



# the River Restoration Centre

Working to restore and enhance our rivers

## Technical Advice

### *Fairywell Brook & Baguley Brook, Altrincham, Greater Manchester* *Assessment of options for ecological improvements*

#### **KEY INFO**

**Date:** August 2022

**Client:** Environment Agency

**Type:** Ecological improvements



The River Restoration Centre was asked by the Environment Agency to assess the Baguley Brook and Fairywell Brook catchment using RRC's catchment planning framework. The framework uses an assessment of pressures and impacts to diagnose catchment condition and prioritise river restoration options. Fairywell and Baguley Brook is a heavily modified water body with significant pressures from urban land use, including realignment, resectioning, bank protection and more. The impacts of the pressures are poor longitudinal connectivity, poor floodplain connectivity and a lack of in-channel diversity, with the sources of the impacts being primarily located in the heavily urbanised lower halves of both brooks.

Over 45 options were assessed, with the suggested top priority options are as follows:

#### **Complex medium to long-term projects:**

- Create a large inset floodplain with wet woodland at Ashtead Road Park.
- Create an inset floodplain at Beech Fields with large wood to encourage recovery.
- De-culvert at Drake Avenue Park.

#### **Simple short-term projects:**

- Use large wood to create in-channel diversity in areas where full floodplain re-connection may not be possible, such as Wythenshawe Park, De-Quincey Park, Newton Park and Smiths Field
- Improve riparian zones by reducing the management of bank-tops and creating marginal-bays where there is space.

As well as physical restoration options, there are priorities for further data collection and assessment, including:

- Fill in the survey gaps with wider surveys and landowner permissions.
- Map and assess all potential barriers in the catchment.
- Assess potential fine sediment inputs in both brooks.

The next steps for the partners are to engage with stakeholders about prioritisation and discuss what projects and data gathering exercises to take forwards. Then the selected projects can be progressed to the planning and design stages. The catchment strategy should be viewed as an evolving process in which catchment understanding is continually improved and prioritisation tables are updated as more information and knowledge is gathered.