

London Geodiversity Partnership

Planning Framework and Designation

The *London Plan* was adopted in March 2021 with Policy G9 on Geodiversity, reproduced in the box below. This is supported by advice in Supplementary Planning Guidance, *London's Foundations*, published in March 2012 that will be revised.

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) and 26 as Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) with 17 as Locally Important Geological Sites (LIGS).

A further three RIGS and 17 LIGS are proposed for the next version of *London's Foundations* when that is consulted upon.

Policy G9 Geodiversity

A In Development Plans, boroughs should:

- 1) establish clear goals for the management of identified sites to promote public access, appreciation and interpretation of geodiversity
- 2) ensure geological sites of European, national or regional conservation importance are clearly identified.

B Development proposals should:

- 1) make a positive contribution to the protection and enhancement of geodiversity
- 2) protect Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS)
- 3) give Locally Important Geological Sites (LIGS) the level of protection commensurate with their importance.

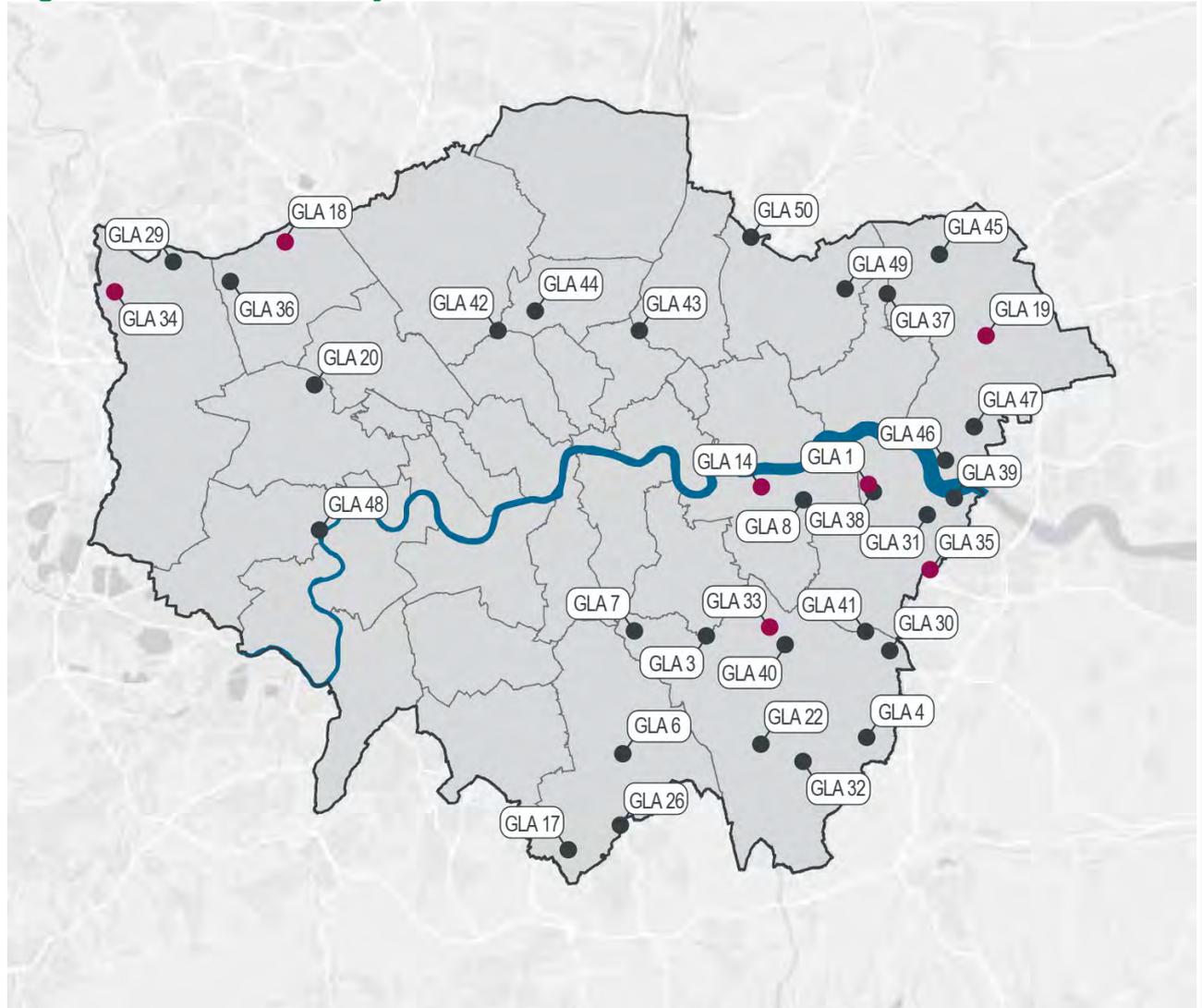
8.9.1 **Geodiversity** is a fundamental cornerstone of our everyday lives. Geology affects where we build, how we construct buildings and how we deliver associated services. It influences the design and layout of infrastructure, filters our drinking water and underpins the landscape around us. Geodiversity cannot be replaced or recreated (other than on geological timescales).

8.9.2 London's geodiversity sites are shown in Figure 8.3. Geodiversity sites with existing or proposed European or national designations are Sites of Special Scientific Interest and subject to statutory protection. Boroughs should protect and enhance RIGSs and LIGSs through their Development Plans. The Mayor will continue to work with the London Geodiversity Partnership to promote geodiversity and will prepare updated Supplementary Planning Guidance as necessary.

8.9.3 Geodiversity sites should be recognised for their importance in providing **habitats for biodiversity** and in allowing delivery of ecosystem services.

8.9.4 Where appropriate, access should be provided to geodiversity sites, although it is recognised that this is not always desirable. Geological sites will require appropriate **maintenance regimes** to ensure that these assets are properly protected and managed.

Figure 8.3 – Geodiversity sites



Sites of National and Regional Geodiversity Importance

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
 - Recommended Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS)
- Reference numbers refer to the appendices of the London Foundations SPG 2012

Source: GLA Planning

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Designating a site as a RIGS or LIGS

The approach shown in the diagram builds on that set out in *London's Foundations*. The flow diagram shows the process in summary for designation a site.

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 that the site is worthy of further study, 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.

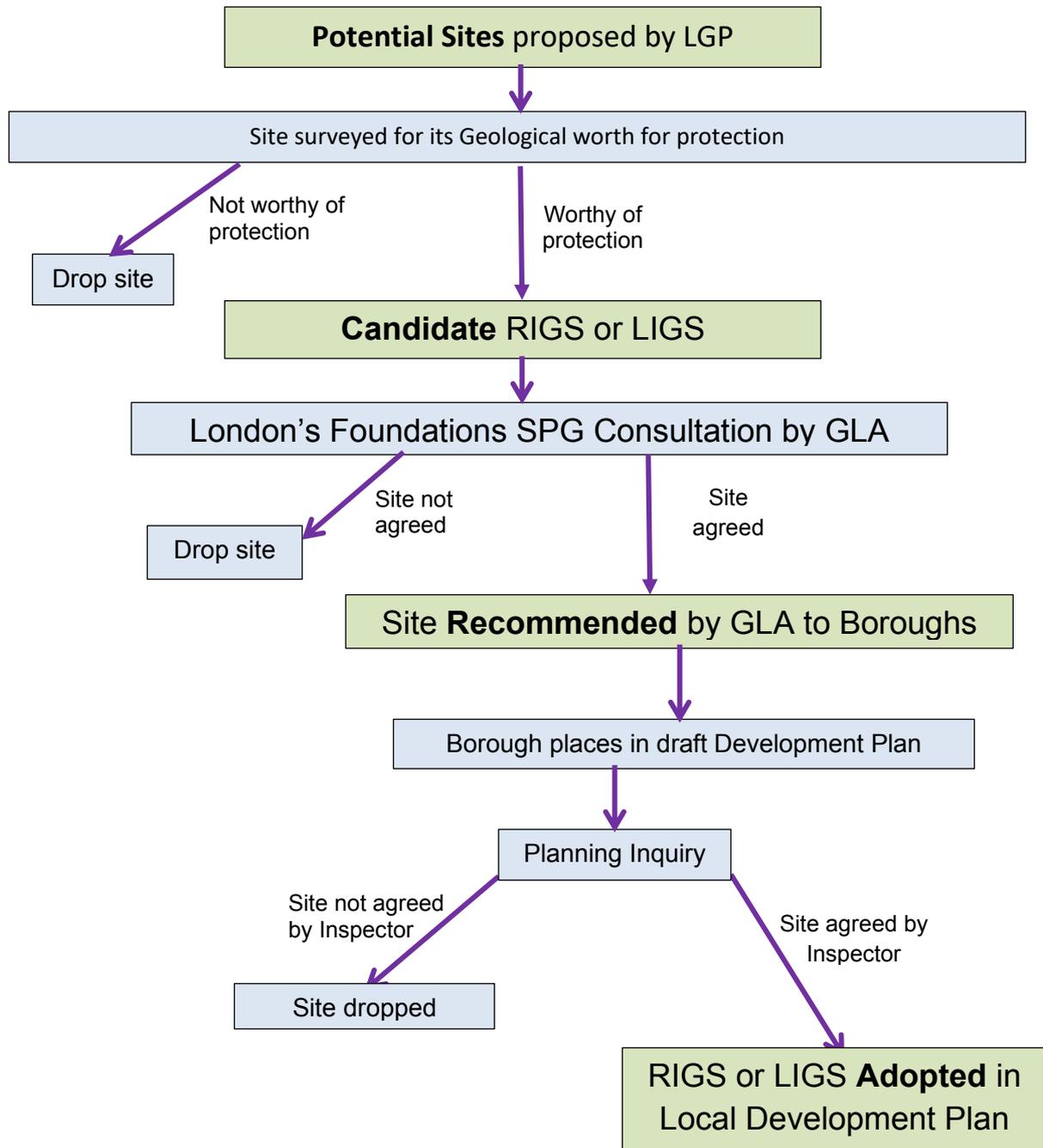
So far, the process is fairly short. But, because the whole process is leading to adoption of a site in a borough's *Local Development Plan* (LDP), there has to be consultation and a recommendation by the GLA through the *London Plan*. Revisions to the *London Plan* do not take place very often.

Revision to the *London Plan* will probably take 12 to 18 months since an examination in public is required. At the examination, there will be the opportunity for the local authority and/or the landowner to support or object. If the examiner (inspector) of the London Plan agrees that the new RIGS/LIGS is suitable, the site will be **Recommended** to the borough 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, finally, it is adopted. The flow chart shows the process.

London Geodiversity Partnership Site Classification

The approach below builds on *London's Foundations* (Geodiversity SPG, March 2012)



There are four stages of designating a site: **potential**, **candidate**, **recommended** and **adopted**. The flow chart refers to the process from potential to a borough adopting a local plan.

Approach agreed 2 September 2015
Updated to clarify 28 April 2021