

Local Sites – Wildlife and Geological



What, who, why and how

Local Sites, along with Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), are the most important places for wildlife and geology in Greater Lincolnshire. Selecting Local Sites recognises areas of substantive nature conservation value within the planning system, and helps local authorities meet their obligations under legislation and government guidance.



What does it mean?

Local Sites are sites selected at a local level for their wildlife or geological value. They are selected by Local Site partnerships, usually made up of NGOs, local authorities and government agencies.

The Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP), as the Local Sites partnership, uses two terms within the umbrella term Local Sites: Local Geological Sites (LGSs) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs).

These are non-statutory designations but are referred to within national policy and guidance aimed at protecting local biodiversity and geodiversity, and are recognised in local planning policy.

The majority of Local Sites in Greater Lincolnshire are on private land; some are publicly accessible but most are not.

Local Sites are important because their identification:

- Contributes to actions within the Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and Geodiversity Action Plan (GAP), which identify priorities for conservation.
- Compiles data on the state of nature and the condition of the wider countryside, outside of statutorily protected sites (e.g. SSSIs).
- Finds sites that have the potential to contribute to the well being of the wider community, and may also have educational value.

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Implications for owners and managers

Local Site selection is recognition of the value of the land for wildlife and/or geology. In many cases it is well-deserved praise for the past or existing management decisions and practices.

Permission for surveys is sought before a site is visited. LWSs and LGSs are monitored every 5-10 years; the GLNP or local authority will be in contact again to request permission to re-visit the site.

Data on Local Sites is held and used by the Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre (LERC), as an independent service of the GLNP, and can be requested at any time.

Surveys provide owners/managers with information that often results in positive outcomes for nature. In prioritising allocation of funds, such as those used for agri-environment schemes, agencies are potentially able to target grants towards Local Sites.

Local Sites are a material consideration during the planning application process, but they do not impose the same constraints to development or land use changes that statutory sites such as SSSIs might.

Site selection does NOT:

- **Affect how owners/managers manage or use their land.**
- **Bestow any additional public right of access.**



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Local Site identification

Any piece of land that satisfies the selection criteria could become a Local Site, with the exception of SSSIs where they are designated for the same features. The GLNP seeks to identify every site that satisfies the selection criteria, thus recognising a comprehensive suite of sites.

Local Sites supersede older designations known as Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGSs) and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs), which were identified on the basis of local knowledge and were selected without consideration of any formal criteria. The GLNP aims to assess all of these RIGSs and SNCIs using the LGS and LWS selection criteria respectively.

However, there are many sites of considerable nature conservation value that were not identified as RIGSs or SNCIs. Therefore a positive effort is being made to identify and assess such sites in order to provide satisfactory Local Site coverage.

Once a site has been identified and permission given, a surveyor visits to collect the data necessary to assess the site against the selection criteria. One visit is usually enough, unless the site is very large.

Local Site selection

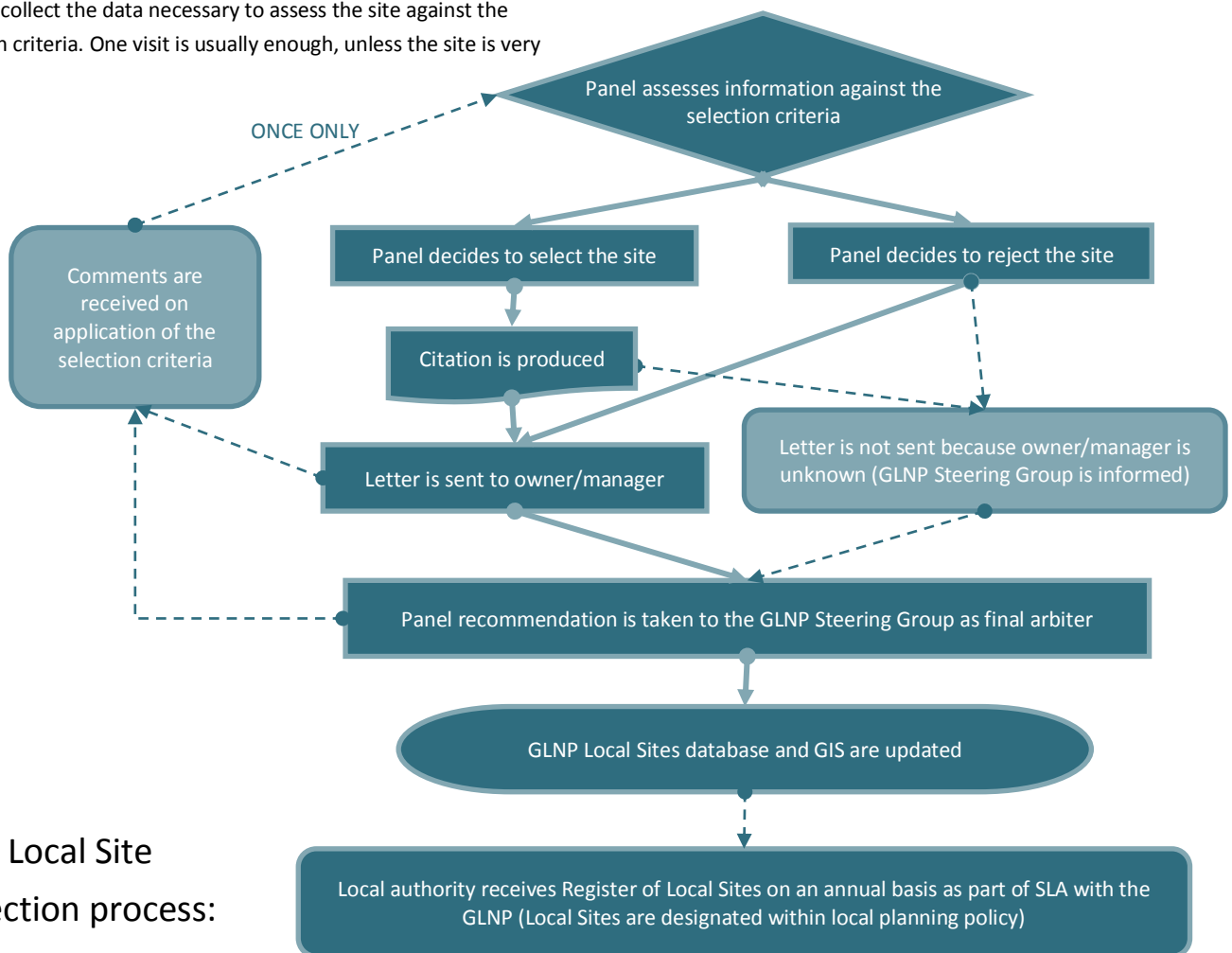
Sites are selected by the GLNP, but are designated by the local authority through inclusion in local planning policy.

Survey data is submitted to the LGS Panel or LWS Panel for assessment against the selection criteria. These Panels are expert working groups of the GLNP, but their decisions are endorsed by the Steering Group on behalf of the entire Partnership before recommendations for designation are made to local authorities.

Owners/managers are invited to make observations on factors relating directly to the application of the selection criteria before any site is selected by the GLNP. See the diagram below for more detail of the selection process.

For more information on the Local Site identification and selection process, including the selection criteria, please see the guidelines on our website: www.glnp.org.uk/partnership/local-sites

Alternatively, if you have any questions you can contact a member of the GLNP Team on info@glnp.org.uk or 01507 528398



The Local Site selection process:

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