

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Town Centres, Economic Growth and Prosperity
2. Date:	23 April 2012
3. Title:	Rotherham Local Site System – Annual Series update
4. Programme Area:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

This report seeks approval of an update of the list of Local Wildlife Sites in Rotherham. The information forms part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework and is used in the determination of relevant planning applications.

6. Recommendations

- That the Rotherham Local Wildlife Site 2011 boundaries (as shown in Appendix 1 of this report) be accepted;

Proposal and Details

Rotherham's Local Wildlife Site series identifies sites of substantive nature conservation value in accordance with Defra best practice. RMBC Cabinet approved the adoption of the Rotherham Local Wildlife Site system and the initial series of site boundaries in 2008 (17 December 2008, minute 139).

Sites of wildlife interest can change over time due to management practices and natural processes; the Rotherham Local Wildlife Site system accommodates this by enabling new sites to be added and for site boundaries to be changed or removed as and when new areas of interest are identified or if sites no longer meet the standards set by the system. The process for this involves the Local Wildlife Site Panel assessing and agreeing site based data and for the results of this analysis to then be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Town Centres, Economic Growth and Prosperity for approval (submissions previously made to Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Environment). The 2010 series of Local Wildlife Site boundaries was accepted by Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Environment 24.01.2011 under minute G96.

During 2011 ten sites were proposed as either new candidate Local Wildlife Sites or as extensions to existing Local Wildlife Sites; site base data was collected where possible and the existing data held by the Rotherham Biological Records Centre was extracted. The combined data for each site was then assessed against the Rotherham Local Wildlife Site selection criteria. Of the ten sites two sites demonstrated that they were of substantive nature conservation value by meeting at least one of the selection criteria and it is now proposed that these are added to the existing Local Wildlife Site series. The sites proposed for addition are listed below and Appendix 1 of this report shows the full series with the proposed additional sites highlighted.

- **candidate LWS122 – Treeton Colliery (ex spoil tip) [includes Well Lane Lagoons and Treeton Meadows], Treeton:** qualifies under selection criteria RI1c: Flowing water vascular plants, G2: Plant species for semi-natural neutral grassland, G2: Plant species for semi-natural calcareous grassland and G3: Plant species for semi-natural acid grassland
- **candidate LWS123 – Larch Plantation, Maltby:** qualifies under selection criteria W3: Vascular Indicator Plants of Neutral to Calcareous Woodland

RMBC Asset Management has been consulted and has confirmed that there is no objection to the proposed additional sites. Larch Plantation is in RMBC ownership and is included in the current development proposal for Maltby Lilly Hall School, which was granted conditionally on 28 February 2012; minor tree removal is needed to create a safe pedestrian access to the school. RMBC's ecologist has been involved in the development of the school proposals and there is not considered to be any impact on the Local Wildlife Site status as a result of the development.

8. Finance

The cost of the Local Wildlife Site update work has been met by the EDS Forward Planning budget.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The operation of a Local Site System enables RMBC to demonstrate compliance with current legislation and planning policy including the need to have a robust evidence base. Designation is based on scientific reasoning and, in accordance with national best practice (Defra, Local Sites: Guidance on their Identification, Selection and Management, 2006), the system includes all sites that qualify.

The Local Wildlife Site System, as approved, includes a responsibility for any additions and amendments to the site list to be reported annually to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Environment (responsibility is now with Cabinet Member for Town Centres, Economic Growth and Prosperity). The approval for the amendments proposed for 2011 is sought now to enable the updated series of sites to be reflected in the preparation of the Local Development Framework and in the determination of relevant planning applications.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Planning Policy Statement 12 (ODPM, 2008) states that areas of protection, such as nationally protected landscape and internationally, nationally and locally designated areas and sites, should be included on adopted proposals maps.

Planning Policy Statement 9 (ODPM 2005) states that 'sites of regional and local biodiversity and geological interest, which include Regionally Important Geological Sites, Local Nature Reserves and Local Sites, have a fundamental role to play in meeting overall national biodiversity targets; contributing to the quality of life and the wellbeing of the community; and in supporting research and education. Criteria-based policies should be established in local development documents against which proposals for any development on, or affecting, such sites will be judged.'

Planning for Biodiversity and Geological conservation – A guide to Good Practice (ODPM 2005) states that local development frameworks should indicate the location of designated sites of importance for biodiversity and geodiversity, making clear distinctions between the hierarchy of international, national, regional and locally designated sites'.

The maintenance of a Local Site system and positive site management are essential elements of Single Data List Indicator 160-01 – 'Positive management of local sites'.

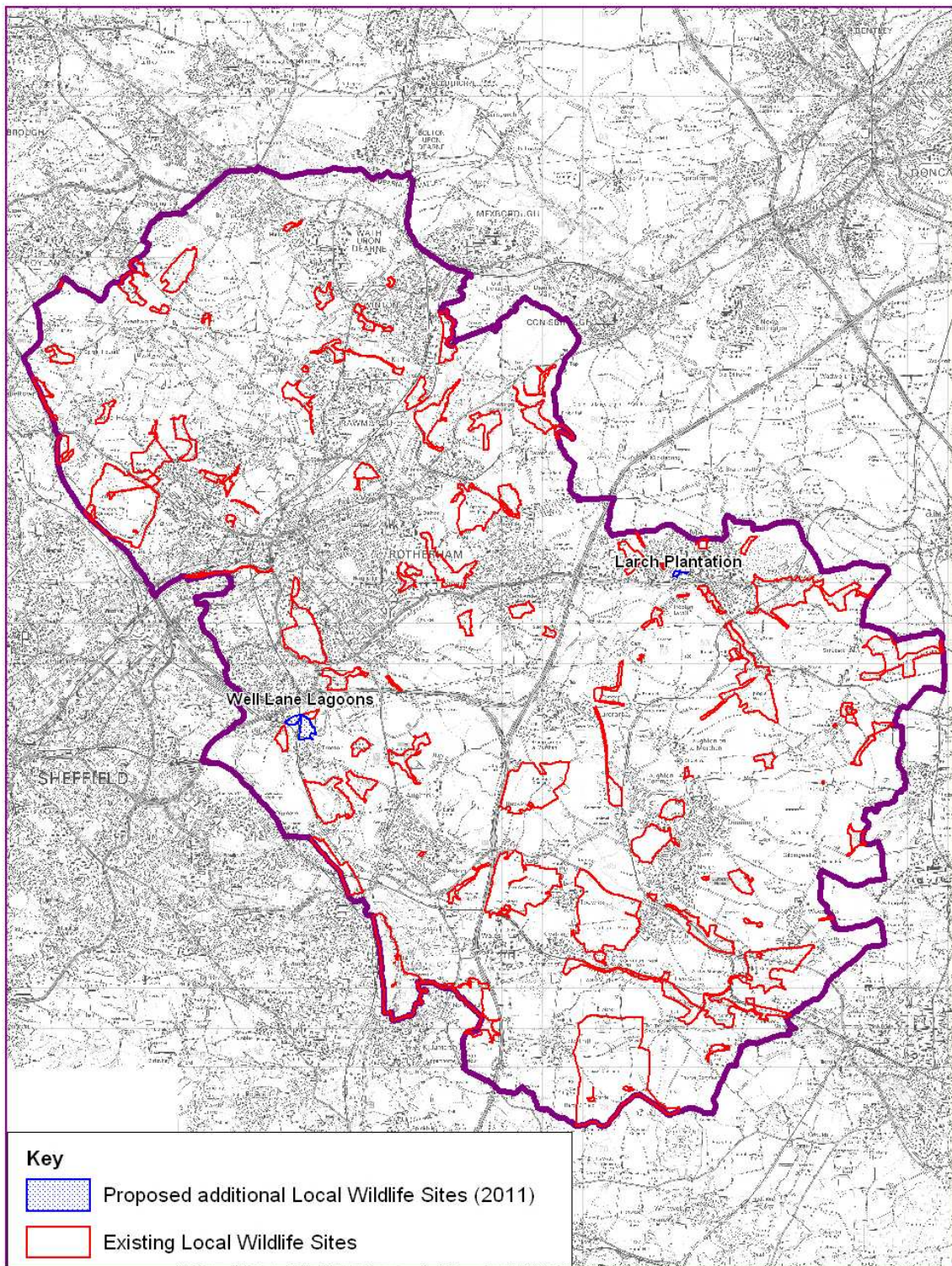
11. Background Papers and Consultation

- Baker Shepherd Gillespie - Ecological Consultants (April 2007)
Rotherham Local Wildlife Site System:
 - Part 1: The Framework for Rotherham's Local Wildlife Site System,
 - Part 2: Site Selection Guidelines for Rotherham.
- Defra Local Sites – Guidance on their Identification, Selection and Management (February 2006)
- Former Cabinet Member for Economic and Regeneration and Development Services (5.4.2006) RMBC <http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk>

- Former Cabinet Member for Economic and Regeneration and Development Services (24.11.2008) RMBC <http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk>
- ODPM Planning Policy Statement 9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (2005)
- ODPM Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – A guide to Good Practice (ODPM 2005)
- ODPM Planning Policy Statement 12 – Local Development Frameworks (2008)
- RMBC Cabinet (17.12.08) <http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk>
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- RMBC Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Environment (24.01.2011) <http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk>

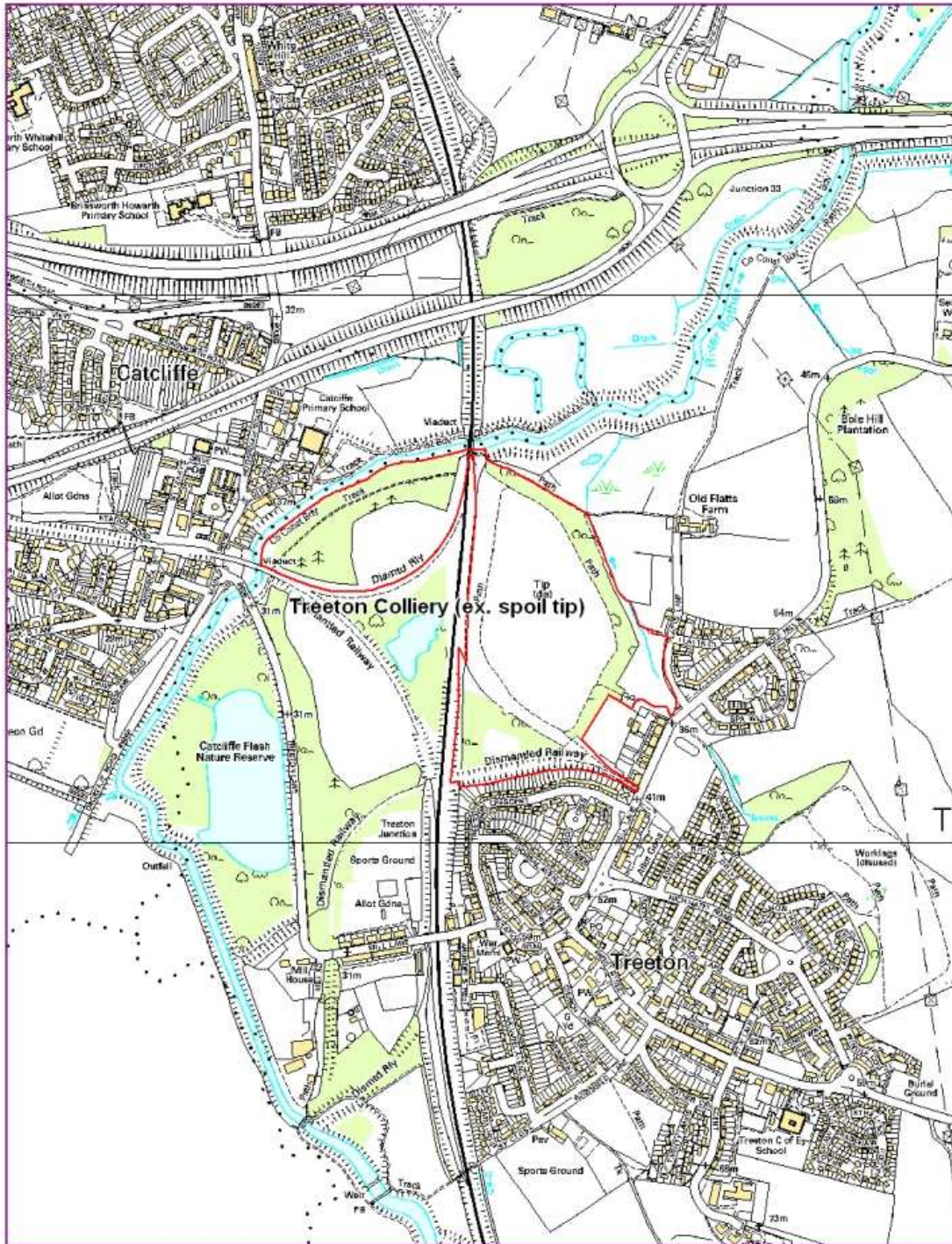
Contact Names: Carolyn Barber, Ecology Development Officer 822462.

Appendix One



Rotherham Local Wildlife Sites: 2011 Proposed Additions

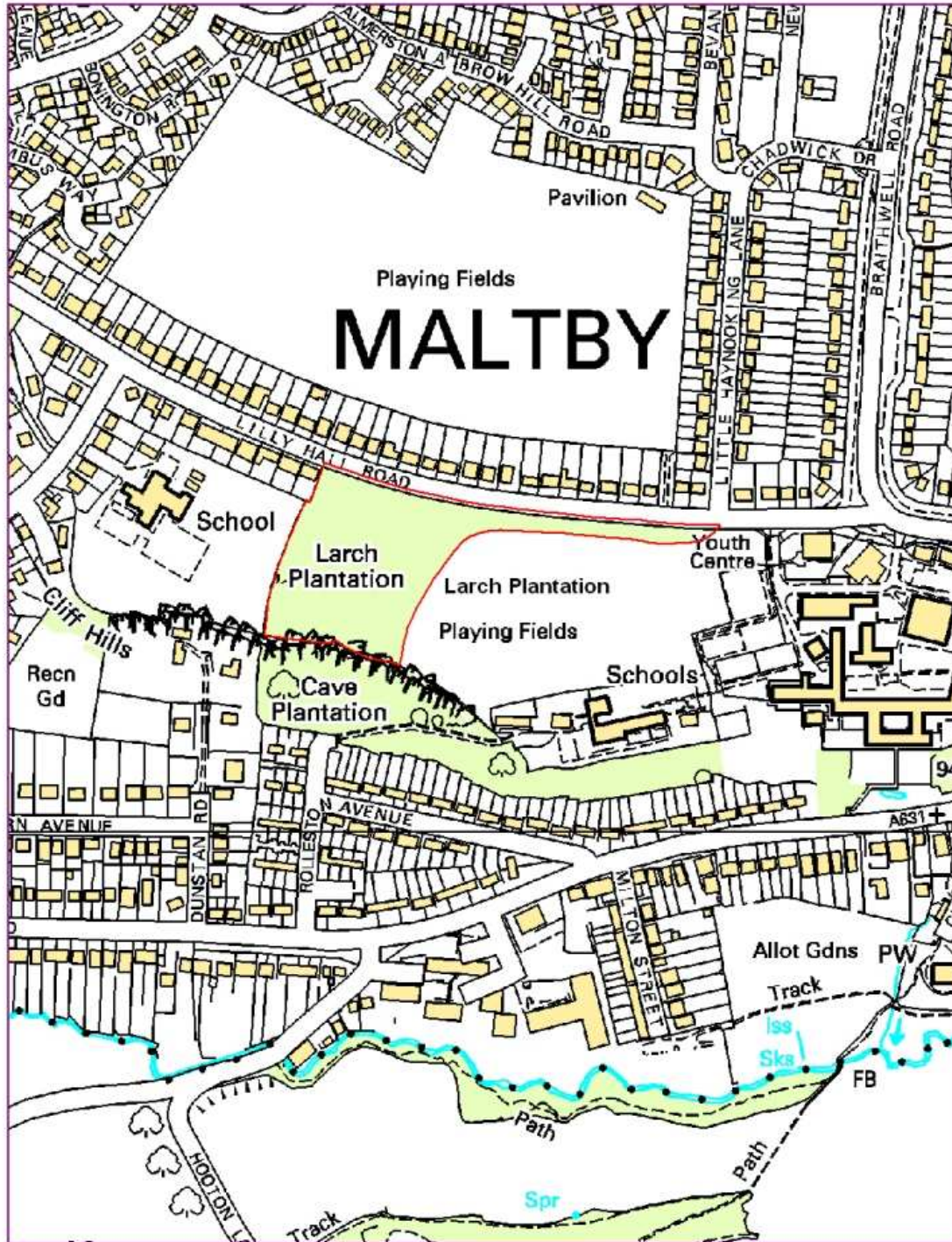
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**LWS122 - Treeton Colliery (ex spoil tip)
[includes Well Lane Lagoons and Treeton Meadows], Treeton**

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LWS123 – Larch Plantation, Maltby

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