

Decision Maker:	Cabinet Member for New Homes and Sustainable Development
Date:	22 October 2024
Report title:	Map changes arising from London's Local Nature Recovery Strategy Borough Consultation
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	N/A
From:	Director of Planning and Growth

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the cabinet member for new homes and sustainable development approve nine minor mapping corrections to the Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) within the adopted Southwark Plan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The Environment Act 2021 requires the production of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) by each of a network of 'responsible authorities' across England. Each LNRS constitutes a local spatial plan for nature conservation, which:
 - Identify existing areas of importance for biodiversity.
 - Agree priorities for nature recovery.
 - Map those proposals to areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity through habitat creation, regeneration, or enhancement.
3. The Greater London Authority (GLA) is the designated responsible authority for producing the statutory LNRS for London. In partnership with all 33 London Boroughs, LB Southwark (LBS) will work closely with the GLA to inform the production of London's LNRS. This regional LNRS, once produced, will inform the actions and strategic direction of Southwark's next biodiversity action plan, and contribution to the council's biodiversity duty.

Borough consultation

4. For the second stage of the GLA’s consultation with the London boroughs (18 June – 16 July 2024), the GLA requested that each borough, including LBS, confirm that the spatial data they held was accurate for (a) Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), (b) Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), and (c) Irreplaceable habitat.
5. During the borough consultation process, LBS identified nine minor inconsistencies in SINC names between the data held by the GLA and the ‘Southwark Plan 2022 - Policies Map’ that we believe are incorrect on the Map and should be updated on our end.
6. The proposed SINC changes to be updated on the Southwark Plan Map in order to align our data with that held by the GLA are listed in the below table 1, including the rationale and evidence for the decision.
 - 3 changes are minor spelling or grammatical changes.
 - 5 changes are name updates to current/correct usage.
 - 1 change merges two SINC polygons on the Southwark Map layer to align with the Southwark Plan.
7. Southwark is committed to protecting biodiversity and making nature accessible to all. At the core of biodiversity conservation in the borough is the network of SINCs - non-statutory, designated sites, offered significant protections within the planning system. The SINC network supports a diversity of habitats and species, while providing important access to nature for people.
8. Maintaining up to date records of SINC names and boundaries that align with records and maps kept by the GLA and the regional biodiversity records center - Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL) – ensures that there is no ambiguity around the status of sites and site protections and allows the public to easily locate natural spaces for their health and wellbeing.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

9. Table 1: Proposed changes to the SINC layer on the Southwark Plan 2022 Policies Map

Current GLA SINC name (revised names will be used once new names are approved)	Southwark Plan SINC name (i.e., Southwark Plan on Southwark Maps)	Update SINC name to	Reason and action for policy decision:
1. Aspinden Road Nature Garden	OS63 - Aspinden Road Nature Gardens	Aspinden Road Nature Garden	Aspinden (with an ‘i’ not an ‘e’) is the correct spelling of the street name.
2. Bellenden Road Nature Garden	OS106 - Bellenden Road Tree Nursery	Bellenden Road Nature Garden	This site is known publicly as Bellenden Road Nature Garden, also reflecting the current usage.
3. Centre for Wildlife Gardening	OS121 - London Wildlife Trust’s Centre for Wildlife Garden	London Wildlife Trust Centre for Wildlife Gardening	Change ‘Trust’s’ to ‘Trust’ to match the spelling of the commonly used site name

Current GLA SINC name (revised names will be used once new names are approved)	Southwark Plan SINC name (i.e., Southwark Plan on Southwark Maps)	Update SINC name to	Reason and action for policy decision:
4. Deal Porter's Walk	OS34 - Deal Porter's Walk	Deal Porters Walk	Change to Deal Porters Walk (without an apostrophe). This is the correct spelling of the street name as per the MOL name, and according to LBS Parks and Natural Environment (P&NE).
5. Dog Kennel Hill Wood	OS119 - Dog Kennel Hill	Dog Kennel Hill Open Space	Dog Kennel Hill Open Space is the official name according to the Council's Parks and Natural Environment Asset Manager.
6. Dulwich and Sydenham Hill Woods	OS181 - Dulwich Wood	Sydenham Hill Wood and Dulwich Wood	Rename in line with MOL name which is 'Sydenham Hill Wood and Dulwich Wood'. The current name omits Sydenham Hill Wood which is a significant SINC site.
7. Dulwich Upper Wood & College Road Wood	OS188 - College Road; and OS187 - Dulwich Upper Wood (these are separate SINCS)	Dulwich Upper Wood and College Road Wood	Merge the separate SINCS which have references OS188 and OS187 to be a single SINC from their currently separate listings on the Southwark Plan Map. They are currently listed as one SINC in the Southwark Plan. However, the separate Open Space references and names are to be retained. The two separately listed SINCS have been one SINC since pre-2014, and there is no apparent border among these two areas in terms of habitat and site management. The whole area is leased to TCV to manage as a nature reserve.
8. Pasely Park	OS82 - Surrey Gardens	Pasely Park	Pasely Park is the accurate name for the site as per P&NE records and how it is known publicly. Not to be confused with Surrey Square Park (OS77), which is a different site near Old Kent Road.
9. St Mary Magdalene Churchyard, Bermondsey	OS49 - St Mary Magdalane Churchyard	St Mary Magdalen Churchyard	'Magdalen' is the correct spelling of the site

Policy framework implications

10. Consolidating SINC data between the GLA and borough councils forms part of the first function of the London LNRS: "*identifying existing areas of importance for biodiversity*". Consideration of the LNRS within local policy and functions is a requirement of the statutory Biodiversity Duty on local authorities, as per the Environment Act 2021.
11. Accurate, up to date, SINC records is baseline information guiding a range of key council policies relating to biodiversity, particularly the Council

Delivery Plan and Southwark 2030 commitments to a “*Healthy Environment*”, the Southwark Plan’s “*P60 Biodiversity*” policy, and the Climate Change Strategy (2021) commitment to a “*Thriving Natural Environment*”.

12. Policy G6 from the London Plan (2021) states that Boroughs should “*use up-to-date information about the natural environment and the relevant procedures to identify SINCs and ecological corridors to identify coherent ecological networks*”. The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) states that Local Plans should “*identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks*”.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impact statement

Community impact statement

13. Having up to date SINC records benefits communities within the borough by clearly identifying the natural assets which can be used by residents. The changes will also allow officers to ensure there is consistency in how SINCS are referred to in plan-making and in the management of these areas, thus ensuring that decisions are based on accurate information.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

14. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (“2010 Act”) which requires the council, in the exercise of its functions, to have due regard to the need to:
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the 2010 Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
15. Approving these changes is not anticipated to have any detrimental impact to any group or protected characteristics as outlined in the 2010 Act.
16. Socio-economically deprived communities and residents experience lower greenspace provision nationally, greater inequality in access to nature and are at greater risk of negative impacts from climate risks. The majority of SINCS in Southwark are parks and public spaces, free to all users, and accessible all year round. This is particularly important for residents without a garden or balcony, in areas of deficiency in access to nature so it follows that the Southwark Plan needs to be accurate to ensure these areas are accessible for all residents.

Health impact statement

17. Accurate SINC records allows residents to better locate accessible natural spaces.
18. Access to nature is well documented as beneficial to both mental and physical health and wellbeing and contributes by community cohesion by connecting people and fostering positive interactions between people from different communities.

Further guidance

19. None.

Climate change implications

20. Accurate, up to date, SINC records is important baseline information guiding a range of council policies and functions that conserve and enhance biodiversity, which additionally reduce emissions and mitigate against the impacts of climate change, for example, planting trees sequesters carbon, provides shade and reduces flood risk.
21. Action for biodiversity contributes to the council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, committing to an adapted, resilient borough, and the Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy, defining the approach to responding to the harmful effects of a changing climate.

Resource implications

22. Making the recommended mapping amendments will be covered within existing staffing resource relating to ongoing biodiversity action and data management within the council.
23. Officers from Parks and natural environment are leading on coordinating with the GLA on the LNRS. Planning Policy and GIS data management officers will lead on making the required amendments to the Southwark Plan associated maps.

Legal implications

24. There are no foreseen legal implications in making the recommended changes to the Southwark Plan mapping data, which only involve the correction of errors, or bringing names up to date.
25. It is a legal requirement for the council to consider the LNRS as part of its statutory biodiversity duty, as per the Environment Act 2021.

Financial implications

26. There is no financial cost with making the recommended changes to the Southwark Plan mapping data.

Consultation

27. No consultation was conducted for this decision. The recommended changes update SINC records to reflect current public and official use.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Head of Procurement

28. This report does not require a formal procurement concurrent as none of the conditions of the council's Contract Standing Orders (1.1) apply to the recommendations herein.

Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance

29. The cabinet member for new homes and sustainable development has been asked to approve minor mapping corrections to the SINC's within the Southwark Plan as set out in the recommendations section above. The recommendation falls within the powers of the individual cabinet member for determination in accordance with paragraph 14, Part 3D of the council's constitution.
30. The background and reasons for the recommendation is detailed in the body of the report. There are no anticipated legal implications arising from the recommendation.
31. Officers have considered the council's PSED under section 149 of the 2010 Act at paragraphs 13 to 16 of this report and concluded that that there will be no adverse equalities impacts and no adverse impacts on persons with protected characteristics.
32. The Human Rights Act 1998 imposes a duty on the council as a public authority to apply the European Convention on Human Rights; as a result the Council must not act in a way which is incompatible with these rights. The relevant rights for planning purposes are Article 8 (respect for homes); and Article 1 of the First Protocol (peaceful enjoyment of property). The approval of the mapping changes is not anticipated to engage or breach the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.
33. Council Assembly on 14 July 2021 approved a change to the council's constitution to confirm that all decisions made by the council will consider the climate and equality (including socio-economic disadvantage and health inequality) consequences of taking that decision. This has been considered at paragraphs 16 and 18 to 19 above.

Strategic Director, Resources

34. The report requests cabinet member for new homes and sustainable development to approve nine minor mapping corrections to the Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) within the adopted Southwark Plan.
35. The strategic director of resources notes that there are no cost implications to the council arising from this report, as mentioned in the financial implications.
36. Staffing and any other costs associated with this recommendation are to be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
The Southwark Plan	Southwark Council, 160 Tooley Street, SE1 2QH	Juliet Seymour, Head of Policy, Building Control and the Historic Environment Tel: 020 7525 0508
Link: Southwark Plan 2022 Southwark Council - Localgov Drupal		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Stephen Platts, Director of Planning and Growth	
Report Author	Charlotte Brooks-Lawrie, Planning Policy Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	22 October 2024	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director, Resources	Yes	Yes

Head of Procurement	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		22 October 2024