

Sites of Biological Importance Update

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Planning & Development

Directorate: Place

Report Author: Peter Richards, Assistant Director for Planning & Development

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Date of Decision: 5 October 2026

1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

To adopt changes to the Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) within the Borough, including boundary changes at Fennifield Lilly Pond and Castleshaw Pasture.

3. Reason for urgency

SBIs play an important role in maintaining and improving important habitats in the borough, and their designations and boundaries are necessary to help inform robust planning decisions on applications within or near to the SBIs. As such, any updates to the SBIs in the borough need to be adopted in a timely manner to ensure that planning decisions are being made on the up-to-date boundaries and information on SBIs. Therefore, this decision should not be delayed.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

The risks of not adopting the changes to the SBIs will result in the Council failing to utilise the most recent and up-to-date specialist ecological advice available. This may result in the Council determining planning applications, formulating policy, or providing advice based on out-of-date information and evidence. The Council may also be failing in its Biodiversity Duty and failing to have regard to the GM Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

The proposed SBI boundary changes relate to land that is not in the ownership of the Council and, as such, do not result in any direct financial implications for the council.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name: Lee Walsh

Date 14 September 2026

Comments

This decision seeks approval to incorporate changes to Sites of Biological Importance (SBI), including boundary amendments, within the Borough. As the proposed changes relate solely to land that is not in Council ownership, there are no direct financial implications arising from this proposal.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name: Alex Bougatef

Date: 11th September 2026

Comments:

The exercise of emergency powers should be undertaken in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council. However, the Council has not yet appointed a Leader or Deputy Leader for the current municipal year; it is therefore not possible to consult them. In addition, there is no certainty about when a Leader or Deputy Leader will be appointed as the Council has failed at successive meetings to do so. For the reasons given in the report, an urgent decision relating to the report is required, and it cannot wait until the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader at some undetermined future date.