

Appendix 1

# Evaluation of Potential Local Nature Reserves

## Main Report

For Maidstone Borough Council  
September 2019



Wimpey Field, Staplehurst

# Contents

---

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Introduction .....</b>               | <b>1</b> |
| Background to this Report .....         | 1        |
| Selecting Local Nature Reserves.....    | 2        |
| Setting up a Local Nature Reserve ..... | 3        |
| Approach to Evaluation .....            | 4        |
| Constraints to LNR Designation.....     | 8        |
| <b>Evaluation of the Sites.....</b>     | <b>9</b> |
| The Sites.....                          | 9        |
| Summary of Evaluation .....             | 15       |

# Introduction

---

## Background to this Report

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are a statutory designation made under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 by principal local authorities. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally and are a natural resource which makes an important contribution to England's biodiversity.

There are currently three formally adopted Local Nature Reserves in the borough: Vinters Valley Park (declared 1 April 1993), Boxley Warren (declared 27 April 2005), and River Len (declared 29 October 2014). The Maidstone Borough Council Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2017 states that additional reserves are being considered for Fant Wildlife Area and Cross Keys, Bearsted, with Sandling Park and Cuckoo Wood also offering potential for designation. The AMR 31 March 2012 to 1 April 2013 included a more extensive list of potential sites but little progress had been made in bringing these forward.

In order to scope which further sites might be suitable to be designated as LNRs, a survey was sent to Ward Councillors asking for suggestions of possible new LNRs or existing sites which could be extended. Maidstone Borough Council officers also proposed some sites. This exercise, along with the original sites included in the AMR report, resulted in 38 sites.

The Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee of the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2018 determined that a robust evidence base was required with a framework of assessment to evaluate the suitability of these potential sites and to progress the project. This report provides a summary of the findings of the evaluation exercise. The full evaluation for each site is provided in the Supporting Document – Sites Evaluation.



Crisbrook Mill Pond

## Selecting Local Nature Reserves

### Legislative Requirements

Schedule 11 (12) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, which replaced Section 15 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, describes a 'nature reserve' as:

- a. Land managed solely for a conservation purpose, or
- b. Land managed not only for a conservation purpose but also for a recreational purpose, if the management of the land for the recreational purpose does not compromise its management for the conservation purpose.

Land is managed for a conservation purpose if it is managed for:

- a. Providing, under suitable conditions and control, special opportunities for the study of, and research into, matters relating to the fauna and flora of Great Britain and the physical conditions in which they live, and for the study of geological and physiographical features of special interest in the area;
- b. Or preserving flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features of special interest in the area;
- c. Or for both these purposes.

Land is managed for a recreational purpose if it provides opportunities for the enjoyment of nature or for open-air recreation.

### Natural England Recommendations

Natural England recommends that LNRs should be:

- a. Of high value locally for environmental education and/or research.
  - People are more likely to be aware of and value the natural environment when they can experience it at first hand in places such as LNRs.

### **Natural England Criteria**

- Is the site the focus of local community interest and concern, or does it have the potential to capture people's imagination? Have local people (both those living and working nearby, and interested groups and users) been involved in the selection process?
- Will interested communities be involved in steering the site's development, management and monitoring?
- Is the site reasonably close to schools, community education centres and/or field study centres?
- Will there be opportunities for local schools to get involved and for schemes such as the Forest School programme or a Watch group to be set up?
- Are there areas where children are welcome to play?
- Is the site in an area generally lacking in publicly accessible natural heritage?
- Is there some public access – rights of approach, entry or use that are legally defined or established through long-standing use? Is the site linked to wider public access networks, green networks, other open spaces, etc?
- Is it safe and physically easy to get into and around the site, accepting that access to highly sensitive areas may need to be restricted wholly or periodically?
- Can people enjoy the access rights and feel comfortable about using the site, for example without fear of crime?
- Can people get to the site by active and public transport?
- Does the site have, or could it have, car parking, and provision for safe delivery and pick-up for educational visits?
- Does the site lend itself to being a safe educational resource, for example with good site interpretation, without adversely affecting its special interest?
- Is the site safeguarded, notably through the development plan process, or can safeguarding be included in the next Local Plan revision?
- Has the site been (or is it likely to be) identified of local importance in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan or Local Geodiversity Action Plan?
- Are there any implications for neighbouring areas, or other sites or facilities?
- Is the site's future secured for some time? There is limited benefit in investing resources in an LNR that will be de-declared and subsumed into the development cycle in the short, or perhaps even medium-term.
- What is the existing use of the site and how can this be taken into account when planning the LNR development? Will alternative provision have to be made, and will there be an overall public benefit?
- Is the site a viable management unit with appropriate access for management, etc?
- What are the likely costs to be incurred during the life-cycle of the LNR (including initial developmental, establishment, staffing costs, etc), and has provision been made for these?

- b. Of high natural interest locally.
  - LNRs can help safeguard not just rare but also more common, locally valued species, habitats and geodiversity. They can play an important part in Local Biodiversity Action Plans and Local Geodiversity Action Plans.
- c. Of reasonable natural interest and of high value locally for enjoyment of nature by the public.

Lack of public access does not preclude the site from becoming a Local Nature Reserve if it passes the core test of being managed for conservation, but Natural England recommends that in this instance the site should be of high local natural interest, reflecting its priority for public access to and enjoyment of Local Nature Reserves.

Natural England also recommends that the reserve is of a minimum size to support a viable ecological interest and have the capacity to support public use. It suggests that any site less than 2 hectares is probably unable to withstand heavy, multiple uses but that this will be affected by adjacent land uses and the site's isolation from other sites of similar character. Conversely, small sites can be very important if no larger sites are available in the local neighbourhood.

### **Setting up a Local Nature Reserve**

Under the 1949 Act, the local authority must have or acquire a legal interest in the land through ownership, lease or an agreement with the owners and occupiers. Some of the sites in this evaluation are not owned by Maidstone Borough Council and therefore a lease agreement will be required with the landowner.

The local authority making the declaration must also have jurisdiction over the area in which the proposed reserve lies. A local authority owning land in a second local authority's area can only declare an LNR if powers are delegated to it by the second local authority. For sites that extend across a local authority boundary, a joint declaration may be made by two local authorities. Some of the sites in this evaluation are within Tonbridge and Malling Borough council area.



Hollingbourne Meadows

The main steps to setting up a Local Nature Reserve, as advised by Natural England, are shown to the right. An important element is a costed management plan. Several of the sites in this evaluation do not have a management plan or, if they do, it would require modification or updating to make it suitable to underpin an LNR designation. Some of the community groups may require support to produce a suitable management plan and may not have the resources to do this. Several Maidstone Borough Council owned sites also need suitable management plans.

There may also be additional resource implications arising from designating LNRs. For third party owned sites, MBC may wish to take more of an active interest in the management of the site. Natural England suggests

that the parties involved in identifying, evaluating, declaring and managing the LNR may form a group to help steer the process through a management advisory committee. Maidstone Borough Council should at least, as the designating authority, set up processes to monitor management of the third-party LNR to ensure that it continues to be managed appropriately.

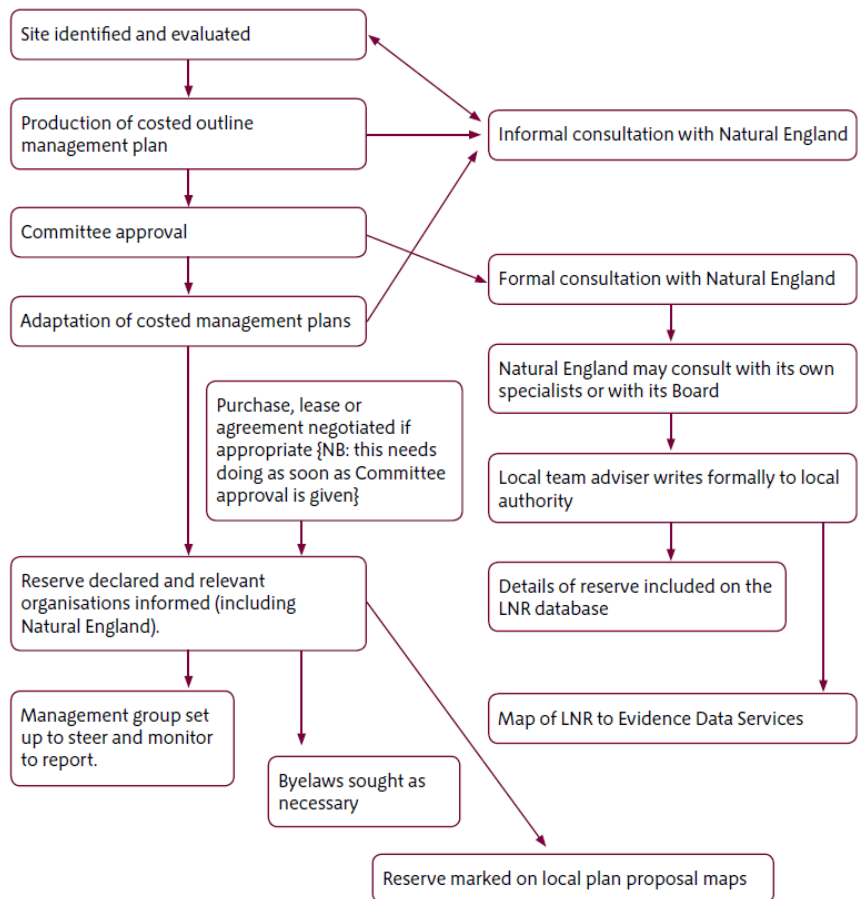
Some of the sites require bringing into appropriate management before they could be designated as LNRs. This includes several Maidstone Borough Council owned sites.

## Approach to Evaluation

LNRs should not just be designated to protect areas of land. They are a positive designation, requiring future commitment to managing the site for nature conservation and, ideally, for public benefit.

The evaluation framework developed for this project considers the core legislative requirements and Natural England’s recommendations and additional criteria. In order to provide objectivity to the evaluation, criteria were developed to assess the core elements of local natural interest and public value. An additional evaluation category encompasses management structure, effectiveness and security, to assess the confidence with which the suitability of the site as an LNR could be secured into the future. This is summarised in the figure on the next page.

Main steps in setting up an LNR



Although the evaluation process necessarily has a degree of subjectivity, scoring provides a quantitative guide to show how well each site meets the core tests and Natural England’s recommendations. The sites scoring highest can therefore be considered to be the strongest candidates for taking forward as Local Nature Reserves.

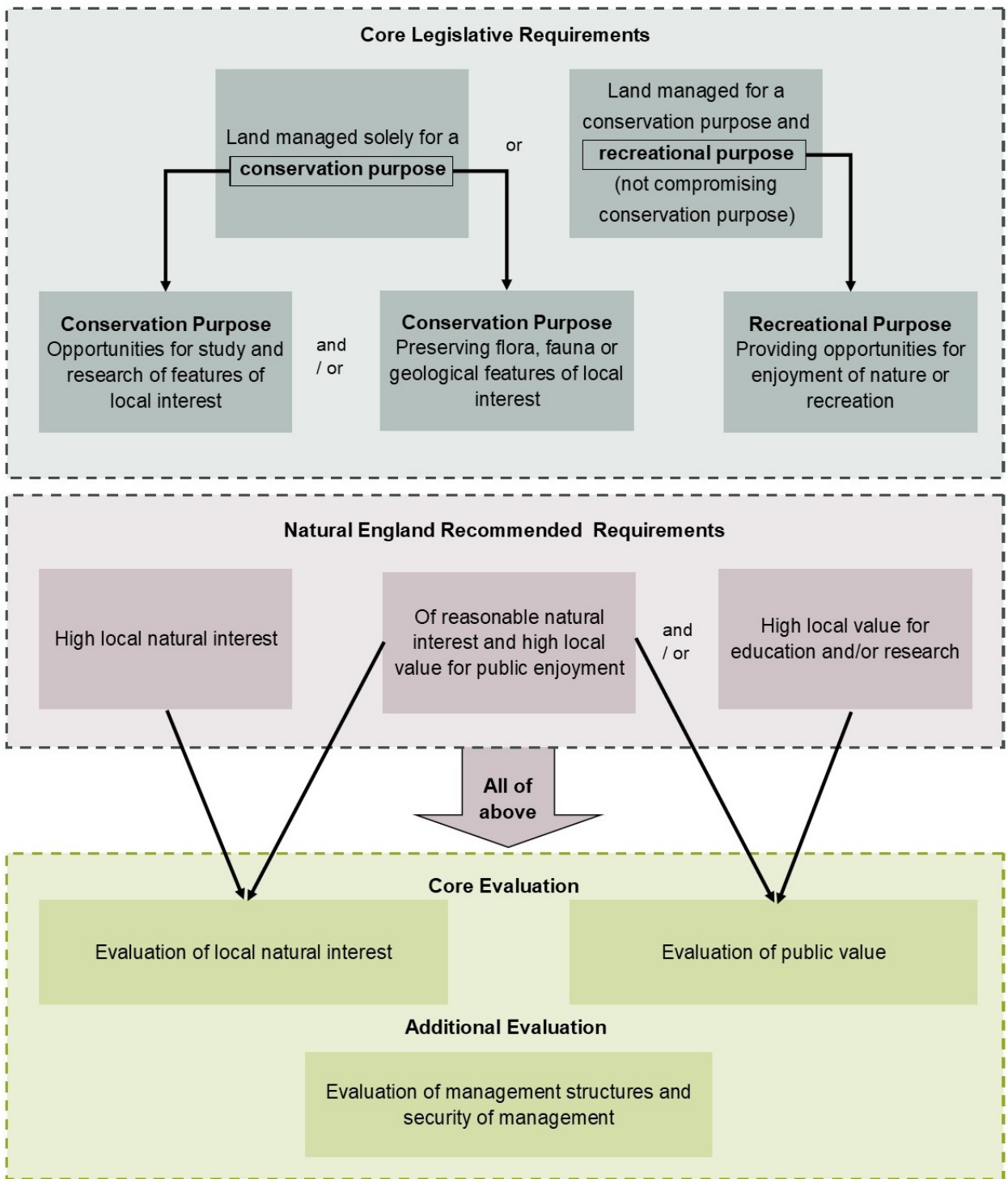
An outline of the elements considered in each evaluation category is shown below. The full evaluation tables are contained in Supporting Document – Sites Evaluation.

| Natural Interest Evaluation   | Public Value Evaluation   | Management Structures and Security Evaluation   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing recognition of being of local importance (Local Wildlife Site or other designation)</li> <li>• Evidence of priority habitats or species</li> <li>• Place in ecological unit – within a Biodiversity Opportunity Area or linking to priority habitats</li> <li>• Size and function as an ecological unit</li> <li>• Condition of habitats</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access</li> <li>• Proximity to people and role as accessible greenspace</li> <li>• Educational and community use</li> <li>• Levels of community interest and activity</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status of management plan</li> <li>• Management organisation</li> <li>• Implementation of management</li> <li>• Balance of recreation and nature conservation – recreation well-managed</li> </ul> |

- The maximum score for each of the categories was 10 (100%)
- Some of the criteria are ‘pass or fail’ – scoring 1 point if the site meets the criteria or zero if it does not
- Some of the criteria are ranked with more points scored for how well the site meets the criteria



Spot Lane Nature Area



The sites in this evaluation encompass a wide range of sites, both urban and rural, consisting of a range of habitats and a wide range of sizes. It is difficult to compare the natural interest value across these sites. For example, a sweet chestnut woodland may be less diverse than a mixed ancient woodland, even if it is on a former ancient woodland site, but it may be of a large size and or important connecting site. The evaluation scores should therefore be viewed as a guide to help prioritise designation, rather than an absolute indication of the value of a site.



## Desktop Research

The following desktop research was carried out:

- The location of the site was determined through reviewing the Maidstone Borough Council ownership GIS shapefile, online research, review of the management plan and contact with the landowner;
- GIS data was reviewed to determine if the site was already a designated site or a Local Wildlife Site (LWS), was within or near a Biodiversity Opportunity Area, contained or was in proximity to Natural England Priority Habitats or Kent Habitat Survey Priority Habitats and whether public rights of way crossed the site;
- Local Wildlife Site citations were obtained from Kent Wildlife Trust;
- Landowners were approached and asked to provide management plans;
- Landscape and Ecological Management Plans were reviewed for sites arising from development;
- The nominating Councillor was approached for more information where appropriate.

## Condition of Habitats

A brief walk-over survey was conducted at each of the sites during the spring and summer of 2019. The aim was to provide an overview assessment of the condition of the habitats, implementation of management and the provision of public access facilities to supplement the desktop research. In several cases these visits also provided an opportunity to meet the community groups/landowner managing the site to discuss management and views on LNR designation.

Natural England's Common Standards Monitoring guidance for a range of habitats was used as the basis of the condition assessment. A summary is shown on the next page.



Cuckoo Wood

## **Description of site and broad habitats present**

### **Recreational Use**

Extent (whole site, rights of way only); type, evidence of illegal/anti-social use; damage from recreation; level of recreation; evidence of conflict with nature conservation management.

### **Management**

Evidence of management – management of habitats and recreation (general); appropriateness of management; evidence of any other damage or threats to site.

### **Woodland Habitats**

Main species and % of species; age structure; regeneration; planting - %, species used; presence of non-native or negative indicator species and extent / % of stand; ground flora and species; woodland management – currently managed or evidence of past management (e.g. age of coppice stools if present); indicator species of local distinctiveness / positive indicator species; browsing or other damage.

### **Scrub Habitats**

Species (%); age; % of site; place within mosaic.

### **Grassland Habitats**

Improved, semi-improved, amenity (%); calcareous, mesotrophic, wet (%); main species present (grass and herbs); grass:herb ratio, % of herbs; presence of non-native or negative indicator species and % of sward (including seeding scrub); indicator species of local distinctiveness / positive indicator species; sward description; litter or bare earth; mosaic with other habitats; evidence of management.

### **Open Water**

Evidence of fishing or other recreation; presence of non-native or invasive species; zonation of vegetation; negative features e.g. erosion, dogs, barriers; height of water – evidence of seasonality; overhanging trees or shrubs (%); surrounding land use; water source; potential sources of pollution/evidence of pollution; approx. size and depth; base or liner; naturalness of banks, bankside vegetation.

## **Constraints to LNR Designation**

Several of the sites are not owned by Maidstone Borough Council. Where possible the landowners were approached to determine whether they would be, in principle, willing to proceed with designation. Some landowners did not reach a conclusion; some did not reply and others rejected the proposal. The evaluation does not take this into account but notes the response as a constraint.

Where there are other constraints, such as multiple ownership making designation very difficult, lack of management plan or of implementation of conservation management and these are noted in the evaluation.

## Evaluation of the Sites

---

### The Sites

The list of sites to be evaluated was:<sup>1</sup>

- Allington Millennium Green
- Bearsted Woodland Trust
- Bell Lane Nature Area
- Bluebell Wood
- Bredhurst Wood
- Bridge Nursery
- Buckland Hill Pocket Nature Reserve
- Bunyards Farm (Allington)
- Cuckoo Wood
- Dove Hill Wood
- Fant Wildlife Area
- Five Acre and Wents Woods
- Four Oaks Wood
- Gorham and Admiral Woods
- Grove Wood
- Hayle Place Stud Farm
- High Level Bridge Pocket Nature Reserve and Valley Conservation
- High Speed 1 Compound
- Hockers Lane Nature Reserve (Kent Medical Campus)
- Hollingbourne Meadows Trust
- Horish Wood and Monk's Meadow
- Lime Trees Open Space Ponds / Green Hill Open Space
- Mote Park
- Palace Wood
- Pepper Fen, Ringlestone
- Poyntell Pond
- River Len Reserve, Downswood (Spot Lane Nature Area)
- River Medway Towpath (land from Bower Lane to East Farleigh Lock)
- Roundwell Park
- Sandling Park
- Senacre Wood
- Sunningdale Court Woodland (River Len Reserve, Maidstone)
- Walderslade Woodlands
- Weaving Heath
- Westfield Wood
- Wimpey Field
- Yalding Fen

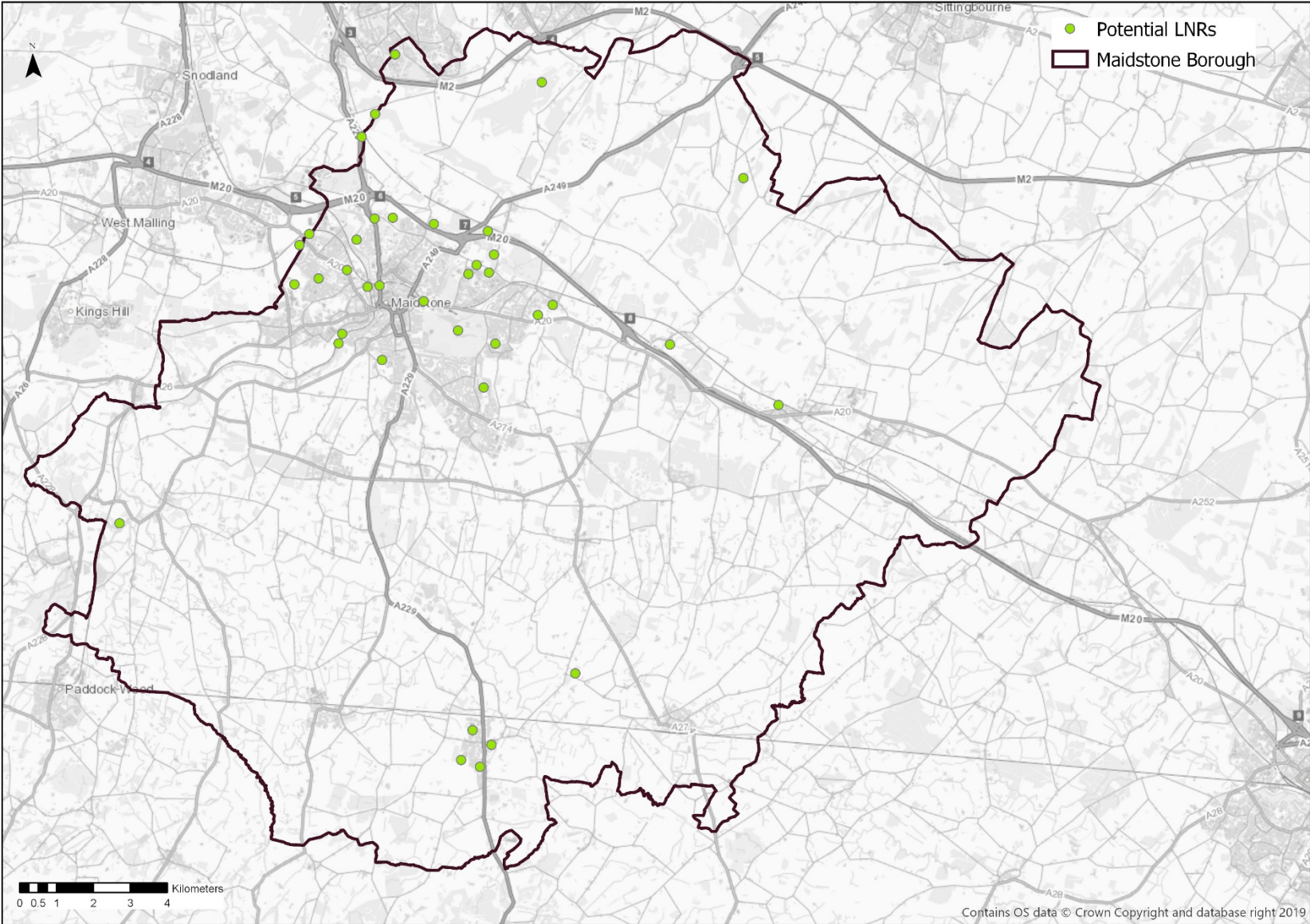
The location of these sites is shown in Plans 1 and 2 and their area in Plan 3.<sup>2</sup> The sites in relation to Natural England priority habitats are shown in Plan 4 and in relation to Biodiversity Opportunity Areas in Plan 5.

---

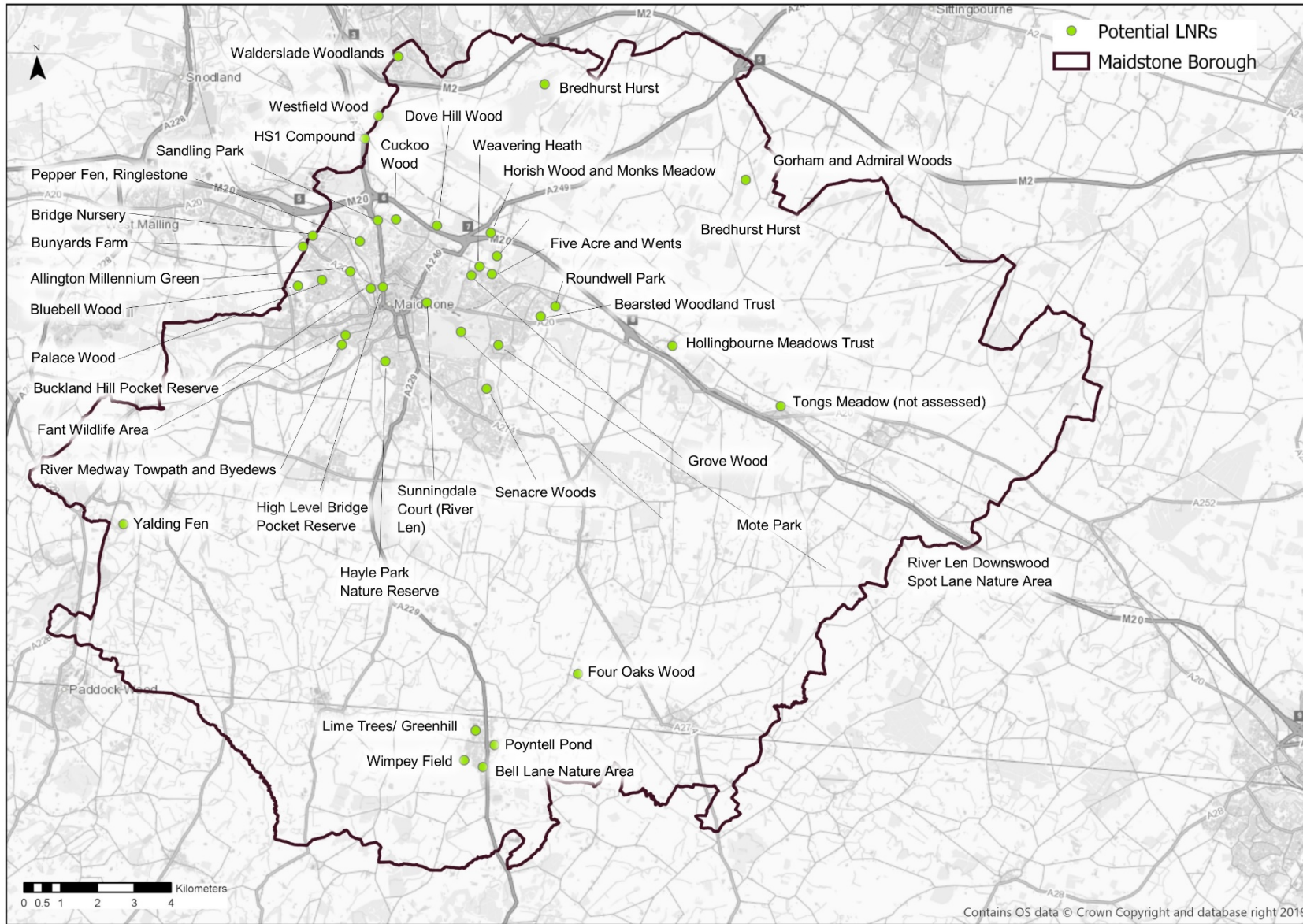
<sup>1</sup> Tongs Meadow was rejected after initial investigation revealed this is a privately owned site with no public access which has been the subject of planning applications.

<sup>2</sup> The areas shown are approximations of the site boundary and should not be regarded as the legal or definitive boundary. Further investigation is required to determine legal boundaries prior to any designations being progressed.

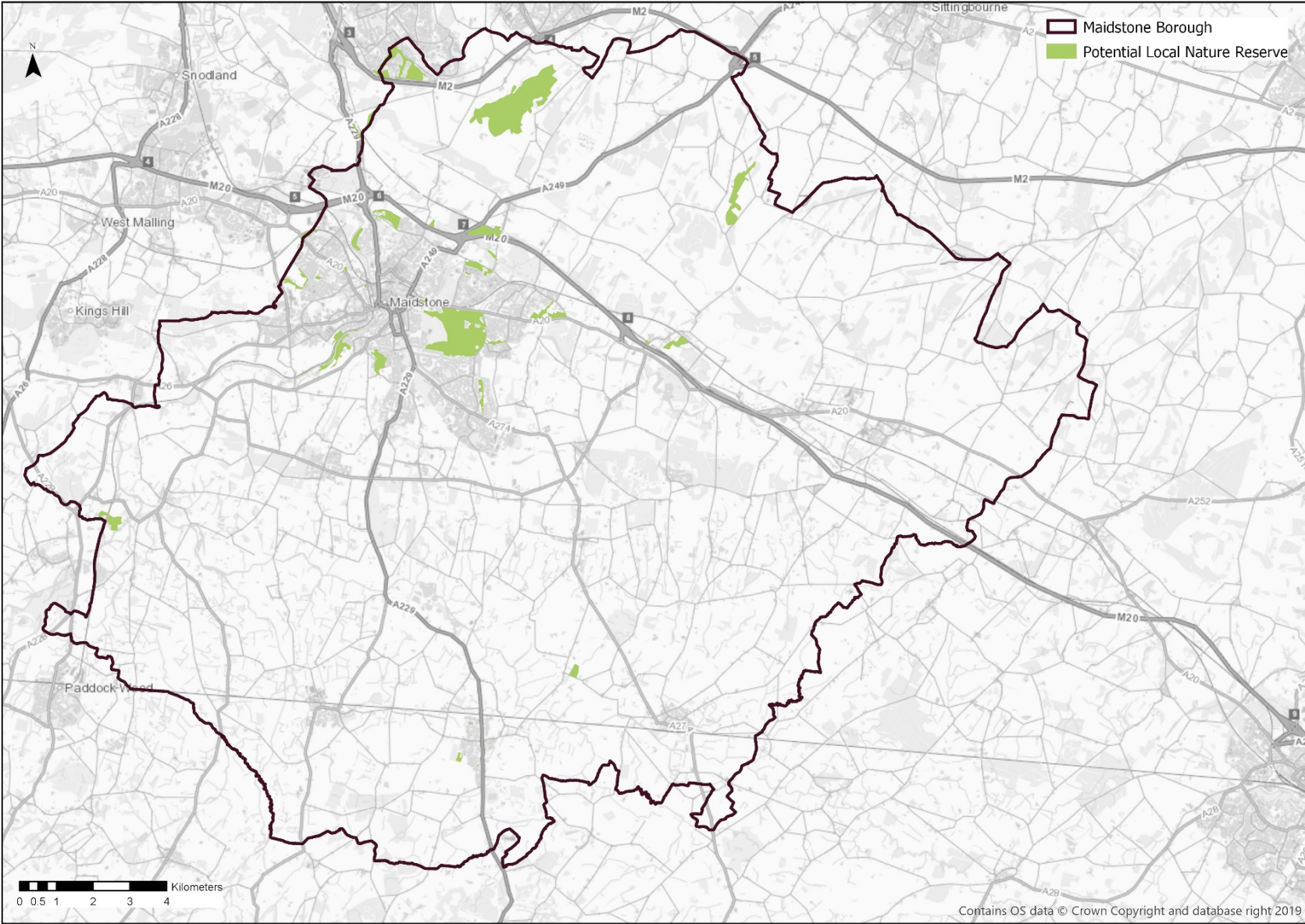
Plan 1: Potential Local Nature Reserves – Location



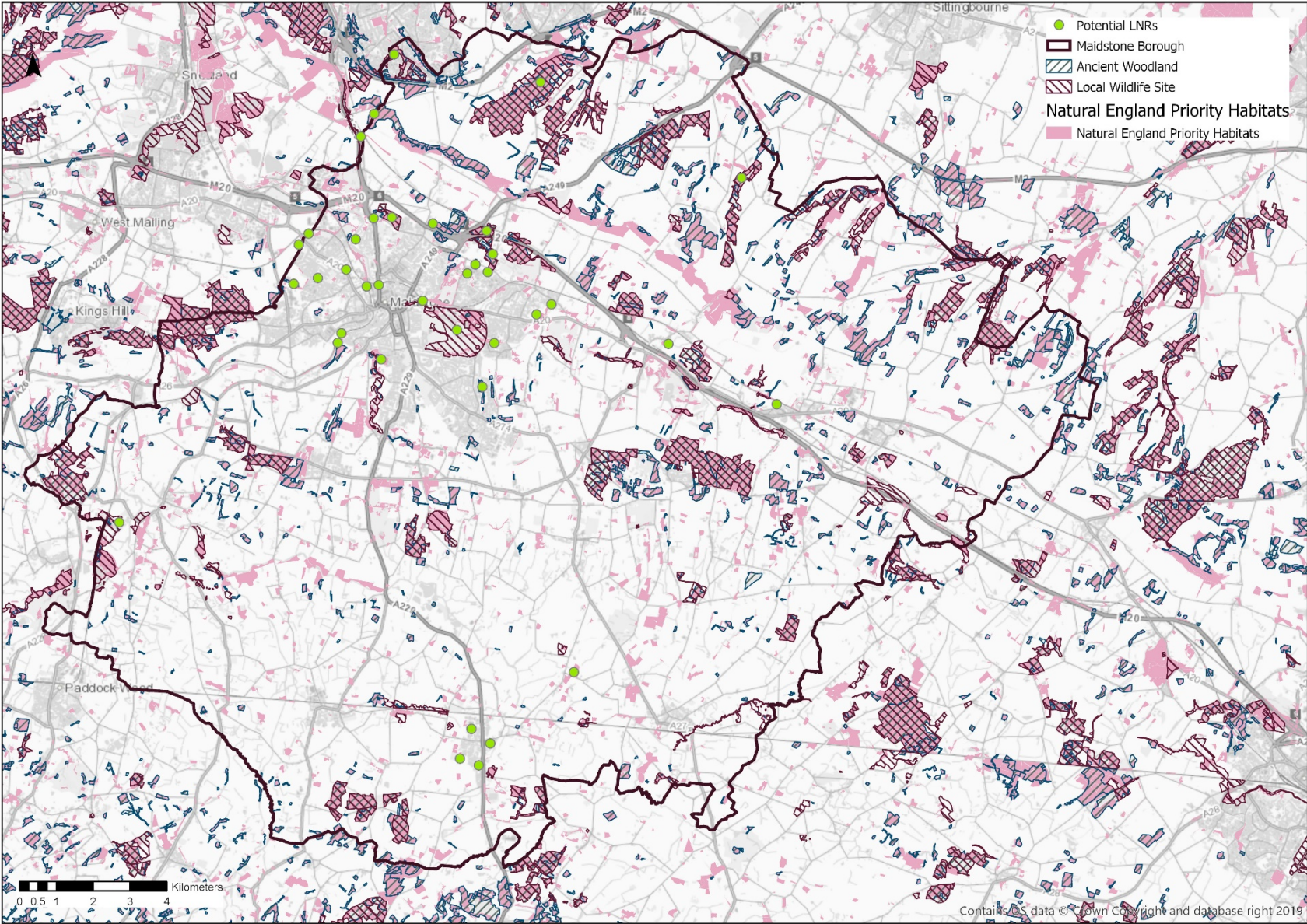
**Plan 2: Potential LNRs – Named**



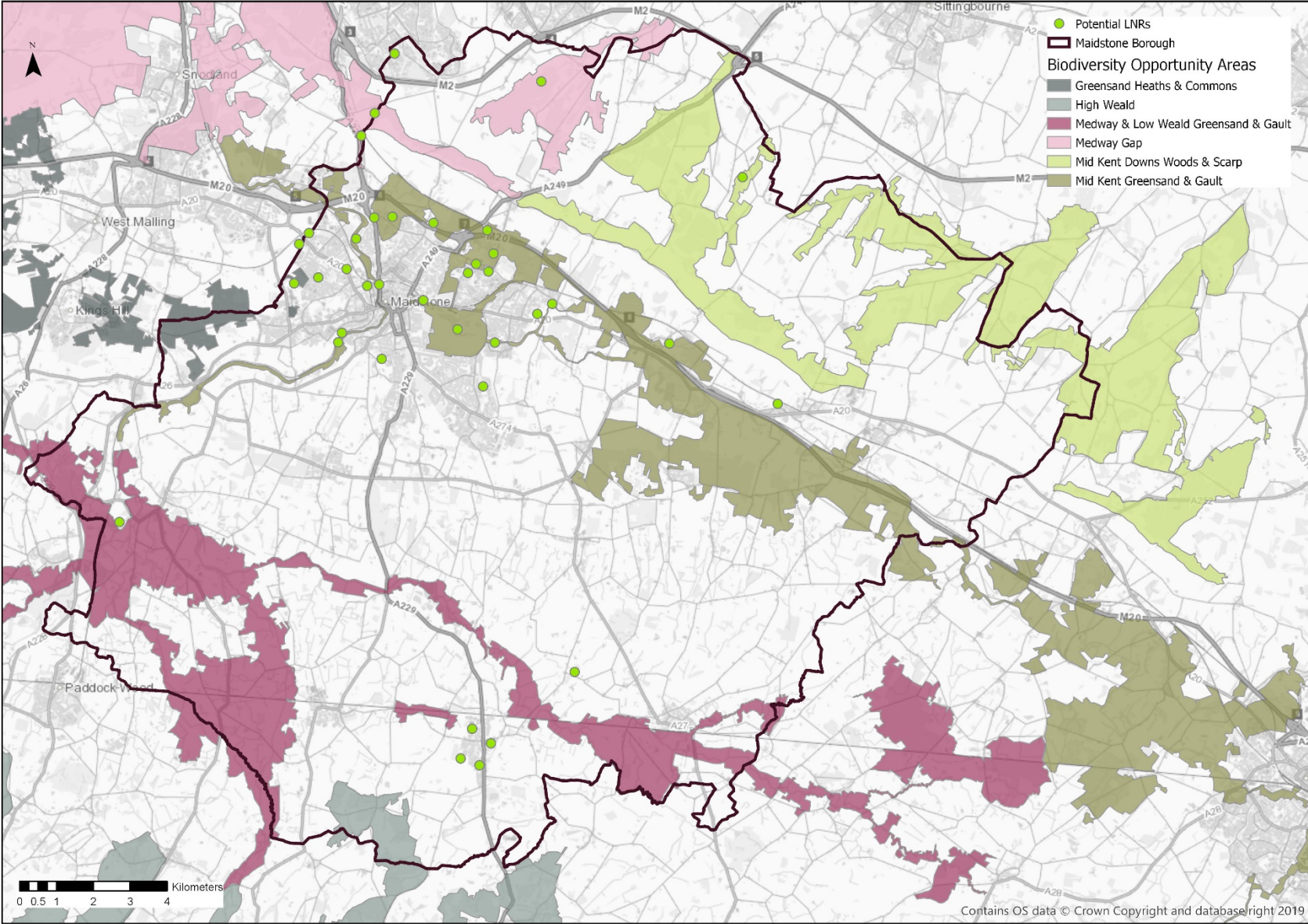
**Plan 3: Proposed Local Nature Reserves – Extent**



**Plan 4: Potential Local Nature Reserves and Priority Habitats**



**Plan 5: Potential Local Nature Reserves and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas**





## Summary of Evaluation

Table 1 shows the summary of the evaluation ranked by the total score across all three evaluation categories.

The table also ranks the natural interest score and indicates where this is higher than the overall rank. This indicates sites where the overall suitability could be improved if the public interest or management were improved. In some cases it would be difficult to improve these aspects but for others, including some Maidstone Borough Council owned sites, a management plan and implementation of management would make the site more suitable for designation. The process of designating as an LNR could be regarded as a catalyst to bring these sites with high natural value into appropriate management. An additional benefit would be to improve the public value of these sites, for example through supporting the establishment of a community group.

There are also constraints to designating some of the sites, which will need to be overcome prior to designation. Some of these constraints may not be overcome in the short term, or at all. The table should therefore be regarded as a tool to guide designation and future actions, rather than a definitive ranking of the suitability of the sites. All the sites have a degree of potential as LNRs<sup>3</sup> but, for some, these constraints and shortcomings will need to be addressed prior to designating.

Most landowners were approached to determine views on LNR designation. Most of the third party owners had not decided whether they wished to proceed with designation at the time of this report and further discussions will be required.

Table 2 shows the sites ordered by the number of constraints to be addressed and then by their overall rank (fewest constraints highest). Those sites which could be taken forward in the short term if the minimal constraints are addressed are as follows:

- **Fant Wildlife Area** – the only site which has no constraints to address and which could be designated immediately;
- **Hayle Park Nature Reserve** – requires some updates to management plans – plans are in place but may need further detail to fully support LNR designation. Valley Conservation and Hayle Park both support designation (Tovil Parish Council and Maidstone Borough Council not approached);
- **Cuckoo Wood** – has management plan, requires landowner agreement. This site was historically to be designated with Sandling Park (s106 agreement states the latter should be designated);
- **Mote Park** – requires further information on nature conservation management in management plan;
- **Wimpey Field** – requires landowner agreement and ‘light touch’ update of management action plan to bring up to date;
- **Allington Millennium Green** – landowner supports designation, needs updated management plan (expired plan was suitable);
- **Weaving Heath** – new management plan in preparation, the process for which will foster community engagement, requires commitment from MBC to manage as LNR;
- **High Level Bridge** – although small site, has management plan and active management, agreement required from Network Rail (initial discussions positive).

There are several sites owned by Maidstone Borough Council which would be suitable but which require a management plan and commitment to implement management suitable for an LNR (River Len Reserve, Downswood (Spot Lane Nature Area), Senacre Wood, Bell Lane Nature Area, Five Acre and Wents Woods, Poyntell Pond, Dove Hill Wood, Palace Wood, Lime Trees Open Space Ponds / Green Hill Open Space, Sandling Park, Four Oaks Wood, Grove Wood).

---

<sup>3</sup> Except for Bunyards Farm, Allington.

**Table 1: Summary of Evaluation Scores – Ranked by Overall Score**

|                             | Total Score | Local natural interest evaluation | Public interest, education and value evaluation | Management evaluation | Rank overall | Rank natural interest | Natural interest rank > overall rank | Landowner supports/ MBC owned | Constraints  |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Hayle Park Nature Reserve   | 93%         | 90%                               | 100%  | 90%                   | 1            | 4                     | No                                   | Yes                           | Recent management plans for Hayle Park Reserve (2014 – 2024) and Crisbrook Meadow (2019 - 2024). Crisbrook Meadow plan may require further elaboration on the management of the meadow and woodland specifically for nature conservation. Management plan will be required for Mount Ararat woodland if included in the designation.             |
| Cuckoo Wood                 | 90%         | 100%                              | 80%   | 90%                   | 2            | 1                     | Yes                                  | Approached - undecided        | No management agreement can be entered into to encompass the 4.3 hectares with no ownership.   |
| Gorham and Admiral Woods    | 90%         | 100%                              | 80%   | 90%                   | 2            | 1                     | Yes                                  | Approached - undecided        | LNR management plan may be required (plan requested but not received).   |
| Mote Park                   | 90%         | 90%                               | 100%  | 80%                   | 2            | 4                     | No                                   | MBC                           | Management plan could be more reflective of natural interest, but grassland and veteran tree reports in preparation. A consolidated management statement and action plan would help to bring these together. Balance of recreation and natural interest needs to be considered more fully. Consideration of area which is suitable to be an LNR. |
| Hollingbourne Meadows Trust | 90%         | 80%                               | 100%  | 90%                   | 2            | 10                    | No                                   | Approached - undecided        | Management plan required which complies with LNR requirements. Further information required by Trust on management agreement with Maidstone Borough Council.   |

|                                 | Total Score | Local natural interest evaluation | Public interest, education and value evaluation | Management evaluation | Rank overall | Rank natural interest | Natural interest rank > overall rank | Landowner supports/ MBC owned                             | Constraints   |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Walderslade Woodlands           | 90%         | 80%                               | 90%   | 100%                  | 2            | 10                    | No                                   | Possible change of ownership                              | Part of land is within Medway Council area; therefore, Medway must delegate powers to MBC to designate or a joint declaration made.<br>At present the future ownership of the land is in question and land ownership may pass to Boxley Parish Council if enabling development proceeds.<br>Designation |
| Fant Wildlife Area              | 90%         | 70%                               | 100%  | 100%                  | 2            | 15                    | No                                   | Yes   | None  |
| Bredhurst Hurst                 | 83%         | 90%                               | 80%   | 80%                   | 8            | 4                     | Yes                                  | Multiple ownership will present challenges to designation | Multiple ownership will present a challenge in constructing management agreements. Owned plots are not contiguous. Management plan for Woodland Grant Scheme – ideally updated to be more suitable for LNR designation.   |
| Wimpey Field                    | 83%         | 70%                               | 80%   | 100%                  | 8            | 15                    | No                                   | Approached - undecided                                    | None, although LNR designation could provide the opportunity to refresh the management action tables.   |
| Horish Wood (and Monk's Meadow) | 80%         | 90%                               | 80%   | 70%                   | 10           | 4                     | Yes                                  | Approached - undecided                                    | Issues with implementing management plan (fallen behind actions set out in management plan due to issues with contractor).  |
| Yalding Fen                     | 80%         | 90%                               | 100%  | 50%                   | 10           | 4                     | Yes                                  | Possible change of ownership                              | Updated management plan will be required.<br>New landowner, intentions not clear  |

|   | Total Score | Local natural interest evaluation | Public interest, education and value evaluation | Management evaluation | Rank overall | Rank natural interest | Natural interest rank > overall rank | Landowner supports/ MBC owned | Constraints  |
|---|-------------|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Westfield Wood                                      | 77%         | 100%                              | 30%   | 100%                  | 12           | 1                     | Yes                                  | MBC owned?                    | Land is within Tonbridge and Malling District, therefore TMBC must delegate powers to MBC to designate. Management plan not viewed – need to assess suitability.   |
| Bearsted Woodland Trust                             | 77%         | 60%                               | 100%  | 70%                   | 12           | 22                    | No                                   | No                            | Landowner does not wish to designate as does not wish to enter into agreement with Maidstone Borough Council. Management plan required which complies with LNR requirements.   |
| Allington Millennium Green                          | 77%         | 40%                               | 100%  | 90%                   | 12           | 32                    | No                                   | Yes                           | Site is also a Millennium Green which places constraints on certain activities. As well as consultation with Natural England through the LNR designation process, Natural England solicitors will need to be involved in designation. Initial discussions have taken place through the process of this scoping exercise and Natural England (Millennium Green solicitor) is favourable to designation. Updated management plan required. |
| Weaving Heath                                       | 73%         | 70%                               | 80%   | 70%                   | 15           | 15                    | Yes                                  | MBC                           | Management plan required – plan in preparation 2019 which will be suitable for LNR designation. Management will need to be implemented.  |
| High Level Bridge Pocket Nature Reserve             | 70%         | 40%                               | 90%   | 80%                   | 16           | 32                    | No                                   | Approached - undecided        | Very small site – well below minimum size threshold.   |
| River Len Reserve, Downwood (Spot Lane Nature Area) | 67%         | 80%                               | 70%   | 50%                   | 17           | 10                    | Yes                                  | MBC                           | Management plan required which complies with LNR requirements. Management needs to be implemented in line with plan.   |

|   | Total Score | Local natural interest evaluation | Public interest, education and value evaluation | Management evaluation | Rank overall | Rank natural interest | Natural interest rank > overall rank | Landowner supports/ MBC owned                                      | Constraints   |
|---|-------------|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Senacre Wood  | 67%         | 70%                               | 70%   | 60%                   | 17           | 15                    | Yes                                  | MBC  | Management plan required which complies with LNR requirements (plan in preparation by Medway Valley Countryside Partnership). Management needs to be implemented in line with forthcoming plan.   |
| Buckland Hill Pocket Nature Reserve                               | 67%         | 50%                               | 60%   | 90%                   | 17           | 26                    | No                                   | MBC  | There is an up to date plan - management needs to be implemented in line with plan. Further detail may be required on costings and funding to demonstrate security of management.   |
| Bell Lane Nature Area   | 67%         | 50%                               | 70%   | 80%                   | 17           | 26                    | No                                   | MBC  | Site below 2 hectare threshold. Management plan required which complies with LNR requirements (previous plan dated 2001). Management needs to be implemented in line with plan.   |
| Bluebell Wood   | 60%         | 80%                               | 80%   | 20%                   | 21           | 10                    | Yes                                  | Active development - future arrangements need to be in place       | Site being developed at present. Suitability will also depend on the condition of the site following establishment as part of development. Management plan required which complies with LNR requirements. Management needs to be implemented in line with plan. |
| River Medway Towpath (land from Bower Lane to East Farleigh Lock) | 50%         | 70%                               | 60%   | 20%                   | 22           | 15                    | Yes                                  | Multiple ownership likely to preclude designation except MBC owned | Multiple land ownership serious constraint to designation and likely to prevent designating northern bank.  |

|   | Total Score | Local natural interest evaluation | Public interest, education and value evaluation | Management evaluation | Rank overall | Rank natural interest | Natural interest rank > overall rank | Landowner supports/ MBC owned                                | Constraints  |
|---|-------------|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Roundwell Park                                      | 47%         | 80%                               | 60%   | 0%                    | 23           | 10                    | Yes                                  | Active development - future arrangements need to be in place | Site being developed at present. Suitability will also depend on the condition of the site following establishment as part of development and security of management arrangements. |
| Five Acre and Wents Woods                           | 47%         | 60%                               | 20%   | 60%                   | 23           | 22                    | Yes                                  | MBC  | Management plan required which complies with LNR requirements. Management needs to be implemented in line with plan.   |
| Poyntell Pond                                       | 47%         | 30%                               | 60%   | 50%                   | 23           | 36                    | No                                   | MBC  | Very small site – well below minimum size threshold. Management plan required which complies with LNR requirements. Management needs to be implemented in line with plan.          |
| Dove Hill Wood                                      | 43%         | 70%                               | 20%   | 40%                   | 26           | 15                    | Yes                                  | MBC  | Management plan required which complies with LNR requirements. Management needs to be implemented in line with plan.   |
| Palace Wood   | 43%         | 50%                               | 40%   | 40%                   | 26           | 26                    | Yes                                  | MBC  | Site below 2 hectare threshold. Management plan required which complies with LNR requirements. Management needs to be implemented in line with plan.                               |
| Lime Trees Open Space Ponds / Green Hill Open Space | 43%         | 40%                               | 50%   | 40%                   | 26           | 32                    | No                                   | MBC  | Site below 2 hectare threshold. Management plan required which complies with LNR requirements. Management needs to be implemented in line with plan.                               |

|   | Total Score | Local natural interest evaluation | Public interest, education and value evaluation | Management evaluation | Rank overall | Rank natural interest | Natural interest rank > overall rank | Landowner supports/ MBC owned                                | Constraints  |
|---|-------------|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Hockers Lane Nature Reserve (Kent Medical Campus) | 40%         | 90%                               | 10%   | 20%                   | 29           | 4                     | Yes                                  | Active development - future arrangements need to be in place | Site being developed at present and final proposals for the nature reserve unclear. Suitability will also depend on the condition of the site following establishment as part of development. Management plan required which complies with LNR requirements. Management needs to be implemented in line with plan. |
| Sandling Park                                     | 40%         | 60%                               | 20%   | 40%                   | 29           | 22                    | Yes                                  | MBC  | Management plan required which complies with LNR requirements. Management needs to be implemented in line with plan.   |
| Four Oaks Wood                                    | 37%         | 70%                               | 0%  | 40%                   | 31           | 15                    | Yes                                  | MBC  | Management plan required which complies with LNR requirements. Management needs to be implemented in line with plan.   |
| Grove Wood  | 37%         | 50%                               | 20%   | 40%                   | 31           | 26                    | Yes                                  | MBC  | Management plan required which complies with LNR requirements. Management needs to be implemented in line with plan.   |
| Sunningdale Court (River Len Reserve, Maidstone)  | 33%         | 60%                               | 0%  | 40%                   | 33           | 22                    | Yes                                  | Approached - undecided                                       | Landowner agreement required. Management plan required which complies with LNR requirements. Management needs to be implemented in line with plan.   |
| Bridge Nursery                                    | 33%         | 50%                               | 30%   | 20%                   | 33           | 26                    | Yes                                  | Unknown  | Management plan required which complies with LNR requirements. Management needs to be implemented in line with plan.   |
| Pepper Fen, Ringlestone                           | 27%         | 50%                               | 20%   | 10%                   | 35           | 26                    | Yes                                  | Unknown  | No response from landowner. Assumed no management plan.  |

|                           | Total Score | Local natural interest evaluation | Public interest, education and value evaluation | Management evaluation | Rank overall | Rank natural interest | Natural interest rank > overall rank | Landowner supports/ MBC owned | Constraints   |
|---------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| High Speed 1 Compound     | 27%         | 40%                               | 0%  | 40%                   | 35           | 32                    | Yes                                  | MBC                           | Most of land is within Tonbridge and Malling District, therefore TMBC must delegate powers to MBC to designate or a joint declaration made. Management plan required which complies with LNR requirements. Management needs to be implemented in line with plan. Two fields currently grazed are not suitable at present due to current management. |
| Bunyards Farm (Allington) | 0           | 0                                 | 0   | 0                     | 37           | 37                    | Yes                                  | Not suitable                  | Site not of sufficient natural interest or size to designate as an LNR. Land is within Tonbridge and Malling District, therefore TMBC must delegate powers to MBC to designate.   |



**Table 2: Sites Ranked by Constraints to Address**

|  | Total Score | Rank overall | Rank natural interest | Constraints to Address  |
|--|-------------|--------------|-----------------------|---|
| Fant Wildlife Area                                   | 90%         | 2            | 15                    | Has an up to date management plan, no constraints                         |
| Hayle Park Nature Reserve                            | 93%         | 1            | 4                     | Management plan   |
| Cuckoo Wood  | 90%         | 2            | 1                     | Landowner agreement   |
| Mote Park  | 90%         | 2            | 4                     | Management plan   |
| Wimpey Field   | 83%         | 8            | 15                    | May require update of management actions, requires landowner agreement    |
| Allington Millennium Green                           | 77%         | 12           | 32                    | Management plan   |
| High Level Bridge Pocket Nature Reserve              | 70%         | 16           | 32                    | Landowner agreement   |
| Gorham and Admiral Woods                             | 90%         | 2            | 1                     | Landowner agreement, may require management plan (plan not received)      |
| Hollingbourne Meadows Trust                          | 90%         | 2            | 10                    | Management plan and landowner agreement                                   |
| Westfield Wood                                       | 77%         | 12           | 1                     | In TMBC area, management plan not seen, KWT agreement if not owned by MBC |
| Weaving Heath  | 73%         | 15           | 15                    | Management plan and implementation of management/commitment to LNR        |
| River Len Reserve, Downswood (Spot Lane Nature Area) | 67%         | 17           | 10                    | Management plan and implementation of management/commitment to LNR        |
| Senacre Wood   | 67%         | 17           | 15                    | Management plan and implementation of management/commitment to LNR        |
| Buckland Hill Pocket Nature Reserve                  | 67%         | 17           | 26                    | Management plan and implementation of management/commitment to LNR        |
| Bell Lane Nature Area                                | 67%         | 17           | 26                    | Management plan and implementation of management/commitment to LNR        |
| Five Acre and Wents Woods                            | 47%         | 23           | 22                    | Management plan and implementation of management/commitment to LNR        |
| Poyntell Pond  | 47%         | 23           | 36                    | Management plan and implementation of management/commitment to LNR        |
| Dove Hill Wood                                       | 43%         | 26           | 15                    | Management plan and implementation of management/commitment to LNR        |
| Palace Wood  | 43%         | 26           | 26                    | Management plan and implementation of management/commitment to LNR        |

|   |     |    |    |  |
|---|-----|----|----|--|
| Lime Trees Open Space Ponds / Green Hill Open Space | 43% | 26 | 32 | Management plan and implementation of management/commitment to LNR   |
| Sandling Park                                       | 40% | 29 | 22 | Management plan and implementation of management/commitment to LNR   |
| Four Oaks Wood                                      | 37% | 31 | 15 | Management plan and implementation of management/commitment to LNR   |
| Grove Wood  | 37% | 31 | 26 | Management plan and implementation of management/commitment to LNR   |
| Sunningdale Court (River Len Reserve, Maidstone)    | 33% | 33 | 22 | Landowner agreement, incorporation into River Len LNR  |
| Walderslade Woodlands                               | 90% | 2  | 10 | Possible change of ownership, designation not possible until settled   |
| Bredhurst Hurst                                     | 83% | 8  | 4  | Management plan, multiple ownership presents challenges  |
| Horish Wood (and Monk's Meadow)                     | 80% | 10 | 4  | Management plan and improved implementation and landowner agreement  |
| Yalding Fen   | 80% | 10 | 4  | Possible change of ownership, designation not possible until settled, management plan                                      |
| Bluebell Wood                                       | 60% | 21 | 10 | Currently active development, site likely to be suitable but risks to proceeding at present and likely change of ownership |
| Roundwell Park                                      | 47% | 23 | 10 | Currently active development, site likely to be suitable but risks to proceeding at present and likely change of ownership |
| Hockers Lane Nature Reserve (Kent Medical Campus)   | 40% | 29 | 4  | Currently active development, site likely to be suitable but risks to proceeding at present and likely change of ownership |
| Bridge Nursery                                      | 33% | 33 | 26 | Management plan and implementation of management/commitment to LNR, landowner agreement                                    |
| Pepper Fen, Ringlestone                             | 27% | 35 | 26 | Management plan and implementation of management/commitment to LNR, landowner agreement                                    |

|   |     |    |    |   |
|---|-----|----|----|---|
| Bearsted Woodland Trust   | 77% | 12 | 22 | Landowner not supportive of entering into agreement with MBC at this time   |
| River Medway Towpath (land from Bower Lane to East Farleigh Lock) | 50% | 22 | 15 | Multiple land ownership significant constraint. Smaller area may be progressed. Landowner agreement and management plan required. |
| High Speed 1 Compound   | 27% | 35 | 32 | Management plan and implementation of management/commitment to LNR, change of management  |
| Bunyards Farm (Allington)   | 0   | 37 | 37 | Not suitable  |