

# River Irwell Evidence & Measures Study

GMCA &  
Irwell Catchment  
Partnership



## Date carried out

September 2016 - March 2017

## Location

River Irwell Catchment

## Background

An early priority for Natural Course within Greater Manchester has been to assemble a detailed evidence base for the River Irwell catchment, to help partners understand the issues within the catchment and the opportunities to make water quality improvements, in line with the objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD). This includes the commission of a study to “Collate and analyse relevant data sets and review existing studies to provide a tested evidence base for the causes of the main water management issues across the River Irwell management catchment”.

## Project

This Evidence & Measures study brings together existing data packages, made widely available to the local catchment partnerships, alongside further data held by the Environment Agency, United Utilities and the GM Ecology Unit. The draft findings of the study were reviewed during a stakeholder workshop in February 2017.

The final project outputs will enable Irwell catchment partners to understand the issues and

## Partners

GMCA, Environment Agency, United Utilities, GM Ecology Unit, Irwell Catchment Partnership

## Themes



Evidence &  
Tools



Water  
Quality



Rural



Urban



challenges within the catchment and develop interventions which contribute more effectively to the delivery of WFD objectives and wider integrated water management goals. The Evidence & Measures study will also support the development of the River Irwell catchment management plan by the catchment host, Groundwork MSSTT.



### Outcomes

The project outputs include a summary report and user guide to help the reader through the wealth of data and information assembled during the project. The study brings together a large range of GIS information along with tables of the main issues within the catchment. Potential projects suggested by the Irwell Catchment Partnership, WFD mitigation measures identified by the Environment Agency, and opportunities recorded during a number of catchment walkover surveys, have been scored and ranked according to their potential contribution to WFD objectives.

### Learning

The opportunities to improve the catchment are summarised in a series of water body output maps for each of the streams and rivers that make up the catchment.

The maps summarise the issues in each water body and highlights opportunities based on:

- Tackling the issues themselves
- The list of EA Mitigation Measures Actions (MMA) for that water body
- The Irwell Catchment Partnership projects portfolio
- Comments provided during the stakeholder workshop in February 2017

Proposed works, by the water company United Utilities, during the current investment period in each water body are also given. In order to help the catchment partnership prioritise action, the Evidence & Measures study assigns one of the following categories to each water body:

- Partnership Priority: where there are no water company issues to address and therefore where there are real opportunities for the catchment partnership to play a central role in addressing the issues in that water body.
- Mixed Priority: where further investigation is required into the issues or where there are planned water company issues which could contribute to the solution.
- Water Company Priority: where water company issues dominate the water body.

### Next Steps

The Evidence & Measures study provides a resource to the Irwell catchment partnership and will support the production of the catchment management plan. It has a clear focus on water quality issues and achieving WFD objectives. The outputs of the study will be used alongside other resources produced through Natural Course, such as the Natural Flood Risk Management modelling by The Rivers Trust and a Green Infrastructure for Water study by City of Trees, to identify projects that can provide a multiple benefits for the water environment.

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