Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) partial review paper

Addendum to the SINC Report 2016

17 May 2022

Contents

Purpose of this paper

The purpose of this paper is to provide an addendum to the adopted SINC Report 2016, provide additional information and describe the review process that has taken place since the SINC Report was adopted.

Section 1 of this paper introduces Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and describes how they are protected. **Section 2** describes the SINC partial review and selection process undertaken by the Council. **Section 3** sets out the schedule of changes to SINC resulting from this partial review.

Section 4 includes the revised and new SINC citations. Each citation includes the site name, reference, description, and aerial image showing the extent of the SINC boundary. These revised citations replace those of the same reference number within Part II of the SINC Report 2016. The new SINC citations add to the total number of formally designated SINC within the borough.

Executive summary

Sites of importance for nature conservation (SINC) are the best examples of non-statutory designated local wildlife sites across Greater London. London Borough of Bexley has carried out a partial review of SINC within the borough that began in 2017 and concluded in January 2022.

The review has resulted in amendments to eight existing SINC and the designation of two new SINC. The final schedule of changes is set out in Table 1 in section 3 of this paper. Citations describe the key features of each site.

Three existing SINC citations have been updated, comprising:

1) Erith Marshes Metropolitan SINC
2) Sidcup Railsides Borough SINC
3) Railsides from Bexleyheath to Slade Green Triangle Borough SINC

Five changes to existing SINC boundaries and their citations updated, comprising:

4) an extension of the Crayford Rough Metropolitan SINC boundary
5) an extension of the Norman's Wood Borough SINC boundary to include a pond at Dartford Road
6) an amendment to the Edendale Road Local SINC boundary resulting in removal of part of the existing SINC, and extension to include an additional area within the SINC
7) a reduction in the size of the Erith Quarry Borough SINC to reflect the footprint of new development
8) a reduction in the size of the Whitehall Lane Borough SINC removing the amenity grassland

Two new SINC have been designated, new boundaries and citations have been created for both, comprising:

9) a new designation for a Borough SINC at Our Lady of the Angels Woodland
10) a new designation for a Borough SINC at Parish's Pit Woodland

1. Sites of importance for nature conservation and their protection

1.1. Paragraphs 1.2 through to 1.5 below replace paragraphs 1.11 through 1.16 in the SINC Report 2016. Figures 1 and 2 in this addendum replace Figures 1 and 2 in the SINC Report 2016.

1.2. London contains many places of value for biodiversity below the national level of importance. London's local wildlife sites are recognised by the Mayor of London and the London boroughs as sites of importance for nature conservation (SINC). SINC are the best examples of non-statutory designated sites identified by local authorities. More information on London's biodiversity and SINC is available on the Mayor of London's website.

1.3. Between 2013 and 2014 a full review of all designated SINC within Bexley was undertaken, resulting in 60 SINC being adopted and published by the Council in the SINC Report 2016. A partial review of designated SINC was carried out as part of the Council's review of its local plan, resulting in the revision of eight designated SINC and the designation of two new borough grade II SINC. These changes were approved and the register updated in January 2022. Full details of each SINC are set out in in **Part II**.

1.4. Also as part of the local plan review, the Council has reviewed all SINC boundaries to check for historical inaccuracies and minor factual changes have been made to the SINC boundaries across the borough as a result. These minor changes are reflected on the Draft Local Plan submission policies map and in the records held by Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL), the environmental records centre for London.

1.5. In total, 62 SINC are designated within London Borough of Bexley. These are illustrated on **Figure 1** and are designated within the following hierarchy of types:

1) **Sites of Metropolitan Importance** are selected on a London-wide basis and represent the highest tier of sites. Eight Metropolitan SINC have been designated in Bexley.

2) **Sites of Borough Importance** (grade 1 and 2) are selected from candidates within each borough, so ensuring that each borough has some sites identified. These are divided into two grades based on their quality, but all are important in the borough context. There are currently 17 Borough Grade I SINC and 25 Borough Grade II SINC designated within the borough.

3) **Sites of Local Importance** are the lowest tier of sites, selected to redress any remaining local deficiencies. These sites provide people with access to nature close to home. There are currently 12 designated Local SINC in the borough.

Designated sites of importance for nature conservation

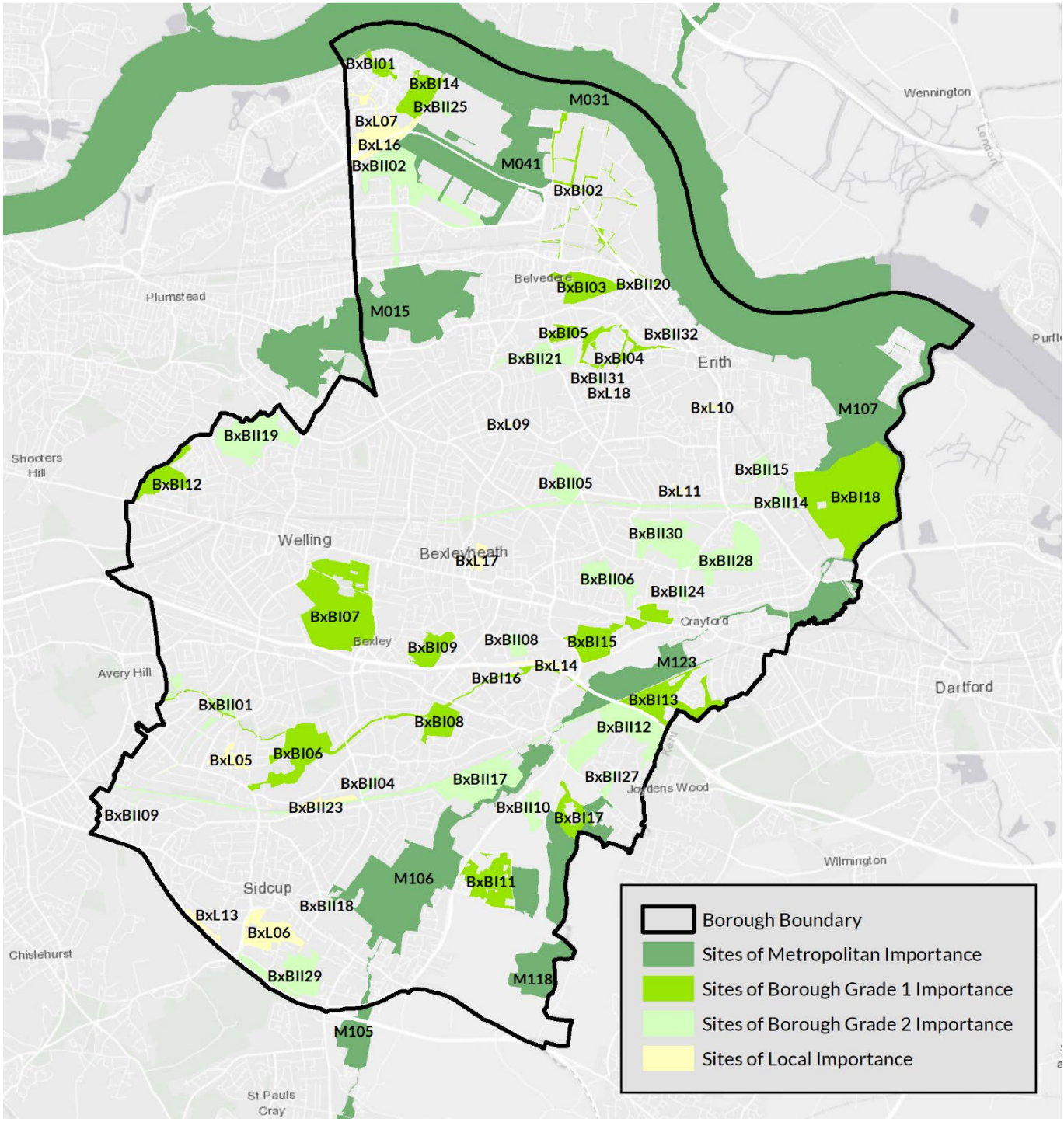

Figure 1: Map illustrating Bexley's Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

Strategic green wildlife corridors

1.6. The richness of Bexley's natural environment also includes wildlife corridors along waterways and railways as well as on the River Thames and its tributaries. These contribute to the ability of wildlife to move between larger sites and extend their distribution into parts of London where they would otherwise not be present. The 14 strategic green wildlife corridors within the borough are illustrated on Figure 2.

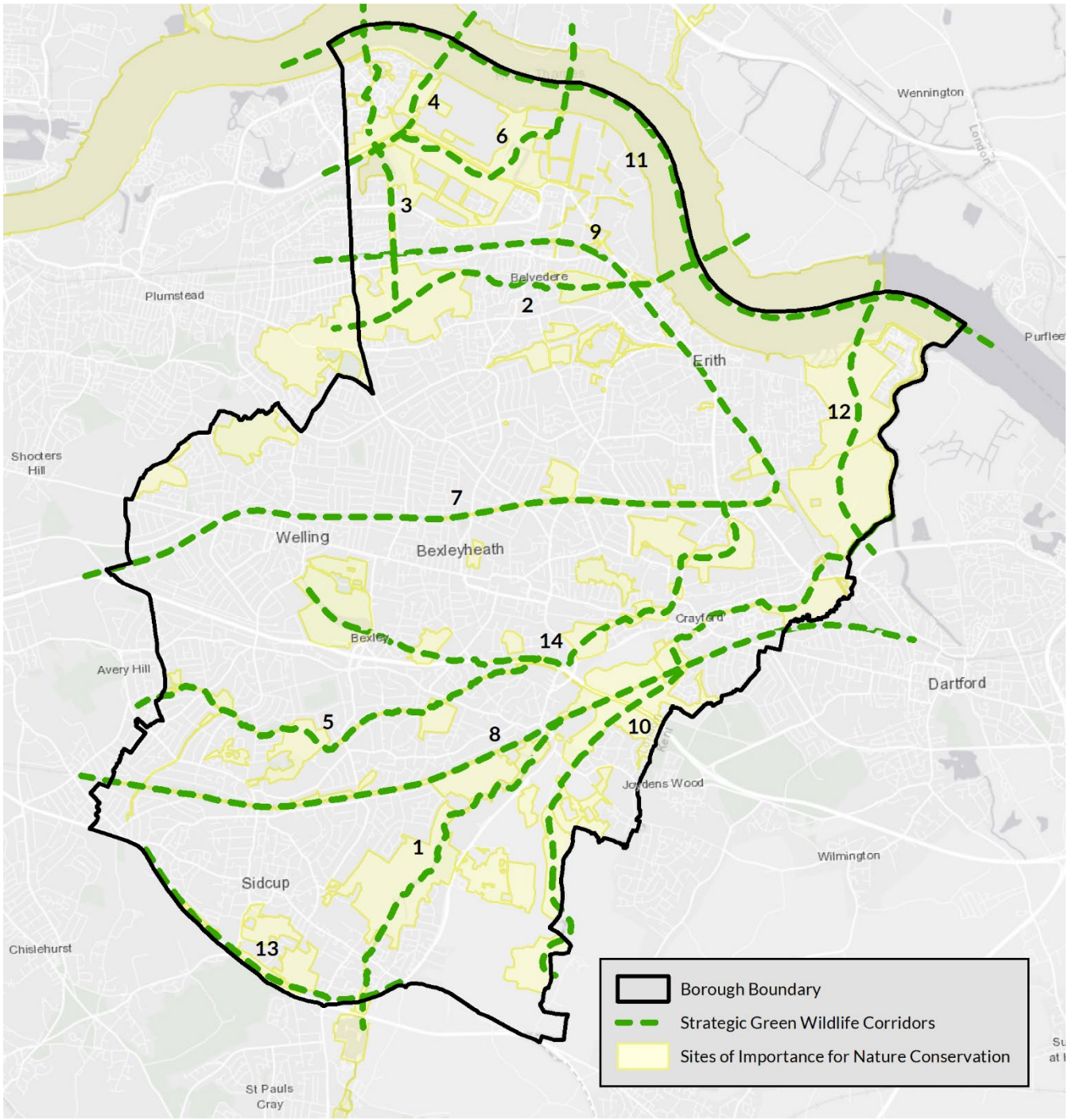

Figure 2: Map illustrating Bexley's strategic green wildlife corridors

Protection through the planning system

1.7. The protection for non-statutory SINC comes through the planning system. SINC is a land use designation conferred through the borough's development plan, primarily comprised of the London Plan 2021 and Bexley Local Plan 2012. The SINC land-use designation is a material planning consideration.

1.8. Currently, the most relevant development plan policies that should be considered are London Plan policy G6 on biodiversity and access to nature, Bexley Core Strategy policy CS18 on biodiversity and geology, and Bexley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies TS10, TS18, TS19 and WAS3.

These and other policies and associated guidance are considered by the planning authority when determining planning applications.

1.9. Bexley's Draft Local Plan has recently been submitted to the Secretary of State to undergo a public examination of the document. This will be carried out by independent Inspectors appointed by the Planning Inspectorate. Once adopted, the new Bexley Local Plan will replace the policies in the current Local Plan 2012, comprised of the Core Strategy and remaining saved policies in the UDP.

1.10. Draft Local Plan policies SP9 and DP20 on biodiversity and geodiversity in developments are most relevant to SINC. The purpose of these policies is 'not only to secure the protection of SINC from harm or loss but also help to enhance them and their connection to wider ecological networks.' This approach is supported by national policy and guidance.

1.11. Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL) is the official custodian of information on London's more than 1,600 sites of importance for nature conservation (SINCs) – their citations and boundary information. This is the capital's official environmental records centre; collating, managing and providing detailed information on London's wildlife, nature reserves, woodlands, parks, gardens and other green spaces.

1.12. Anyone can submit a wildlife sighting to GiGL, whether it's a rare species or more familiar animals and plants. By submitting wildlife sightings, this adds to information known about the borough's wildlife, and ensures the planning authority and developers have access to an up-to-date evidence base at key stages of the planning application process.

Legal protection

1.13. SINC, also known outside of London as Local Wildlife Sites, is a non-statutory designation and has no direct legal protection. However, criteria for selection of SINC takes into account its importance for protected and priority species. Therefore, landowners and others who manage or visit SINC should be aware of their responsibilities under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which provides legal protection for certain species and habitats.

1.14. The Wildlife Crime Unit of the Metropolitan Police can be contacted for advice and, if necessary, they will investigate whether a wildlife crime has been or has the potential to be committed. If unsure, then a precautionary approach is advisable and contact with the police should be made as early as possible so that they can investigate and intervene if necessary.

1.15. Natural England has published guidance that developers should refer to on how to prepare a planning application when there are protected species on or near a proposed development site that explains what needs to be considered.

2. Sites of importance for nature conservation partial review selection process

2.1. The process for selecting and confirming Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) in Greater London is set out in the London Wildlife Sites Board (LWSB) Advice Note, adopted by the Mayor of London.

Site identification

2.2. As part of the review of its local plan, the Council held a public 'call for sites' exercise, which was conducted in mid-2017. Residents, landowners and other interested parties were asked to submit details of sites that they wanted to be assessed for future development potential or change of land use designation, including potential SINC land use.

2.3. All sites submitted to the Council from the call-for-sites exercise were assessed for their suitability to accommodate the proposed use. The site assessments and Council's recommendations for land use were included within the local plan Regulation 18 stage consultation paper '*Preferred approaches to planning policies and land-use designations*' that was publicly consulted upon in early 2019.

2.4. The consultation also provided an opportunity for landowners and interested parties to provide comments on existing SINC shown within the adopted SINC Report 2016 and submit requests to amend SINC boundaries.

Site assessment

2.5. Fourteen sites were identified from the process to be considered for SINC designation changes or for boundary amendments. Land Use Consultants (LUC) were appointed to undertake an independent ecological assessment of the 14 sites, assessing each site against the standard SINC criteria. The purpose of the ecological assessments was to determine whether the sites had met the criteria to be afforded a SINC land-use designation. **Appendix 1** sets out the complete ecological assessment by LUC.

2.6. The surveys undertaken by LUC comprised a rapid form of Phase 1 Habitat Survey in accordance with Joint Nature Conservation Committee methodology. This included mapping the sites' broad constituent habitats. Detailed target notes were taken for notable habitats only.

2.7. The sites were also subject to an assessment using the Greater London Authority's Open Space and Habitat Survey Methodology. This methodology comprises part of a process set out in the LWSB Advice Note, by which London Boroughs should select and approve SINC. This process was specifically designed to enable the identification of SINC, using the criteria set out below.

• access	• aesthetic appeal	• ancient character
• cultural or historic character	• geographic position	• habitat rarity
• habitat richness	• important populations of species	• potential
• recreatability	• representation	• size
• species richness	• typical urban character	• use

Table 1: Criteria for identifying SINC

2.8. Mapping showing 'Ecological Constraints and Opportunities' is presented in LUC's ecological assessment (Appendix 2) alongside the SINC recommendations. The mapping was colour coded to

illustrate the ecological value of habitats within the site and identify the potential of these habitats to support protected species. The colours were assigned as high potential (green), medium potential (orange) and low potential (red).

2.9. LUC also produced a Green Infrastructure Study for Bexley. Chapter 10 of the study presents an overview of the ecological networks in the borough. Chapter 6 and appendix D of the study includes comprehensive open space surveys and assessments. The surveys and assessments were reviewed as part of the desk study to ensure they were in line with the recommendations of LUC's ecological assessment (**Appendix 1**)

Consideration of ecologist recommendations

2.10. The Council summarised and tabulated the findings and recommendations of LUC's ecological assessment, considered other evidence, and then added the Council's considerations of the findings and proposals for the 14 sites.

2.11. As a result, 10 of the 14 sites assessed by LUC were proposed to be updated, either incorporating boundary changes or the designation of new SINC. The Council produced maps that illustrated the proposed boundary changes. **Appendix 2** sets out this work.

2.12. To ensure the assessment benefitted from additional consideration by individuals and organisations with knowledge of the sites and of nature, the Council undertook a six-week public consultation on the findings, recommendations and proposed changes. The Council invited comments from interested parties on the survey data, approach to surveys, recommendations and conclusions contained within the independent ecological review (**Appendix 2**) and on the Council's proposals (**Appendix 3**).

2.13. This consultation was targeted at those who had an interest in the land and those who had an interest or expertise in nature conservation although comments were welcomed from anyone who had an interest. The closing date of the public consultation was Friday 7 May 2021.

Consideration of consultation responses

2.14. Thirteen responses were received during the public consultation period. Five responses were received from landowners and/or consultants and responses were also received from the Bexley Natural Environment Forum, Bexley Civic Society, three local nature conservation experts/ specialists/ manager, and one resident. Natural England and the Environment Agency each responded with no comments on the proposed SINC changes. Representations were received on both the survey approach and individual sites

2.15. The Council produced a consultation statement and updated boundary changes paper that set out the Council's response to representations made during the public consultation. As a result of the evidence received from the public consultation, the Council revised its approach to some of the sites and produced a 'final schedule of changes to SINC' and a map for each boundary change. **Appendix 3** sets out this work.

2.16. Working with GiGL, the environmental records centre for London, the Council prepared 10 proposed site citations. One proposed citation for each of the two new SINC and one for each of the eight existing SINC to update the site information.

London Wildlife Sites Board (LWSB)

2.17. The LWSB reviews the site selection process undertaken by London boroughs and confirms, or otherwise, that the process undertaken is consistent with the guidance set out in the LWSB Advice Note. The primary role of the LWSB is to ensure consistency of approach across Greater London.

2.18. The Council submitted its partial review '*consultation statement and updated boundary changes*' paper (**Appendix 3**) along with the proposed citations to the LWSB in November 2021. The LWSB meeting, chaired by the Greater London Authority, took place in January 2022. The LWSB did not raise any concerns with the Council following the meeting. Changes to SINC were approved for adoption by the Councils Cabinet Member for Growth.

3. Schedule of changes

3.1. This section outlines the changes to SINC that have been adopted by the Council as a result of the partial review of SINC.

3.2. The partial SINC review process has resulted in amendments to eight existing SINC and the designation of two new SINC. This includes changes to five existing SINC boundaries and an update to each citation, updates to three existing SINC citations to reflect new site information, and the designation of two new SINC. Table 1, below, includes the final schedule of adopted changes to the SINC land-use designation.

3.3. Table 1 includes the 2016 reference number and SINC name to which each site is referred to in the SINC Report 2016; a summary of changes made because of the partial review; the new SINC name and number; along with the site ID and site name used by LUC during the partial review surveys (**Appendix 1**).

3.4. **Section 4** of this paper sets out the final set of site citations including boundary maps. The adopted boundary changes to the SINC designation are reflected on the Draft local plan submission policies map, and the '*Schedule of changes to the Bexley Draft Local Plan and submission policies map*.' The adopted changes are also reflected in the records held by Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL), the environmental records centre for London.

2016 SINC Reference	2016 SINC name (SINC Report 2016)	Changes made	New SINC Reference	New SINC Name	2019 survey Site ID	2019 survey (appendix 1) site name
M041	Erith Marshes	citation update	No change	No change	2	Veridion Park Industrial Estate (Reedbed habitats)
M123	Crayford Rough	Boundary extension/name change/citation update	No change	Crayford Meadows	3	Greenfield land adjacent to Crayford Rough
BxBII27	Norman's Wood and Tile Kiln Lane	Boundary extension/name change/citation update	No change	Tile Kiln Lane, Norman's Wood, and Cypry Angel Pool	5b	Land at Dartford Road (pond habitat)
BxBII23	Sidcup Rail sides	Citation update	No change	No change	8	Land at Jubilee Way

2016 SINC Reference	2016 SINC name (SINC Report 2016)	Changes made	New SINC Reference	New SINC Name	2019 survey Site ID	2019 survey (appendix 1) site name
BxBI04	Erith Quarry and Fraser Road	Boundary reduction & extension/citation update	No change	No change	9	Erith Quarry
BxBII15	Slade Green Recreation Ground	Boundary reduction/name change/citation update	No change	Whitehall Lane Recreation Ground	10a	Urban Open Space at Whitehall Lane
BxBII14	Rail sides from Bexleyheath to Slade Green Triangle	Citation update	No change	No change	11	Former Allotments at Howbury Lane
BxL11	Edendale Road, Bexleyheath	Boundary reduction & extension/name change/citation update	No change	Edendale Road and Cheviot Close	12	Edendale Road (Cheviot Close and Venners Close), Barnehurst
None	None	New SINC	BxBII31	Our Lady of the Angels Woodland	13	Our Lady of the Angels Church Woodland
None	None	New SINC	BxBII32	Parish's Pit Woodland	14	Rail Corridor and Sandbank between Fraser/Bexley Rd, Bronze Age Way and Sandcliffe Rd

Table 2: Schedule of adopted changes to the SINC land-use designation

4. Site-by-site review

4.1. This section sets out the full citations of the 10 SINC, reflecting the changes set out in Table 2 above. The eight revised citations, M041, M123, BxBII27, BxBII23, BxBI04, BxBII15, BxBII14 and BxL11, replace citations of the same reference number within Part II of the SINC Report 2016. The two new borough grade II SINC citations, BxBII31 and BxBII32, add to the total number of SINC within the borough.

4.2. The site-by-site review is composed of a series of citations relating to each of the 10 designated sites in order of SINC grade from highest to lowest. Each citation notes the SINC grade, gives a description of the site and provides a current boundary map overlaid on an aerial image. The 10 citations below are set out in order from the highest to the lowest grade of SINC in the hierarchy of types, beginning with the Sites of Metropolitan Importance.

Sites of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation

M041 Erith Marshes

Grade:	**Metropolitan**
Site Reference:	**M041**
Site Name:	**Erith Marshes**
Summary:	**One of the very few remaining areas of Thames-side grazing marsh in London, supporting scarce birds, plants and insects.**
Grid ref:	**TQ 485 803**
Area (ha):	**88.59**
Borough(s):	**Bexley**
Habitat(s):	**Brownfield, Pond/Lake, Reed bed, Roughland, Scattered trees, Scrub, Secondary woodland, Unimproved neutral grassland, Wader scrapes, Wet ditches, Wet grassland**
Access:	**Access on public footpaths only**
Ownership:	**Thames Water and Private**

Site description:

This is one of the few remaining examples of Thames-side grazing marshes. The flora of the old sea walls includes several regionally scarce species: corn parsley (Petroselinum segetum), knotted hedge-parsley (Torilis nodosa) and narrow-leaved pepperwort (Lepidium ruderale). The wetland flora is also diverse, including horned pondweed (Zanichellia palustris), wild celery (Apium graveolens), lesser reedmace (Typha angustifolium), pink water-speedwell (Veronica catenata) and marsh and water docks (Rumex palustris, R. hydrolapathum), which are all rare in London.

Although quite rank in places, the grassland is comprised of a characteristic Thames grazing marsh community, typified by abundant meadow barley (Hordeum secalinum). There are also extensive areas of scrub, tall herbs and ruderal vegetation within the Crossness Sewage Treatment Works. An area of brownfield habitat in the east of the site supports the London notable plants dittander (Lepidium latfolium) and narrow-leaved bird's-foot-trefoil (Lotus glaber) while soapwort (Saponaria officinalis) can be found along the footpath running along the southern edge of Crossness Sewage Treatment Works. Additional flora found across the site includes borrers saltmarsh grass (Puccinellia fasciculata), brackish water-crowfoot, (Ranunculus baudotii), hairlike pondweed (Potamogeton trichoides), trifid bur-marigold (Bidens tripartite) marsh yellow-cress (Rorippa palustris) and golden dock (Rumex maritimus).

A number of notable species were not found during a 2016 survey, including corn parsley and pink water-speedwell, but due to access issues to many of the wetland areas it cannot be determined whether they were still present or not.

The site is also important for its breeding and wintering avifauna. Breeding species include barn owl, teal, lapwing, ringed plover, reed warbler, sedge warbler, reed bunting, linnet and skylark. Regular wintering birds include pintail, snipe, redshank, dunlin, black-tailed godwit and green sandpiper. The site also serves as a commuting route for bats, while the ditches support an important population of the specially protected water vole, as well as the fish rudd and tench. Invertebrates include the common emerald damselfly (Lestes sponsa), roesel's bush-cricket (Metrioptera roeselii), shrill carder-bee (Bombus sylvarum), and brown banded carder bee (Bombus humilis). Wet ditch habitats around the periphery of the site support rare botanical communities associated with salt marsh such as dittander, water vole and reptiles, including commuting grass snakes. A variety of Red Data Book and notable invertebrates are also found on site.

Large areas of the site are managed for wildlife conservation, with part of the site to the north of Eastern Way managed by Thames Water as a nature reserve. Public access to Erith Marshes is restricted to footpaths and there is permit access to the nature reserve, through Thames Water's Friends of Crossness Nature Reserve scheme. In 2006 Thames Water opened a permissive footpath through Crossness Southern Marsh, south of Eastern Way.

Site first notified:	**19/09/1988**	**Mayor Agreed:**	**25/11/2002**
Boundary last changed:	12/11/2021	Defunct:	N
Citation last edited:	01/12/2021	Last Updated:	11/01/2022

Figure 3: M041 Erith Marshes

M123 Crayford Meadows

Grade:	**Metropolitan**
Site Reference:	**M123**
Site Name:	**Crayford Meadows**
Summary:	**This former rail yard has developed a variety of habitats, creating a home for a wide range of animals and plants.**
Grid ref:	**TQ 512 744**
Area (ha):	**9.13**
Borough(s):	**Bexley**
Habitat(s):	**Ruderal, Scattered trees, Scrub, Secondary woodland, Semi-improved neutral grassland, Tall herbs, Wet ditches, Wet grassland**
Access:	**Free public access (all/most of site)**
Ownership:	**London Borough of Bexley and Private**

Site Description:

Situated alongside the River Cray, this former railyard has developed a variety of habitats supporting an exceptionally diverse flora and fauna. These form part of an important wildlife corridor which contains the River Cray, reservoirs, pasture, woodland and heathland.

Plants of note include the nationally scarce yellow vetchling (Lathyrus aphaca) together with many other London rarities, such as narrow-leaved bird's-foot-trefoil (Lotus glaber), blue fleabane (Erigeron acer), pyramidal orchid (Anacamptis pyramidalis) and a population of bee orchid (Ophrys apifera), although blue fleabane and bee orchid were not found during a 2016 survey. The scrub and young woodland supports an important breeding bird community, including cuckoo, lesser whitethroat, yellowhammer and reed bunting. Slow worms and common lizard can also be found. The invertebrate fauna is also likely to be of interest and green hairstreak butterfly are present.

An area to the east of the site has been added as it includes continuous habitat that supports notable species such as pyramidal orchid and yellow vetchling, as well as reptiles such as common lizard and important woodland edge breeding bird communities.

Scrub encroachment has become a problem around important plant populations, isolating pockets of grassland and generating shade in the north of the site. Most of the southern section appeared to have not been cut for several years and had developed a thick grassland sward with plentiful tall herb stands. It is suggested that to reduce this successional process and improve the grassland value for invertebrates and wildflowers it is placed on a 50% a year rotational cut with each 50% being cut in both spring (late March) and Autumn (a late October cut would be best to avoid harming reptiles). Cut material would need to be removed.

The site is currently used by the public for the enjoyment of nature and dog walking.

Site first notified:	**26/01/1993**	**Mayor Agreed:**	
Boundary last changed:	12/11/2021	Defunct:	N
Citation last edited:	01/12/2021	Last Updated:	11/01/2022

Figure 4: M123 Crayford Meadows

Sites of Borough Grade I Importance for Nature Conservation

BxBI04 Erith Quarry and Fraser Road

Grade:	**Borough Grade I**
Site Reference:	**BxBI04**
Site Name:	**Erith Quarry and Fraser Road**
Summary:	**This former quarry contains a mixture of woodland, scrub and grassland of value to a range of important birds, invertebrates and plants.**
Grid ref:	**TQ 503 780**
Area (ha):	**9.01**
Borough(s):	**Bexley**
Habitat(s):	**Ruderal, Scrub, Secondary woodland, Semi-improved neutral grassland, Semi-natural broadleaved woodland**
Access:	**Can be viewed from adjacent paths or roads only**
Ownership:	**London Borough of Bexley and Private (Excel Logistics)**

Site description:

This former quarry supports a rich mosaic of habitats, including woodland, tall ruderal, scrub and semi-improved neutral grassland habitats. The grassland and woodland are habitats of principle importance. Its rich flora communities are typical of former minerals extraction sites with low nutrient soils, with extensive rubble found within the soil.

The woodland edge habitat, despite comprising common and widespread species, is relatively species rich. Within the canopy layer there is dominant English oak (Quercus robur) with occasional sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus), rare rowan (Sorbus aucuparia), birch (Betula sp.), and wild cherry (Prunus avium). The scrub layer is more diverse with bramble (Rubus fruiticosus), goat willow (Salix caprea) and buddleia

(Buddleia davidii) with rare elder (Sambucus nigra), holly (Ilex aquifolium), Virginia creeper (Parthenocissus quinquefolia), white bryony (Bryonia alba), gorse (Ulex sp.), and dog rose (Rosa canina).

Ground flora includes locally dominant stands of bracken (Pteridium aquilinum), with nettle (Urtica dioica), creeping thistle (Cirsium arvensis) and herb Robert (Geranium robertum). Wood forget-me-not (Myosotis sylvatica) and native bluebell have also been recorded. The London notable species southern woodrush (Luzula forsteri), knotted hedge-parsley (Torilis nodosa), fern-grass (Catapodium rigidum), reflexed saltmarsh-grass (Puccinellia distans) and dittander (Lepidium latifolium) have previously been recorded at the site but were not identified in a 2014 survey.

Areas of tall ruderal habitat are also noted as species rich, including hogweed (Heraclius sphondylium), broad leaved dock (Rumex obtusifolius), mugwort (Artemisia vulgarisa), St. John's wort (Hypericum perforatum), ribwort plantain (Plantago major), scentless mayweed (Tripleurospermum inodorum), field poppy (Papaver rhoeas), fat hen (Chenopodium album), Lathyrus and unidentified Aster, although this area was highly disturbed by nearby construction during surveying. The grassland is false oat-grass (Arrhenatherum elatius) dominated.

The grassland and woodland periphery habitats are important for breeding and foraging bird species including kestrel, goldfinch, mistle thrush, song thrush, starling, spotted flycatcher, dunnock, bullfinch, greenfinch, linnet, willow warbler, meadow pipit and whitethroat. The Red List species house sparrow and song thrush are considered to breed here.

These habitats also support reptiles such as slow worm, common lizard and grass snake, amphibians, and a rich assemblage of invertebrates including abundant populations of common butterfly species and yellow meadow ant. The tall ruderal adjacent to the woodland form part of a mosaic of habitats that likely contribute to the rich assemblage of invertebrates. The habitats also provide suitable opportunities for wildlife travelling through the site, including badger, birds and bats. Generally low levels of bat registrations were recorded by detectors deployed overnight in strategic locations in a survey in 2014, with the vast majority pertaining to common pipistrelle bats.

The area in the centre of this site lies within a new housing development ('The Quarry') and has therefore been de-designated. The site is subject to an approved planning consent 14/02155/OUTM. The Ecological Mitigation and Management Plan secured through planning condition includes provisions to maximise the ecological value of retained and created habitats in the long-term.

There is potential for additional tree planting to increase woodland coverage around the periphery of the site, increasing species diversity of the woodland. It should be noted that grassland habitats on site are at risk of being lost to scrub encroachment, and Japanese Knotweed, an invasive plant species, has also been recorded.

Site first notified:	**01/11/1999**	**Mayor Agreed:**	
Boundary last changed:	12/11/2021	Defunct:	N
Citation last edited:	29/11/2021	Last Updated:	11/01/2022

Figure 5: BxBI04 Erith Quarry and Fraser Road

Sites of Borough Grade II Importance for Nature Conservation

BxBII14 Railsides from Bexleyheath to Slade Green Triangle

Grade:	**Borough Grade II**
Site Reference:	**BxBII14**
Site Name:	**Railsides from Bexleyheath to Slade Green Triangle**
Summary:	**Well-vegetated railway land visible from passing trains.**
Grid ref:	**TQ 508 762**
Area (ha):	**16.46**
Borough(s):	**Bexley**
Habitat(s):	**Ruderal, Scattered trees, Scrub, Semi-improved neutral grassland, Tall herbs**
Access:	**Can be viewed from adjacent paths or roads only**
Ownership:	**Network Rail**

Site description:

This site has been designated for its mosaic of dense scrub, rough grassland and scattered trees that support a wide assemblage of invertebrates, breeding birds, reptiles and badger. It forms part of an important commuting corridor for wildlife.

As the triangle at the eastern end is surrounded on all sides by railway land it is inaccessible and therefore largely undisturbed, making it a valuable refuge for wildlife. This area is vegetated with a mosaic of scrub and rough grassland. The scrub is dominated by bramble (Rubus fruticosus agg) and hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna), while the grassland is dominated by false oat-grass (Arrhenatherum elatius). Similar habitat extends into abandoned allotments north of the triangle. A number of associated ornamental plant species occur here which are unlikely to be encountered elsewhere within the borough, such as grape vine and

hops, which are of high ecological value to nesting birds and invertebrates. The species rich scrub also includes cherry, oak, hawthorn, blackthorn and bramble.

The wildlife habitats continue along the railsides to the west of the site. A cutting and then, further west, an embankment contain a mosaic of habitats, including scattered trees, scrub, tall herbs and rough grassland, and form a valuable wildlife corridor leading across the borough. Scrub includes scattered gorse (Ulex europaeus) and broom (Cytisus scoparius), while the grassland supports common wild flowers including oxeye daisy (Leucanthemum vulgare), wild carrot (Daucus carota) and toadflax (Linaria vulgaris), along with large stands of broad-leaved everlasting pea (Lathyrus latifolius). At Barnehurst station a number of uncommon plants can be found, including lesser meadow-rue (Thalictrum minus), wood spurge (Euphorbia amygdaloides), wood anemone (Anemone nemorosa) and common centaury (Centaurium erythraea); these may be the result of planting. Purple hairstreak butterflies occur around the oaks (Quercus sp) at Barnehurst station.

A 2016 survey found areas of scrub dominated by wild cherries with scattered oak and sycamore trees. Bramble was abundant together with cow parsley and several plants of buddleia were present. A patch of grassland was found to be mainly false oat-grass and Yorkshire fog. The site seemed to have a rich invertebrate fauna and provided a good habitat for breeding birds. However, the 2016 survey also found some fly-tipping present at the Howbury allotments, and the site would benefit from additional tree planting along the railside to strengthen ecological connectivity.

Site first notified:	**01/11/1991**	**Mayor Agreed:**	
Boundary last changed:	11/12/2013	Defunct:	N
Citation last edited:	29/11/2021	Last Updated:	11/01/2022

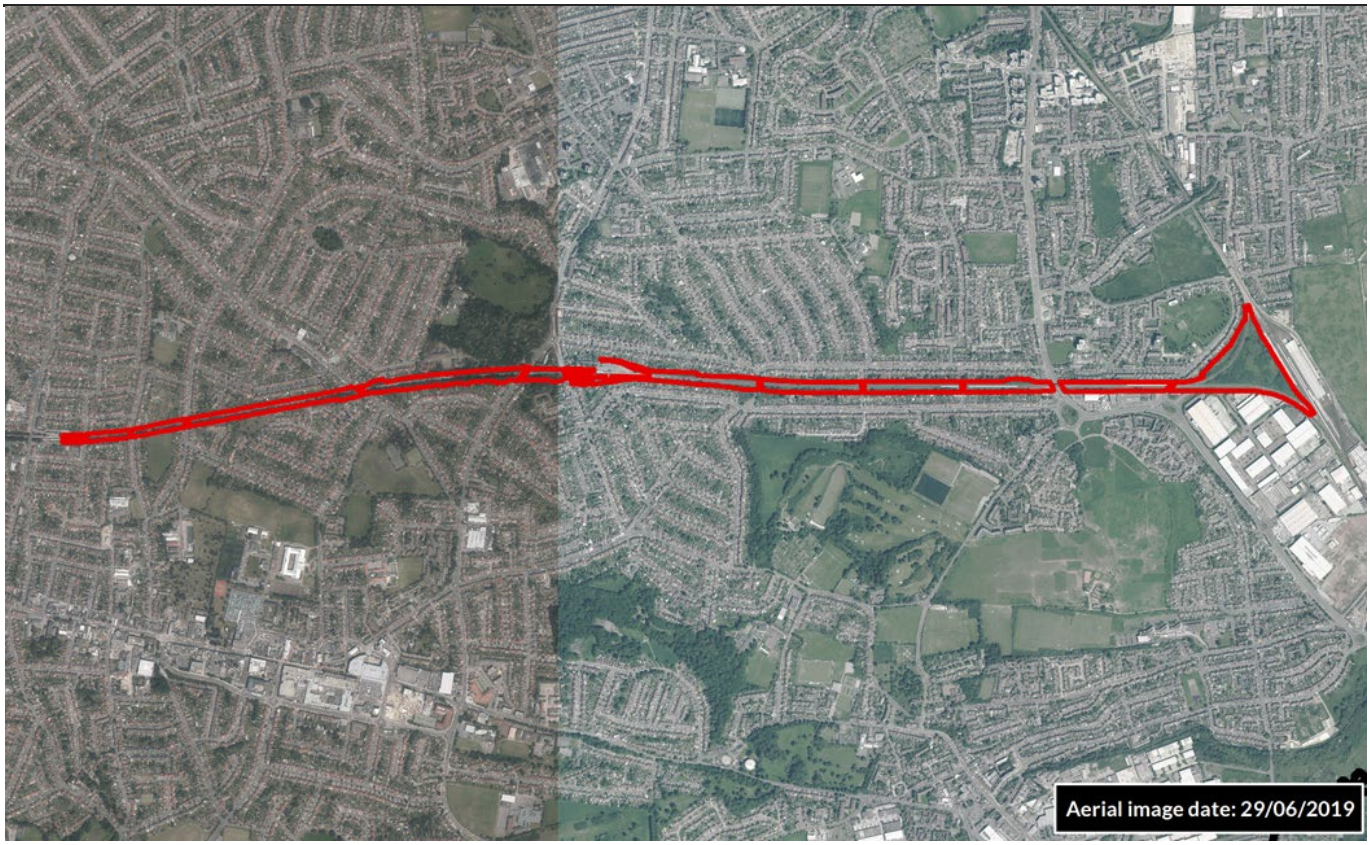

Figure 6: BxBII14 Railsides from Bexleyheath to Slade Green Triangle

Figure 7BxBII14 Railsides from Bexleyheath to Slade Green Triangle – western section

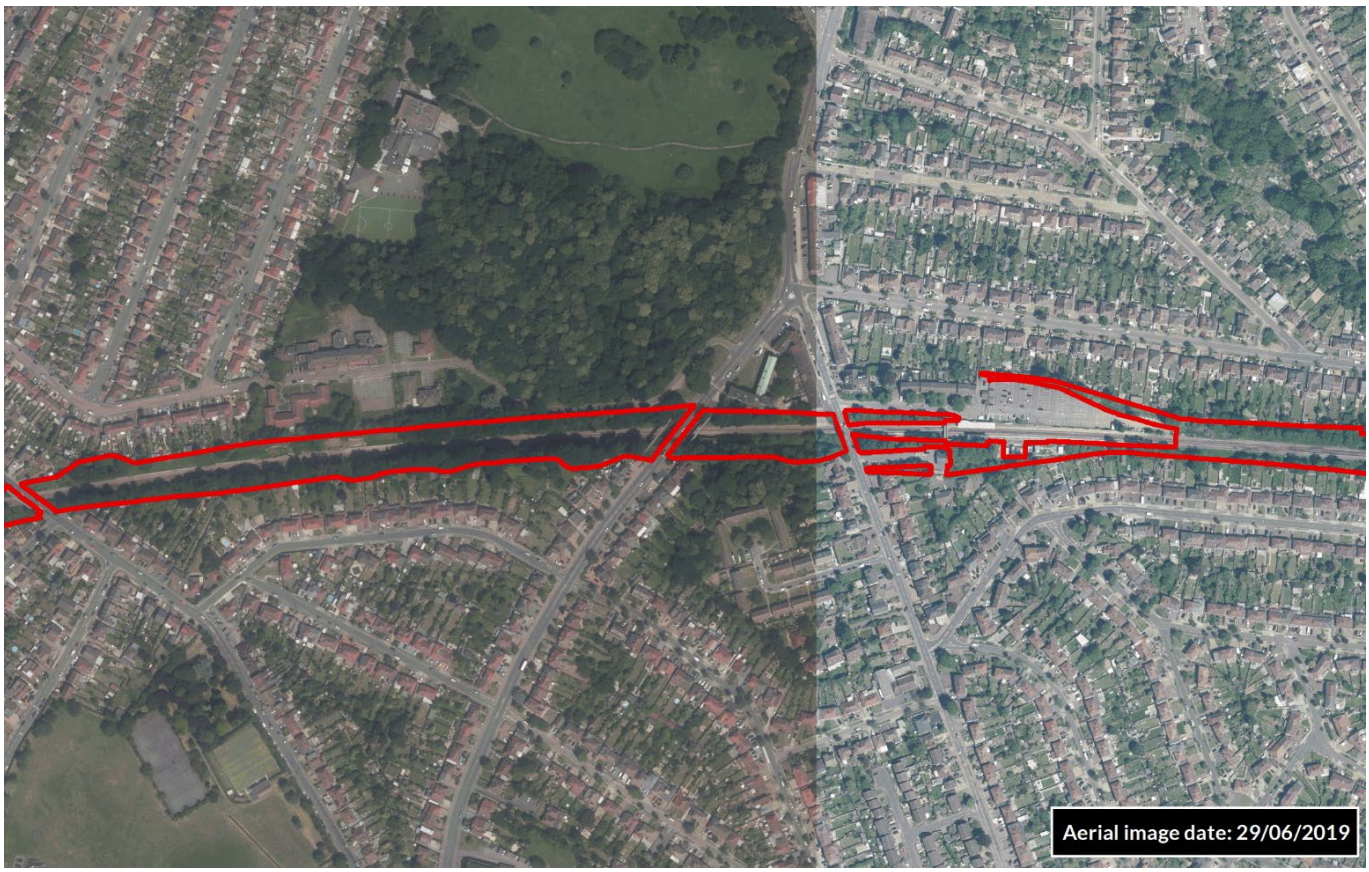

Figure 8: BxBII14 Railsides from Bexleyheath to Slade Green Triangle – western middle section

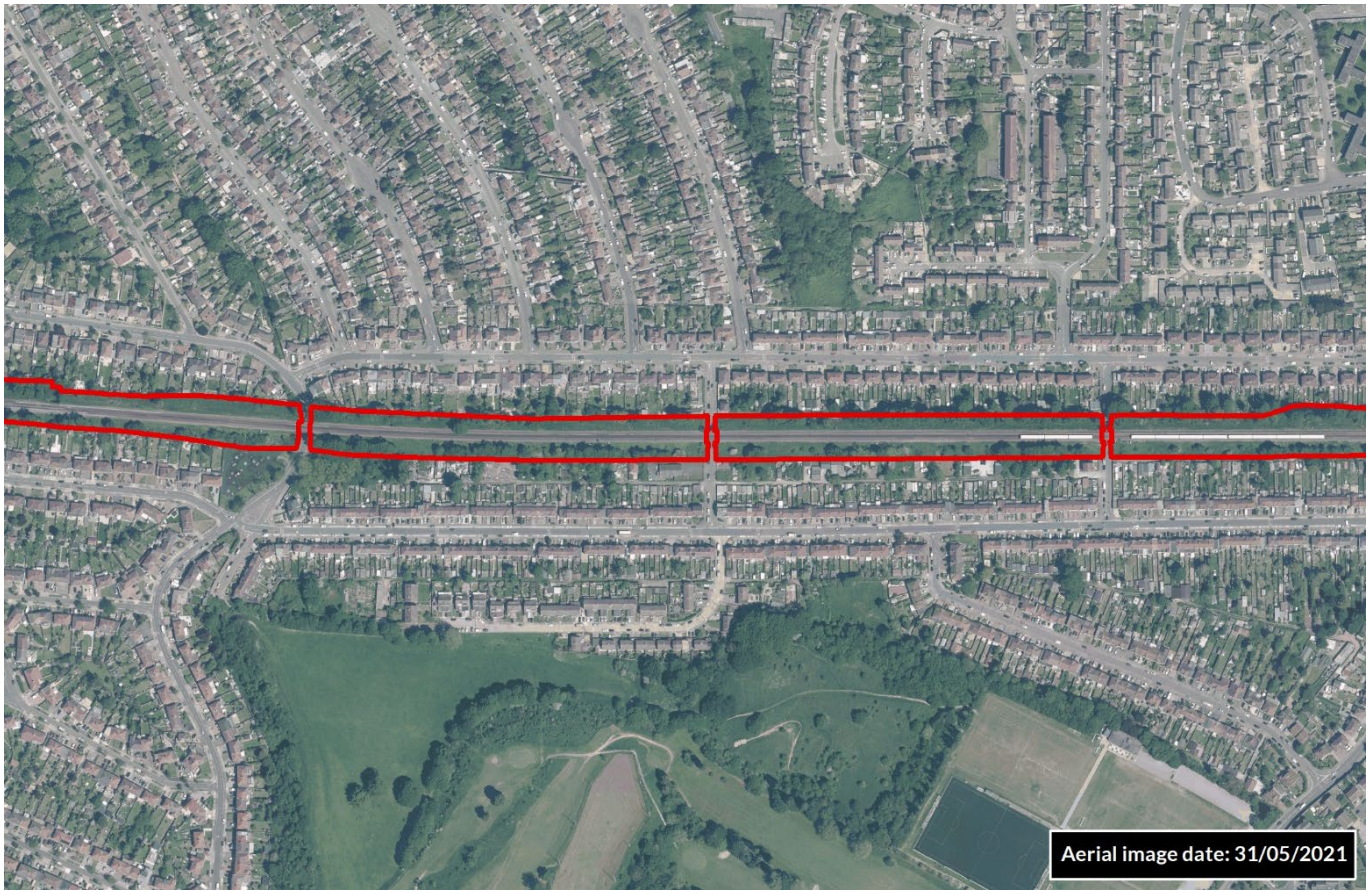

Figure 9: BxBII14 Railsides from Bexleyheath to Slade Green Triangle – eastern middle section

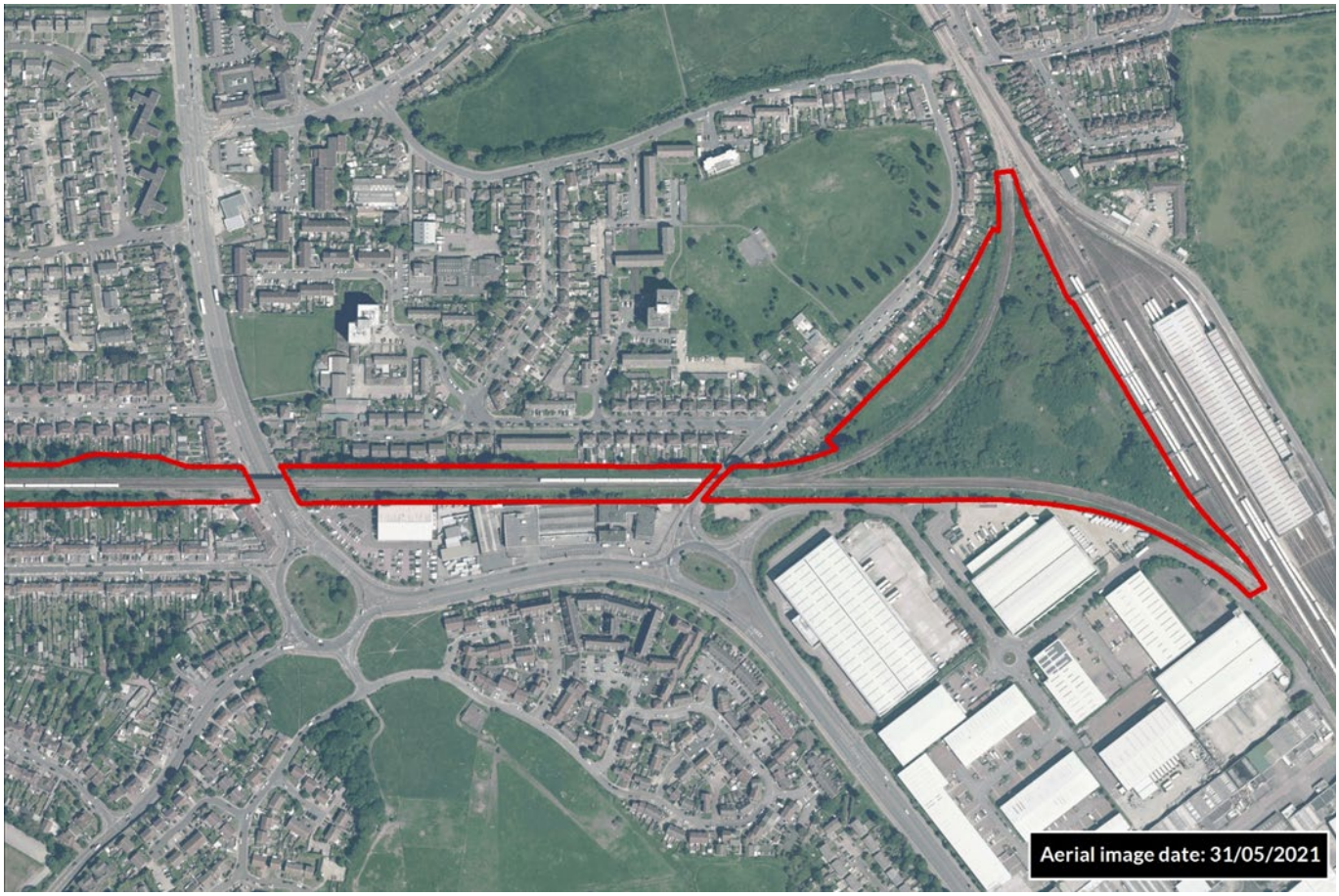

Figure 10: BxBII14 Railsides from Bexleyheath to Slade Green Triangle – eastern section

BxBII15 Whitehall Lane Recreation Ground

Grade: Borough Grade II
Site Reference: BxBII15
Site Name: Whitehall Lane Recreation Ground
Summary: A grassland site with a hedgerow and large colony of common lizards.
Grid ref: TQ 521 766
Area (ha): 4.86
Borough(s): Bexley
Habitat(s): Amenity grassland, Hedge, Scrub, Semi-improved neutral grassland
Access: Free public access (all/most of site)
Ownership: London Borough of Bexley

Site description:

The site includes amenity grassland, semi-improved neutral grassland, scrub and hedgerow habitats. In combination these habitats represent a moderately rich diversity of habitats that offers open views for residents of notable aesthetic value.

The large area of hummocky rough grassland, dominated by false oat-grass (Arrhenatherum elatius), is of value mainly for its very large population of common lizards. Acid grassland species such as parsley-piert (Aphanes arvensis) and buck's-horn plantain (Plantago coronopus) are also present.

The hedge of English elm (Ulmus procera) along the southern boundary adds interest and could be used as a wildlife commuting route across the site for common and widespread birds, bats, reptiles and hedgehogs. There is potential to plant additional hedgerows along the eastern, western and northern boundaries of the site.

The heavily mown grassland in the west of the site was not suitable to support populations of common lizard at the time of surveying and has therefore been de-designated as a SINC. A 2016 survey also found buddleia and Japanese knotweed on site, as well as some fly tipping near the train station on the eastern edge.

Site first notified:	**01/11/1991**	**Mayor Agreed:**	
Boundary last changed:	12/11/2021	Defunct:	N
Citation last edited:	30/11/2021	Last Updated:	11/01/2022

Figure 11: BxBII15 Whitehall Lane Recreation Ground

BxBII23 Sidcup Railsides

Grade:	**Borough Grade II**
Site Reference:	**BxBII23**
Site Name:	**Sidcup Rail sides**
Summary:	**Railway linesides offering diverse habitats for a range of animals and plants, and pleasant views for train passengers.**
Grid ref:	**TQ 485 730**
Area (ha):	**14.07**
Borough(s):	**Bexley**
Habitat(s):	**Bare ground, Ruderal, Scrub, Secondary woodland, Semi-improved neutral grassland, Semi-natural broadleaved woodland**
Access:	**Can be viewed from adjacent paths or roads only**
Ownership:	**Network Rail**

Site Description:

These railsides provide wildlife habitats and an important green corridor extending across the borough boundary into Greenwich, where they are known as Mottingham and New Eltham railsides. It also provides a dark corridor along the railway suitable to support commuting nocturnal wildlife, including bats.

The site is a mosaic of woodland, scrub and rough grassland, offering habitats for a range of invertebrates, birds such as song thrush, mammals, reptiles and flowering plants. The woodlands are dominated by pedunculate oak (Quercus robur), silver birch (Betula pendula) and bramble (Rubus fruticosus agg), whilst the grasslands are dominated by false oat-grass (Arrhenatherum elatius).

The land at Jubilee Way forms one of the widest areas along the length of the site, and likely acts as an ecological stepping stone for species using the rail side cutting to disperse across the borough. The woodland here includes oak (Quercus sp.), horse chestnut (Aesculus hippocastanum), cherry (Prunus avium), hazel (Corylus avellana), ash (Fraxinus excelsior), common lime, birch, sycamore and holly (Ilex aquifolium), as well as locally dominant stand of snow berry (Symphoricarpos albus) and dense scrub habitats of bramble and common nettle (Urtica dioica). The ground flora contains creeping thistle (Cirsium arvense), ivy (Hedera helix), hedge woundwort (Stachys sylvatica), mullein (Verbascum sp), wood avens (Geum urbanum), herb robert (Geranium robertum), toad flax (Linaria vulgaris), night shade (Solanaceae sp.), teasel (Dipsacus fullonum), and hedge bindweed (Convolvulus arveinsis). Rare Lords and Ladies (Arum maculatum) and pendulous sedge (Carex pendula) have also been recorded, the latter of which is noted as an Ancient Woodland Indicator Species (AWIS) relevant to the south east, although no other AWIS have been recorded.

Parallel to the railway in the west of the site is the Old Farm Park with a stretch of planted scrub and woodland. A survey in 2016 found the area planted with native tree species including ash, alder (Alnus glutinosa), field maple (Acer campestre), pedunculate oak, silver birch, beech (Fagus sylvatica) and wild cherry. The scrub layer was species rich and included elder (Sambucus nigra), hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna), hazel, holly, dog rose (Rosa canina) and bramble. This planted stretch creates a continuous habitat with the overgrown hawthorn and wild cherry hedge along the railway fence, providing excellent habitat for birds and functioning as a natural extension of the habitat along the railways.

Site first notified:	**16/02/2004**	**Mayor Agreed:**	
Boundary last changed:	11/12/2013	Defunct:	N
Citation last edited:	30/11/2021	Last Updated:	11/01/2022

Figure 12: BxBII23 Sidcup Railsides (full site boundary illustrated)

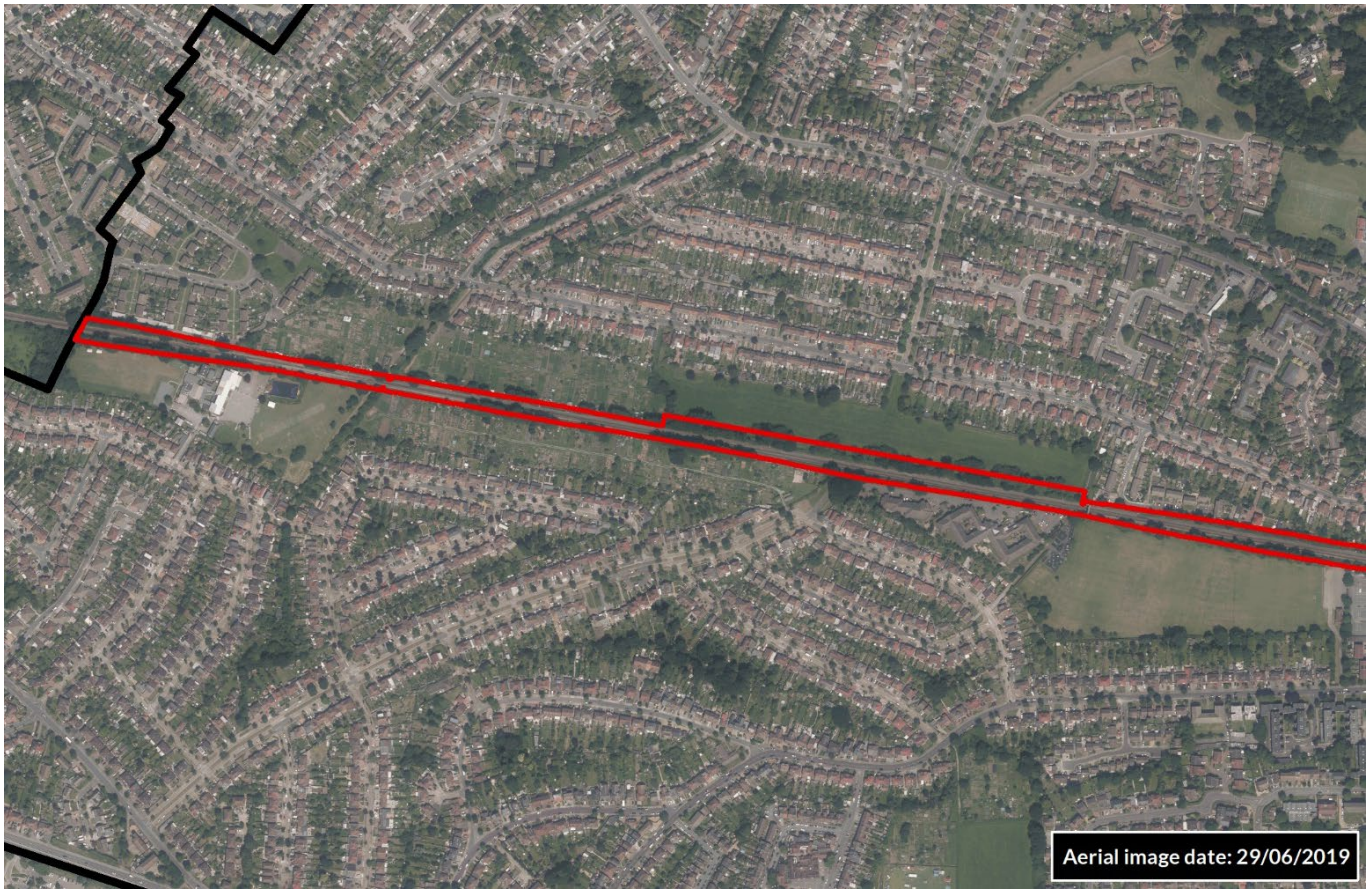

Figure 13: BxBII23 Sidcup Railsides (enlarged, partial site boundary illustrated)

Figure 14: BxBII23 Sidcup Railsides (enlarged, partial site boundary illustrated)

Figure 15: BxBII23 Sidcup Railsides (enlarged, partial site boundary illustrated)

Figure 16: BxBII23 Sidcup Railsides (enlarged, partial site boundary illustrated)

BxBII27 Tile Kiln Lane, Norman's Wood, and Cypry Angel Pool

Grade:	**Borough Grade II**
Site Reference:	**BxBII27**
Site Name:	**Tile Kiln Lane, Norman's Wood, and Cypry Angel Pool**
Summary:	**A mixed native wood, adjacent ancient trackway and fishing lake.**
Grid ref:	**TQ 502 729**
Area (ha):	**3.17**
Borough(s):	**Bexley**
Habitat(s):	**Hedgebanks, Pond/Lake, Reed bed, Scrub, Secondary woodland, Semi-improved grassland, Standing water**
Access:	**Free public access (part of site)**
Ownership:	**London Borough of Bexley and Private**

Site description:

Tile Kiln Lane appears to be an ancient sunken lane, bounded by banks with lines of trees, which run past the ancient woodland of Cavey's Spring. The lane has a good range of trees and shrubs, some of them coppiced or pollarded in the past, including field maple (Acer campestre), pedunculate oak (Quercus robur), hazel (Corylus avellana), dogwood (Cornus sanguinea), ash (Fraxinus excelsior), spindle (Euonymus europaea), wild privet (Ligustrum vulgare) and hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna).

The ground flora includes wood meadowgrass (Poa nemoralis), bush vetch (Vicia sepium) and dog's mercury (Mercurialis perennis). The banks have been modified in places, and one section in the north-west part is bounded by a wall. The north-east part merges into a private garden with no clear boundary. Norman's Wood is a sizeable block of mixed native broad-leaved woodland, adjacent to Tile Kiln Lane, which appears to be about 25 years old. It is maturing nicely and there is plenty of regeneration of the trees.

Cypry Angel Pool and its surrounding habitat at Dartford Road have been added to this site as they represent a good example of pond habitat that is scarce within the borough, and includes marginal reedbed, a habitat of principle importance. The pool was created in 2017 as a fishing lake and it is surrounded by scattered mature trees including English oak, ash and willow.

Despite its recent creation, the habitats could support a range of notable species including foraging bats using the unlit tree lines, freshwater invertebrates (including dragonfly), wetland birds, amphibians (including great crested newts, toads and frogs), fish and reptiles. The mosaic of poor semi-improved grassland and dense scrub can also support common and widespread birds, reptiles and amphibians in their terrestrial stage. The pond is currently in use as a fishing lake and is used by local residents for the enjoyment of nature and recreation, although public access is ticketed.

In 2016 the site name was changed from Cold Blow Wood and Tile Kiln Lane to Norman's Wood and Tile Kiln Lane, and this was changed again to Tile Kiln Lane, Norman's Wood, and Cypry Angel Pool in 2021.

Site first notified:	**30/09/2011**	**Mayor Agreed:**	
Boundary last changed:	12/11/2021	Defunct:	N
Citation last edited:	29/11/2021	Last Updated:	11/01/2022

Figure 17: BxBII27 Tile Kiln Lane, Norman's Wood, and Cypry Angel Pool

BxBII31 Our Lady of the Angels Woodland

Grade:	**Borough Grade II**
Site Reference:	**BxBII31**
Site Name:	**Our Lady of the Angels Woodland**
Summary:	**Oak woodland adjacent to 'Our lady of the Angels' church, noted to have a relatively rich scrub layer providing opportunities for widespread and common woodland birds and bats.**
Grid ref:	**TQ 502 776**
Area (ha):	**0.71**
Borough(s):	**Bexley**
Habitat(s):	**Semi-natural broadleaved woodland**
Access:	**No public access**
Ownership:	**Private**

Site Description:

This site is comprised entirely of oak woodland. Given the composition of the canopy and its small size, the habitats on site are relatively species diverse. It has a mature English oak (Quercus robur) canopy with a dense understory scrub of abundant holly (Ilex aquifoliium), and rare elder (Sambucus nigra), field maple (Acer pseudoplatanus), yew (Taxus baccatta), sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus) and hazel (Corylus avellana). The ground flora is dominated by ivy (Hedera helix).

The abundance of oak with a species diverse scrub layer and dynamic structure means that this site likely supports a diverse range of common and widespread species, including bird species of conservation concern such as mistle thrush, dunnock, spotted flycatcher and bullfinch. The site is functionally linked with the nearby Erith Quarry SINC and is suitable to support breeding populations potentially present at that site, such as Red List species including house sparrow and song thrush. Features found within this

mature oak woodland, such as standing deadwood and dense ivy, provide additional habitat niches for a range of birds, different species of bats, mammals such as badger and invertebrates such as stag beetle.

The site is privately owned and appears to have been managed to the benefit of biodiversity. There is no public access to the site, but it can be accessed by monks residing in the adjacent building. There are further opportunities for woodland management within the site, including the continued retention of deadwood to promote a wider assemblage of habitats for invertebrates and bats. There is potential to introduce bird and bat boxes, which may increase the usage of the site by these target species.

Site first notified:		**Mayor Agreed:**	
Boundary last changed:	12/11/2021	Defunct:	N
Citation last edited:	26/11/2021	Last Updated:	11/01/2022

Figure 18: BxBII31 Our Lady of the Angels Woodland

BxBII32 Parish's Pit Woodland

Grade: Borough Grade II
Site Reference: BxBII32
Site Name: Parish's Pit Woodland
Summary: Species rich woodland on a steep sand bank adjacent to a railway corridor.
Grid ref: TQ 510 782
Area (ha): 0.67
Borough(s): Bexley
Habitat(s): Scrub, Woodland
Access: No public access
Ownership: Private

Site description:

This woodland is located on a steep sand bank and is part of Parish's Pit, a Locally Important Geological Site. Habitats on site include predominantly species-rich broad-leaved woodland with a developed scrub layer. Abundant elder (Sambucus nigra), hazel (Corylus avellana), elm (Ulmus sp.), oak (Quercus robur), buddleia (Buddleia davidii), sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus), jasmine (Jasminoides sp.), blackthorn (Prunus spinose), and hops (Humulus lupulus) are present. The ground flora includes dominant ivy (Hedera helix) with abundant bramble (Rubus fruticosus agg).

The undisturbed nature of the woodland is of benefit to wildlife and could support potentially important populations of breeding birds, roosting and foraging bats and invertebrates. Stag beetle have been recorded within the woodland and deadwood habitats on site are suitable for supporting populations of this species.

This woodland is a notable area of rail side habitat, forming a relatively wide section of the railway corridor compared to the width of vegetation elsewhere. The position of the site along the railway cutting provides added value of connectivity. This habitat is species rich, structurally diverse and hard to recreate.

Due to the topography, position and small size of the site active woodland management is not recommended. However, there is potential to introduce bat and bird boxes on site which would increase its usage by these target species.

Site first notified:		**Mayor Agreed:**	
Boundary last changed:	12/11/2021	Defunct:	N
Citation last edited:	26/11/2021	Last Updated:	11/01/2022

Figure 19: BxBII32 Parish's Pit Woodland

Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation

BxL11 Edendale Road and Cheviot Close

Grade:	**Local**
Site Reference:	**BxL11**
Site Name:	**Edendale Road and Cheviot Close**
Summary:	**A woodland bound by residential gardens. Woodland edge habitats to the north of the site are utilised by the Bexley Scout Group.**
Grid ref:	**TQ 510 764**
Area (ha):	**0.99**
Borough(s):	**Bexley**
Habitat(s):	**Ruderal, Scrub, Semi-natural broadleaved woodland, Tall herbs**
Access:	**No public access**
Ownership:	**London Borough of Bexley**

Site description:

The broadleaved woodland on site includes abundant mature English oak (Quercus robur), with bullace (Prunus domestica subsp. Insititia), sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus), hazel (Corylus avellana), holly (Ilex aquifolium), yew (Taxus bacata), and hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna). Ground flora includes male fern (Dryopteris filix-mas), common nettle (Urtica dioica) and bramble (Rubus fruticosus). To the south is an area of dense scrub with dominant bramble (Rubus fruticosus), abundant old man's beard (Clematis vitalba) and frequent Virginia creeper (Parthenocissus quinquefolia).

The site supports bullace scrub, which is of high ecological value and is likely scarce within the borough. Habitats to the east adjacent to Venners Close include dense bramble scrub and tall ruderal common nettle, which are of local importance to breeding birds and invertebrates, including butterflies. Grassland habitats to the north of the site are common, widespread and species poor and have therefore been de-designated. However, it is recognised that these habitats have educational value to the local scout group.

The woodland is of local importance to a wide assemblage of common and widespread species, including badger, breeding birds, invertebrates and bats. The site has the potential to support breeding populations of bird species of conservation concern including house sparrow, which has been recorded within the site. Mature oak trees within the woodland are of a notable age and provide additional habitat and species richness to the woodland.

There is no public access to the site, but it is an important reservoir of birds and other animals which visit nearby gardens. The site has good aesthetic appeal to residents with gardens backing onto the woodland.

The woodland is a valuable educational resource that could be utilised more by the local scout group. There is an opportunity to increase access to this educational resource through appropriate arrangements, and to introduce additional bird and bat boxes to the woodland, which may result in increased use of the site by these target species.

The aesthetic value of the woodland could be enhanced by the clearance and control of fly tipping. Measures to enhance tall ruderal habitats to the east, such as pond creation, orchard planting or additional tree planting, would benefit the local scout organisation. Woodland oaks were notable in girth and supported multiple ecological features of high value, and a tree preservation order would safeguard these for the future.

Site first notified:	**01/11/1991**	**Mayor Agreed:**	
Boundary last changed:	12/11/2021	Defunct:	N
Citation last edited:	12/11/2021	Last Updated:	11/01/2022

Figure 20: BxL11 Edendale Road and Cheviot Close

Appendix 1: Partial review of SINC, Land Use Consultants ecological assessment, Jan 2020

Refer to the independent ecological assessment of the 14 sites, which has been published alongside this paper.

Appendix 2: Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) partial review paper, LBB consultation document, March 2021

Refer to the consultation document, which has been published alongside this paper.

Appendix 3: Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) partial review paper, LBB Consultation Statement and updated boundary changes, October 2021

Refer to consultation statement, which has been published alongside this paper