

Basildon Borough Local Wildlife Sites Review



Client
Basildon Council

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This report has been compiled in accordance with BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development, as has the survey work to which it relates.

The information, data, advice and opinions which have been prepared and provided are true, and have been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional *bona fide* opinions.

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Appendices

1. Map of Basildon LoWS
2. LoWS selection criteria 2016

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The most recently published version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) retains references to locally designated sites for biodiversity & geodiversity (Paragraphs 174 & 175). The identification of Local Sites enables the Local Planning Authority, in this case Basildon Council, to comply with the NPPF requirements. Within Essex, sites identified as having nature conservation at a county level are known as Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS). Although not receiving any statutory protection, it is expected that LoWS will be protected within the planning system.
- 1.2. Since their original identification in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Essex LoWS have typically been selected as part of borough, district or unitary authority 'reviews' commissioned by the relevant local authority. In line with national guidance on Local Sites, areas which have been designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for the same features, have not been included in this Local Wildlife Sites register.
- 1.3. This report has been prepared by Place Services on behalf of Basildon Council. Its principal aim is to provide up to date and easily accessible information on sites of biodiversity value within Basildon Borough, updating the evidence base required to support the emerging Local Plan and future development management decisions.
- 1.4. Identification of land within this report as a Local Wildlife Site does not confer any right of public access to the Site, above and beyond any Public Rights of Way that may exist. Most of the Sites are in private ownership and this should be respected at all times.
- 1.5. Whilst every attempt has been made to ensure accurate mapping of the site boundaries, the accompanying Local Wildlife Site maps should be considered as being illustrative only.

2. Methodology

- 2.1. This review covered all of the LoWS, as identified during the last review in 2009, which was the final year of a three-year Service Level Agreement during which all of the sites were reassessed.
- 2.2. Each of these sites was visited at a time of the year appropriate to the habitats present and was re-assessed against the current Essex Local Wildlife Site Selection Criteria (see Appendix 2 for a summary of selection criteria). Any sites considered to no longer meet the criteria for which they were selected are recommended for deletion from the LoWS register. Boundaries have been remapped where parts of sites no longer meet criteria, or where additional qualifying habitat has been identified. Site descriptions have been reviewed and adjusted as necessary to reflect any changes within the sites.
- 2.3. All of the sites were re-mapped to Ordnance Survey (OS) Mastermap resolution, which particularly affected boundaries adjacent to roads and other features with fixed dimensions within the previously used OS 1:10,000 mapping.
- 2.4. As part of the site assessment, the condition of the sites was recorded as one of 'Good', 'Moderate' or 'Poor', with an additional descriptor relating to trend: 'Stable', 'Improving' or 'Declining'. This is based on a subjective assessment by the surveyor, this being all that is possible without considerable survey effort, which was not possible within the scope of this review.
- 2.5. During site visits, the impact of recreational pressure on the habitats present was recorded, along with any provision of facilities for the management of visitors to the site.
- 2.6. Sites were assessed against the Essex LoWS Selection Criteria most recently updated in 2016 (Ref. 1) and summarised in Appendix 2. Some selection criteria codes and titles have changed since the previous review in 2009, while some may no longer be applicable due to changes in the condition of the site, or the availability of current data.
- 2.7. Each site has a description sheet in line with a format agreed by the Essex LoWS Partnership and these are combined into a separate LoWS Register document. The description provides information on the habitats and species present and provides clarity about the criteria against which the site has been selected. The description sheets also highlight any management issues that were identified during the site visits, either because of current inappropriate management methods or through the use of the sites for other activities.

Constraints

- 2.8. Wherever possible, a thorough assessment of the sites has been carried out from publicly accessible land or with the permission of the landowners. However, in many cases, ownership of LoWS is unknown and so surveyors were given authorisation to act on behalf of Basildon Borough Council, and to enter land under the provisions of Section 324 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990. This power was only used where it was considered safe to do so with no damage or adverse impact to the land in question.
- 2.9. Guidance and risk assessments in relation to the Covid19 pandemic that was ongoing through the course of the survey work, prevented direct approaches to landowners resident on or adjacent to sites, or thought to be associated with ownership of a site.
- 2.10. As a result of these restrictions, one site with unknown ownership (Ba5) could not be accessed at all, and coverage of one other (Ba28) was very limited, as the landowner refused access for the protection of residential staff.
- 2.11. Within the scope of the Review, only a single site visit was possible to most sites, and so judgements have been made on the basis of professional opinion with whatever data are available.

3. Results

Summary

3.1. The headline results of this review 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%

3.2. Full details of all LoWS are included within the accompanying Basildon LoWS Register 2020 and the headline data are expanded in the following sections. The updated LoWS network is illustrated in Appendix 1.

Changes to existing Local Wildlife Sites

3.3. The following table of previously designated LoWS includes a brief summary of the changes, if any, applied as a result of the current assessment.

Table 1. Changes to existing LoWS

Site No	Site Name	Recommendation	Change in area (ha)
Ba1	Blind Lane	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	+0.1
Ba2	Parkhill Wood Meadow	Returned to original extent after habitat restoration	+1.5
Ba3	Bluntswall Wood	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	+0.1
Ba4	St Margarets Wood and Lane	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	+0.1
Ba5	Round Wood	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	0.0
Ba6	Botneyhill Wood	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	0.0
Ba7	Gravelpit Wood	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	+0.1
Ba8	Little Burstead Common	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	+0.7
Ba9	The Wilderness	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	+0.1
Ba10	Queens Park Meadow	Rename as Hannakins Meadow	0.0
Ba11	Poles Wood	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	0.0
Ba12	Frith Wood	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	0.0
Ba13	Buckwyns Wood	Expanded to include additional habitat to the north	+1.6
Ba14	Laindon Common	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	0.0
Ba15	Basildon Recreation	Delete, now part of Langdon Ridge SSSI	-1.8
Ba16	Little Burstead Wood	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	+1.0
Ba17	Queens Park Country Park	Expanded to include additional meadow to east	+2.9
Ba18	Mill Meadows LNR	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	0.0
Ba19	Coombe Wood Extension	Delete, now part of Langdon Ridge SSSI	-1.1
Ba20	Norsey Meadow	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	-0.1
Ba21	Langdon Complex	Delete, now part of Langdon Ridge SSSI	-205.9
Ba22	Westley Heights	Delete, now part of Langdon Ridge SSSI	-17.1
Ba23	St Nicholas Church Complex	Remove development area	-1.1
Ba24	Dry Street Pastures	Remove development area; washland area	-18.0

Site No	Site Name	Recommendation	Change in area (ha)
		identified as PLoWS	
Ba25	Forty Acre Plantation	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	+0.2
Ba26	Kennels Wood	Delete, now part of Langdon Ridge SSSI	-4.7
Ba27	Noak Bridge Reserve	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	+0.2
Ba28	Moses' Spring Complex	Remove destroyed area	-2.0
Ba29	Gloucester Park Meadow	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	0.0
Ba30	Hawkesbury Manor	Delete, now part of Langdon Ridge SSSI	-3.6
Ba31	Parsonage Farm Green Lane	Remove destroyed area, expand to include lake	+1.2
Ba32	Bells Hill Meadow	Delete, now part of Langdon Ridge SSSI	-1.5
Ba33	Crays Hall Meadow	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	-0.2
Ba34	All Saints Grassland	Remove remaining churchyard through over-management	-0.1
Ba35	Vange Hill and Golf Course	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	+0.6
Ba36	Nutton's Wood	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	0.0
Ba37	Vange Creek Marshes	Remapped with Ba39 to better reflect habitat units	+3.4
Ba38	Noke Wood	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	0.1
Ba39	Pitsea Landfill	Remapped with Ba37 to better reflect habitat units	-1.2
Ba40	Nevendon Bushes	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	0.0
Ba41	Pitsea Mount	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	0.0
Ba42	Wickford Riverside	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	+0.4
Ba43	Untidy Industries	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	+0.1
Ba44	Burnt Mills	Destroyed by development, remaining area identified as PLoWS	-11.5
Ba45	Bowers Gifford Grasslands	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	0.0
Ba46	Bowers Marshes	Expanded to include restored habitat	+60.7
Ba47	Southfields Washland	Destroyed by development, remaining area identified as PLoWS	-3.3
Ba48	Tompkins Farm Meadow	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	+0.1
Ba49	Home Farm Meadow	Remove area lost to development	-0.4
Ba50	River Crouch at Noak Bridge	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	+0.1
Ba51	Barrenleys Meadow	Remove surfaced track	-0.1
Ba52	Bluntswall Shaws	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	0.0
Ba53	Nether Mayne Verges	Remove meadow lost to scrub encroachment	-0.8
Ba54	The Wick Country Park	No change, re-mapped for greater accuracy	-0.2

Deleted Sites

- 3.4. In total, nine sites are proposed for removal from the LoWS Register in the table above. Seven of these sites are deleted only because they are now included within the recently designated Langdon Ridge SSSI and so receive greater, statutory protection. This amounts to 235.6ha and accounts for the majority of the decrease in LoWS area.
- 3.5. The other two – Ba44 and Ba47 – have both been affected by development to such an extent that they are no longer considered to meet any of the selection criteria, although neither could be fully assessed and so the remaining semi-natural areas of both sites are proposed as Potential LoWS (PLoWS).

3.6. A further seven sites have lost area, six as a result of development planning matters and the seventh because of inappropriate management.

Proposed New Sites

3.7. Four new LoWS have been identified during this review, all assessed as meeting one or more of the current selection criteria. Two of these sites – Ba57 and Ba58 – were formerly parts of the Ba21 Langdon Complex LoWS but were not included within the Langdon Ridge SSSI designated area. One, Ba55, is an area of habitat created since the last LoWS review in 2009. The fourth, Ba56, is an old churchyard grassland community that has not previously been recognized as having nature conservation value.

Table 2. New LoWS

Site No	Site Name	Area (ha)
Ba55	Nevendon Washland	19.7
Ba56	Little Burstead Churchyard	0.4
Ba57	Langdon Lake and Meadows	13.6
Ba58	Staneway Verge and Woodland	2.1

Potential LoWS

3.8. Three new PLoWS have been identified during this review, all three of which are sections of LoWS that have been adversely affected by development. In all three cases, full access wasn't possible during this review, and so the overall effects of development on the remaining semi-natural habitats are not yet clear.

Table 3. Potential LoWS

Site No	Site Name	Area (ha)
PLoWS23	Dry Street Washland	0.8
PLoWS44	Burnt Mills	6.6
PLoWS47	Southfields Washland	1.6

Recreational Pressure

3.9. The table below summarises for all sites within the updated LoWS Register, the impact that recreational pressure is having, along with a summary of the measures available for the management of visitors.

Table 4. Recreational impacts and visitor management

Site No	Site Name	Recreational Impacts	Visitor Management
Ba1	Blind Lane	Damage to ground surface from bikes; fly tipping and litter at southern end	None; site is part of the PRow network
Ba2	Parkhill Wood Meadow	None	None; no public access
Ba3	Bluntswall Wood	None	None; no public access
Ba4	St Margarets Wood and Lane	Damage to ground surface from motorbikes; fly tipping at southern end	None; site is part of the PRow network
Ba5	Round Wood	None	None; no public access
Ba6	Botneyhill Wood	None	None; no public access
Ba7	Gravelpit Wood	Recovering from now inactive commercial paintball operation, with associated debris still present	None; no public access
Ba8	Little Burstead Common	Damage to ground surface from bikes, with trackway created	None
Ba9	The Wilderness	Litter, apparently associated with angling	None

Site No	Site Name	Recreational Impacts	Visitor Management
Ba10	Hannakins Meadow	Access closed at time of survey due to fire damage of boardwalk	Paths, kissing gates and boardwalk
Ba11	Poles Wood	None	None; no public access
Ba12	Frith Wood	None	None; no public access
Ba13	Buckwyns Wood	An extensive motorbike track has been created within secondary woodland, damaging ground surface	None; land is assumed to be private
Ba14	Laindon Common	None	Site is managed by local people, with interpretation and maintained paths
Ba16	Little Burstead Wood	None	Much of site is privately owned with no public access
Ba17	Queens Park Country Park	Heavily used, but no clear impacts	Car park, maintained paths, benches
Ba18	Mill Meadows LNR	Well used, but no clear impacts	Maintained paths, benches, interpretation
Ba20	Norsey Meadow	None	Path fenced from maintained habitat areas
Ba23	St Nicholas Church Complex	Minor evidence of misuse	None; much of site is privately owned with no public access
Ba24	Dry Street Pastures	None	None; some public access, but unofficial
Ba25	Forty Acre Plantation	None	None; no public access
Ba27	Noak Bridge Reserve	None	Maintained and surfaced paths, benches, interpretation
Ba28	Moses' Spring Complex	Significant loss of habitat and damage through commercial recreational activities	Commercial operation only; no public access
Ba29	Gloucester Park Meadow	Heavily used, but no clear impacts	Within park managed for public amenity
Ba31	Parsonage Farm Green Lane	None	PRoW is surfaced; most is in private ownership with no public access
Ba33	Crays Hall Meadow	None	None; no public access
Ba34	All Saints Grassland	None	None; no public access
Ba35	Vange Hill and Golf Course	Used by motorised vehicles; other minor evidence of misuse	Surfaced and mown paths; interpretation
Ba36	Nutton's Wood	None	None; no public access
Ba37	Vange Creek Marshes	Minor evidence of misuse	Viewing screen, maintained footpaths in northern section
Ba38	Noke Wood	None	None; no public access
Ba39	Pitsea Landfill	None	None; no public access
Ba40	Nevendon Bushes	Minor evidence of misuse	Surfaced paths, benches
Ba41	Pitsea Mount	Minor evidence of misuse	Maintained paths, benches, interpretation for church
Ba42	Wickford Riverside	Minor evidence of misuse	Maintained paths
Ba43	Untidy Industries	None	None; no public access
Ba45	Bowers Gifford Grasslands	None	None; PRoW crosses, but otherwise private with no public access
Ba46	Bowers Marshes	None	Established and extensive visitor infrastructure with sensitive areas inaccessible
Ba48	Tompkins Farm Meadow	None	None; no public access
Ba49	Home Farm Meadow	None	None; no public access

Site No	Site Name	Recreational Impacts	Visitor Management
Ba50	River Crouch at Noak Bridge	None	None; no public access
Ba51	Barrenleys Meadow	None	None; no public access
Ba52	Bluntswall Shaws	None	None; no public access
Ba53	Nether Mayne Verges	None	None; adjacent to public highway
Ba54	The Wick Country Park	Minor evidence of misuse	Car park, surfaced paths, benches, interpretation
Ba55	Nevendon Washland	None	None; no public access
Ba56	Little Burstead Churchyard	None	Interpretation; maintained path
Ba57	Langdon Lake and Meadows	Minor evidence of misuse	Surfaced paths, benches; connected to wider public open space
Ba58	Staneway Verge and Woodland	None	Surfaced path

- 3.10. There was little evidence of impact on the ecological features of interest of the LoWS surveyed from informal recreation, despite many being within or very close to population centres. Minor impacts, such as the presence of litter or physical damage to vegetation, were common in some locations, but this wasn't considered to be affecting the quality of the ecological resource. Even in sites that are heavily used, with an upsurge in visitor numbers during Covid19 restrictions, there was little clear evidence of any significant problem.
- 3.11. Damage to the ground surface by vehicles, either motorised or not, was evident in a few sites and has an obvious impact on vegetation. Associated with vehicular access was the presence of fly-tipped material on two of the more rural LoWS.
- 3.12. Formal, and particularly commercial recreation has had a more significant effect on LoWS, although this is more of a development control issue than one of visitor management.

4. Discussion

Changes to the LoWS Network

- 4.1. The single most significant change to the LoWS network since the last review in 2009 has been the designation of the Langdon Ridge SSSI, which alone resulted in a reduction in total LoWS area of 22%. However, that lost area now receives greater protection from a nature conservation perspective.
- 4.2. More concerning changes have occurred as a result of development operations, where planning consent was obtained despite the LoWS status of the land. Two sites have been removed from the network in their entirety because of development: Burnt Mills (formerly Ba44) and Southfields Washland (formerly Ba47). However, the remaining undeveloped parts of both are proposed as Potential LoWS in the hope that some of their ecological value can be maintained post-construction. Further assessment will be necessary in order to determine whether or not any selection criteria are met once any disruption is over.
- 4.3. The majority of a third site, Ba24 Dry Street Pastures, has also been lost to consented development, although a small proportion has been retained. A further four sites – Ba23 St Nicholas Church Complex; Ba31 Parsonage Farm Green Lane; Ba49 Home Farm Meadow; and Ba51 Barrenleys Meadow – have been reduced in size because of development impacts. These include consented residential development and damage caused by infrastructure to support a solar farm.
- 4.4. The other significant adverse impact has been to Ba28 Moses' Spring Complex, where Ancient Woodland habitat has been cleared apparently for commercial purposes, and other sections of the site are still affected negatively by paintball and other leisure activities. In this instance, it is unclear whether the impact has been consented.
- 4.5. Only one small section of a site, Ba34 All Saints Grassland, has been removed through inappropriate management, in this case the result of more frequent cutting of a churchyard to the point where the original grassland community can no longer be recognised.
- 4.6. However, it is anticipated that there could be further such losses in the future, as the condition of several sites was considered to be declining. This included one site – Ba29 Gloucester Park Meadow – where trees have been planted into species-rich grassland. Although the grassland between the trees is still in reasonable condition at present, although mown too frequently, it will lose its value to biodiversity as the trees mature and the canopy closes. With a recent push to plant more trees, there are concerns that other sites with existing biodiversity value will be lost to tree planting that will not provide any significant value to biodiversity for decades.
- 4.7. A number of other sites – such as Ba8 Little Burstead Common, Ba10 Hannakins Meadow, Ba35 Vange Hill and Golf Course, Ba39 Pitsea Landfill, Ba41 Pitsea Mount and Ba43 Untidy Industries – are vulnerable to a lack of, or insufficient levels of, management leading to a loss of more open habitat to dense scrub or vegetation dominated by a small number of competitive species.
- 4.8. Of interest is the conclusion 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 likely that other factors, including a lack of appropriate management, are outweighing any impact that disturbance could have on these sites.
- 4.9. With the large extension to the Ba46 Bowers Marshes LoWS, as a result of the RSPB's habitat creation measures, and the addition of the recently created Ba55 Nevendon Washland site, alongside the other minor additions and reductions, the net change in total LoWS area is a 15% reduction. However, removing the Langdon Ridge figures from the calculation would mean that there was an 8.8% increase in LoWS area.

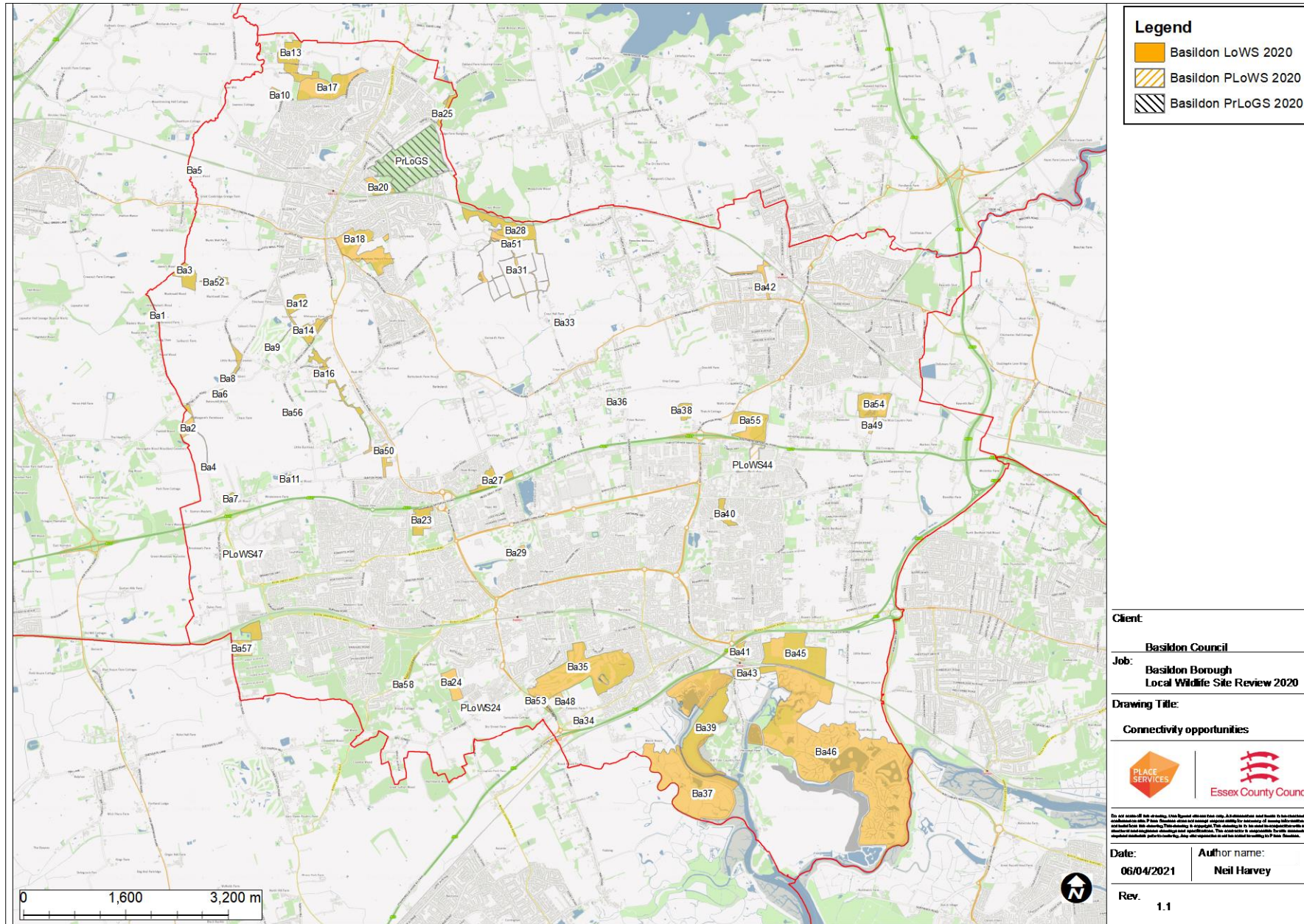
5. Local Geological Sites

- 5.1. GeoEssex has kindly provided details of site of importance to geodiversity in Basildon Borough (Ref. 2), although no Local Geological Sites (LoGS) have yet been designated. There are two Proposed LoGS, both of which coincide with sites designated for their nature conservation significance. As their designation is a formality requiring an active LoWS Partnership, these sites should be treated as if they have been designated.
- 5.2. Norsey Woods is an area of SSSI woodland, but is also the location of an outcrop of the Bagshot Pebble Bed, formed from beach-rounded pebbles, although it is not clear if it marks the location of the beach itself or if the pebbles were transported there by a river from the beach.
- 5.3. Vange Hall Brick Pit is located within the Vange Hill and Golf Course LoWS and consists of the only exposure of Claygate Beds in Essex, worked from the end of the 19th Century to feed the Vange Hall Brickworks.

References

- Ref. 1 Essex Local Wildlife Sites Partnership (2016). *Local Wildlife Site Selection Criteria*. Essex Wildlife Trust.
- Ref. 2 Lucy G. and Mercer, R. (2020). Basildon District Council Report on Local Geological Sites. GeoEssex

Appendix 1 Map of Basildon LoWS, PLoWS and PrLoGS



Appendix 2 - Summary of Essex LoWS selection criteria (from ELSP, 2016)

Habitat Criteria:

Habitat Criterion 1 (HC1) – Ancient Woodland Sites

“All sites considered to be ancient woodland shall be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 2 (HC2) – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

“All significant areas of non-ancient Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland will be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 3 (HC3) – Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient Sites

“Any area of Lowland Beech and Yew woodland (e.g. NVC type W15) or Wet Woodland, as defined in the Habitats of Principal Importance in England descriptions, will be eligible for selection.”

Habitat Criterion 4 (HC4) – Wood-pasture and Parkland

“Any remnant area of mature parkland and/or wood-pasture, preferably with veteran trees and/or a semi-natural ground flora will be eligible for selection, together with any more recent parkland sites that support inherent ecological interest and whose ecological value is not compromised by amenity use or other primary functions”.

Habitat Criterion 5 (HC5) – Woody Scrub

“Stands of woody scrub that support exceptional diversity, uncommon shrub assemblages, and/or which provide a valuable component of a site’s ecological value will be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 6 (HC6) – Veteran Trees

“Veteran trees known or suspected to be of specific nature conservation interest, for example supporting significant invertebrate assemblages, and/or epiphytic bryophytes and lichens, will be eligible for selection, even in the absence of other associated semi-natural habitat. The tree or tree group should encompass a sufficient area with appropriate habitat conditions for the associated species interest to be maintained”.

Habitat Criterion 7 (HC7) – Old Orchards

“All traditional orchards will be eligible for selection, particularly those that have retained mature fruit trees.”

Habitat Criterion 8 (HC8) – Hedgerows and Green Lanes

“*Hedgerows and green lanes shall be eligible for selection if they are assessed as having significant ecological value in terms of:*

- *their intrinsic flora and fauna*
- *a defined ecological function in the landscape”*

Habitat Criterion 9 (HC9) – Lowland Meadows

“*All old, largely unimproved grasslands identifiable as falling within the definition of the NVC MG5 Lowland Meadow vegetation type will be eligible for selection.*”

Habitat Criterion 10 (HC10) – River Floodplain

“*Significant areas of river floodplain grassland should be considered for selection, especially those areas still subject to seasonal inundation. The role of such grasslands as wildlife corridors should also be considered*”.

Habitat Criterion 11 (HC11) – Other Neutral Grasslands

“*Unimproved or semi-improved¹² pastures or meadows that do not clearly fit criterion HC9 shall be eligible for selection if they support features that indicate long continuity as grassland or support notable populations of invertebrates. Special consideration should be given to sites listed in the Grassland Inventory for Essex and to sites supporting plants listed in Appendix⁴.*”

Habitat Criterion 12 (HC12) – Lowland Calcareous Grassland

“*All areas of grassland supporting assemblages of typical chalk grassland species included in Appendix 5 should be considered for selection.*”

Habitat Criterion 13 (HC13) – Heathland and Acid Grassland

“Any site supporting characteristic heathland or acid grassland vegetation, including deteriorated sites with the potential for restoration shall be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 14 (HC14) – Lowland Fen Vegetation

“Significant areas of lowland fen vegetation¹⁴, or such habitat known to support notable species, will be eligible for selection. Usually such sites will include the associated water body or source of groundwater, if applicable.”

Habitat Criterion 15 (HC15) – Reedbeds

“All significant stands of Common Reed (Phragmites australis) will be eligible for selection.”

Habitat Criterion 16 (HC16) – Lakes and Reservoirs

“Lake and reservoir LoWS identified on the basis of Mosaic Habitat or Species Criteria should be of sufficient size and habitat quality to maintain the seasonal or resident population of that species. Where a seasonal species utilises several water bodies during the course of its stay, all such bodies should be selected”.

Habitat Criterion 17 (HC17) – Ponds

“Pond LoWS identified on the basis of Species Criteria should be of sufficient size and habitat quality to maintain the population of that species at a sustainable level.”

Habitat Criterion 18 (HC18) – Rivers

“Where a section of river, stream, canal or borrow dyke is designated via Species Selection Criteria, a minimum 500 metre section of that water course shall be designated (250 metres upstream and downstream of a positive sample site or 250 metres upstream and downstream of the end points of a cluster of records from the same population). The Site shall be deemed to extend at least 2 metres away from the top of the bank into the adjacent habitat.”

Habitat Criterion 19 (HC19) – Extended Riverine Habitat

“Where two designated sections of watercourse are separated by no more than 1000 metres of undesignated water, the intervening section may be included within one large site, if it is deemed that the central section has the potential to be restored to good condition or realistically colonised by the species concerned”.

Habitat Criterion 20 (HC20) – Complex Riverine Habitats

“Sections of river that support a suite of natural features, leading to a complex riverine habitat structure will be eligible for selection.”

Habitat Criterion 21 (HC21) – Coastal Grazing Marsh

“All areas of coastal grazing marsh shall be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 22 (HC22) – Tidal Transition Zones

“All sites exhibiting an unrestricted upper saltmarsh to grassland transition will be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 23 (HC23) – Saltmarsh and Mudflats

“All areas of saltmarsh and other intertidal habitats outside of SSSIs will be considered for selection. Newly created habitats within managed retreat zones can be considered once they have acquired a typical flora and use by other coastal wildlife is demonstrated”.

Habitat Criterion 24 (HC24) – Saline Lagoons and Borrow Dyke Habitats

“Sections of borrow dyke and tidal or semi-tidal brackish or saline lagoons known to support a flora and fauna characteristic of saline lagoon conditions will be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 25 (HC25) – Sand Dune and Shingle Beach Vegetation

“All areas of sand dune and shingle habitat exhibiting a characteristic landform and flora will be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 26 (HC26) – Maritime Cliffs and Slopes

“Maritime Cliffs and Slopes identified on account of one or more significant species or groups of species should be of sufficient extent, either in isolation or as a clearly recognisable chain of inter-related sites, should be of sufficient extent to include habitat capable of supporting sustainable populations of the species concerned.”

Habitat Criterion 27 (HC27) – Post-industrial Sites

“Brownfield/post-industrial sites or derelict buildings/structures of high nature conservation value will be eligible for selection if they are known to support notable species or where it can be demonstrated they provide the habitat qualities necessary to support such species. The site may include sections of land that might not otherwise qualify for selection, if they provide one or more of the ecological requirements of the notable species”.

Habitat Criterion 28 (HC28) – Small-Component Mosaics

“A site comprising two or more sub-habitats, each of which just fails to be selected as a Site within its own main habitat criterion group or on species grounds, will be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 29 (HC29) – Habitat Extension Mosaics

“Where a site that would not on its own qualify for consideration as a LoWS provides a significant and clearly identifiable extension to the habitat of an adjacent LoWS, then the habitat extension area should be added to the LoWS”.

Habitat Criterion 30 (HC30) – Wildlife Corridors

“Where two or more LoWS are physically linked by additional habitat of a type that would allow the dispersal and interchange of species within each site, then these corridors should be included within the LoWS.”

Habitat Criterion 31 (HC31) – Accessible Natural Greenspace 57

“A site that comes close to qualifying under other selection criteria can be eligible for selection based upon its amenity, cultural and/or education value close to a centre of population.”

Species criteria:

Species Criterion 1 (SC1) – Vascular Plants

“Sites supporting significant populations of ‘notable’ vascular plants will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 2 (SC2) – Bryophytes

“Sites supporting significant populations of ‘notable’ bryophytes will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 3 (SC3) – Lichens

“Sites supporting significant populations of ‘notable’ lichens will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 4 (SC4) – Fungi

“Sites supporting significant populations of ‘notable’ fungi will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 5 (SC5) – Notable Bird Species

“Discrete habitat areas known to support significant populations of notable bird species, whether breeding or over-wintering, will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criterion 6 (SC6) – Exceptional Populations of Common Bird Species

“Discrete habitat areas that regularly support exceptional breeding, feeding, roosting/resting or over-wintering populations of relatively commonplace species will be considered for selection”.

Species Criterion 7 (SC7) – Dormouse

“All sites confirmed as supporting populations of Dormouse will be eligible for selection. Sites should include all adjoining areas of suitable Dormouse habitat and important movement corridors (HC30)”.

Species Criterion 8 (SC8) – Barbastelle (and other Annex II) bats

“All sites containing a maternity roost of Barbastelle bats (or other Annex II bat species should they be recorded in Essex in the future) will be eligible for selection.”



Species Criterion 9 (SC9) – Other Bat Breeding Colonies

“All sites, except dwelling houses, regularly supporting breeding colonies of four or more bat species, or an exceptional breeding roost or colony of one or more species, will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 10 (SC10) – Bat Hibernation Sites

“All sites, except dwelling houses, supporting exceptional numbers of hibernating bats of one or more species will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 11 (SC11) – Protection of Otter Holts

“A confirmed, natural or artificial, well established and regularly used otter holt, including an appropriate buffer zone of up to 250 metres up and down stream, will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 12 (SC12) – Breeding Water Vole Colonies

“Any watercourse or wetland system supporting a viable breeding population of Water Vole will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 13 (SC13) - Hotspots for Amphibian Diversity

“Any water body, other than a garden pond, known to support significant populations of three or more species of breeding amphibian will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criterion 14 (SC14) - Palmate Newts

“Any water body, other than a garden pond, known to support a breeding population of Palmate Newt will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criterion 15 (SC15) - Great Crested Newts

“Any water body, other than a garden pond, known to support an exceptional breeding population of Great Crested Newts will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criterion 16 (SC16) - Hotspots for Reptile Diversity

“Any site supporting significant populations of three or more reptile species will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 17 (SC17) – White-clawed Crayfish

“All populations of White-clawed crayfish will be eligible for selection. Any designated Site should include suitable buffering both upstream and downstream”.

Species Criterion 18 (SC18) – Invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England

“All significant populations of terrestrial and freshwater aquatic invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criteria 19 (SC19) – Important invertebrate assemblages

“Significant populations of notable invertebrate species, and/or important invertebrate assemblages (i.e. unusual or uncommon assemblages, or exceptional diversity) will be eligible for selection. In deciding the significance of a species, reference should be made to any available Essex Red Data List, national Red Data Book or “Review”.

Species Criteria 20 (SC20) – Notable ‘flagship’ macro-invertebrates

“Exceptional populations or high species diversity of non-notable macro-invertebrates (e.g. dragonflies, damselflies and butterflies) will be eligible for selection”.

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