

General Information	
Ministerial Decision Type	Select Decision Type.
Report Title	Listing Criteria – Sites of Special Geological Interest
Minister	Environment
Signatory	Select Signatory.
Lead Department	Infrastructure, Housing and Environment (IHE)
Lead Directorate	Natural Environment (IHE)
Ministerial Decision Summary: Public or Absolutely/Qualified Exempt	Public Select if more than one Absolutely/Qualified Exemption.
Date decision made if different to date 'Ministerial Decision Summary' signed.	Select date.
Report and Supplemental Report Details	
Report Author	Environment Manager – Legislation, IE
Date of Report	Select Date of Report.
Supplementary Report Title <i>(If applicable)</i>	N/A
Supplementary Report Author <i>(If applicable)</i>	
Date of Supplementary Report <i>(If applicable)</i>	Select Date of Supplemental Report. Select Date of Supplemental Report.
Ministerial Decision Report: Public or Absolutely/Qualified Exempt	Public Select if more than one Absolutely/Qualified Exemption.
Relevant Case/Application/URN <i>(Only complete if making a decision related to an appeal/case/application)</i>	N/A
Relevant Proposition Number <i>(Only complete if presenting Comments or if lodging an Amendment)</i>	Insert P. number.
Relevant Scrutiny Report <i>(Only complete if presenting a ministerial response)</i>	Insert S.R. number.
Associated Law(s) and/or Subordinate Legislation	Planning and Building (Jersey) Law 2002
Action required if recommendation agreed	Department to take necessary action.

Resource Implications	There are no new financial and/or manpower implications.
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Introduction

1. Summary

The Minister is asked to approve the adoption and publication of criteria for the listing of Sites of Special Geological Interest (GSSI) under the Planning and Building (Jersey) Law 2002. The process and criteria are published in the Geodiversity Audit for Jersey (2020)¹ produced by the British Geological Society (BGS).

The adoption and publication of the criteria will enable the implementation of the recommendations of the BGS for the extension of the island's GSSI network. This will in turn enable the delivery of one of the Minister's 2023 priorities for the protection and enhancement of Jersey's natural and heritage by: 'extending protection of the Island's rich geodiversity to ensure that geo-heritage assets are valued and appreciated' in a manner that is objective, transparent and accessible; and consistent with the approach adopted for the listing of heritage and nature conservation assets.

2. Background

Ministerial priority

One of the Minister's 2023 priorities for the protection and enhancement of Jersey's natural and heritage involves: 'extending protection of the Island's rich geodiversity to ensure that geo-heritage assets are valued and appreciated'.

The Law

Part 6, Chapter 1 'Sites of Special Interest' of the Planning and Building (Jersey) Law 2002 provides that the Chief Officer shall maintain a list of building/places that are considered to be of public importance by reason of their (*inter alia*) geological interest.

Criteria for Listing

Unlike sites of special architectural, archaeological and historic interest²; or sites of special ecological interest³, there is currently no established set of criteria for a systematic selection and evaluation of sites that warrant listing for their geological interest.

3. Current List of GSSIs

Currently a total of 22 GSSIs have been designated in Jersey. These were selected based on the findings of a report produced in 1996 entitled 'Possible Sites of Special, or Scientific Interest in Jersey: a First Listing' (Debbie Davis and Dr J Renouf), which recommended sites for listing based primarily on their research value in the international context.

¹ [Geodiversity Audit for Jersey \(2020\)](#)

² [ID-criteria for listing and grading \(April 2011\) 20150323 mm.pdf \(gov.je\)](#)

³ See page 5: evaluation of natural history sites [Island Plan Biodiversity Strategy 2010.pdf \(gov.je\)](#)

4. Geodiversity Audit 2020

In 2020, the British Geological Society (BGS) undertook a geodiversity audit with two objectives:

- to ensure comprehensive representation of Jersey's geological history within the SSI network (through the identification and recommendation of potential new sites); and
- to identify opportunities to increase geo-tourism and public engagement associated with the SSI network (within existing and proposed new sites).

The Geodiversity Audit provides a comprehensive documentation of the island's geodiversity which includes both a review of existing GSSIs and the identification and recommendation of potential new GSSIs, and in doing so puts forward an evaluation process and criteria for the selection and evaluation of sites of geodiversity value.

The evaluation process

The methods for site selection adopted in the audit follow standard practice and involve three stages:

- Stage 1: Literature review, data collection and consultation with local experts
- Stage 2: Field based data collection
- Stage 3: Review and documentation, to provide a comprehensive site report and an evaluation of the geoscientific merit of each site.

Criteria for Site Evaluation

The criteria used to assess and value each site are based on current best practice approaches used in geodiversity audits in the UK⁴.

1. Rarity Criterion

This criterion relates to the intrinsic geological attributes of the site and its contribution to scientific understanding of the geological history of Jersey. Sites are graded as either international, regional or local, as follows:

Rarity

International – the site is representative of key elements of the geological history of the Cadomian terrane and/or the Quaternary history of Northern Europe and provides a particularly complete/unique/valuable scientific record

Regional – the site is representative of aspects of geological history of the Cadomian terrane and/or the Quaternary history of Northern Europe and provides a unique contribution to understanding Jersey's geological history

Local – the site provides examples of geological features of interest, with limited contribution to the understanding of Jersey's geological history.

⁴ See section 3.4 [Geodiversity Audit for Jersey \(2020\)](#)

2. Quality Criterion

This criterion relates to the potential value of the site for public education and tourism, based on an assessment of the visibility of the key geological features of the site and the degree to which access is fundamentally restricted by natural or human factors.

Quality

Excellent – the site presents clear exposures of key features with no restrictions on visibility or access

Good – the site presents exposed features, but may be affected by some natural or human degradation and/or minor issues with visibility and access

Moderately good – the site presents exposed features that affected by some natural or human degradation, and/or moderate issues with visibility and access.

Recommendations

To enable delivery of the ministerial priority, and to provide an open and objective process to assess the value of sites of special geological interest (that is consistent with the approaches adopted for the statutory designation of heritage and nature conservation assets) it is recommended that the Minister:

- i. approves the adoption of the criteria for the listing of Sites of Special Geological Interest (GSSI) under the Planning and Building (Jersey) Law 2002, as published in the Geodiversity Audit for Jersey (2020)⁵ produced by the British Geological Society (BGS); and
- ii. authorises their publication to inform the listing process and in order that they are accessible to those affected by or interested in it.

⁵ [Geodiversity Audit for Jersey \(2020\)](#)