



Basildon Borough Local Wildlife Sites Review (2021) and Basildon Borough Local Wildlife Sites 2020 Register (2021) Position Statement

July 2021

Introduction

- 1.1 This position statement considers the information contained within the Basildon Borough LoWS Review and Basildon LoWS 2020 Register (2021). It identifies whether there are any amendments required to the Local Plan and any need for further monitoring within planning policy work going forward.

National Policy Requirements for Local Wildlife Sites

- 1.2 The *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)* expects Local Plans to identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity. Within Essex, sites identified as having nature conservation at a county level are known as Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS). The identification of LoWS enables Basildon Council to comply with the NPPF requirements.

Basildon Borough LoWS Review and Basildon LoWS 2020 Register (2021)

- 1.3 The *Basildon Local Wildlife Sites Review (2021)* and the *Basildon Borough Local Wildlife Sites 2020 Register (2021)* consider the 54 existing sites contained within the *Basildon Local Wildlife Sites Register (2009)*¹ and reassesses them, along with possible new sites, against the Essex Local Wildlife Selection Criteria 2016². Any sites considered to no longer meet the criteria have been deleted from the LoWS register and any new sites which now meet the criteria have been added. Site boundaries have been amended where required and site descriptions have been reviewed and adjusted as necessary to reflect any changes within the sites.

Changes to the Register

- 1.4 Since the last *LoWS Review (2009)* the Langdon Ridge SSSI (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) has been designated, this has resulted in a reduction in total LoWS area in the Borough of 22%. This lost area now receives greater protection from a nature conservation perspective through being a SSSI.
- 1.5 The main results of the *Basildon LoWS Review (2021)* are as follows:
- There are now 49 LoWS with a total area of 888.1ha, a net decrease of five LoWS and 163.5ha since the last review in 2009;
 - Four new sites totalling 35.8ha have been added;
 - Nine sites with a total area of 250.4ha have been removed;
 - Three sites have been expanded by a total of 65.2ha;
 - Seven sites have been reduced in size by a total of 20.6ha;
 - Minor mapping changes have led to a net increase of 6.6ha;
 - The percentage of the Borough now covered by LoWS designation is 8.1%, previously it was 9.6%.

¹ [Basildon Local Wildlife Sites Register \(2009\)](#)

² [Essex Local Wildlife Selection Criteria 2016](#)

Outcomes of the Review

- 1.6 The *Basildon LoWS Review (2021)* considers the impact that recreational pressure is having, along with the measures available for the management of visitors. It has been concluded that recreational activity is having relatively little effect on the condition of the LoWS, even where there are significant levels of public usage. It seems that other factors, including a lack of appropriate management, are outweighing any impact that disturbance could have on these sites. Other factors affecting the decline of sites also include development and tree planting.
- 1.7 The Local Plan seeks to conserve and enhance LoWS through new development and to support proposals which ensure the active management and improvement of biodiversity interest at these sites. Policy NE3 Local Wildlife Sites supports the need for appropriate site management identified through the *Basildon LoWS Review 2021*.

Potential LoWS (PLoWS) Identified

- 1.8 There are three Potential LoWS (PLoWS) that have been identified through the *Basildon LoWS Review (2021)*. They relate to sections of LoWS that have been adversely affected by development; Dry Street Washland, Burnt Mills and Southfields Washland. It is considered that potential LoWS should be identified within the Local Plan through the LoWS policy to encourage active conservation and enhancement where possible. Further assessment in the near future will be necessary in order to determine whether or not any LoWS selection criteria are met once any disruption is over.

Local Geological Sites (LoGS) Identified

- 1.9 GeoEssex has provided details of sites of importance to geodiversity in Basildon Borough. Whilst no Local Geological Sites (LoGS) have been designated, there are two Proposed LoGS. The areas consist of Norsey Woods, which is currently designated as a SSSI and Vange Hall Brick Pit, which is currently designated as a LoWS. As these two sites are only proposed and not formally designated, and they are both afforded protection through their other designations, it is not considered that they should be identified within the Local Plan at this point in time. A future assessment of the sites should be carried out as part of the next Local Plan review.

Implications on the Local Plan

- 1.10 The Council submitted the *Basildon Borough Local Plan 2014 - 2034* to the Secretary of State in March 2019 for examination. Following the Council's response to the Inspectors Initial Questions the Inspector has requested that the Council publish draft modifications to the Local Plan that are required as a result of the new and updated evidence.

Recommendation – Local Plan: Update text within the Local Plan to ensure the number of LoWS detailed is correct. *Basildon Local Wildlife Sites 2020 Register and Review (2021)* should replace the text referencing the 2009 Review in the evidence base section of policy NE3. Potential LoWS should be included in policy NE3 and afforded the same protection as LoWS. Reference to LoWS throughout the plan to be reviewed for consistency with the new evidence base. Appendix 8 (LoWS Register 2009) should be updated with the revised 2021 register and include the PLoWS information.

Recommendation - Local Plan Policies Map: The Local Plan Policies Map will need updating to show the revised locations of the 49 LoWS and the three PLoWS.

Monitoring

- 1.11 The LoWS and PLoWS identified should be reassessed as part of the next Local Plan review to consider whether any LoWS need removing or new sites adding, as well as whether the PLoWS need their status upgrading to LoWS.
- 1.12 The Proposed Local Geological Sites (LoGS) should be reassessed as part of the next Local Plan review to consider whether they can be designated formally as LoGS.