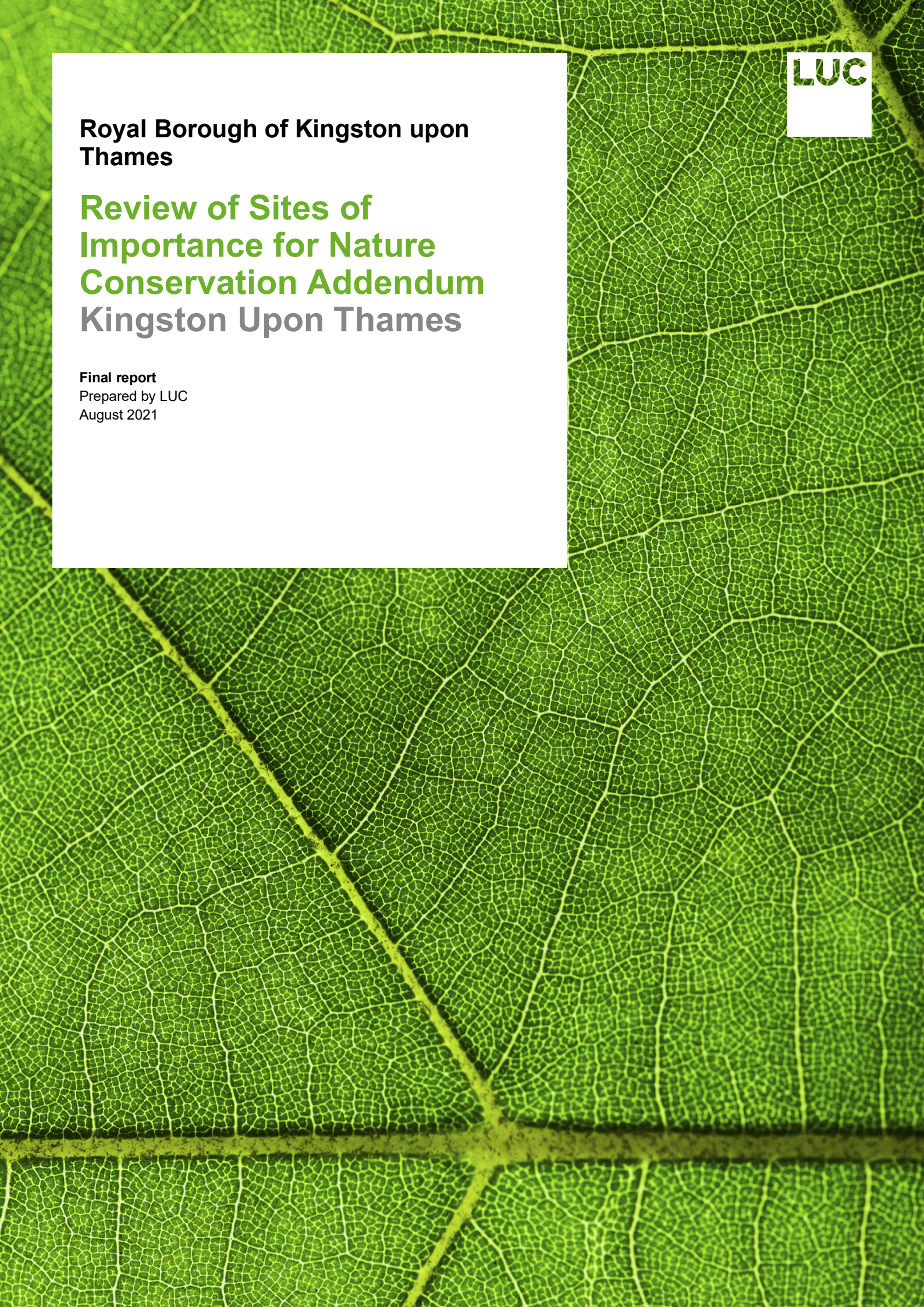

Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

Review of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation Addendum

Kingston Upon Thames

Final report
Prepared by LUC
August 2021

Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

Review of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation Addendum
Kingston Upon Thames

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Contents

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 LUC was appointed in June 2021 by the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames to produce an addendum to the Review of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Kingston upon Thames (2021)[1].

1.2 This addendum presents the findings of the updated site survey and review of Seething Wells Filter Beds Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) to further understand the ecological value of the designated SINC.

1.3 An updated survey was required as there had been recent changes in habitat management prior to the previous survey in 2020.

1.4 In conjunction with the Review of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Kingston upon Thames (2021)[1], this addendum will form part of the evidence base of the emerging Local Plan, which is being produced by the Council.

[1] LUC (2021). *Review of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Kingston upon Thames*. LUC, London.

Chapter 2
Method

2.1 This Chapter presents the Methods that were applied as part of the updated SINC Review of Seething Wells Filter Beds SINC in 2021.

Desk Review

2.2 To provide additional background and to highlight likely features or species groups of interest, a review of the previous desk study in 2020 was undertaken.

2.3 The findings of this review are presented within the summary table in **Appendix A**. The proforma presenting the raw data is provided in **Appendix B**.

Site Survey 2021

2.4 The 2021 site survey followed the same methodology applied in the 2020 SINC review. A summary of the methodology is provided below.

2.5 The site was surveyed using the Greater London Authority's (GLA) Open Space and Habitat Survey Methodology[2] which has been specifically developed to enable the identification of SINCs and enables the collection of the key site Information. This involved the collection of data relating to a range of site attributes as detailed in **Table 2.1** below.

2.6 Detailed plant species lists were only collected for species-rich or particularly notable habitats as per the GLA methodology.

2.7 The survey was completed by Tom Hicks BSc Qualifying Member of CIEEM on 18th June 2021 during the flowering season to allow for optimal opportunities for floral identification, particularly for rare and notable species

Site Evaluation

2.8 The site was assessed against a consistent and well-established methodology and set of criteria which is set out in **Table 2.1** below. This will follow the methodology established by the London Wildlife Sites Board as published in 2019, which sets out the Mayor of London's criteria on SINCs selection[3].

[2] Greater London Authority, Open space and habitat survey for Greater London

[3] The London Wildlife Site Board (LWSB0) Advice Note – April 2019

Table 2.1: Table 2.1 SINC Assessment Criteria

Assessment Criteria	Guidance
Representation	The best examples of each major habitat type are selected. These include typical urban habitats such as abandoned land colonised by nature. Where a habitat is not extensive in the search area it will be appropriate to conserve all or most of it, whereas where it is more extensive a smaller percentage will be conserved.
Habitat Rarity	The presence of a rare habitat makes a site important, because the loss of, or damage to, only a few sites threatens the survival of the habitat in the search area.
Species Rarity	The presence of a rare species makes the site important in a way that parallels rare habitat.
Habitat Richness	Protecting a site with a rich selection of habitat types not only conserves those habitats, but also the wide range of organisms that live within them and the species that require more than one habitat type for their survival. Rich sites also afford more opportunities for enjoyment and educational use.
Species Richness	Generally, sites that are species rich are preferred, as this permits the conservation of a correspondingly large number of species (however, some habitats such as reed beds, heaths and acid woodlands, are intrinsically relatively species poor).
Size	Large sites are generally more important than small sites. They may allow for species with special area requirements. Larger sites may be less vulnerable to small scale disturbance, as recovery is sometimes possible from the undisturbed remainder. They are more able to withstand visitors. Size is also related to the richness of habitat and species. The evaluation of the site's size was based on professional judgement, which was informed by the information on the extent of the site relative to the local area. For those sites of notable size, these were considered to be of particular importance in the local area, for example a large site within an urban area is considered to be of notable size, and which due to its size provides a significant contribution to a strategic wildlife corridor.
Important Populations of Species	Some sites are important because they hold a large proportion of the population of a species for the search area.
Ancient Character	Some sites have valuable ecological characteristics derived from long periods of traditional management, or even continuity in time to woodlands and wetlands that occupied before agriculture. Ancient woodlands, old parkland trees and traditionally managed grasslands tend to have typical species that are rare elsewhere. These habitats deserve protection also because of the ease with which they are damaged by changes in management.
Recreatability	The more difficult it is to recreate a sites habitat the more important it is to retain it. (Ponds can be created from scratch within a few years – whereas woodlands take decades). Certain habitats cannot be recreated because of practical reasons such as land availability and cost.
Typical Urban Character	Features such as canals, walls, bridges, railway sidings colonised by nature often have a juxtaposition of artificial and wild features. Some of these habitats are particularly rich in species / have rare species / communities. Particular physical or chemical substrates may allow rare species to thrive. They may also have particular visual qualities.
Cultural and Historic Character	Sites such as historic gardens with semi-wild areas, garden suburbs, churchyards which have reverted to the wild may have a unique blend of cultural and natural history.
Geographic Position	Regarding areas of deficiency in access to nature.
Access	An important consideration – especially in areas where there are limited opportunities for large urban populations to enjoy the natural world. Some access is desirable to all but the most sensitive sites, but direct physical access to all parts of a site may not be desirable.
Use	The current use of the site, relating to how the site is used by people e.g. education, research, or quiet enjoyment of nature.
Potential	Where a site can be enhanced given modest changes in management practices gives it value. Opportunity exists where a site is likely to become available for nature conservation use, or where there is local enthusiasm.

Assessment Criteria	Guidance
Aesthetic Appeal	Factors which contribute to the enjoyment of the experience of visiting a site – seclusion/views/variety of landscape etc.

2.9 The assessment included a set of recommendations based on the following categories detailed below. This included:

- **Proposed upgrade and/or extension** – this category identified SINC sites, which were recommended for an upgrade in SINC designation and/or alteration of the site boundary to include additional habitats, which were considered to contribute to the value of the SINC.
- **Proposed New SINCs** – this category identified sites, which has not been previously designated as a SINC but were considered to support habitats of SINC quality and were therefore recommended to be designated as such.
- **At Risk** – this category identified sites, which were at risk of downgrade or de-designation due to a decline in ecological value. These sites should retain their existing SINC designation, however, it is recommended that action is taken to ensure that these sites retain their value as a SINC.
- **De-designation** – this category identified sites that had changed significantly and were therefore no longer considered to support habitats of SINC value, and which were not considered viable for restoration. This included changes to site boundaries to exclude areas where the site no longer supported habitats that contributed to the value of the SINC.
- **Opportunity** – this category identified sites, which have potential through further management and establishment of habitats to be recommended for upgrade in the future. At this stage, these sites were recommended to retain their SINC designation in this SINC review.
- **No change** – this category identified sites, which were not considered to have changed since the previous survey and continued to retain their value as a SINC. These sites were recommended to retain their SINC designation.

2.10 The SINC was considered in relation to the Areas of Deficiency (AoD) in Access to Nature, which was provided by GIGL. AoD in access to nature was modelled by GiGL as areas outside of 1km walking distance, along roads and paths, from access points to publicly accessible SINCs as presented in **Appendix A** of the Review of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Kingston upon Thames (2021)[1].

2.11 Given the nature of the assessment methodology and criteria, field-based assessments were necessarily subjective to a degree and based on the professional judgement of experienced ecologists. In addition, not all criteria are necessarily applicable to the Site. Following completion of the survey, a workshop was held with the Project Manager to develop recommendations and ensure consistency during the assessment.

Limitations and Constraints

2.12 It is important to note that ecological surveys provide information regarding the ecological baseline of a site for only a 'snapshot' of time. Ecological surveys can generally be considered as up to date for 1 to 3 years dependent on the nature of the Site[4].

[4] CIEEM (2019). *Advice Note: On the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys*. Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Chapter 3
Summary of the SINC Assessment

3.1 This Chapter presents a summary of the findings of the SINC Review in 2020 and 2021 with more detail presented in in **Table A.1**, **Appendix A**.

3.2 The survey proforma presenting the information recorded during the surveys in 2020 and 2021, and photos, is provided in **Appendix B.**

2020 Survey Findings

3.3 Seething Wells Filter Beds was historically a waterworks located in the north of Kingston Upon Thames adjacent to the River Thames.

3.4 The site was comprised of filter beds with standing water and bare ground with ephemeral plant species and scattered trees. The site had significantly changed since the previous review with the entire site being subject to treatment and removal of vegetation and trees. The survey recorded no evidence of emergent vegetation within the filter beds and little evidence of species-rich grassland supporting species typically found in chalk grassland identified along the basin walls. A review of the aerial imagery indicated that changes in extent and types of habitats in the site have occurred in more recent years with most significant changes recorded between 2018 and 2020

2020 Recommendations

3.5 Following the 2020 survey, the Seething Wells Filter Beds was identified as **at risk of downgrade or de-designation** as the ecological value of the site has declined since the previous survey and would require management to maintain the site at its current status.

3.6 It was recommended that the site retained its designation as a Borough Grade I SINC but that changes in management were required.

3.7 The previous SINC Review in 2020 made the following recommendations:

Due to the current management practices, which include the treatment and removal of vegetation, being implemented, the site is at risk of de-designation unless urgent action is taken to implement remedial measures to restore the site.

The site has significantly changed since the previous survey due to current management approach, which has reduced the extent and value of the habitats present. The site is now

primarily comprised of standing water and bare ground with tall ruderal vegetation and ephemeral/short perennial plant species. The remains of some value to breeding birds and winter waterfowl species using the River Thames, however this could be further improved through appropriate management of the site.

Given the nature of the site, which continues to support wetland habitats, as well as its relationship with the River Thames and its geological character, the site is considered to continue to be of notable value. Due to these factors and given that the site been subject to these changes in more recent years, it is expected that the potential to restore the site to its previous quality and value would be achievable through appropriate management of the site.

To support this assessment, it is recommended that an additional survey is conducted in spring to further understand the ecological value of the site.

It is recommended that the SINC site retains its designation as a Borough Grade I SINC, however action is required otherwise it is at risk of being downgraded or de-designated in the future if management does not improve.

3.8 In line with the recommendations of this review, an updated survey was completed at the end of spring. This findings of which are present below.

2021 Survey Findings

3.9 The condition of the site during the 2021 survey did not significantly differ from the condition recorded during the 2020 survey. Management practices remain the same with the only notable change being the introduction of goats for grazing.

3.10 Some indicators of calcareous grassland were recorded including oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, lady's bedstraw *Galium verum* and field scabious *Knautia arvensis*. This suggests the site is likely to retain its previous geological character and there is an opportunity to re-establish the species-rich calcareous grassland.

2021 Recommendations

3.11 The 2021 update survey determined that Seething Wells Filter Beds **remains at risk of downgrade or de-designation** due to the continued unfavourable management practices. The ecological value of the site remains in decline relative to previous surveys. The site should retain its existing SINC designation, however, it is recommended that action is taken to ensure that the site retains its value as a SINC.

3.12 The management recommendations remain largely the same as during the 2020 survey. Additionally, it is recommended that the goats are removed to prevent overgrazing. This would allow the re-establishment of species-rich grassland which may support the notable species recorded in previous surveys.

Conclusion

3.13 In summary, the conclusions and recommendations of the 2020 survey remains largely unchanged. There were minor changes to the management recommendations in relation to grazing but overall the recommendations remain the same.

3.14 It is recommended that the site retains its designation as a Borough Grade I SINC, however action is required otherwise it is **at risk of being downgraded or de-designated** in the future if management does not improve.

Appendix A

Summary of SINC Review

Key to SINC Recommendations

	At risk

Table A.1: Summary of SINC Review

LUC Site ID	SINC ID	Site Name	SINC Designation	SINC Citation	Key Survey Findings	Recommendations of the SINC Review *	Proposed SINC Designation
14	KiBI08	Seething Wells Filter Beds	Borough Grade I	The remains of the old Surbiton Water Works, next to the Thames, frequented by wintering wildfowl and other birds seeking refuge from the comparatively exposed river. Plant species usually associated with the North Downs grow on the chalk grassland atop the basin walls	**2020 Survey** Seething Wells Filter Beds was historically a waterworks located in the north of Kingston Upon Thames adjacent to the River Thames. The site is comprised of filter beds with standing water and bare ground with ephemeral plant species and scattered trees. The site has significantly changed since the previous review with the entire site being subject to treatment and removal of vegetation and trees. The survey recorded no evidence of emergent vegetation within the filter beds and little evidence of species-rich grassland supporting species typically found in chalk grassland in the North Downs identified along the basin walls. A review of the aerial imagery indicates that changes in extent and types of habitats in the site have occurred in more recent years with most significant changes recorded between 2018 and 2020. **2021 Update Survey** The habitats at the site remain the same as those recorded during the 2020 survey. This updated survey noted that there was notably higher species richness along the Portsmouth Road basin wall than the River Thames basin wall. The species composition on both basin walls was typical of disturbed urban habitats though some indicators of calcareous grassland present including oxeye daisy, lady's bedstraw and field scabious. There was no evidence to suggest that species-rich grassland supporting calcareous species was still present at the Site. However, the site did support several species indicative of calcareous grassland which suggest the site has retained its previous geological character.	**2020 Survey** **At Risk** Due to the current management practices, which include the treatment and removal of vegetation, being implemented, the site is at risk of de-designation unless urgent action is taken to implement remedial measures to restore the site. The site has significantly changed since the previous survey due to current management approach, which has reduced the extent and value of the habitats present. The site is now primarily comprised of standing water and bare ground with tall ruderal vegetation and ephemeral/short perennial plant species. The remains of some value to breeding birds and winter waterfowl species using the River Thames, however this could be further improved through appropriate management of the site. Given the nature of the site, which continues to support wetland habitats, as well as its relationship with the River Thames and its geological character, the site is considered to continue to be of notable value. Due to these factors and given that the site been subject to these changes in more recent years, it is expected that the potential to restore the site to its previous quality and value would be achievable through appropriate management of the site. To support this assessment, it is recommended that an additional survey is conducted in spring to further understand the ecological value of the site. It is recommended that the SINC site retains its designation as a Borough Grade I SINC, however action is required otherwise it is at risk of being downgraded or de-designated in the future if management does not improve. **Management Recommendations** The site is currently subject to regular management each month. This includes the treatment and removal of vegetation. The site offers a significant opportunity to sensitively manage the site to restore the wetland habitat present. Given that a large proportion of the site supports wetland habitat and due to the existing relationship with the River Thames, the site continues to be of notable value. Due to this and given that the site been subject to these changes in more recent years, it is expected that the potential to restore the site to its previous quality and value would be achievable through appropriate management of the site. In addition to this, there is the opportunity to re-establish the species-rich calcareous grassland, which despite existing levels of disturbance and treatment from current management of the site is likely to retain its previous geological character and retain notable value to support rare and notable species that are unique to the site. **2021 Update Survey** **At Risk** The site remains at risk of downgrade or de-designation due to the continued unfavourable management practices. Since the previous survey, several goats have been introduced to graze vegetation on the basin walls. Given the stocking density and existing low vegetation cover, the goats are likely to cause overgrazing. Overgrazing is likely to prevent the re-establishment of species-rich grassland and will further reduce the value of the terrestrial habitats at the site. **Management Recommendations** The management recommendations remain the same as during the 2020 survey. Additionally, it is recommended that the goats are removed to prevent overgrazing. This would allow the re-establishment of species-rich grassland which may support the notable species recorded in previous surveys.	**Borough Grade I**

Appendix B

Proforma

Seething Wells Filter Beds

Site information

Site ID	14	**SINC ID**	KiBI08	**SINC Name**	Seething Wells Filter Beds
Grid Ref	TQ 17355 67553	**Area (Ha)**	5.38	**Grade**	Borough I
Site type	Existing site			**Ownership**	Private

SINC Access GiGL data Can be viewed from adjacent paths or roads only

SINC Access 2020 Survey No change

SINC Description The remains of the old Surbiton Water Works, next to the Thames, frequented by wintering wildfowl and other birds seeking refuge from the comparatively exposed river.

Other designations within 30m of SINC

SSSI within 30m of the SINC:	No SSSI within 30m	**SAC within 30m of the SINC:**	No SAC within 30m
LNR within 30m of the SINC:	No LNR within 30m	**NNR within 30m of the SINC:**	No NNR within 30m
AWI within 30m of the SINC:	No AWI within 30m	**Land Use**	Disused filter bed

Invasive species (GiGL data): A Flowering Plant, American Mink, Butterfly-bush, Ring-necked Parakeet

Priority Habitat No PHI habitat within SINC

Protected / Notable Species

Bats; Black Redstart; Common Pipistrelle; Common Tern; Daubenton's Bat; Dunnock; Fieldfare; Gadwall; Goldcrest; Green Sandpiper; Grey Heron; Grey Wagtail; Herring Gull; House Martin; House Sparrow; Kestrel; Kingfisher; Lapwing; Lesser Black-backed Gull; Lesser Noctule; Linnet; Little Egret; Little Ringed Plover; Mediterranean Gull; Mistle Thrush; Mute Swan; Nathusius's Pipistrelle; Natterer's Bat; Noctule Bat; Peregrine; Pipistrelle; Pipistrelle Bat species; Pochard; Red-eyed Damselfly; Redwing; Reed Bunting; Sand Martin; Serotine; Shoveler; Snipe; Song Thrush; Soprano Pipistrelle; Starling; Stock Dove; Swallow; Swift; Tawny Owl; Teal; Unidentified Bat

Will this site contribute to Areas of Deficiency in Access to Nature? No

Summary

Seething Wells Filter Beds is a disused industrial site in the north of Kingston Upon Thames adjacent to the River Thames. The site was historically used as a waterworks that provided water from the River Thames to London.

Seething Wells Filter Beds

Survey

Surveyor TH **Date** 18/06/2021 **Weather** Mild and wet.

Nature and level of use None **Management** Regularly

Habitat Survey Description

2020 Survey

The site is subject to regular maintenance on a monthly basis. This includes the treatment and removal of vegetation.

2021 Spring Update Survey

Management remains largely the same as 2020. In addition, several goats have been introduced to graze vegetation on the basin walls.

Priority Habitats on site:

- [ ] Chalk Grassland
- [ ] Acid Grassland
- [ ] Woodland
- [ ] Heathland
- [ ] Private Gardens
- [ ] Rivers and Streams
- [ ] Reedbeds
- [x] Standing Water
- [ ] Tidal Thames
- [ ] Wasteland
- [ ] Parks and Urban greenspaces

Habitat Survey Description

2020 Survey

The majority of the site is comprised of standing water, which was previous used as a filter bed, and bare ground with tall ruderal, ephemeral and short perennial plant species and scattered trees. The site has significantly changed since the previous survey with little evidence of the species-rich grassland supporting species, such as upright brome, small scabious, dropwort, salad burnet and pyramidal orchid, which are typically found in chalk grassland in the North Downs identified along the basin walls. A review of the aerial imagery indicates that changes in extent and types of habitats in the site have occurred in more recent years with most significant changes recorded between 2018 and 2020.

2021 Spring Update Survey

The habitats at the site remain the same as those recorded during the 2020 survey. Habitats comprised standing water, bare ground with tall ruderal, ephemeral and short perennial plant species and scattered trees. Species richness was notably higher along the Portsmouth Road basin wall than the River Thames basin wall. The species composition was typical of disturbed urban habitats though some indicators of calcareous grassland present including oxeye daisy, lady's bedstraw and field scabious.

Species recorded within the Portsmouth Road basin wall included occasional common poppy, opium poppy, purple toadflax, fern, hop trefoil, oxeye daisy, bramble, buddleia and biting stonecrop with rarely ribwort plantain, ash (seedling), holly, sycamore (seedling), bent grass, lady's bedstraw, fields scabious, mallow, green alkanet, yarrow, herb Robert and false oat grass. Species recorded within the River Thames basin wall comprised abundant hedge mustard, frequent common poppy with occasional bramble and broom.

Threats and Disturbances

- [x] Redevelopment
- [x] Invasives
- [x] Erosion
- [ ] Vandalism
- [ ] Dog Fouling
- [ ] Flytipping
- [ ] Litter

Comments

The site was subject to threat from erosion along the edge of the site immediately adjacent to the River Thames. In addition to this, moderate levels of buddleia were recorded during the survey.

Opportunities on Site

- [ ] Mowing Regime
- [x] Meadow Creation
- [x] Wetland Creation
- [ ] Tree Planting
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Active Tree Managment
- [ ] Loggery
- [ ] Wildlife Friendly Planting

Comments

The site offers a significant opportunity to sensitively manage the site to restore the wetland habitat present. Given that a large

proportion of the site supports wetland habitat and due to the existing relationship with the River Thames, the site continues to be of notable value. Due to this and given that the site been subject to these changes in more recent years, it is expected that the potential to restore the site to its previous quality and value would be achievable through appropriate management of the site. In addition to this, there is the opportunity to re-establish the species-rich calcareous grassland, which despite existing levels of disturbance and treatment from current management of the site is likely to retain its previous geological character and retain notable value to support rare and notable species that are unique to the site.

Interest Features

☐ Fish	☐ Amphibian	☐ Reptile	☐ Higher Plant	☐ Fungi
☑ Bird	☐ Bryophyte	☑ Mammal	☐ Lichen	☑ Invertebrates

Explain the importance of the site for these features

2020 Survey

A range of waterfowl were identified within the site including swan, coot and gull species. In addition to this, a small number of butterflies were recorded during the survey.

2021 Spring Update Survey

A range of waterfowl were identified within the site including swan, coot and mallard. A fox den and collared dove were also noted.

SINC Survey Criteria

Representation

This is a unique site within the borough as it represents an old industrial site that has been colonised nature. In addition to this, the site is considered of historical importance and forms part of Conservation Area, as well as a Borough Grade I SINC.

Habitat Rarity

The site was previously noted to support species-rich grassland with calcareous tendencies. This is a rare habitat within the borough and should be re-established where possible.

Species Rarity

The site was previously recorded to support a range of grassland species, which are rare within London. Due to the management of the site, these species are no longer evident and have largely been replaced by tall ruderal and ephemeral species.

Habitat Richness

This criterion is not applicable to the site.

Species Richness

2020 Survey

The previous survey recorded a species-rich grassland along the basin walls of the site. There was no evidence to suggest during the site visit that this was still present, and efforts should be made to re-establish this habitat, which supported a range of unique species, including upright brome, small scabious, dropwort, salad burnet and pyramidal orchid that are typically associated with calcareous grassland in the North Downs. Despite existing disturbance and treatment from the current management of the site, it is likely that that the site continues to retain its previous geological character and retain its value to support rare and notable species. To understand the ecological value of the site further, it is recommended that an additional survey are conducted in spring

2021 Spring Update Survey

Moderate species richness was recorded along the Portsmouth Road basin wall and low species diversity was record along the River Thames basin wall. Species recorded were typical of disturbed habitat though some indicators of calcareous grassland present including oxeye daisy, lady's bedstraw and field scabious.
It is possible that Portsmouth Road basin wall has been seeded as species typical of wildflower seed mixes were recorded such as common and opium poppy.

Size

The site is 5.38ha and is not considered to be notable in size.

Important Populations of Species

The site is known to be of particular importance to winter waterfowl. Due to the timings of the SINC Review survey, it was not possible to observe this. However, during the survey a range of waterfowl species were recorded using the site. Given the proximity of the site to the River Thames, this site is likely to provide an important habitat for birds to shelter.

Ancient Character

This criterion is not applicable to the site.

Recreatability

The site is unique as a result of its previous land use and therefore as previously found has potential to support habitats and species that cannot be found elsewhere in the borough.

Seething Wells Filter Beds

Typical Urban Character

The site is a disused industrial site, which has been colonised by tall ruderal and ephemeral species.

Cultural or Historic Character

The site is of historic value as it was previously used as a waterworks to supply water to London. In addition to this, the site is listed within a Conservation Area and supports a listed boundary wall.

Geographic Position

The site is located in the north of the borough along the River Thames. The site provides an important place for birds that use the River Thames to shelter.

Access

There is no public access to the site. However, it can be viewed from the footpath on the Portsmouth Road.

Use

The site is a disused industrial site that is not accessible to the public.

Potential

The site offers a significant opportunity to sensitively manage the site to restore the wetland habitat present. Given that this habitat continues to present and comprises the large majority of the site, the ability to achieve this restoration is considered to be achievable. In addition to this, there is the opportunity to re-establish the species-rich calcareous grassland, which despite existing levels of disturbance and treatment from current management of the site is likely to retain its previous geological character and retain notable value to support rare and notable species that are unique to the site.

Aesthetic Appeal

This criterion is not applicable to the site.

Geodiversity Interest

This criterion is not applicable to the site.

Conclusions

SINC Recommendations

At risk

Comments

2020 survey

Due to the current management practices, which include the treatment and removal of vegetation, being implemented, the site is at risk of de-designation unless urgent action is taken to implement remedial measures to restore the site. The site has significantly changed since the previous survey due to current management approach, which has reduced the extent and value of the habitats present. The site is now primarily comprised of standing water and bare ground with tall ruderal vegetation and ephemeral/short perennial plant species. The remains of some value to breeding birds and winter waterfowl species using the River Thames, however this could be further improved through appropriate management of the site. Given the nature of the site, which continues to support wetland habitats, as well as its relationship with the River Thames and its geological character, the site is considered to continue to be of notable value. Due to these factors and given that the site been subject to these changes in more recent years, it is expected that the potential to restore the site to its previous quality and value would be achievable through appropriate management of the site. It is recommended that the SINC site retains its designation as a Borough Grade I SINC, however action is required otherwise it is at risk of being downgraded or de-designated in the future if management does not improve.

2021 Spring Update Survey

The 2021 update survey determined that Seething Wells Filter Beds remains at risk of de-designation due to the continued unfavourable management practices. The ecological value of the site remains in decline relative to previous surveys.

Management Recommendations

2020 survey

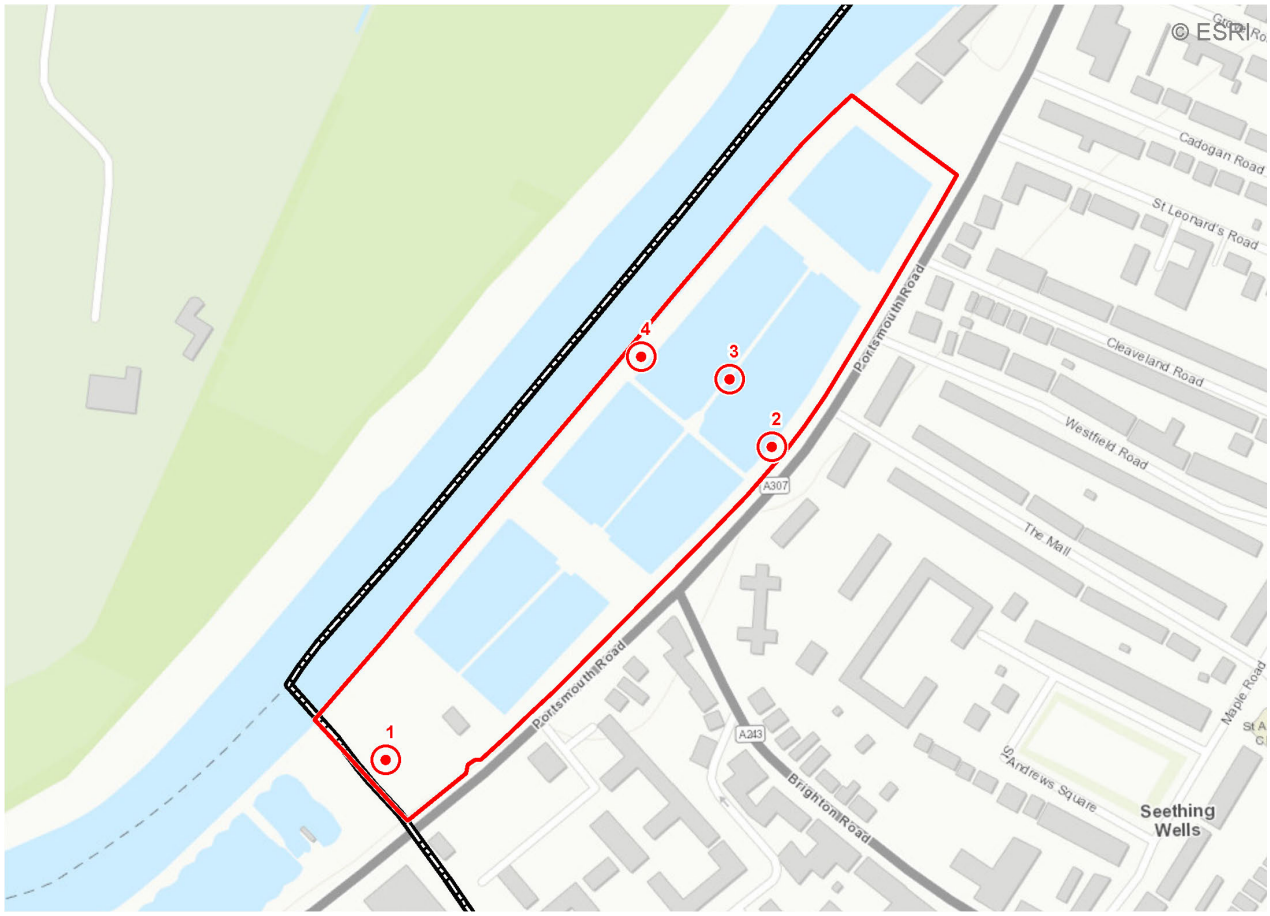
The site is currently subject to regular management each month. This includes the treatment and removal of vegetation. The site offers a significant opportunity to sensitively manage the site to restore the wetland habitat present. Given that a large proportion of the site supports wetland habitat and due to the existing relationship with the River Thames, the site continues to be of notable value. Due to this and given that the site been subject to these changes in more recent years, it is expected that the potential to restore the site to its previous quality and value would be achievable through appropriate management of the site. In addition to this, there is the opportunity to re-establish the species-rich calcareous grassland, which despite existing levels of disturbance and treatment from current management of the site is likely to retain its previous geological character and retain notable value to support rare and notable species that are unique to the site. In addition to this, if any invasive species which was reported anecdotally on site, these species should be controlled and prevented from further spread.

2021 Spring Update Survey

The management recommendations remain largely the same as during the 2020 survey. Additionally, it is recommended that the goats are removed to prevent overgrazing. This would allow the re-establishment of species-rich grassland which may support the notable species recorded in previous surveys.

Seething Wells Filter Beds

Habitat Map



SINC boundary

Kingston Upon Thames boundary

Target Note

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Target Notes

Target Note ID	Comment
1	Bare ground with ephemeral plants. Some scattered trees including sycamore Acer pseudoplatanus and ash Fraxinus excelsior. Ephemeral vegetation including willowherb Epilobium sp. and dandelion Taraxacum officinale agg..
2	Ephemeral and short perennial plant species including occasional common poppy, opium poppy, purple toadflax, fern, hop trefoil, oxeye daisy, bramble, buddleia and biting stonecrop with rarely ribwort plantain, ash (seedling), holly, sycamore (seedling), bent grass, lady's bedstraw, fields scabious, mallow, green alkanet, yarrow, herb Robert and false oat grass.
3	Odonata species present. Algae build up in filter bed. Bird nests present.
4	Ephemeral and short perennial plant species including abundant hedge mustard, frequent common poppy with occasional bramble and broom.

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Site Photographs