

# Flashes of Wigan and Leigh National Nature Reserve - What Makes it Special?



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## Legacy and development of the concepts

Our National Nature Reserve is a result of its post-industrial past.

Building on the work put in by a number of organisations since the 1980s, Great Manchester Wetlands is spearheading a step-change in nature recovery – Wigans Landscape is the flagship project at its heart.

The NNR will deliver a huge amount and will demonstrate how partnership working can meet mutual goals and we have proven the benefits of connecting people and nature.

We have developed activity that has a lasting impact and is sustainable.

Everyone's achievements will continue to be built on and this will continue.



# A Long History of Coal Mining



Mossland and wet  
grassland prior to mining

Mining important between  
1800s and 1970s

Other industries included  
foundries, cotton mills  
and engineering





# Collieries in Wigan



1000 coal mines  
in the Wigan area

Wigan was the centre  
of the Lancashire coalfield

Canal and rail transport hub



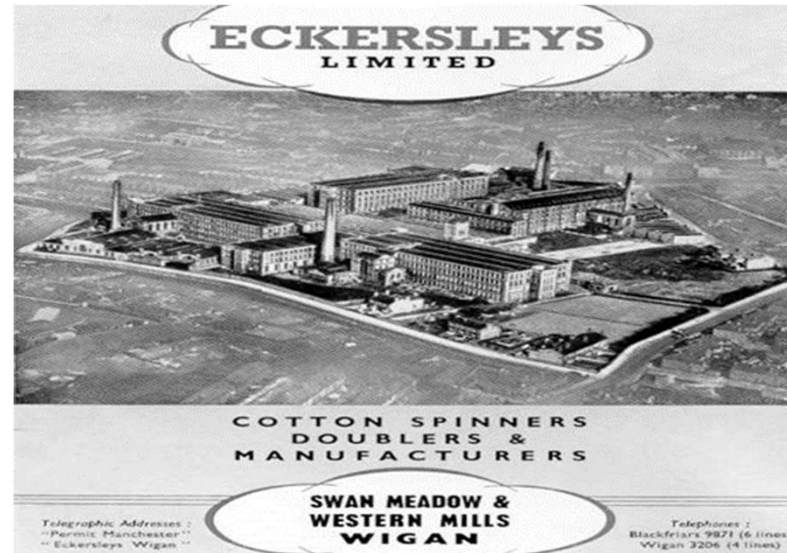


# The Way We Were



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## Westwood Power Station

- The power station
- created Fly ash (PFA)
- Plants found belong to coastal dune systems
- Power Station
- demolished in 1989



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## Wigan's Challenge

The Derelict Land Survey, 1974, showed Wigan had 1045 Ha of derelict land

Third highest incidence in England (Kerrier, Cornwall topped the list with 1283 Ha)

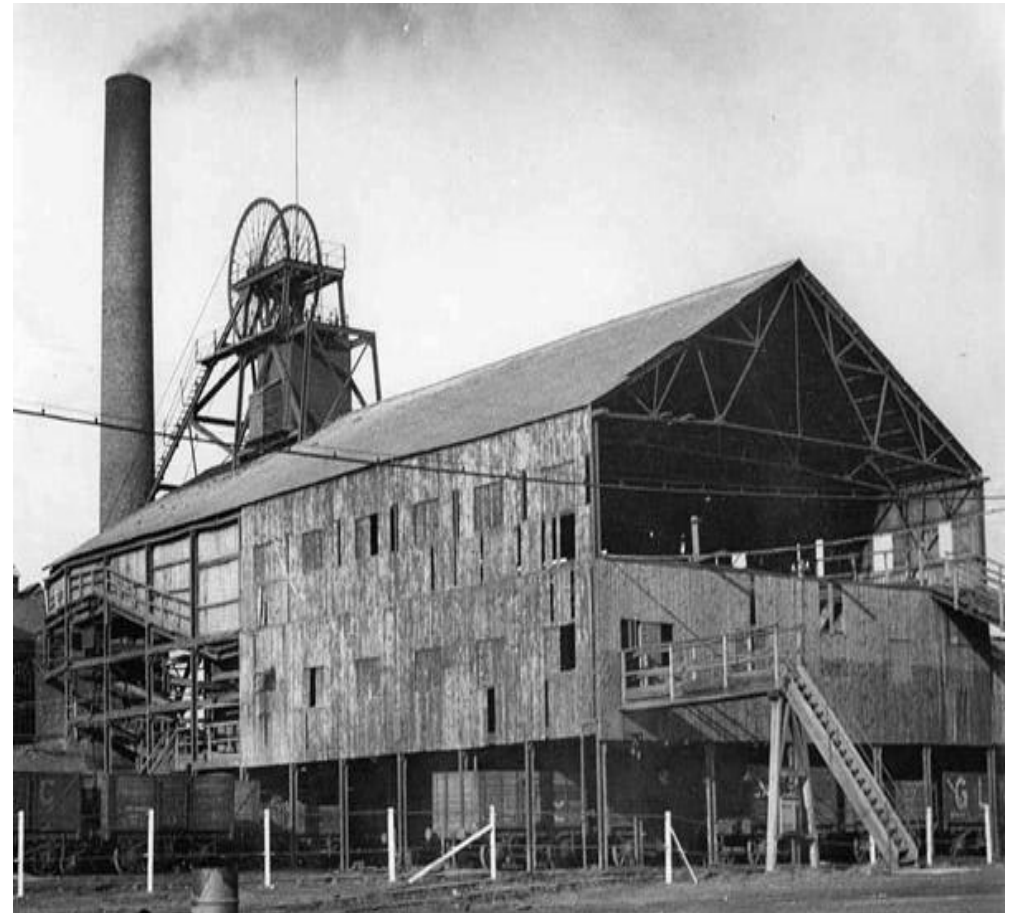
One-third of the derelict land  
In Greater Manchester

Including colliery spoil heaps (580 Ha), abandoned railway land, metaliferous spoil, subsidence flashes and other industrial dereliction



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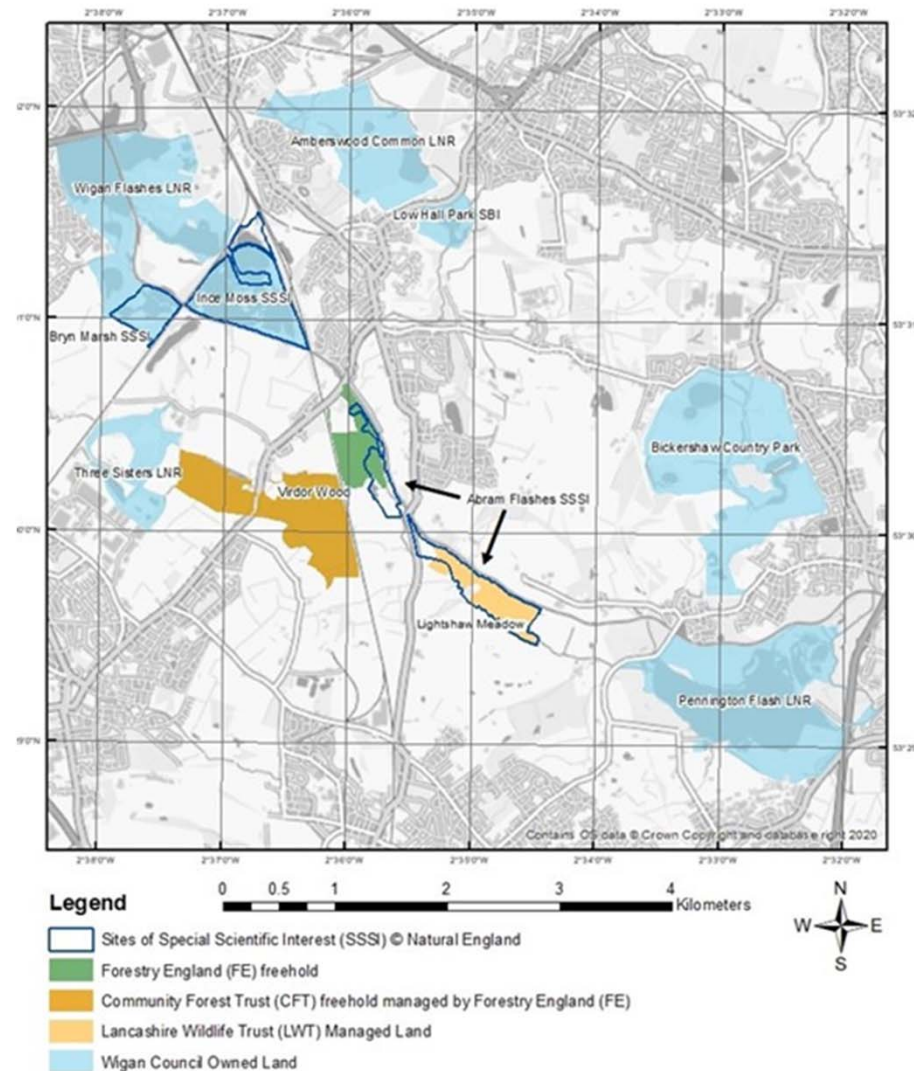


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## Urban Significance

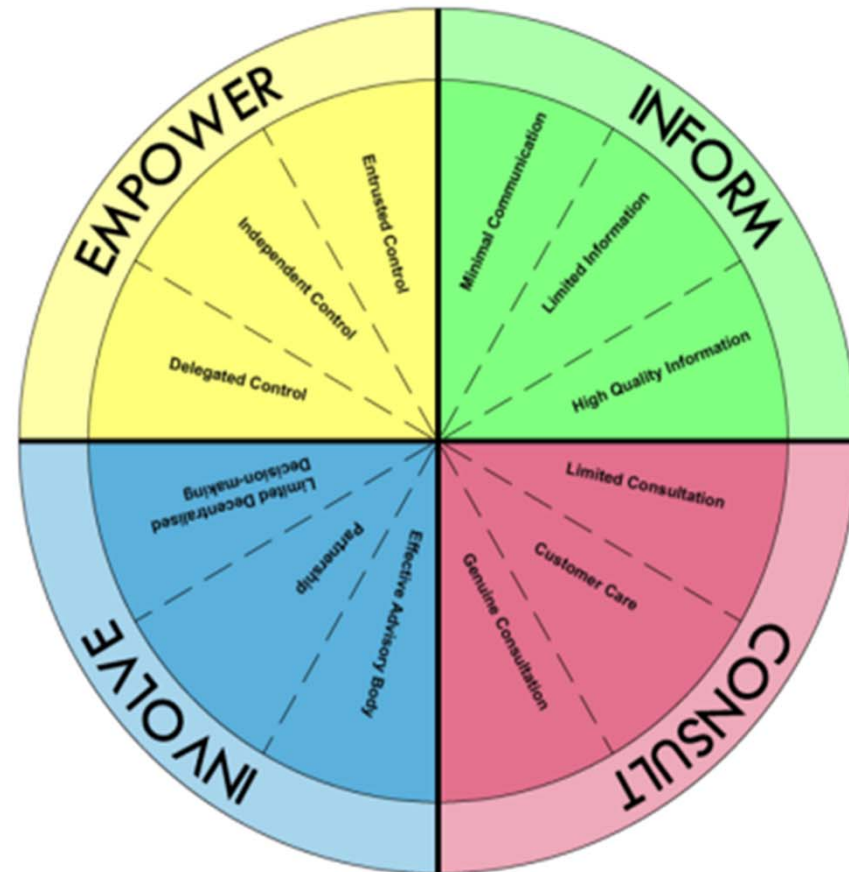
- 224 NNRs in England but very few Urban NNRs
- Main way to protect high-value nature conservation land from inappropriate development
- In 2006, opportunities for public enjoyment of nature 6 million people live within half an hour's travel
- Case study to modernise the NNR selection criteria





## The Pilot

- Large amounts of engagement with over 40 workshops held on zoom
- Needed evidence to prove good enough to be designated
- Community ambitions for these places
- Comments supporting the aims of the NNR



# Importance for Wildlife



Includes 2 SSSIs, 12 Local Wildlife Sites  
and 4 LNRs

Approx. 800ha of  
shallow open water  
bodies and wetland  
habitats

Over 52 pairs of the  
nationally rare  
Willow Tit and wider  
breeding bittern (0.5% of national  
population)  
and breeding wetland  
birds such as water rail (0.97% of England  
population)





## Potential for People

Sites within an area of high deprivation

Shared vision for engagement and education

Great public access and rights of way

Landscape scale approach and use of the sites by visitors



# Stakeholder Engagement



**A wide range of stakeholders**

**A consortium of landowners and land managers**

**Consultation and Engagement**

**Interest from recreation and sport to wildlife, arts and natural history interests**

**Includes opportunities for learning and research**



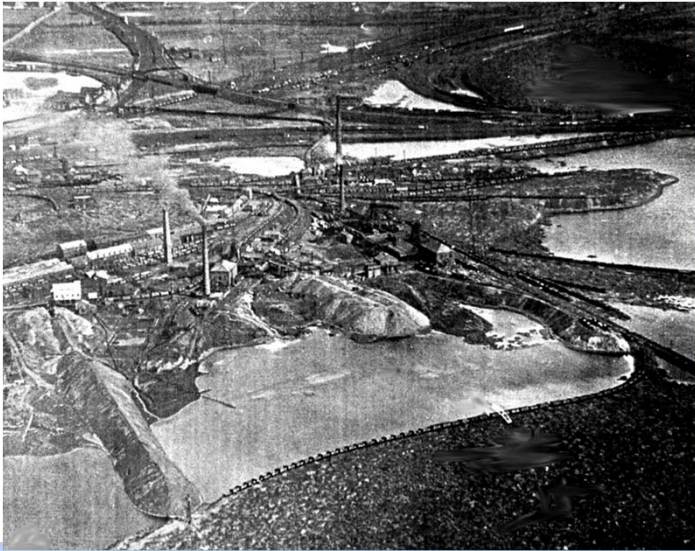


# Landscape and Management History



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# What are National Nature Reserves?



## Statutory purpose

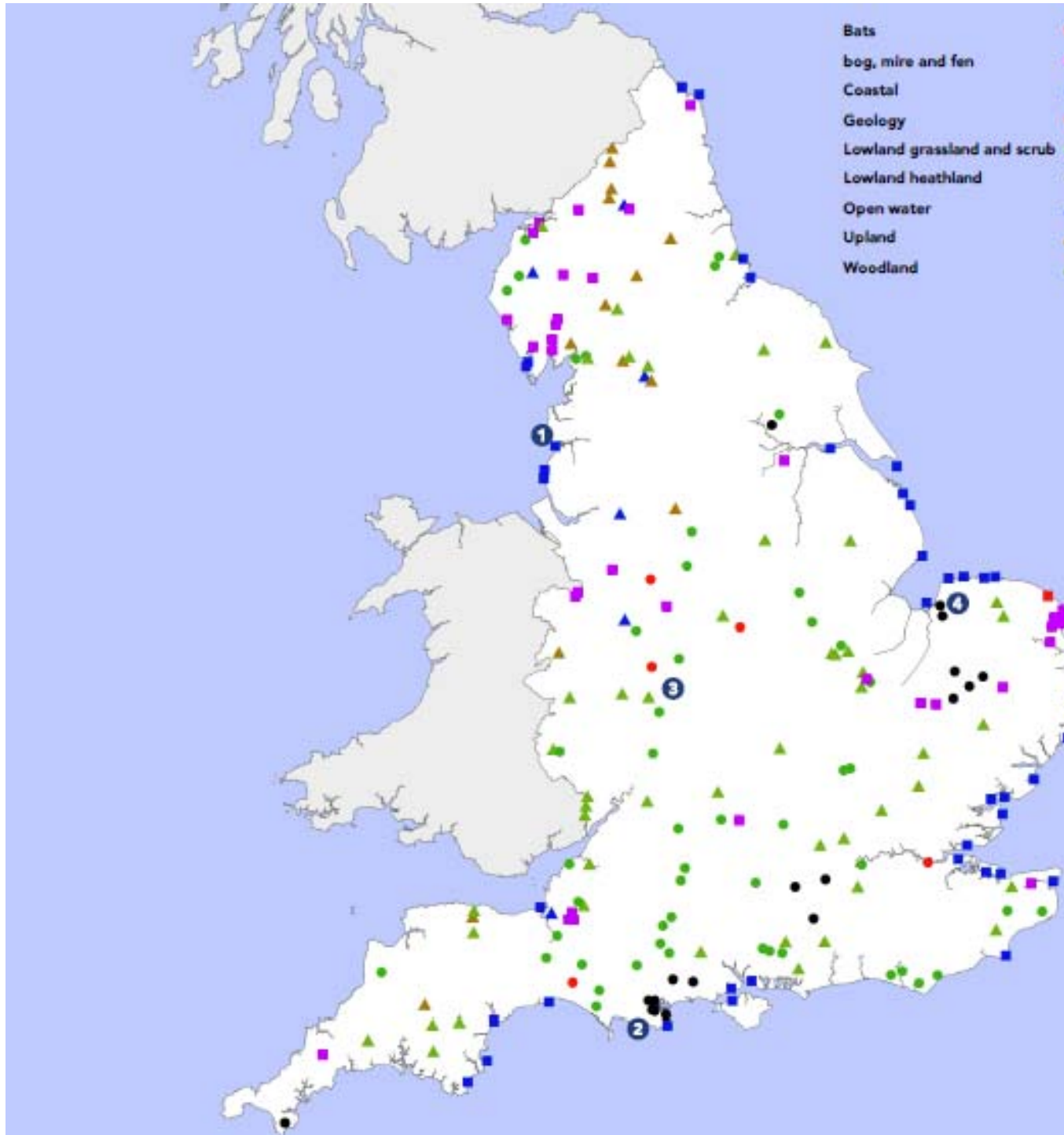
- First established through the 1949 Act
- Conservation purpose - including for research and study, or preservation, or both;
- Purpose further extended through NERC Act 2006
- Recreation purpose – enjoyment of nature and open air recreation, provided this does not compromise the conservation purpose



# England's National Nature Reserves



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# Strategic themes

- Conservation: the most important places for nature; Lawton; Nature Recovery Network
- Science: learning, sharing, developing best practice
- Engagement: behavioural change, participation, impact
- Partnerships: shared brand & values, working across priority landscapes
- Resources: new investment, influencing, up-scaling



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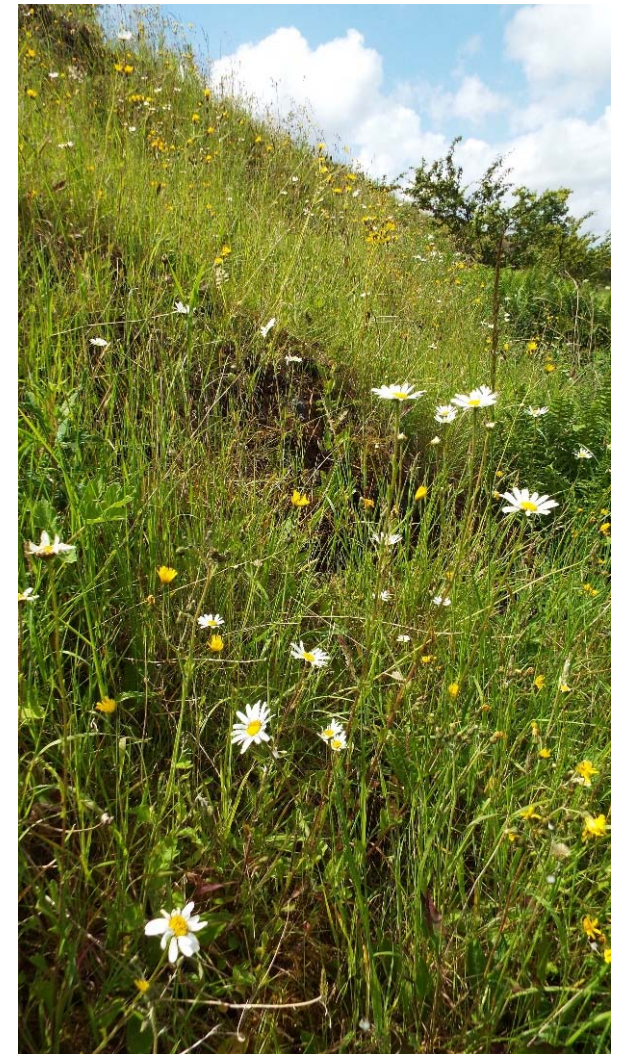
# NNR Management Standards



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- 9 Standards which:-
- Set out the common principles for the management of NNRs
- Developed initially by Natural England for their NNRs
- Welcomed by the NNR Partnership and across our Approved Body partners, now being adopted widely across the NNR Series





# Management Standard 1: Simply The Best!



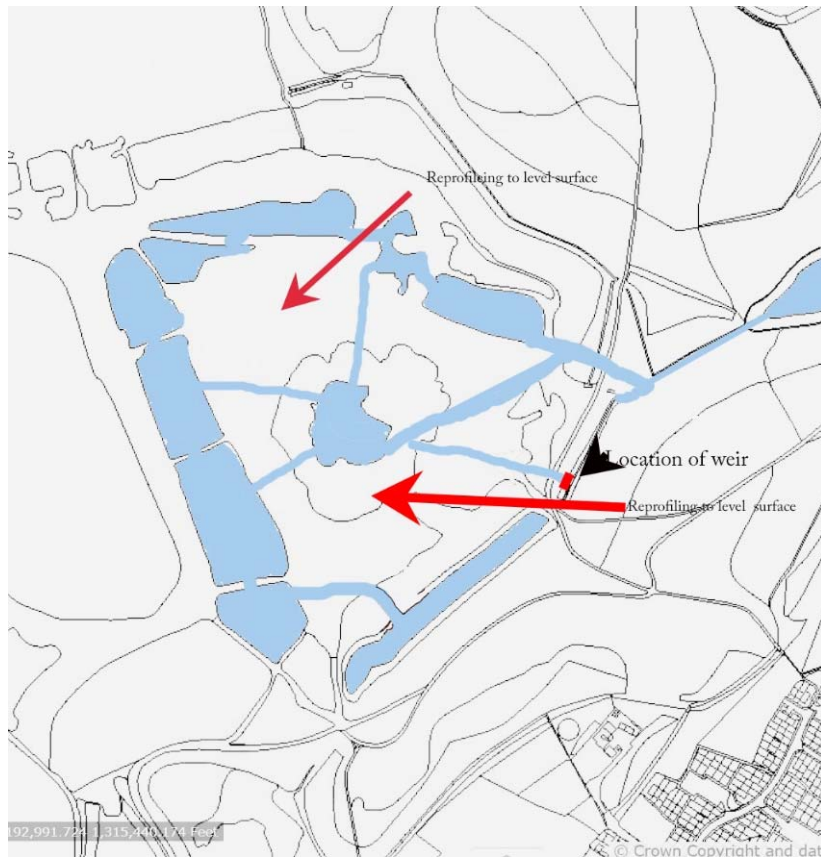
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# Management Standard 2: Management Planning





# Management Standard 3: An exemplary NNR



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# Management Standard 4: Landscape Scale



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## Management Standard 4: Landscape Scale



The NNR will create new relationships and started new conversations –

The broader agenda – themes that Carbon Landscape has been pioneering are now being recognised widely in the UK as best practice and being firmly embedded - e.g. local nature recovery, green recovery, slow the flow, natural flood management, carbon storage, wellbeing through nature, the value to society and the economy of healthy natural systems





# Management Standard 5: Public Enjoyment



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# Management Standard 6: Knowledge Sharing



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# Management Standard 7: Involving Stakeholders



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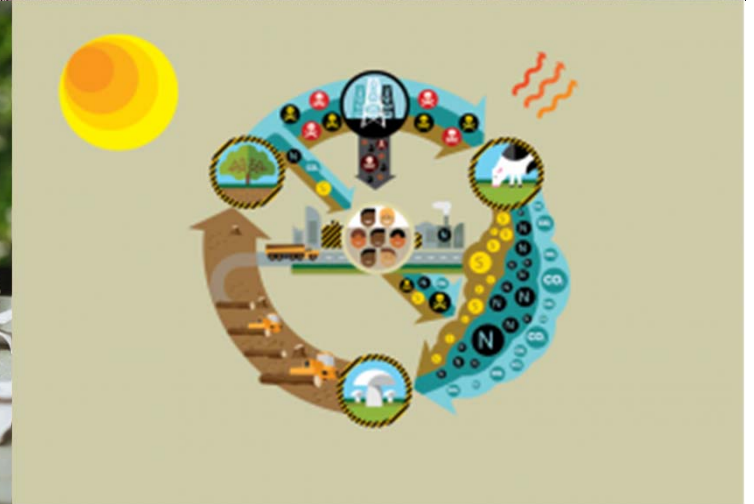


# Management Standard 8: Collaboration



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# Management Standard 9: Demonstration



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# An Urban Landscape Scale NNR fit for the future



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- Exemplify the 'Three pillars':
  - » Conservation
  - » Science
  - » Engagement



- Adaptive network of ecosystems and natural landscapes
- Collaborative, working with communities and partners
- Exemplary management, leading evidence-based best practice
- Highly valued and sustainable - new resources and investment, new contributors, valued by society



# A new National Nature Reserve for Wigan

# Wigan Council



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