



Birmingham and Black Country Local Wildlife Sites

- Guidance for Selection -

March 2018

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Local Wildlife Sites systems operate throughout England for the purpose of conferring a level of protection to those sites of substantive nature conservation value that are not otherwise covered by national or international designations. Here Local Wildlife Sites and the term 'nature conservation' encompass both ecological (i.e. habitats and species) and geological /geomorphological assets.
- 1.2 National guidance has been published by Defra to ensure some consistency between the many Local Wildlife Sites systems (see 'Local Sites – Guidance on their identification, selection and management' –Defra PB11684 2006). The system defined in this document conforms to this guidance.
- 1.3 Local Wildlife Sites receive their protection primarily through the operation of the planning system. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006), National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the more detailed Government Circular 06/2005: 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system' set the national context and obligations in relation to the role and the identification and protection of local sites. The Black Country Core Strategy, Birmingham Development Plan and other documents including Supplementary Planning Documents adopted by Dudley MBC (2016) and Walsall Council (2013) provide the local planning context. The first Local Wildlife Sites schedule for Birmingham and the Black Country was published in 1977 and the sites have been protected ever since by a succession of local planning policy and nature conservation strategies. It is important to note that the selection of Local Wildlife Sites and the maintenance of site schedules is carried out independently of the making of planning policy. More recently, the Birmingham and Black Country [Nature Improvement Area Ecological Strategy 2017-2022](#) has been published. This sets out a landscape-scale strategy for creating a coherent ecological network in line with the recommendations of the government white paper Making Space for Nature (2010). This emphasises the need to take a landscape-scale approach to nature conservation in order to achieve a coherent and resilient ecological network of sites that can adapt to future changes.
- 1.4 This non-statutory system is intended to be comprehensive (i.e. all sites should be selected that meet the criteria), whereas statutory designation systems such as Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Ramsar sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest are intended to provide a representative suite of sites.
- 1.5 In Birmingham and the Black Country Local Wildlife Sites encompass what are termed Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINCs). This two-tier system aims to ensure that all sites of substantive local nature conservation value are selected by assessing sites in both a sub-regional (i.e. Birmingham and the Black Country) and metropolitan borough or city context (either Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall or Wolverhampton). The two designations are defined as:
 - **Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)** - Sites of substantive nature conservation value in the context of Birmingham and the Black Country.
 - **Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINCs)** - Sites of substantive nature conservation value in the context of a metropolitan borough.
- 1.6 Importantly Local Wildlife Sites are not assessed in a wider regional or national context.
- 1.7 **Potential Sites of Importance (PSIs)** have not yet been assessed against the Local Wildlife Sites criteria but may potentially support species of note or areas of important semi-natural habitat. PSIs are identified primarily through the use of aerial photography, but also through reference to old maps and existing species records. Commonly these will not have been subject to the survey work necessary to undertake a Local Wildlife Sites assessment.

2. Selection of Local Wildlife Sites

- 2.1 To ensure the effective selection of Local Wildlife Sites a series of selection criteria have been produced against which all sites must be evaluated.
- 2.2 The Local Wildlife Sites Selection Criteria are based on reference criteria given in Local Sites: Guidance on their Identification, Selection and Management (Defra, 2006) which are themselves based on those contained in A Nature Conservation Review (Ratcliffe ed. 1977) (commonly referred to as 'Ratcliffe's Criteria'). These have been adapted to best serve the needs of the Local Wildlife Sites system in Birmingham and the Black Country and the resource it works to protect.
- 2.3 The Selection Criteria are divided under three headings: Ecological, Geological and Social. Sites can be evaluated against either the Ecological or Geological criteria or against both where appropriate. All sites must be assessed against the Social criteria, however, no site can be assessed against the Social criteria only.
- 2.4 The Ecological and Geological criteria are of primary importance. The Social criteria evaluate the value derived from experiencing natural features and therefore no site will be selected where it scores highly against Social criteria only.
- 2.5 For site evaluation purposes a value (either High, Medium, Low or Unknown) must be given against each of the criteria based on the information collected and presented in a Birmingham & Black Country Local Wildlife Sites Assessment Report. Attributing values requires an informed judgment being made with reference to the evaluation criteria and the guidance given within these. In the assessment report a summary of how this value judgment was reached must be given for each of the criteria.
- 2.6 There are no 'absolute' values for any of the criteria and their application is not mechanical or rule-based. The criteria are, however, based on sound, rational principles and their application requires a good knowledge and understanding of the local ecological and geological resource.
- 2.7 Based on the values attributed against each of the criteria a judgment must be made as to whether a site merits Local Wildlife Site status. Those sites scoring mostly 'Highs' will tend to meet the threshold for SINC status whereas those scoring mostly 'Mediums' will tend to meet the threshold for SLINC status. Sites scoring mostly 'Lows' will tend not to meet the threshold for selection as a Local Wildlife Site. Not all criteria, however, are of equal weight. In some cases a site may justify selection where very few criteria score highly (e.g. where the site supports a population of a protected or priority species, or displays a single important geological feature).
- 2.8 Statutory nature conservation sites that are designated for their geological value may be designated as ecological Local Wildlife Sites or vice-versa, however, sites will not be selected as ecological or geological Local Wildlife Sites if they are statutorily protected for these reasons (this does not apply to Local Nature Reserve designations, see 2.9).
- 2.9 Local Nature Reserve (LNR) status will not be considered when evaluating sites as this designation considers different attributes to that of the Local Wildlife Sites system.
- 2.10 Sites will be assessed periodically and their status re-assessed. The frequency with which sites should be re-assessed is dependent upon the habitat types present and how susceptible these are to change.
- 2.11 Sites which have deteriorated through neglect or wilful damage will not be deselected as Local Wildlife Sites without considering the potential for restoration.

3. Local Wildlife Sites Selection Criteria

3.1 Ecological Criteria

3.1.1 Habitat Diversity

Rationale

Habitat 'types', variants of these and the ecotones between different habitats not only have an intrinsic value in themselves, but sites comprising a higher diversity of these will usually support a wider range of associated species. Additionally, many species are dependent on the presence of more than one habitat type (amphibians for example) or the ecotone between two habitats (e.g. woodland edges).

Habitat diversity is broader than habitat 'types' however, and variation within single habitats is also an important consideration. These variations include attributes such as micro-climate, micro-habitats (for example dead wood or bare soil), topography, parent rocks and derived soils. Structural diversity within a habitat type is also important (e.g. variations in the physical and temporal structure of a woodland) and in some circumstances diversity may depend on the presence of different stages of ecological succession. A site with a restricted number of habitats can therefore score highly, especially if there is variation of this type.

Habitat diversity should not be sought to the detriment of other attributes such as rarity or naturalness.

Attributing Value

Sites which would tend to score highly under this criterion are:

- Those that support a range of habitats.
- Those that support habitats with physical and/or structural variation or are otherwise of notable complexity.

3.1.2 Species Diversity

Rationale

A high diversity of species will usually be a positive attribute of a site. Species diversity should not be interpreted simply as the total number of species, however, and it is important that sites are assessed against the norms of the habitats under consideration. For example, some habitats are intrinsically species-poor, and a direct comparison between these and an intrinsically species-rich habitat would underestimate the value of the former. Outstanding diversity within a single species group (e.g. Odonata, Lepidoptera or avifauna) may also justify a high score.

Species diversity should be assessed over as wider range of groups as possible. In many cases, however, the available information will relate predominantly to flora and therefore this criterion will commonly be assessed on botanical diversity.

Furthermore, there are species that are considered to be indicators of particular habitat types or of habitat 'quality'. The presence of an assemblage of these would be of greater value and score more highly than the presence of a larger number of species associated with negative disturbance of the same habitat. Specifically, it is recommended that the '**axiophyte**' list of plant species strongly associated with sites of nature conservation interest in Birmingham and the Black Country is referred to and axiophyte species present at the site be listed in the assessment. A copy of the list and more detail on the definition of axiophytes is provided in Appendix 5.

Attributing Value

Sites which would tend to score highly under this criterion are:

- Those that support a high overall diversity of plants and/or animals.
- Those that support species-diverse examples of their component habitats.
- Those that support a high diversity of discrete groups or assemblages of species.
- Those that support an assemblage of 'indicator' species.

3.1.3 Habitat Rarity

Rationale

Most habitats and their variants have an intrinsic value and those that are rare or less common are perhaps most in need of recognition and protection. In addition to their intrinsic value these may support species or communities unique to the habitat, which clearly adds to their importance. Sites that support habitats that are rare internationally, regionally or locally are therefore of value in the context of the Local Wildlife Sites system, even where the habitat(s) may be in unfavourable condition.

Attributing Value

Sites which would tend to score highly under this criterion are:

- Internationally or nationally identified habitats (e.g. Annex 1 habitats in European Habitats Directive and Habitats of Principal Importance listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006).
- Those that support Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats.
- Those that are rare in a Birmingham and Black Country context.

3.1.4 Species Rarity

Rationale

For rare species an individual population may represent an important part of the total population and its loss may result directly in the reduction of the species' geographical range. The loss of a local population may also result in the irreversible loss of genetic diversity, local races or sub-species, and ultimately of species themselves.

Individual sites may therefore contribute significantly to the protection of species that are rare or declining nationally, regionally or locally. These include those species protected under international and national legislation, Red Data Book species and BAP Priority Species. Sites that support populations of species that are not considered rare or declining internationally or nationally, but that are rare in the sub-region or local authority area are also of value in the context of the Local Wildlife Sites system.

In the broader sense this criterion refers not only to individual species but also to communities and species groups, and due consideration should be given to the presence of these on a site.

Attributing Value

Sites which would tend to score highly under this criterion are:

- Those that support species protected by international or national legislation (e.g. the European Habitats Directive & the Wildlife and Countryside Act).
- Those that support species listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) (Species of Principal Importance).
- Those that support BAP Priority Species.

- Those that support species that are considered uncommon, rare or very rare - excluding introduced species - (e.g. those that are rare in Birmingham and the Black Country or listed as Red Data Book species).
- Those that support fauna species identified as of 'Conservation Concern' by the RSPB (Red List & Amber List bird species), the Mammal Society (National Decline & England Decline) or by Butterfly Conservation West Midlands (Regional Decline).
- Those that support species listed on other relevant species schedules.

3.1.5 Size or Extent

Rationale

The ecological value of a site will usually increase with area. Larger sites tend to be more diverse in habitats and species, and can support larger populations. They can also better support species dependent upon extensive territories or foraging areas, are more able to tolerate disturbance and are less prone to local extinctions.

Size or Extent should not be used only as a simple measure of total site area, and other factors including the size and quality of specific habitat types must also be considered. For example, the area covered by a 'large' pond may be considered a 'small' woodland; a site may contain a small area of a habitat that is uncommon in the conurbation; or one that is a particularly high quality example. These examples are potentially significant in the context of the Local Wildlife Sites system and could therefore score highly even if only of limited physical extent.

The size of populations of certain species and communities should also be considered under this criterion. For example, a large population of a rare or protected species, or a large example of a specialist community may also score highly.

Attributing Value

Sites which would tend to score highly under this criterion are:

- Larger sites.
- Those sites containing significant areas of a single habitat type.
- Those sites supporting a significant population of a species defined in the Rare Species criterion.
- Those sites supporting a significant species community.

3.1.6 Naturalness

Rationale

Human activities past and present have had such an impact that even those parts of the landscape that seem least modified are usually more accurately described as 'semi-natural'. Here therefore the concept of 'naturalness' is considered not as the absence of human intervention or legacy within a site, but the degree to which a site supports natural features or natural processes.

Long established habitats associated with traditional rural landscape form and management practice are perhaps the most easily identifiable as 'natural' in this context (e.g. heathlands, woodlands and unimproved grasslands). Habitats such as these may support long-standing ecological associations between species and physical conditions that cannot easily be re-created. These habitats have an intrinsic value that is particularly significant where they have been least affected by modern human activity including the introduction of species, alterations in physical structure, physical disturbance to soils and the addition of soil nutrients.

This criterion is, however, not defined by longevity or history and does not apply only to habitats of a rural origin. Natural processes and ecological associations of value can develop at any pace through the colonisation and succession of an area, whatever the preceding dominant activity may have been. This may apply to previously developed sites, formerly arable sites or those where semi-natural habitats have altered through abandonment of management. Stability can be an important consideration (e.g. where 'arrested succession' is in evidence on a highly modified sub-strate), as short-lived habitats may be commonplace and relatively easy to re-create.

Attributing Value

Sites which would tend to score highly under this criterion are:

- Those which have developed through consistent management over a very long period.
- Those where species colonisation has occurred through natural processes (i.e. not introduced purposefully or directly through human activity).
- Those which have been least influenced by human activity.
- Those that have developed on intrinsically nutrient-poor soils and where there is a rarity or absence of species associated with anthropogenic disturbance.
- Those where associations between species, communities and habitats have developed and where these cannot easily be re-created.

3.1.7 Position & Connectivity

Rationale

Besides directly supporting wildlife within their boundaries, sites may also have an important role in supporting populations of species within the wider landscape. This includes populations that survive across a group of sites (where exchange of individuals maintains genetic diversity and helps to prevent local extinctions), populations that require physically linked sites to colonise new areas, and those where different sites are utilised for different purposes (e.g. foraging and breeding).

Individual sites must therefore be considered in terms of the contribution they make to such ecological networks.

The Birmingham and Black Country Nature Improvement Area Strategy 2017-2022 sets out a landscape-scale approach to nature conservation and identifies 'Core Ecological Areas' (those areas of the conurbation that are richest in wildlife) and 'Ecological Linking Areas' which link core areas and the wider landscape. The position of a site within this network may be relevant in determining the score awarded for this criterion.

Attributing Value

Sites which would tend to score highly under this criterion are:

- Those which have physical links with other sites and the wider landscape.
- Those which have strong ecological links with other local sites supporting similar species and habitat assemblages.
- Those which have strong ecological links with other local sites supporting different but complementary habitat assemblages.
- Those which are strategic ecological 'stepping stones'.

3.2 Geological Criteria

3.2.1 Intrinsic Scientific Interest

Rationale

The scientific interest of a site will contribute to an understanding of the geological past and its heritage and the interpretation of the area's geodiversity. It will be expressed through:

Palaeontology

Rock types can be characterised by the types of fossils found within them. Fossils are a vestige of the wildlife of the past and their occurrence helps to date the rocks and make comparisons with rocks from other localities. Fossils are also indicators of ancient environments and provide clues to evolutionary pathways of animal and plant families.

Stratigraphy

The types and ages of different rocks provide a record of the depositional environments at the time of their formation and is the fundamental expression of an area's geodiversity. Individual sites contribute to this geodiversity and local distinctiveness and character.

Structure

Some sites exhibit faulting, folding and other landform features providing information on the tectonic history of an area or region.

Physiography, Geomorphology and Natural Processes

Features resulting from weathering or glacial action, landforms and active processes such as river meanders that impact upon the landscape.

Attributing Value

Sites which would tend to score highly under this criterion are:

- Those that have a distinctive or diverse range of fossils.
- Those that have unusual or rare fossil groups.
- Those that illustrate the geological diversity of the area.
- Those that contribute to an understanding or interpretation of the landscapes, climate and environments in the geological past in the area.
- Those that exhibit structural features e.g. faulting, folding.
- Those that demonstrate geomorphological processes e.g. river meanders, alluvial deposits, ice age related features etc.

3.2.2 Rarity

Rationale

The uniqueness of a site in the local or regional context. In cases where there are no other exposures of a particular horizon within a borough, then sites may be selected on this criterion alone in the interest of conserving geodiversity.

Attributing Value

Sites which would tend to score highly under this criterion are:

- Those that are stratigraphically uncommon.
- Those which have rock types or parts of the geological succession that are under-represented.
- Those sites that have unique features.

3.2.3 Association with Other Sites and Features

Rationale

The site contributes to a network of sites and the bigger picture for interpretation and understanding of the geological past on a wider or landscape scale.

The site may have both geological as well as biological/ecological value which is of value to a local neighbourhood or demonstrates the underpinning influence of geology upon habitat and flora.

Attributing Value

Sites which would tend to score highly under this criterion are:

- Those sites which contribute to a network of sites that aid the interpretation and understanding of an area.
- Those sites which have a moderate geological value and also have a moderate or better ecological value

3.3 Social Criteria

3.3.1 Historical & Cultural

Rationale

Because the natural environment has been so extensively shaped and influenced by human activity, the natural features of value in the landscape of today are often also important parts of our cultural heritage. Such features can contribute considerably to the quality of the local environment as well as helping to define local distinctiveness.

The historic land-use and activities that have created these features are many and varied. They include post-industrial sites and their associated structures and by-products (e.g. spoil or slag heaps), transport networks (e.g. canals, dismantled railway lines, 'green' lanes and holloways), agricultural landscapes (e.g. hedgerows, ancient woodlands, ridge and furrow systems) or residences and formal landscapes (e.g. artificial lakes, avenues of trees or moats). Within these there may be features of finer detail (e.g. bank and ditch systems, ancient coppice stools or pollards) which add additional value.

A further example of the relationship between the cultural and natural landscape is that between local geology and its uses in the built environment. Not only do many places contain structures made of locally quarried products, but the former quarries from which these materials came may now be sites of local value for their geological and/or ecological features.

Sites may also have links to historic events or have literary or other associations in art. Such recording or portrayal can reveal changes in perception of the natural environment and the economic value that it has been ascribed at different times.

Attributing Value

Sites which would tend to score highly under this criterion are:

- Those with links to historic agricultural practice.
- Those with links to local industrial development.
- Those with links to former societies.
- Those with links to historic events or those that have literary and artistic associations.

3.3.2 Recorded History

Rationale

A record of research, scientific literature references, association with scientists of recognised stature or contributions to scientific advances adds considerably to a site's interest. For example, where geological concepts were first demonstrated or where new ecological methods and techniques have been trialled, refined and reported upon.

Additionally, a long-term record of the natural processes acting upon or being displayed within a site, the management of a site or comprehensive ecological records for a site can add considerably to its interest.

Attributing Value

Sites which would tend to score highly under this criterion are:

- Those with links to scientific research and advances.
- Those with long-term records of features or management.

3.3.3 Access

Rationale

Sites that provide people with the chance to experience nature and a high quality natural environment are important. Access to sites is particularly valuable in urban areas with few opportunities for the appreciation of nature. In these circumstances small sites or those of lesser intrinsic nature conservation interest may be of increased value for the opportunities they provide for the appreciation of nature.

Uncontrolled access is not, however, always desirable. Any adverse impacts that this may have on the nature conservation value of the site must be considered.

Attributing Value

Sites which would tend to score highly under this criterion are:

- Those with legitimate and safe public access.
- Those that are close to peoples' homes and/or close to public transport routes.
- Those in areas with little accessible natural greenspace.
- Those not adversely impacted upon by public access.
- Those specifically managed to accommodate public access and where resources such as interpretation or organised events are provided.

3.3.4 Aesthetic

Rationale

Areas of ecological and geological value can be visually attractive, helping to define a sense of place and contributing to the quality of life of the people who live or work there.

A site's visual contribution to the local environment and the views into and out of a site should be considered, as should features that provide a seasonal high point such as a carpet of bluebells, heather in bloom, autumn colour or an annual display of meadow flowers.

Attributing Value

Sites which would tend to score highly under this criterion are:

- Those that are attractive with a high visual quality.
- Landscapes that are important to local communities reflecting natural and industrial heritage.
- Those that contribute positively to local distinctiveness and a sense of place.
- Those with a high value for the appreciation of nature.

3.3.5 Value for Learning

Rationale

Sites of ecological and geological interest can be valuable local educational resources, enabling people of all ages to learn about and better understand the natural world around them.

Some locally designated sites can provide opportunities for formal education which the national statutory network of sites cannot fulfil alone. Many sites are used or are suitable for further education, higher education and postgraduate studies and are valuable for training new environmental professionals. Research, investigation or experimental work may be undertaken as a part of this. Sites which illustrate local natural features are valuable to primary and secondary schools for project work and for activities that link with the National Curriculum.

There is an equal need to provide a focus for more informal education and opportunities for the wider community. Sites can have a role in the development of skills through involvement in their protection, management and recording. All these activities can potentially benefit sites through promoting wider understanding, support and care of these local assets.

Attributing Value

Sites which would tend to score highly under this criterion are:

- Those that are currently utilised for formal and informal education.
- Those that are close to educational establishments.
- Those with legitimate and safe student access.
- Those that are unlikely to be damaged by educational use.
- Those that are managed to accommodate student access and that provide resources such as interpretation or organised events.
- Those that demonstrate features as set out in the National or other curricula.

Appendix 1: Notes on Completing the Report Form

A1.1 Survey and information required to complete a Local Wildlife Site Assessment

The standard of survey work and assessment must be sufficient to comply with the local guidance on assessing Local Wildlife Sites. All work must be rigorously carried out to justify formal designation of sites, and be robust enough to be defensible in planning appeals.

Surveys must be undertaken by suitably qualified staff, experienced in habitat surveys of this type, at an appropriate time of year for the habitat types/species present. More than one survey visit and type of survey may be necessary to collect the appropriate data to determine if a site meets the threshold for selection as a Local Wildlife Site.

To assess a site against the ecological criteria:

The following must be undertaken for each site assessment:

- An EcoRecord data search which includes:
 - a complete list of ecological records and reports held for the site
 - records of species of note and details of nature conservation sites within a minimum 1km radius
- A Phase 1 Habitat Survey in accordance with the methodology issued by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC, 2010). Surveys should be of a resolution sufficient to identify habitat features of 10m² and larger, although there may be cases where smaller features need to be mapped, for example small ponds.
- Comprehensive survey and recording of plant species present. Where sites can be divided into ecologically distinct and discrete compartments a list of species present in each compartment is required.
- Incidental records of fauna or their field signs, as well as incidental records of any other taxon groups, e.g. fungi or bryophytes.
- Field notes on the suitability of habitats for other notable fauna.
- Field notes on the current management, condition and structure of each habitat parcel.
- Field notes on signs of use including formal and informal access points and paths, littering, interpretation boards etc.

To assess a site against the geological criteria:

- A data search must be undertaken that includes any existing records/reports held by EcoRecord.
- A geological survey undertaken by a competent surveyor.

Other information sources below:

British Geological Society - 1:625,000 bedrock & superficial deposits GIS layers
www.bgs.ac.uk/downloads/browse.cfm?sec=6&cat=11.

British Geological Society - Geology of Britain viewer
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

UKSO – Soils Map Viewer <http://mapapps2.bgs.ac.uk/ukso/home.html>

To assess a site against the social criteria:

- A desk study should be undertaken that includes reference to historic maps.
- Proximity to residential areas, schools, other areas of public open space and important social features should be assessed.
- During site visits notes should be taken regarding signs of use including formal and informal access points and paths, littering, interpretation boards etc.

Other information sources in the Birmingham and Black Country area can be found [here](#).

A1.2 Outputs required

- A Local Wildlife Site Assessment Report Form needs to be completed for each site in line with the local guidance and include:
 - A map depicting the survey area, current SINC and/or SLINC boundaries (where these exist) and any recommended revised/new SINC or SLINC boundaries.
 - Phase 1 Habitat Map(s) with target notes highlighting features of note referenced in the text.
 - Any other maps that illustrate particular aspects relevant to the assessment (these may include management recommendations, historic maps and any maps showing features of importance).
 - Photographs illustrative of the site and of key features.
 - Species lists.
- An excel spreadsheet (or equivalent) listing all species recorded during any new surveys undertaken for this assessment.
- Any additional sources of information used to support the assessment and not in the public domain.
- Any GIS data files produced (including habitat polygons/lines, targets notes, survey boundaries and any recommended LWS designation boundaries). File format should be MapInfo GIS compatible.

A1.3 Completing the Local Wildlife Sites Assessment Form

The following are explanatory notes for each of the fields in the Birmingham and the Black Country Local Wildlife Sites Assessment Report form:

EcoRecord Reference¹: The unique code allocated to a site by EcoRecord.

Site Name¹: The default site name as allocated by EcoRecord.

Grid Reference¹: The default British National Grid Reference allocated to the site by EcoRecord.

Designation(s)¹: The current nature conservation designation(s) for the site i.e: SAC (Special Area of Conservation), SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), NNR (National Nature Reserve), LNR (Local Nature Reserve), SINC (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation), SLINC (Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation) or WC (Wildlife Corridor).

Survey Date(s): The date of the survey (or surveys) undertaken for this assessment. This excludes any historical surveys identified in the data search. Where an assessment has been conducted from a desk study only n/a should be entered in this box. Where multiple surveys have been undertaken, the individual dates should be recorded.

Planning Authority: The local planning authority.

Site Ownership: Given as either private (with owner or unknown in brackets) or name of public body (e.g. local authority or statutory agency).

Area/Length: Given in hectares to two decimal points or metres to one decimal point.

Reason for Survey: The reason why this survey/site assessment has been undertaken.

Report Date: The date the site report was completed/compiled

Meets LWS Criteria: The findings of the assessment: SINC, SLINC or None.

Type: (of Local Wildlife Site) either Wildlife, Geological or Wildlife & Geological.

Amendment: Whether this is a New Site, Upgrade (i.e. SLINC to SINC), Downgrade (i.e. SINC to SLINC), Extension or Whole/Part Deletion. Any boundary amendments must be accompanied by a map illustrating changes.

Citation (Summary of Value): A short description of the main ecological, geological and social value (as appropriate) of the site.

Local Wildlife Site Selection Criteria: Here the Birmingham and Black Country Local Wildlife Site Selection Criteria are listed. Against each criteria assessed a value (either High, Medium or Low) must be given (written as H, M, L). A short written justification of the value given must also be given.

If the site has not been assessed for either Ecological or Geological value then the criteria not assessed can be removed and replaced with n/a. All sites must be assessed against the Social criteria.

Site Description: A summary description of the site to include features such as location, historic associations, habitats, land use, topography, social use etc.

¹ These details will be provided by EcoRecord upon request.

Habitat descriptions: All habitats should be listed in accordance with their Phase 1 Habitat category name and alphanumeric code (in accordance with JNCC handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey, 2010). Below each habitat category a concise description of this must be given. This should include location, extent, physical characteristics, dominant species, species and features of note, and any other information considered relevant.

Habitats of Note: All habitats recorded on site during this survey or historically that are considered notable should be recorded in this table. Each is listed with its Phase 1 Habitat category name and alphanumeric code, the date it was most recently recorded at the site and the reason for which it is considered notable, as described below:

- **Habitat** - The Phase 1 Habitat category code.
- **EHD** - where the habitat meets the description of habitats in the European Habitats Directive the relevant habitat type name should be listed here.
- **BAP** - where the habitat meets the description of any current UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat. Of the 56 UK Priority Habitats 22 have been recorded to date in Birmingham and the Black Country. The relevant habitat type name should be listed here. Please refer to Appendix 6 for a list.
- **NERC** - where the habitat meets the description of any current Habitat of Principal Importance listed for the NERC Act (2006) (Section 41). The relevant habitat type name should be listed here.
- **Rarity** - where habitats meet the description of those included on the B&BC list of locally rare/priority habitats administered by EcoRecord. Please refer to Appendix 6 for a list.
- **Date recorded** - the most recent year the habitat has been recorded at the site.

Species of Note: All species of note that have been identified as present at the site through recent or historical surveys should be recorded in this table. Each is listed with its scientific and common (English) name, the date it was most recently recorded at the site and the reason for which it is considered notable, as described below:

Flora: Any notable flora species that have been recorded at the site are listed:

- **Species** - scientific name.
- **Common Name** - English name.
- **Statutory** - for those species protected by UK and European legislation an acronym of the legislation is given (e.g. **WCA S8** = Wildlife & Countryside Act Schedule 8).
- **BAP** - Y is entered if the species is included on the current national list of Species of Principal Importance.
- **NERC** - Y is entered if the species is included on Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) as of Principal Importance.
- **RL** - Y is entered if the species is included on Global IUCN or British Red Lists (Red Data Books).
- **Rarity** - a U, R or VR is entered for those flora species classified as being Uncommon, Rare or Very Rare in Birmingham & the Black Country by EcoRecord. Refer to appendix 5 for a B&BC species rarity list.
- **Date recorded** - the most recent year the species has been recorded at the site.

Fauna: Any notable fauna species that have been recorded at the site are listed:

- **Species** - scientific name.
- **Common Name** - English name.
- **Statutory** - for those species protected by UK and European legislation an acronym of the legislation is given (e.g. **WCA S1** = Wildlife & Countryside Act Schedule 1 (birds protected at all times)).
- **BAP** - Y is entered if the species is included on the current national list of Priority Species.
- **NERC** - Y is entered if the species is included on Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) as of Principal Importance.
- **RL** - Y is entered if the species is included on Global IUCN or British Red Lists (Red Data Books).
- **Concern** - for those species included on relevant lists or schedules (e.g. by RSPB, the Mammal Society and Butterfly Conservation) as of concern an acronym of the list/schedule is given (e.g. **A** = RSPB's Amber List).
- **Rarity** - a U, R or VR is entered for those species classified as being Uncommon, Rare or Very Rare in Birmingham & the Black Country by EcoRecord. Refer to appendix 5 for a B&BC species rarity list.
- **Date recorded** - the most recent year the species has been recorded at the site.

Site/Habitat Suitability for Other Species of Note (not recorded during the survey): Where it is considered likely that other species of note besides those recorded during the survey could be present, this should be described in this section. The species/species group and location of suitable habitat should be described here (accompanying maps can be included if appropriate). Where the potential for a notable species to be present is identified, additional survey work should be recommended and this should be included in the recommendations table.

Invasive Species: Details of species recorded at the site that are listed on Schedule 9 pt. 1 & 2 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended are listed:

- **Species** - scientific name.
- **Common Name** - English name.
- **Location** - grid reference/description.
- **Abundance** - recorded as a DAFOR value (Dominant, Abundant, Frequent, Occasional, Rare).
- **Date recorded** - the most recent year the species has been recorded at the site.

Geology

- **Drift/Solid Formation**
- **Description** - summary description of the geology or geomorphological features.
- **Features of Value** - description of features of value with reference to the geological criteria.

Soils - a brief description of site soils (including attributes such as physical structure or pH where this is known or can be implied).

Public Access & Site Usage: Information on public accessibility and current usage of the site.

- **Land Use** – e.g. Pasture, Nature Reserve, Garden, Public Open Space, Golf Course etc.
- **Access Level** - either Unrestricted, Restricted or None.
- **Access Type(s)** - e.g. Private, Unofficial, Local Nature Reserve, Public Footpath Only etc.

Comparison with Previous Survey(s) Results: A description of any physical, ecological, geological or social changes that have occurred on the site since the last known survey.

Boundary (notes): A brief description of the rationale for the survey and proposed Local Wildlife Site boundary should be given here. The Local Wildlife Site boundary should include all important features and may differ from the area surveyed. Where there are adjacent undesignated/unsurveyed areas which are likely to be important, this should be noted and a recommendation for further survey work made where necessary.

Summary of Assessment: A brief description/conclusion of the assessment with reference to recommendations for Local Wildlife Site status and boundary changes etc.

Recommendations (including further survey & site management/enhancement recommendations): List any recommendations that would further understanding of the site and/or contribute to enhancing its value (more detailed information can be provided in the optional management brief). These might include:

- Further survey work to better understand the status of a recorded feature, to determine whether a notable species is present or to assess adjacent land parcels that may be of importance for the function or resilience of the site.
- Habitat management recommendations with brief description.
- Recommendations relating to ecological enhancement opportunities both on-site and in adjacent areas.
- Where changes in adjacent land-use might be beneficial, e.g. where the site may be negatively affected by spill lighting, dust or other avoidable impacts.

Data Sources: The sources of all information used to produce this report must be listed in the table below. For each type of data, all sources must be listed with the most recent first (see example below). Any data referenced here that is not provided by EcoRecord or is not readily available in the public domain must be provided with the assessment form and other required outputs.

Data Sources		
	Source	Date
Species and Habitat Data Source(s)	Site Survey: Allan Hurst, The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country.	12/05/2016
	EcoRecord data search.	2016
	Wolverhampton Phase 2 Survey, Dudley to Priestfield Railway.	July 1989
Geology Data Source(s)	British Geological Society 1:625,000 bedrock & superficial deposits GIS layers from BGS website: www.bgs.ac.uk/downloads/browse.cfm?sec=6&cat=11 .	
Historic Data Sources(s)	Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway. (2016). In <i>Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia</i> . Retrieved 15:54, May 23, 2016, from https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Oxford,_Worcester_and_Wolverhampton_Railway&oldid=717728322	29/04/2016
	Ordnance Survey County Series Mapping 1884 - 1992.	1884-1992
Assessment Author and Organisation	Allan Hurst, The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country.	03/06/2016

Species Lists: An excel spreadsheet (or equivalent) must be provided containing a record of all species recorded during any new surveys undertaken to complete the assessment (spreadsheet template available in Appendix 4). The species list may be divided into compartments, species groups or dates as is relevant to the points being illustrated.

Site photographs: Representative photographs of the site and features of interest should be included where possible with notes describing the location and features depicted.

Maps: A number of maps must be provided to illustrate this assessment as follows:

- A map depicting the survey area (where relevant), current SINC and/or SLINC boundaries (where these exist) and any recommended revised/new SINC or SLINC boundary.
- A Phase 1 Habitat Map(s) in line with the guidance in 'A Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey (JNCC, 2010). Target notes should be used to highlight features of note referenced in the text.
- Any other maps that illustrate particular aspects relevant to the assessment (these may include management recommendations, historic maps and any maps showing specific features of importance)

Management Brief (optional): Detailed management prescriptions may be given in the Management Brief table. These should give a descriptive name to the *Action*, describe the *Objective & Rationale* for undertaking this, describe the *Method* by which the action should be undertaken and recommend *Timings* for these.

Appendix 2: Report Form

Birmingham & Black Country Local Wildlife Sites Assessment Report

EcoRecord Reference	Site Name	Grid Reference	Designation(s)	Survey Date(s)
Planning Authority	Site Ownership	Area/Length	Reason for Survey	Report Date

Meets LWS Criteria		Type		i.e. Wildlife/Geological
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Amendment(s)		i.e. None; New Site; Upgrade; Downgrade; Extension; Whole/Part Deletion		
Description				

Citation (Summary of Value)

Local Wildlife Site Selection Criteria		
Ecological		
Habitat Diversity		
Species Diversity		
Habitat Rarity		
Species Rarity		
Size or Extent		
Naturalness		
Position & Connectivity		
Geological		
Intrinsic	Palaeontology	
	Stratigraphy	
	Structure	
	Physiography & Geomorphology	
Rarity		
Ass. with Other Sites		
Social		
Historical & Cultural		
Access		
Aesthetic		
Recorded History		
Value for Learning		

Site Description

Habitats

Phase 1 Name		Phase 1 Code	
Phase 1 Name		Phase 1 Code	
Phase 1 Name		Phase 1 Code	
Phase 1 Name		Phase 1 Code	
Notes			

Habitats of Note [1]

Phase 1 Name	Phase 1 Code	EHD	BAP	NERC	Rarity	Date Recorded
Notes						

Species of Note [1]

Flora

Species	Common Name	Statutory	BAP	NERC	RL	Rarity	Date Recorded
Notes							

Fauna

Species	Common Name	Statutory	BAP	NERC[3]	RL	Concern	Rarity	Date Recorded
Notes								

Site/Habitat Suitability for Other Species of Note (not recorded during the survey)

Description/Notes	
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Invasive Species [2]

Species	Common Name	Location	Abundance (DAFOR)	Date Recorded
Notes				

Geology	
Solid/Drift Formation	
Description	
Features of Value	
1	
2	

Soils

Public Access & Site Usage	
Land Use	
Access Level	
Access Type(s)	

Comparison with Previous Survey(s) Results

Boundary (notes)

Summary of Assessment

Recommendations (including further survey & site management/enhancement)	
1	
2	

Data Sources		
	Source	Date
Species and Habitat Data Source(s)		
Geological Data Source(s)		
Historic Data Sources(s)		
Assessment Author and Organisation		

[1] HABITATS/SPECIES OF NOTE TABLES – ATTRIBUTE DEFINITIONS

STATUTORY (PROTECTED) -

EHD = EU Habitats Directive (plus where relevant the Annexe II or IV). **PBA** = Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

WCA S1 = Wildlife & Countryside Act Schedule 1 (birds protected at all times). **WCA S5** = Wildlife & Countryside Act Schedule 5 (animals with various levels of protection). **WCA S8** = Wildlife & Countryside Act Schedule 8 (higher and lower plants with various levels of protection).

BAP – Habitats/Species included on current UK BAP list of Priority Habitats/Species.

NERC P.I. - Habitats/Species included on current list of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006).

RL - Species included on Global IUCN & British Red Lists (Red Data Books).

RARITY (HABITATS) - BIRMINGHAM & BLACK COUNTRY - Habitats included on the B&BC list of locally rare habitats (administered by EcoRecord).

RARITY (FLORA SPECIES) - BIRMINGHAM & BLACK COUNTRY - (based on data held and managed by EcoRecord).

VR = Very Rare - a species present in less than 1.0% of 1Km squares, tetrads, or 5Km squares in B&BC.

R = Rare - a species present in 1.0% - 4.3% of 1Km squares, tetrads, or 5Km squares in B&BC.

U = Uncommon - a species present in 4.3% - 12% of 1Km squares, tetrads or 5Km squares in B&BC.

CONCERN (FAUNA SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN) -

Birds: **R** = Red List - species that are Globally Threatened according to the International Union for Nature Conservation criteria; those whose population or range has declined rapidly in recent years; and those that have declined historically and not shown a substantial recent recovery. **A** = Amber List - species

with an unfavourable conservation status in Europe; those whose population or range has declined moderately in recent years; those whose population has declined historically but made a substantial recent recovery; rare breeders; and those with internationally important or localised populations.

Mammals: **ND** = National Decline and **ED** = England Decline as measured by the Mammal Societies Table of Recent Population Changes in the Native Species of Land Mammals.

Invertebrates: **RD** = Regional Decline identified in Butterfly Conservation West Midlands Regional Action Plan.

DATE - The most recent date the species has been recorded.

[2] Species listed on Schedule 9 part 1 (animals) and part 2 (plants) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended - this lists animals which may not be released or allowed to escape into the wild and plants which may not be planted or otherwise caused to grow in the wild.

Report Maps

Site Photographs

Species Records

Appendix 3: Optional Management Brief (to be appended to completed report form if completed)

Management Brief			
Action	Objective & Rationale	Method	Timings
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Appendix 4: Species Records Spreadsheet

Template available to download [here](#)

Appendix 5: Birmingham and the Black Country Species of Note

The following documents can be downloaded [here](#):

- List of statutory protected, UKBAP and Local BAP species recorded in B&BC
- B&BC Species Rarity Lists
- B&BC Axiophyte List

Appendix 6: Birmingham and the Black Country Habitats of Note

The following documents can be downloaded [here](#):

- UK BAP Priority Habitats present in B&BC
- B&BC Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats

Appendix 7: Interactive Map of the Birmingham and Black Country Ecological Network

Interactive map available [here](#)

Appendix 8: Birmingham and the Black Country Biodiversity Action Plan (2010)

A copy of the B&BC BAP (2010) can be downloaded [here](#)

Appendix 9: Example of a completed Local Wildlife Sites Assessment Report

An example LWS assessment report can be downloaded [here](#)

Appendix 10: Local Wildlife Sites Assessment Report Form

Template available to download [here](#)

Appendix 11: Local Sites Partnership for Birmingham and the Black Country Terms of Reference

B&BC LSP Terms of Reference available to download [here](#)