

London Geodiversity Partnership – Planning Framework

The London Plan was adopted in July 2011 with Policy 7.20 on Geological Conservation:

POLICY 7.20 GEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION

Planning decisions

- A Development proposals should:
- wherever possible, make a positive contribution to the protection and enhancement of geodiversity
 - be resisted where they have significant adverse impact on sites with existing or proposed European or national designations in accordance with Government guidance
 - protect regionally important geological sites (RIGS)
 - give locally important geological sites (LIGS) the level of protection commensurate with their importance

Local Development Framework preparation

- B In their LDFs Boroughs should:
- establish clear goals for the management of identified sites to promote public access, appreciation and the interpretation of geodiversity
 - ensure sites of European, national or regional conservation importance are clearly identified
 - use the guidance set out in London's Foundations (2009) and work with appropriate organisations to investigate additional sites that maybe of value in the local area and afford them the appropriate level of protection in LDFs.

7.63 New development should have regard to the conservation of geological features and should take opportunities to achieve gains for conservation through the form and design of development. Where development is proposed which would affect an identified geological site the approach should be to avoid adverse impact to the geological interest. If this is not possible, the design should seek to retain some of the geological interest and enhance this where possible, for example by incorporating permanent sections within the design. The negative impacts of development should be minimised and any residual impacts mitigated. On behalf of the London Geodiversity Partnership, and working with Natural England, the Mayor has published *London's Foundations* as implementation guidance to advise boroughs on fulfilling their statutory duty set out in PPS 9 to protect geodiversity. The Mayor will continue to work with all relevant partners to identify regionally important geological sites.

This is supported by advice in Supplementary Planning Guidance "*London's foundations*" published in March 2012. The guidance is based upon a geodiversity audit done between 2007 and 2011. There are 50 sites (GLA 1 to GLA 59) of which seven are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It recommends 28 as Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) and 15 as Locally Important Geological Sites (LIGS).

Designating a site as a RIGS or LIGS

The approach below builds on that set out in *London's foundations*. The flow diagram shows the process in summary. First of all Potential sites are identified, which are then surveyed for their geological value using the field audit recording sheet in Appendix 3 of *London's foundations*. If the decision is to propose the site goes forward, it becomes a Candidate and put on the LGP and the GLA websites. At that time the local authority planning department should be informed.

So far, the process is fairly short. But, because the whole process is leading to adoption of a site in a borough's local development plan (LDP), there has to be consultation and a recommendation by the GLA through the *London Plan*. Revisions to the *London Plan* do not take place very often.

Revision to the *London Plan* will probably take 12 to 18 months since an examination in public (which used to be a public inquiry) is involved. At the examination, there will be the opportunity for the local authority and/or the

landowner to object. If the examiner (inspector) of the *London Plan* agrees with the new RIGS/LIGS they will become sites Recommended to boroughs for adoption in their LDP. That will occur when the borough revises its LDP. Therefore, the whole process can take a number of years.

Thus, there are four types of site: **potential**, **candidate**, **recommended** and **adopted**. The flow chart shows the process.

