and management</li> </ul>	GW, OP	2016–20



## Objective 2: Planting appropriately

Headline action	Potential projects/activities	Delivery agencies	Timescales
<b>Ensure continued healthy and diverse tree canopy cover across the city</b>	<p>Sustain tree and woodland canopy cover of 20% average to 2025</p> <p>Deliver suitable and sustainable tree-planting projects that support biodiversity, in line with the G&amp;BI Strategy, tree audit baseline, Park Strategy and neighbourhood place plans, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-for-one tree replacement for highways trees</li> <li>• Delivery of tree-replacement policies across the city</li> <li>• 150 trees planted beside highways annually (combination of new and replacements)</li> <li>• 1,000 hedgerow trees planted annually</li> <li>• 1,500 trees planted annually</li> </ul> <p>Develop Beacon/Heritage Trees Mapping project</p>	<p>MCC, RVIs, RPs, CoT, CGs Woodland Trust, LWT</p> <p>MCC</p> <p>TfGM, MCC</p> <p>MCC</p> <p>MCC, CoT, RPs</p> <p>MCC, CoT, RPs</p> <p>MCC, CoT</p>	2016–20
<b>Continued planting of community orchards in suitable locations</b>	<p>Planting of at least four new community orchards annually</p> <p>Mapping of community orchard locations</p> <p>Encourage cropping, harvesting, distribution and usage of food provided</p>	<p>RFW, CoT, RPs, MCC, OP, CGs</p> <p>MCC, OP, CoT</p> <p>OP, CoT, RFW, CGs</p>	<p>2016–20</p> <p>2017–18</p> <p>2016–20</p>
<b>Investigate mechanisms for funding new tree planting, management, and maintenance</b>	<p>Support the delivery of the City of Trees Vision for Greater Manchester by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active involvement in the GM Forest Partnership</li> <li>• Exploring opportunities to engage with complementary additional tree planting through the One Tree per Child Project</li> <li>• Working collaboratively to develop sustainable tree planting and management project ideas through, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manchester City Council's parks and green spaces opportunity mapping programme and tree-sponsorship opportunities</li> <li>• Investigating commercial opportunities for trees and woodlands</li> <li>• Neighbourhood tree-planting opportunities, with priority given to wards with lower average tree cover where possible</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	MCC, MCR GI Group	2016–20
<b>Develop a climate-resilient approach to tree planting</b>	<p>Utilise a mixture of native and non-native planting projects to ensure resilience against pests and diseases</p> <p>Reduce risk of tree pests and disease by ensuring all new trees planted are from registered and approved sources</p> <p>Promote SUDS-friendly demonstrators eg, Grow Green Gorton Project</p>	<p>MCC, MCR GI Group, CoT, RPs</p> <p>MCC, CoT</p> <p>CoT, MCC, RPs</p>	<p>2016–20</p> <p>2016–20</p> <p>2016–20</p>

## Objective 3: Protecting strongly

Headline action	Potential projects/activities	Delivery agencies	Timescales
<b>Investigate effective tree-replacement and compensation measures</b>	Develop and agree appropriate compensation measure for tree loss and replacement in Manchester	MCC, CoT	2018-19
<b>Ensure trees of high value are designated as Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)</b>	Continue to designate new TPOs as appropriate	MCC	2016–20
	Enforce as appropriate against unauthorised work to trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders or within Conservation Areas	MCC	2016–20
	Promotion of the Tree Preservation Order process via neighbourhood teams	MCC, CoT, partners	2016–20
<b>Sites of Biological Importance (SBI): increase the number of SBI in active management to conserve, protect and enhance biodiversity</b>	Increase the number of SBI in active conservation management by 1–4% annually, working with landowners and land managers	MCC, GMEU	2016–20
	Provide statistical report for Defra annually	MCC	2016–20
<b>Use planning conditions to ensure high standard of tree work, protection and management</b>	Tree officers to provide guidance and advice through the planning process to ensure compliance of tree work against: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BS 5837 (the British Standard for Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction)</li> <li>• BS 3998 (the British Standard for Tree Work)</li> </ul>	MCC, developers	2016–20
	Investigate use of the City of Trees Citizen Forester Volunteer Service to increase the awareness of non-compliance with conditions	MCC, CoT	2016–18

## Objective 4: Involving creatively

Headline action	Potential projects/activities	Delivery agencies	Timescales
<b>Further develop research into the benefits of trees</b>	<p>Local universities, MCR GI Group and the Council to establish an ongoing programme of collaborative GI research (including trees), initially for 2016–20, to measure the impact of GI across the range of social, economic and environmental benefits set out in the strategy. To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating 'ecosystems@Manchester' multi-disciplinary research network at The University of Manchester</li> <li>• Nerc Gardens and Ecosystem Services project</li> <li>• Nerc GHIA project</li> <li>• Nerc Green Growth</li> </ul> <p>Update GI evidence base with tree and woodland-related research</p>	<p>Universities, MCC, MCR GI Group, MCCA</p> <p>UoM</p> <p>MMU</p> <p>UoM</p> <p>UoM</p> <p>CoT, MCC, universities</p>	<p>2016</p> <p>2016–18</p> <p>2016–18</p> <p>2016–18</p> <p>2016–20</p>
<b>Encourage and record the delivery of community-led and focused tree projects and food growing</b>	<p>Projects to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real Food Wythenshawe</li> <li>• Heritage Trees</li> <li>• The Orchard Project</li> <li>• Green Connections</li> <li>• Wythenshawe Woods</li> </ul>	<p>RFW, CGs</p> <p>CGs</p> <p>OP, CGs</p> <p>CoT, MCC, TfGM</p> <p>CoT, MCC</p>	<p>2016–20</p> <p>2016–17</p> <p>2016–19</p> <p>2017–18</p> <p>2017–18</p>
<b>Raise the awareness of the benefits of trees</b>	<p>Establish social media platforms for ongoing promotion of tree-related information</p> <p>Ward councillors and local communities to include tree activity in ward plans as appropriate</p>	<p>Ward councillors, CoT, MCR GI Group, MCCA, CGs</p>	<p>2016-20</p>
<b>Provide opportunities for community engagement, involvement and activity</b>	<p>Support for and delivery of tree-related activity, training and capacity building:</p> <p>Related volunteer opportunities to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friends group events and activities</li> <li>• Development of CoT Citizen Forester volunteer scheme</li> <li>• River Valley Initiative volunteer and engagement opportunities</li> <li>• LWT Moston Fairways volunteer scheme</li> <li>• Orchard Management Training</li> </ul>	<p>MCR GI Group, CGs, MCC, OP, MCCA</p>	<p>2016–20</p>

<b>Showcase local best practice and seek recognition for delivered project</b>	Apply for national awards wherever appropriate, eg. Britain in Bloom RHS Awards for community greening projects	MCC	2016–20
	Encourage nomination of Champion Trees as part of notable and ancient trees in Britain and Ireland register	MCC	2016–20
<b>Raise the profile of Manchester as an attractive place to live, work and visit, with access to high-quality GI within and beyond Manchester</b>	Use of the city's trees and woodlands to attract visitors and create new recreation opportunities, including through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heaton Park Tree Top Trail</li> <li>• Heritage Trees project</li> <li>• Beacon Trees</li> </ul>	MCR GI Group, MCC, MCCA, MM, UoM MCC CoT CoT, MCC	2016–20
	Promote the city's existing parks and green spaces to maximise their usage by local communities, workers and visitors	MCC, MCR GI Group, CGs	2016–20

## Part 2: Monitoring, review and progress-reporting actions

Headline action	Potential projects/activities	Delivery agencies	Timescales
<b>Key performance indicators</b>	Potential measures to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number/area of trees/woodland with management plans</li> <li>• The percentage of tree-canopy cover across Manchester</li> <li>• Numbers engaged through volunteer opportunities</li> </ul>	All stakeholders as appropriate	2016–20
<b>Annual review and reporting</b>	Undertake an annual review against the Action Plan and publish the findings through the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MCCA website</li> <li>• MCCA Annual Report</li> <li>• Manchester State of the City Report</li> <li>• Others as appropriate</li> </ul>	All stakeholders as appropriate	2016–20
<b>Website and news stories</b>	Publish stories on progress against the Action Plan and specific projects on the Council's website, plus other channels as appropriate	All stakeholders as appropriate	2016–20
<b>Review and update the Action Plan</b>	Undertake a full review of progress against the Action Plan in 2020 and publish an updated version for the following three to five-year period	All stakeholders as appropriate	2020

## Contributors

The MACF Green and Blue Infrastructure Group are grateful to the following organisations that have contributed to the development of this Action Plan and made commitments to support its delivery.

City of Trees	CoT	<a href="http://www.cityoftrees.org.uk/">http://www.cityoftrees.org.uk/</a>
Community groups	CGs	
Environment Agency	EA	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency</a>
Forestry Commission	FC	<a href="http://www.forestry.gov.uk/">http://www.forestry.gov.uk/</a>
Greater Manchester Ecology Unit	GMEU	<a href="http://www.tameside.gov.uk/ecologyunit">http://www.tameside.gov.uk/ecologyunit</a>
Groundwork	GW	<a href="http://www.groundwork.org.uk/">http://www.groundwork.org.uk/</a>
Manchester – Green and Blue Group	MCR GI Group	<a href="http://macf.ontheplatform.org.uk/">http://macf.ontheplatform.org.uk/</a>
Manchester City Council	MCC	<a href="http://www.manchester.gov.uk/">http://www.manchester.gov.uk/</a>
Manchester Climate Change Agency	MCCA	<a href="http://macf.ontheplatform.org.uk/">http://macf.ontheplatform.org.uk/</a>
Manchester Garden City	MGC	<a href="http://cityco.com/project/manchester-garden-city/">http://cityco.com/project/manchester-garden-city/</a>
Manchester Metropolitan University	MMU	<a href="http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/">http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/</a>
Manchester Museum	MM	<a href="http://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/">http://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/</a>
Natural England	NE	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england/about">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england/about</a>
Real Food Wythenshawe	RFW	<a href="http://www.realfoodwythenshawe.com/">http://www.realfoodwythenshawe.com/</a>
Registered Providers (Formerly Registered Housing Providers)	RPs	
River Valley Initiatives: Irk Valley Project, Medlock Valley Project, Moston Brook Partnership, Mersey Valley Partnership	RVI	<a href="http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/500194/irk_river_valley_project/4753/irk_valley">http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/500194/irk_river_valley_project/4753/irk_valley</a> <a href="http://www.medlockvalley.org.uk/MedlockValley/">http://www.medlockvalley.org.uk/MedlockValley/</a> <a href="http://oldham.gov.uk/info/200393/parks_countryside_and_canals/699/moston_brook_green_corridor/2">http://oldham.gov.uk/info/200393/parks_countryside_and_canals/699/moston_brook_green_corridor/2</a>
The Orchard Project	OP	<a href="http://www.theorchardproject.org.uk">http://www.theorchardproject.org.uk</a>
The University of Manchester	UoM	<a href="http://www.manchester.ac.uk/">http://www.manchester.ac.uk/</a>
The Wildlife Trust For Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside	LWT	<a href="http://www.lancswt.org.uk/">http://www.lancswt.org.uk/</a>
Transport for Greater Manchester	TfGM	<a href="https://tfgm.com">https://tfgm.com</a>
Tree and Design Action Group	TDAG	
University of Salford	UoS	<a href="http://www.salford.ac.uk/">http://www.salford.ac.uk/</a>
Woodland Trust	WT	<a href="https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/">https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/</a>