

Public Report
Delegated Officer Decision

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Delegated Officer Decision – 09 September 2026

Report Title

Rotherham Local Sites Update 2026

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

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Service Director Approving Submission of the Report

Simon Moss, Service Director of Planning, Regeneration & Transport

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Anston and Woodsetts Ward
Boston Castle Ward
Maltby East Ward
Rawmarsh West Ward
Rawmarsh East Ward
Wales Ward

Report Summary

This report seeks approval of an update to the Local Sites Series in Rotherham, with the inclusion of three new local sites:

- Local Wildlife Site (LWS) LWS 124 River Rother near Beighton
- Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) R70 Dog Kennels Quarry Kiveton Park and
- RIGS R101 Rosehill Warren Vale Roadcut

and the amendment to the boundaries of two local sites (LWS 49 Wood Lee Common and RIGS R27 Canklow Woods).

Recommendations

1. That LWS 124 River Rother near Beighton, RIGS R70 Dog Kennels Quarry Kiveton Park and R101 Rosehill Warren Vale Roadcut as shown in Appendix 1 be approved.

2. That the amendment to the boundaries of LWS 49 Wood Lee Common and RIGS R27 Canklow Woods as shown in Appendix 3 be approved.
3. That approval is given to proceed with the integration of these Rotherham Local Sites in the determination of relevant planning applications.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 New Local Sites boundaries (LWS 124, RIGS R70 and R101).

Appendix 2 Current boundaries of LWS 49 and RIGS R27

Appendix 3 Revised boundaries of LWS 49 and RIGS R27

Appendix 4 Local Wildlife Sites Series Update 2026

Appendix 5 Regionally Important Geological Site Series Update 2026

Appendix 6 Equality Part A Initial Equality Screening Assessment

Appendix 7 Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

Defra Local Sites Guidance (2006)

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20130402204735/http://archive.defra.gov.uk/rural/documents/protected/localsites.pdf>

National Planning Policy Framework

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

Rotherham LWS System

<https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/691/local-wildlife-system-parts-1-and-2>

Rotherham RIGS Selection Information

<https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/402/regionally-important-geological-site-methodology-selection-and-boundary-update-2010-document>

RMBC Notice of Motion – Nature Crisis. Full Council, 25 May 2022.

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

Rotherham Enhanced Biodiversity Duty Report

<https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/4894/biodiversity-duty-report-2024-2025>

Cabinet's Response to the Improving Places Scrutiny Review Recommendations – Nature Recovery, 16 September 2024 [Agenda item - Cabinets Response to the Improving Places Scrutiny Review Recommendations - Nature Recovery - Rotherham Council](#), [Appendix 1 - Recommendations Review.pdf](#)

South Yorkshire local nature recovery strategy information

<https://www.southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk/explore/local-nature-recovery-strategy>

Canklow Hill earthworks

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1004818?section=official-list-entry>

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 Sites Update 2026

1. Background

- 1.1 The LDF Steering Group meeting on 18 June 2010 agreed the aspiration for a Local Sites System. Rotherham's Local Sites comprise Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and Local Geological Sites including Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS). These are substantive sites of local conservation importance. Rotherham's local sites are included in the Non-Statutory Protected Sites designation shown on the Local Plan Policies Map (adopted June 2018). Rotherham's LWS series was developed in accordance with Defra best practice guidance and published LWS selection framework and criteria (see background papers). Rotherham RIGS are selected using externally verified published methodology. Local Sites were included in the successful local plan examination and are capable of being a material consideration in planning applications.
- 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. The designation of new LWS is considered compliant with this duty. 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. In 2026, the Council has published an Enhanced Biodiversity Duty Report (see background paper). Furthermore, LWS will contribute to the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and RIGS may also support 'inland rock' habitat recognised in the emerging strategy.
- 1.3 The Local Site system is intended to be comprehensive and allows for the inclusion of new sites and changes to existing sites throughout the plan period. As a result of new evidence and analysis, information has become available and reflects valued interest prompting an update to the existing local site series.
- 1.4 This report seeks a decision on the approval of an update to the local sites series, as a result of the endorsement of these changes by the Local Sites Panels with the addition of three new local sites (comprising one new LWS and two new RIGS) and the amendment of the boundaries of two existing Local Sites (one LWS and one RIGS).

New Local Sites (Appendix 1):

- LWS 124 River Rother near Bighton (S20 1AH).
- R70 Dog Kennels Quarry Kiveton Park (close to Dog Kennel Hill, S26 6NS).
- R101 Rosehill Warren Vale Roadcut (adjacent to Warren Vale Road, S62 5QJ).

Amendment to extend existing Local Sites (Appendix 3):

- R27 Canklow Woods (S60 2UB).
- LWS 49 Wood Lee Common (adjacent to Blyth Road, S66 8NN).

- 1.5 The updated LWS and RIGS series, including their indicative location map, is shown in Appendix 4 and 5 respectively.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The proposed updates have been endorsed by the Rotherham LWS Panel and the Rotherham Local Geological Sites Panel. All decisions were based upon new data collected on the sites and their respective published selection criteria (see background papers). Designation of the sites are made in accordance with the Delegation Scheme as set out in the Council's Constitution.
- 2.2 The approval of these sites as Local Sites 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).
- 2.3 The designation of the sites as LWS that the Council own or manage will bring an expectation of their positive management for nature conservation in compliance with the Enhanced Biodiversity Duty upon the Council. The recommendation to enable nature's recovery in the Council's Enhanced Duty Report (p.15, IPSC 3.0.8 bullet 6) states: 'Consideration should be given to a coordinated 'One Council' programme to increase council owned LWS in positive conservation management with resourced management, monitoring and reporting.'
- 2.4 LWS 124 (River Rother near Beighton) is under Asset Management ownership. Nevertheless, it would be beneficial for this site (and the nearby LWS 208 Pit House West) to be managed by the Council's Green Spaces Team for their conservation and use as an annex to Rother Valley Country Park. In addition, there is scope for the Council to explore Biodiversity Net Gain credits funding (selling units to developers for offsite biodiversity credits) for enhanced management of suitable Council owned areas.
- 2.5 All the RIGS sites in this report are owned by RMBC, of which two are under the care of Asset Management (R70 and R101) and one is under Greenspaces Team (R27). Consideration should be given to the management of the RIGS assets including sympathetic removal of the graffiti present on the rocks at R27. It is noted R70 is located not far from the Kiveton Park council depot site area.
- 2.6 LWS 49 Wood Lee Common extension is privately owned.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 **Option 1: approve the new local sites and boundary update of existing sites to the Local Sites Systems**
The Rotherham Local Sites Panels are local experts who 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 approve the new local sites and boundary update of existing sites to the Local Sites Systems

Not including the new sites or review site boundaries would mean the Local Site System is not kept up to date. The sites have been identified and agreed by the local experts 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 Council's Greenspaces service and Corporate Services, who are the land managers of the sites, have been contacted to notify them of the proposed designation. No objections have been raised.

4.2 The landowner of LWS 49 Wood Lee Common extension has been consulted. No objections have been raised.

4.3 Relevant ward members have been consulted on this proposal:

- Cllr Tinsley commented on LWS 49 Wood Lee Common. He raised suggestions of two further candidate Local Wildlife Sites for future consideration and noted the value of ecological connectivity and consistent site protection (issues heightened with the proximity of the SSSI at Wood Lee Common).
- Cllr Sutton fully supported the proposed extension of LWS 49 Wood Lee Common and welcomed its inclusion in the updated Local Sites series; this being consistent with the Enhanced Biodiversity Duty (Environment Act 2021) and aligning with the ambitions of the South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Cllr Sutton said 'Protecting valued local habitats not only benefits wildlife but also contributes to residents' wellbeing, provides opportunities for people to connect with nature and helps preserve the unique character of our area for future generations'.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 If approval is given, the local sites changes will be integrated immediately into the planning system and will be considered when determining planning applications. This will include:

If approval is given, the local sites changes 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 LWS, RIGS and boundary changes
- Updating the Council's online mapping system to include up to date boundaries regarding LWS, RIGS and boundary changes.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 The costs associated with this decision will be managed within existing revenue budgets for Asset Management, Planning and Green Spaces.

6.2 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval to proceed with integration of three sites at the River Rother near Beighton, Dog Kennels Quarry Kiveton Park and Rosehill Warren Vale Roadcut and amendments to the boundaries of Wood Lee Common and Canklow Woods and have these integrated into the Rotherham local sites in the determination of relevant planning applications. As a consequence, they become a material consideration for the purpose of consideration at planning application decision state. 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.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

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

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 Local Sites add to the local character and distinctiveness of an area contributing to a sense of place. 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 6). There are no detrimental impacts on equalities or human rights identified, and the designation of the sites may encourage more positive management.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 A Carbon Impact Assessment has been carried out (Appendix 7). The proposed local sites series changes are not considered to have any significant implications for CO2 emissions and climate change.
- 11.2 However, the sites' designation may have some indirect benefits. LWS in Rotherham are designated for their ecological interest: protecting these habitats' ecological condition may also conserve their capacity for carbon sequestration.
- 11.3 As per the framework for Rotherham's LWS, the appraisal of sites should be kept valid and up to date through continuous ecological 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 LWS System and Rotherham RIGS Selection Information). 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 LWS are allocated as Green Space 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, Service Director of Planning, Regeneration & Transport

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	John Edwards	Click here to enter a date.
Executive Director of Corporate Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	Click here to enter a date.
Service Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	Click here to enter a date.

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