

- 1.0 The Wirral Unitary Development Plan (UDP) provides protection for Sites of Local Importance for Earth Science in Policy NC10. The original schedule of sites is identified in the UDP Proposal NC11 and on the Proposals Map.
- 1.1 In October 2011 Wirral Borough Council formally agreed a revised schedule of Local Geological Sites, as a material consideration for use by Planning Committee in the determination of individual planning applications and as part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Development Framework for Wirral.
- 1.2 The revised schedule of Local Geological Sites is set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 A list of Sites of Geological Importance for Merseyside was originally produced in 1983 by the Keeper of Geology at Merseyside County Museum, in consultation with local geological societies, for inclusion in the Merseyside Structure Plan. The Wirral & Cheshire RIGS Group, co-ordinated by the Cheshire Wildlife Trust, reviewed these sites in accordance with national guidelines for the identification of Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological sites (RIGS) issued by English Nature (now Natural England). This led to the formal designation of 12 Sites of Local Importance for Earth Science under Proposal NC11 – Sites of Local Importance for Earth Science of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (UDP), which was adopted in February 2000.
- 2.2 The reasoned justification for Proposal NC11 states that “sites not currently identified under the Proposal NC11 list, but which can be shown to meet the criteria specified, will also be subject to protection under Policy NC10”. Policy NC10 – The Protection of Sites of Importance for Earth Science, sets out the Council’s approach to the protection of sites which can be demonstrated to have special local value for earth science conservation.

3.0 Review of Sites

- 3.1 In 2002 the Cheshire Wildlife Trust withdrew from the co-ordination of the Wirral & Cheshire RIGS Group and a new partnership, known as Cheshire RIGS Group, was convened. This group has continued to review sites of geological and geomorphological importance in Wirral. The sites are selected on a local basis according to the following nationally agreed criteria for the selection of Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Site (RIGS) using the standardised recording, assessing, designation and notification procedures produced by The Association of UKRIGS – (the umbrella body for UK RIGS groups):
 - The value of a site for educational purposes in life-long learning

- The value of a site for study by both amateur and professional earth scientists
- The historical value of a site in terms of important advances in earth science knowledge, events or human exploitation
- The aesthetic value of a site in the landscape, particularly in relation to promoting public awareness and appreciation of earth sciences.

3.2 The local sites schedule is intended to be a comprehensive rather than representative list, including all sites meeting the selection criteria. Since the adoption of the Wirral UDP, the Cheshire RIGS Group has agreed a number of proposed changes to the original schedule of sites, including the identification of additional sites, the modification of site boundaries and the de-selection of two of the sites.

4.0 Revised Schedule of Local Geological Sites

4.1 Wirral Council formally agreed the changes proposed by Cheshire RIGS Group in October 2011. The revised schedule attached below identifies 15 sites which will be subject to protection under Policy NC10 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan. The schedule includes five new sites, one of which is the result of an existing site being split into two. Two sites have been removed from the original schedule as they no longer meet the criteria for selection. The boundaries of three of the original sites have been modified to better reflect the geological interest following updated site surveys.

4.2 In response to guidance published in 2006 by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) the sites will be known as Local Geological Sites. The numbering of new sites follows on from the original schedule with the deleted site number not being reassigned to avoid confusion.

4.3 Full details of the proposed changes were presented to Wirral Council's Cabinet on 1st September 2011 in a report titled *Local Development Framework for Wirral –Local Geological Sites Update*, which can be viewed at:

<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=20218>

<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=20219>

Appendix 1 - Schedule of Wirral Local Geological Sites 2011

New Site No.	Site Name	UDP Site No.
1	Red and Yellow Noses, New Brighton	1
2	Grange Hill, West Kirby	2
3	Irby Quarry	3
4	Mill Road, Bromborough	4
5	Hilbre Point/ Red Rocks, Hoylake	5
6	Hilbre Island, Hoylake/ West Kirby	6
7	Caldy Hill	7
8	Thurstaston Common	8
10	Storeton Hill, Bebington	10
11	Bidston Hill	11
13	Telegraph Road Cutting, Thurstaston	NEW
14	Boundary Road, Bidston	NEW
15	Lower Flaybrick, Bidston	NEW
16	Arrowe Brook, Woodchurch	NEW
17	Flaybrick Cemetery, Bidston	NEW