

Havering Local Plan 2016-2031

Havering SINC Review 2017



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This review has been carried out by Havering Wildlife Project, which functions as the Wildlife Sites Partnership for Havering.

Notes

1. Havering's current list of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) was drawn up in 2003 based on habitat survey work carried out for the GLA in 2000/1. A lot has changed in Havering since then, including the establishment of the Thames Chase Community Forest, and this review has focussed on new wildlife habitat that has developed in the intervening years and significant changes affecting current SINCs.
2. A key conclusion of the Government-commissioned Lawton Report *Making Space for Nature* was that we needed to create larger and better connected natural areas in order to conserve our biodiversity. This places a premium on sites that form part of a larger unit of adjacent SINCs or that interconnect SINCs, and this is reflected in the citations that follow.
3. The previous GLA survey was essentially a habitat survey, supplemented by observations of species using the habitat that were made at the time. For proposed new SINCs, this review has drawn on details of that original survey, plus significant recent records or surveys (e.g. of water voles) and a walkover survey of prospective new SINCs.
4. Sites have been graded this time based on analogy with sites graded by GLA in the previous survey, with additional weight given for membership of a larger grouping and/or connectivity (point 2 above) and for habitats or species of particular significance locally.
5. Two sites are proposed for upgrade to Site of Metropolitan Importance (SMI) – North Ockendon Pit and Beam Valley South. The former is proposed by Havering Wildlife Project, based on recent survey work, and the latter via a review of metropolitan SINCs commissioned by the GLA. Proposed new SMIs must be submitted to the London Wildlife Sites Board for their approval, and approval has been given for North Ockendon Pit and is expected for Beam Valley South. Identifying numbers for new SMIs will be supplied by GIGL (London's biodiversity recording centre) when details are submitted to them.
6. Boundaries follow habitat boundaries rather than ownership boundaries (e.g. including the opposite bank of a watercourse where ownership runs down the middle; including adjacent motorway banks where appropriate) and also align with the boundaries of adjoining current SINCs.

Site of Importance for Nature Conservation

M??? **North Ockendon Pit** (*formerly HVBII38*)

Grid ref: **TQ 591 844**

Area (ha): **18.7**

Borough: **Havering**

Site first notified: **01/03/2002** **Boundary unchanged**

Citation last edited: **31/03/2017**

Habitat: **Neutral grassland (semi-improved), tall herb, scrub, woodland, scattered trees, standing water, hedges**

North Ockendon Pit lies on the border of Havering with Thurrock. Following gravel extraction it was partially infilled with building rubble and Thames dredgings. It was designated a Site of Borough Importance Grade II in 2003, identified as HvBII38. The citation describes it as ‘an area of capped land dominated by couch grassland with areas of tall herb’; ‘areas of raised spoil supporting scrub ... and planted (trees)’; ‘dry grassland’ and ‘ditches and pools full of brackish water’. Its biodiversity was summarised as ‘moderately rich in plant species despite the dominance of couch’ and ‘undisturbed habitat for a variety of birds’.

Before and since then the site has been locked up and left to itself with no management and largely undisturbed. Even so it appears to have suffered very little succession, still remaining largely open with significant scrub invasion only along the eastern and southern boundaries. It also remains ‘moderately rich in plant species’, including pyramidal and bee orchids, fig-leaved goosefoot, lesser spearwort, corn mint and golden dock.

During this time the site has developed an invertebrate assemblage of national importance, including several rare bees, wasps and ants. Its geographical situation adds weight to that importance. In its *Stepping Stones* project, BugLife has established a chain of good invertebrate sites across Thurrock. This site lies some 5km north of the western end of the chain (Chafford Gorges Nature Park), extending the chain into Havering and Greater London and towards other brownfield sites in the borough that have the potential to develop valuable invertebrate populations.

Added to this it has significant populations of reptiles, cementing Havering’s position as the most important London borough in this respect.

Finally, it is a valuable undisturbed breeding ground for a wide variety of birds in an area dominated by arable farming, including lapwing (red-listed) and reed bunting (amber-listed).

Site of Importance for Nature Conservation

M??? **Beam Valley South in Havering** (*formerly HVBI17*)

Grid ref: **TQ 506 836**

Area (ha): **10.2**

Borough: **Havering**

Site first notified: **01/03/2002** **Boundary unchanged**

Citation last edited: **31/03/2017**

Habitat: **Neutral grassland (semi-improved), tall herb, scrub, hedges, ditches, *Typha* swamp, standing water, river**

This section of the River Beam has a steep-sided, straightened course but supports frequent curled and fennel-leaved pondweeds (*Potamogeton crispus* and *P. pectinatus*), and abundant emergent branched bur-reed (*Sparganium erectum*) and Indian balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*). A new channel links into the river and this also has luxuriant submerged and emergent vegetation including Canadian waterweed (*Elodea canadensis*), common waterstarwort (*Callitriche stagnalis*), reed sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*) and common spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*) as well as further wetland species in lesser abundance. Mallard, moorhen and grey heron are frequently seen and water voles have been recorded.

Pasture immediately to the east is marshy in places, and includes marsh foxtail (*Alopecurus geniculatus*), celery-leaved buttercup (*Ranunculus sceleratus*) and toad rush (*Juncus bufonius*). A ditch along the western side of the pastures has a good wetland flora including marsh woundwort (*Stachys palustris*) and marsh yellow-cress (*Rorippa palustris*). The pasture may be of value to wintering birds.

The Site extends across the River Beam into Barking & Dagenham, where it is called Beam Valley South in Dagenham and the Wantz Stream. It forms part of the Dagenham Corridor, a green corridor running north-south through east London that is an important flyway for migrating birds.

Site of Importance for Nature Conservation

HVBII12 **Bonnetts Wood** (*formerly Central Farm Streamsides*)

Grid ref: **TQ 554 844**

Area (ha): **16.4**

Borough: **Havering**

Site first notified: **01/03/2002** **Boundary last changed: 31/03/2017**

Citation last edited: **31/03/2017**

Habitat: **Broadleaved woodland, scrub, hedges, stream, pond, wet marginal vegetation, semi-improved neutral grassland (some wet)**

The Cranham Brook, a clear-flowing stream feeding into Berwick Ponds and the Ingrebourne Marshes SSSI to the south, flows through the site from north to south. It and an adjoining (and restored) former farm reservoir have a strong population of water voles. The stream is bordered by mature ash, oak, alder and willow trees (some stag-headed with woodpecker holes), and by patches of bramble and thorn scrub.

The northern section was planted up in patches with a variety of predominantly broad-leaved native trees in 2003, which are now maturing and support good numbers of nesting birds. The tree patches are separated from one another and from the stream by broad grassy rides that are moderately rich in flowering plants. The whole is an important feeding and nesting area for bats.

The southern section (formerly designated under the name Central Farm Streamsides) is bordered to the north by a varied treeline including elm, white willow, aspen, ash, oak, hornbeam and field maple, and shrubs including hazel and dogwood, with dense osier scrub further south.

Its northern field has a diversity of grasses and herbs, transitioning from dry grassland to damper areas with abundant marsh horsetail. The southern field has a fen-like quality with a variety of wet grassland herbs including marsh horsetail, hemp agrimony and square-stalked St John's-wort, all uncommon in London, transitioning to the south into grey willow scrub with scattered white and crack willow trees (some massive) with reed, comfrey and meadowsweet growing below and between them. A boardwalk has been installed to allow visitors to visit this unusual habitat and view the water voles without disturbing them.

Site of Importance for Nature Conservation

HVBII44 Gerpins Lane Open Space

Grid ref: **TQ 554 840**

Area (ha): **15.2**

Borough: **Havering**

Site first notified: **31/03/2017**

Citation last edited: **31/03/2017**

Habitat: **Semi-improved neutral grassland, tall herb, scrub, broadleaved woodland (planted in the 1980s), scattered trees, hedges**

This is a former gravel extraction site that was filled with municipal rubbish during the 1960s and 70s. It has been left untouched since then, apart from some tree planting in the 1980s.

A variety of native broad-leaved trees have been planted densely along the western boundary next to Gerpins Lane, including ash, oak, field maple, elm, hawthorn and wild cherry. This has a species-poor ground flora including substantial areas of cow parsley and some nettle. Elsewhere on the site, the trees have been spaced more widely, creating open, sunny woodland with a grassy understorey and patches of ground ivy, red campion and lords-and-ladies.

A substantial proportion of the site to the north and east is open grassland dominated by coarse grasses and with scattered small trees and occasional patches of bramble and nettle. Despite the dominance of coarse grasses it is moderately rich in flowering plants. These are mostly common ruderal plants, including white and red dead-nettle, hemlock, lesser burdock and teasel, but also perforate st-john's wort, knapweed and hairy bittercress. It also has areas of sparser vegetation, supporting low-growing plants such as common whitlowgrass and common stork's-bill. Topography is varied, with many humps and hollows and occasional banks, deep depressions and spoil heaps. This kind of open mosaic habitat is typical of neglected brownfield sites like this one which would now be described as 'poorly restored' and is now very scarce as sites like this are 'tidied up'. It forms valuable habitat for invertebrates, exploiting the variety of niches for nesting and a good foraging resource.

The combination of open woodland and grassland is also optimal habitat for reptiles – common lizard is known to be present.

The site provides undisturbed habitat for a variety of breeding birds and good foraging habitat for raptors such as kestrels and barn owls.

Site of Importance for Nature Conservation

HVBII45 Folkes Lane Woodland

Grid ref: TQ 575 896

Area (ha): 48

Borough: Havering

Site first notified: 31/03/2017

Citation last edited: 31/03/2017

Habitat: **Mixed woodland (planted in 2002), mature trees (possibly ancient), semi-improved neutral grassland, scrub**

Former arable fields bordering a steep hill, now cut through by the M25 motorway, most of which has been planted up with trees. These are mostly native broad-leaves, with some scots pine and larch. The trees are now maturing and are bordered in places by bramble patches and blackthorn thickets.

Areas of woodland are separated by broad grassy rides and a large open area has been left on high ground towards the northern end of the site. Parts of this are rich in flowering plants, including knapweed and devilsbit scabious.

The site includes several ancient hedges with many massive oaks, some stag-headed and almost all containing nest holes, plus sweet chestnut, wild service, elm and hawthorn. Ground flora includes wood sage, hedge woundwort and great horsetail.

A small pond has been created with good aquatic vegetation.

This large site provides good habitat for a variety of birds and small mammals and forms part of a wildlife corridor running alongside the M25 to its west.

Site of Importance for Nature Conservation

HVBII46 Tylers Wood

Grid ref: TQ 571 904

Area (ha): 14

Borough: Havering

Site first notified: 31/03/2017

Citation last edited: 31/03/2017

Habitat: Broad-leaved woodland (planted in 2002), hedges, semi-improved neutral grassland, scrub

A hilltop and valley side sloping down from the M25 motorway to a bridleway, and with an arm projecting northwards beside the motorway up to a footbridge. Former arable land, it is now substantially open, sunny grassland sheltered by patches of maturing native broad-leaved trees, including much birch. Flowering plants include agrimony and knapweed. This provides good habitat for butterflies and also for reptiles (for which it is being managed).

The northward projection beside Jer mains Wood is kept wet by seepage off the motorway bank and has sheets of common fleabane and other damp-loving plants in summer. The steep motorway bank has patches of gorse.

A stream/ditch meanders along the north-west boundary. Its treeline/hedge includes ash, oak, hornbeam and crack willow. Patches of brooklime and fool's-watercress grow on its banks.

Provides supporting habitat for HvBI06 Tylers Common and links it with two ancient woodland SINC s – HvBII20 Jer mains Wood and HvBII21 Foxburrow Wood. Also forms part of a wildlife corridor running alongside the M25 to its west.

Site of Importance for Nature Conservation

HVBII47 Harold Court Woods

Grid ref: TQ 554 915

Area (ha): 25

Borough: Havering

Site first notified: 31/03/2017

Citation last edited: 31/03/2017

Habitat: Broad-leaved woodland (mostly planted in 2001–3), hedges, semi-improved neutral grassland, ponds

Former farmland surrounding Harold Court (now residential flats), much of which has been planted with trees, mainly native broad-leaves with some scots pine and larch, supplementing the surrounding tree belts, which include groups of mature hybrid black poplar and horse chestnut. The original hedges include many old trees, including midland hawthorn and wild service, and have dog's mercury among the ground flora. These and the maturing plantations provide a good foraging and nesting resource for birds and other wildlife.

Broad grassy rides and open areas have been left between the groups of trees, These are moderately rich in flowering plants and provide good habitat for butterflies, small mammals and reptiles.

A pond at the northern end has been restored and has good emergent vegetation including common reed and lesser reedmace.

Provides supporting habitat for HvBI06 Tylers Common and links it with a grassland SINC – HvBII24 Bournwood Fields – and with HvBII42 Rainside Land, which also forms part of an east-west wildlife corridor.

Site of Importance for Nature Conservation

HVBII48 **Pages Wood**

Grid ref: **TQ 558 898**

Area (ha): **61**

Borough: **Havering**

Site first notified: **31/03/2017**

Citation last edited: **31/03/2017**

Habitat: **Broad-leaved woodland (planted in 2002), hedges, semi-improved neutral grassland**

This site includes the remainder of Pages Wood not included in M108 Ingrebourne Valley (which covers land west of the river, i.e. the former Mount Pleasant Farm, plus the river corridor and the tree-lined tributary that leads into it from the eastern boundary). This is a broad valley sloping down to the River Ingrebourne from the north and east. It is former farmland most of which has been planted with groups of trees, predominantly native broad-leaves, separated by grassy rides and open glades which were sown with a wild flower mix and remain moderately flower-rich. The northern boundary hedge has mature oak, ash, field maple, crab apple and wild service trees.

It also includes the part of Harold Wood Park east of the river (again, the river corridor is included in M108). This is flower-rich grassland with daisy, autumn hawkbit, dandelion, self-heal and creeping buttercup, and with scattered birch, poplar and willow. The south boundary consists of a good (and probably ancient) hedge with oak and midland hawthorn, and dogs mercury in the ground flora

This is a large site and the combination of maturing woodland with open, sunny grassland and adjoining watercourses makes it valuable for a variety of wildlife, and particularly invertebrates and reptiles.

Provides supporting habitat for this part of M108 Ingrebourne Valley and links it to HvBI06 Tylers Common and the extensive complex of sites surrounding it.

Site of Importance for Nature Conservation

HVBII49 Ingrebourne Hill

Grid ref: TQ 525 834

Area (ha): 74

Borough: Havering

Site first notified: 31/03/2017

Citation last edited: 31/03/2017

Habitat: Broad-leaved woodland (planted in 2008), hedges, semi-improved neutral grassland

This is a former landfill site immediately south-west of the Ingrebourne Marshes, built up into a low hill. Parts of the gentle slopes and low ground to the north and west have been planted up with trees, mainly native broadleaves with some scots pine. This leaves large areas of open grassland containing a variety of flowering plants, both native and alien. The large flattish area on top of the hill is particularly rich in flowers, among them knapweed, goat's rue, red clover, creeping thistle, yarrow, ox-eye daisy and creeping cinquefoil, and forms a valuable foraging resource for insects, including a national rarity, the brown-banded carder bee.

At its southern tip are two large lakes fringed with common reed and willow. These form a valuable resource for breeding birds, including great crested grebe, little grebe, mallard, coot and mute swan, and for over-wintering wildfowl.

This substantial mosaic of grassland, maturing woodland and water bodies provides habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, and valuable supporting habitat and protection for the southern section of the Ingrebourne Marshes SSSI.

Site of Importance for Nature Conservation

HVBII50 **Berwick Glades**

Grid ref: **TQ 541 842**

Area (ha): **12**

Borough: **Havering**

Site first notified: **31/03/2017**

Citation last edited: **31/03/2017**

Habitat: **Broad-leaved woodland (planted in 2003), hedges, semi-improved neutral grassland**

This former arable land has been planted up with blocks of predominantly broad-leaved trees. Substantial areas of open grassland have been left and parts of these are rich in flowering plants, including notably knapweed, goat's-rue and various vetches and clovers, forming a useful foraging resource for insects. Skylarks nest in the less disturbed areas.

The boundary tracks and hedges support a good flora including some rare plants. This includes meadow vetchling, narrow-leaved birdsfoot trefoil, field parsley, amphibious bistort, zig-zag clover and wild carrot.

Provides valuable supporting habitat for the northern section of the Ingrebourne Marshes SSSI and for M108 Ingrebourne Valley..

Maps





