

18/01/2021

Your ref: Letter of Support for United Utilities Green Recovery Proposals



2nd Floor, Arndale House,
Manchester, M4 3AQ

Dear Sir/Madam

LETTER OF SUPPORT: United Utilities Green Recovery Proposals

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

As an organisation whose statutory purpose is to protect and enhance the natural environment for communities, we are keen to engage with partners to develop new initiatives to further these objectives.

Natural England has worked with United Utilities in the North West for some years, supporting the development of United Utilities delivery plans, providing technical oversight when required and developing a partnership approach to mutually aligned objectives and project delivery. We are also working with United Utilities on the Natural Course (EU Life IP) project across Cheshire and Greater Manchester taking a collaborative approach to resolve difficult challenges to delivering Water Framework Directive improvements across the North West River Basin District.

We are keen to continue to work in partnership to align delivery and maximise the results that can be achieved and are particularly supportive of proposals put forward to enhance the River Irwell catchment which include:

- Tackling invasive species at a catchment level to improve access to the river, restore native biodiversity, reduce health and safety risk and prevent further spread.
- Catchment phosphorus management to reduce both rural and urban pollution in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive as well as reducing other urban pollutants.
- Sustainable drainage and natural flood management to reduce flooding associated with surface water and sewers.

We are also keen to continue to work in partnership to align delivery and maximise the results that can be achieved and are particularly supportive for proposals put forward to undertake Peatland restoration on Winter Hill.

- This project is critical to the recovery of this area of blanket bog from wildfire damage, contributing to improving the condition of the Site of Special Scientific Interest and wider nature recovery.
- The project will restore a wet sphagnum dominated habitat reducing future wildfire risk, protecting the peat from oxidation and erosion, helping to keep its carbon in the ground.
- As well as the climate mitigation effects, the project will also provide wider natural capital benefits downstream such as attenuating flow and improving water quality.

We look forward to working with you in the future, to facilitate of these mutually beneficial projects and their associated complimentary activities for the benefit of the natural environment and the communities of the North West.

Yours sincerely

Petula Neilson

Petula Neilson
Team Leader -Urban, Water & Wetlands/Natural Course
Area Team 4