

Public Report  
Delegated Officer Decision

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**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Delegated Officer Decision – 27 June 2025

**Report Title**

Rotherham Regionally Important Geological Sites Series Update 2025

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

**Assistant Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Simon Moss, Assistant Director of Planning, Regeneration & Transport

**Report Author(s)**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

Anston and Woodsetts  
Dinnington  
Maltby East

**Report Summary**

This report seeks approval of an update to the Regionally Important Geological Sites Series (RIGS) in Rotherham with the inclusion of two new RIGS. These site boundaries will form part of the environmental evidence for the Local Plan and be used in the determination of relevant planning applications.

**Recommendations**

1. Two new sites: R155 Lindrick Common Quarry and R108 Seed Hill Wood are be added to the Rotherham RIGS series, using the boundaries shown in Appendix 1.
2. That approval is given to proceed with the integration of these Rotherham RIGS in the determination of relevant planning applications.

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 Regionally Important Geological Site Boundary Maps of R155 Lindrick Common Quarry and R108 Seed Hill Wood

Appendix 2 Regionally Important Geological Site Series Update 2025

Appendix 3 Equality Part A – Initial Equality Screening Assessment

Appendix 4 Carbon Impact Assessment

**Background Papers**

National Planning Policy Framework

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675abd214cbda57cacd3476e/NPPF-December-2024.pdf>

Rotherham RIGS System

[Microsoft Word - RIGS methodology for web needs cover april 13 2011.doc](#)

Environment Act 2021 legislation

[Environment Act 2021](#)

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (2022). Notice of Motion – Nature Crisis. Full Council, 25 May 2022.

<https://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=91028>

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Cabinet - Response to the Improving Places Scrutiny Review Recommendations on Nature Recovery, 16 September 2024

<https://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=16172>

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

N/A

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Rotherham Local Geological Site (including RIGS) 2025 boundaries update**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Rotherham's Local Geological Sites (including Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS)), form part of Rotherham's 'Local Site system' and are included in the Non-Statutory Protected Sites designation shown on the Local Plan Policies Map (adopted June 2018). The RIGS in Rotherham were first identified in the 1990s and incorporated into the Unitary Development Plan (Rotherham MBC 1999) through Policy ENV2.2 Interest Outside Statutorily Protected Sites. The LDF Steering Group meeting on 18 June 2010 agreed the aspiration for a Local Sites System encompassing a Local Geological Sites (LGS) System. RIGS were resurveyed in 2010 under the guidance of the expert Rotherham Local Geological Sites Panel. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council approved this updated series on 24 January 2011. RIGS designation is intended to be comprehensive, and the supporting system allows for the inclusion of new sites and changes to the existing sites throughout the plan period. An independent panel of geodiversity experts the Rotherham Local Geological Sites Panel (RLGSP) recommends the selection and deselection of RIGS to the Local Planning Authority. As a result of the analysis of new information, two new RIGS have been endorsed by the RLGSP.
- 1.2 The Environment Act 2021 introduced a strengthened 'Biodiversity Duty', which means that public authorities in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. RIGS will contribute to the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) required by the Environment Act 2021; geodiversity provides the physical foundation for biodiversity. It is no accident that many RIGS are also Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) reflecting the special environment they provide. At its meeting of 25 May 2022, the Council resolved to declare a Nature Crisis in Rotherham ('Nature Crisis Motion'), noting that almost half of UK wildlife is in long-term decline. Cabinet's response to a review from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) regarding the opportunities to support nature's recovery in Rotherham was approved in the meeting on 16 September 2024.
- 1.3 It is proposed to add two new RIGS to the existing RIGS series reflecting the geo-conservation interest present on these sites as a result of site survey work commissioned by RMBC in 2024. The two new proposed RIGS are:
- R155 Lindrick Common Quarry (adjacent to Worksop Road, estimated central point postcode S81 8BA)
  - R108 Seed Hill Wood (adjacent to Kings Wood Lane, estimated central point postcode S66 8NU).
- The proposed new sites boundaries are shown in Appendix 1.
- 1.4 The updated RIGS series, including their indicative location map, is shown in Appendix 2.

### **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 The Rotherham Local Geological Sites Panel has endorsed these sites as being of RIGS value. Designation of the sites would be made in accordance with the Delegation Scheme as set out in the Council's Constitution.
- 2.2 The assessment confirmed that both sites demonstrated substantive geo-conservation value by meeting at least one of the selection criteria. The RLGSP has endorsed these RIGS selection, which is based upon the agreed, published criteria in respect of the substantive biodiversity interest present on site.
- 2.3 The approval of these sites as RIGS and integration of their boundaries into the Local Plan will ensure that relevant planning policies are considered in the determination of planning applications relating to the sites. It will assist the Council to comply with national planning policy provisions regarding the natural environment and contribute towards the Council's enhanced Biodiversity Duty (Environment Act 2021) and delivery of the 'Nature Crisis Motion'.
- 2.5 Lindrick Common Quarry is located on private land. There is a public footpath through the proposed RIGS. The site overlaps with a LWS (LWS 11 Lindrick Common).
- 2.6 Seed Hill Wood is located on private land. There is a public footpath through the proposed RIGS. The site overlaps with a LWS (LWS 125 Seed Hill Wood).

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

#### **3.1 Option 1: approve the inclusion of the new sites in Rotherham's Local Site System**

The Rotherham Local Geological Sites Panel have assessed these sites in accordance with agreed, externally verified methodology, using new knowledge obtained. The sites' approval and integration into planning policy would contribute towards the robustness of the Local Plan.

#### **3.2 Option 2: do not include the new sites in Rotherham's Local Site System**

Not including the new sites would mean the Local Site System is not kept up to date. The sites have been identified and agreed by the Rotherham Local Geological Sites Panel as meriting inclusion. The Council would not be abiding by the relevant legislation and the requirement to maintain an up-to-date system.

#### **3.3 Option 1 is the recommended option.**

### **4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 The landowners have been contacted to advise them of this proposed designation and invited to return comments. The spokesperson for R155 Lindrick Common Quarry landowners and managers requested clarification

regarding the sites continued use as part of the golf course. They were given assurance that there would be no additional rights of public access with the sites designation and its existing use would be unaffected. No further comment was received. The landowner of R108 Seed Hill Wood responded in support of the site designation (saying they: *'fully support the designation of the site as a RIGS, due to the ancient and unique structure of the limestone overhang. RIGS designation will assist us in preserving the site from unwanted development in adjacent areas which might impact the structure. I would urge RMBC to include the site as a RIGS in their Local Plan'*).

- 4.2 Relevant ward members have been consulted on this proposal. Cllr Tarmey responded to this consultation saying he raised no objection.

## **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 If approval is given, the additional RIGS will be integrated immediately into the planning system and will be considered when determining planning applications. This will include:
- Updating the Council's website to provide information regarding the additional RIGS.
  - Updating the Council's online mapping system to include up to date boundaries regarding RIGS.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

- 6.1 The costs associated with this Officer Decision will be contained within the approved revenue budgets of the Planning and Green Spaces services.
- 6.2 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report.

## **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 The designation does not bring extra legal requirements on how the land needs to be managed; though there is an expectation that Local Sites will be managed positively for nature conservation (see Environment Act 2021). Any existing legislation that applies to the site will remain in force.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 9.1 RIGS add to the local character and distinctiveness of an area contributing to a sense of place. The proposed RIGS also overlap with Local Wildlife Sites. A thriving, wildlife-rich environment is considered to benefit both physical and mental health.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

- 10.1 An Initial Screening Equality Assessment has been completed (Appendix 3). There are no detrimental impacts on equalities or human rights identified, and the designation of the RIGS may encourage more positive management of the site.

## **11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

- 11.1 A Carbon Impact Assessment has been carried out (Appendix 4). The proposed addition of the two RIGS to the Rotherham's RIGS series is not considered to have any significant implications for CO2 emissions and climate change.
- 11.2 However, the sites' designation may have some indirect benefits. RIGS in Rotherham are designated for their geo-conservation interest: protecting these sites may also help conserve their capacity for carbon sequestration.
- 11.3 As per the framework for Rotherham's RIGS, the appraisal of sites should be kept valid and up to date through continuous monitoring. Additional monitoring of sites' annual carbon sequestration and total carbon storage would increase the Council's capacity to value ecosystem services and natural capital and could inform future carbon impact assessments.

## **12. Implications for Partners**

- 12.1 None identified.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

- 13.1 The operation of a Local Site System enables the Council to demonstrate compliance with current legislation and planning policy, including the need to have a robust evidence base. Designation is based primarily on scientific reasoning and in accordance with national best practice (see the Background Paper: Rotherham RIGS System), The system includes all sites that qualify. This can create a conflict of interest between Local Site status and potential for development, as Local Site status will be a designation within the Local Plan and will be a material consideration when determining planning applications. However, the additional proposed RIGS are allocated as Green Belt where there are substantial planning policies which already restrict development.
- 13.2 The designation does not bring extra legal requirements on how the land needs to be managed; though there is an expectation that the site will be managed positively for nature conservation (see Environment Act 2021). Any existing legislation that applies to the site will remain in force.

## **14. Accountable Officers**

Simon Moss, Assistant Director, Planning, Regeneration & Transport

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp OBE	Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	Click here to enter a date.
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	Click here to enter a date.

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