

Proposed Changes to Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

1. Background

- 1.1 The Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in the borough were reviewed in 2011 and this is the first opportunity since then to have them agreed for inclusion in the Local Plan.
- 1.2 The SINC designations originated from sites identified by the Kent Trust for Nature Conservation as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest and subsequently identified by the former London Ecology Unit (LEU) in 1991 and adopted by the Council and included in the 1994 UDP and subsequently, following a further review by the GLA in 2001, they were included on the UDP Proposals Map (adopted in 2006).
- 1.3 The current London Plan identifies the need to protect biodiversity and to provide opportunities for access to nature. It recommends identifying and protecting a suite of sites of importance at Metropolitan, Borough and Local level in order to protect the most important areas of wildlife habitat in London and provide Londoners with opportunities for contact with the natural world. The Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy sets out criteria and procedures for identifying such land for protection in Local Development Frameworks.
- 1.4 The process used in respect of the sites referred to in this paper was developed by the London Wildlife Sites Board (LWSB). The LWSB was established to ensure a transparent and consistent approach to the SINC selection in London and to ensure that the selection and approval of SINCs by Boroughs is consistent with National Planning Policy Framework, The Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy and The London Plan.
- 1.5 The process developed by the LWSB showed London Borough how they should select and approve Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). The system identifies three grades of SINC, Sites of Metropolitan Importance, Sites of Borough Importance and Sites of Local Importance
- 1.6 Sites of Metropolitan Importance are those which contain the best examples of London's habitats, sites which contain particularly rare species, rare assemblages of species or important populations of species, or sites which are of particular significance within otherwise heavily built-up areas of London.
- 1.7 They are of the highest priority for protection. The identification and protection of Metropolitan Sites is necessary, not only to support a significant proportion of London's wildlife, but also to provide opportunities for people to have contact with the natural environment.
- 1.8 Sites of Borough Importance are sites which are important on a borough perspective in the same way as the Metropolitan sites are important to the whole of London. Although sites of similar quality may be found elsewhere in London, damage to these sites would mean a significant loss to the borough. As with Metropolitan sites, while protection is important, management of borough sites

should usually allow and encourage their enjoyment by people and their use for education.

- 1.9 In the same way as for Sites of Metropolitan Importance, parts of some boroughs are more heavily built-up and some borough sites are chosen there as oases providing the opportunity for enjoyment of nature in extensive built environments.
- 1.10 A Site of Local Importance is one which is, or may be, of particular value to people nearby (such as residents or schools). These sites may already be used for nature study or be run by management committees mainly composed of local people. Where a Site of Metropolitan or Borough Importance may be so enjoyed it acts as a Local site, but further sites are given this designation in recognition of their role. This local importance means that these sites also deserve protection in planning.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 The GLA recommends that the Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation all be afforded protection in London Borough Local Plans, against proposals that may harm their value.
- 2.2 The London Plan Policy concerning the Natural Environment, 7.19 (F) which relates to the preparation of Local Plans, requires the use of the procedures in the Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy to identify and secure the appropriate management of sites of borough and local importance for nature conservation in consultation with the London Wildlife Sites Board. This is the approach which the 2011 review adopted, thus whilst four years have passed since the survey was undertaken, it is considered that the changes which it proposed are still valid.

3. Schedule of Sites and Maps

These are found in the Appendices to this paper:

- Appendix 1- Schedule of Sites
- Appendix 2 – Keys to Map Page Locations

The third Appendix comprises Map Pages (*because of the file sizes these are grouped*):

- Appendix 3 – Pages 1-3
- Appendix 3 – Pages 4-7
- Appendix 3 – Pages 8-12
- Appendix 3 – Pages 13-15
- Appendix 3 – Pages 16-20
- Appendix 3 – Pages 21-25
- Appendix 3 – Pages 26-30
- Appendix 3 – Pages 31-34
- Appendix 3 – Pages 35-37

4. Overall Analysis of sites Site Characteristics

- 4.1 An overall analysis of the SINC changes proposed is set out in the tables below:

Table 4.1 - Areas covered by each type of change:

Change	Area Sq. m	Area Ha
Sites of Metropolitan Importance:		
Extensions	619,686	61.97
Extensions and Boundary Corrections	48,178	4.82
Upgraded from Borough Grade I	148,181	14.82
Sites of Borough Importance:		
New Borough Grade I	459,019	45.90
Extensions	160,633	16.06
Upgraded from Borough Grade II and Extensions	1,421,799	142.18
Upgraded from Borough Grade II	190,175	19.02
Sites of Local Importance:		
New	217,677	21.77
Extensions	86,435	8.64
Extensions and Boundary Correction	2,420	0.24

Table 4.2 - Number of Changes in each ward:

Ward	Number of SINC Changes
Bickley / Petts Wood and Chislehurst	1
Biggin Hill	9
Bromley Common and Keston	5
Chelsfield and Pratts Bottom	7
Clock House	1
Cray Valley East	6
Crystal Palace	2
Darwin	16
Darwin / Farnborough and Crofton	1
Farnborough and Crofton	2
Hayes and Coney Hall	3
Hayes and Coney Hall / Bromley Common and Keston	1
Kelsey and Eden Park	1
Orpington	1
West Wickham	1
All Other Wards	0

Table 4.3 - Number of sites by UDP designation

UDP Designation	Number of sites / groups of sites
Green Belt	44
Green Belt / None	1
Metropolitan Open Land	3
None	3
None (<i>Change to UOS proposed in DP&D</i>)	1
Urban Open Space	5

Table 4.4 - Breakdown of Site Land Uses

Use	Number of Sites	Areas percentage of All Uses	Total Area Sq. m	Total Area Ha
Golf Course and Golf Course / Orchard	2	21.93%	735,564	73.56
Hospital Grounds	1	21.53%	722,275	72.23
Woodland	16	15.39%	516,273	51.63
Field / Woodland	6	12.03%	403,418	40.34
Railway Land	2	6.57%	220,396	22.04
Field, Grass / Hedgerows & Trees	5	5.03%	168,782	16.88
Public Park	4	4.53%	151,930	15.19
Cemetery	1	4.26%	142,798	14.28
Woodland / Hedgerows	2	3.30%	110,580	11.06
Hedgerows	9	2.29%	76,671	7.67
Field	2	1.52%	50,857	5.09
Church Grounds / Cemetery with Trees	2	0.38%	12,758	1.28
Field / Pond	1	0.34%	11,532	1.15
Orchard	1	0.33%	10,985	1.10
Pond	1	0.32%	10,589	1.06
Residential community open space	2	0.26%	8,793	0.88