



# Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement

## Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan

February 2025

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# 1. Introduction

1.1 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) (as amended) provide protection for sites that are of exceptional importance in respect of rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species. The network consists of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Both types can also be referred to as European Sites. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also states that Ramsar sites should be afforded the same level of protection and refers to SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites as 'Habitat Sites'.

1.2 The requirement to undertake Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) of development plans is set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) (as amended). It is also a requirement of Regulation 32 schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). In order to proceed to referendum a Neighbourhood Plan must meet a series of 'basic conditions', which include that it does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.

1.3 Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) (as amended through EU Exit legislation) states:

'Where a land use plan:

(a) Is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and

(b) Is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site,  
The plan-making authority for that plan must, before the plan is given effect, make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives.'

1.4 The HRA is therefore undertaken in stages and should conclude whether or not a proposal or policy in the Plan would adversely affect the integrity of any sites.

Stage 1: Determining whether a plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site. This needs to take account of the likely impacts in combination with other relevant plans and projects. This assessment should be made using the precautionary principle. The screening assessment must reflect the outcomes of the 2018 judgement of the Court of Justice of the European Union<sup>1</sup>, which has ruled that where

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<sup>1</sup> C-323/17 – People over Wind, Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta

mitigation is necessary this must be identified through an Appropriate Assessment.

Stage 2: Carrying out Appropriate Assessment and ascertaining the effect on site integrity. The effects of the plan on the conservation objectives of sites should be assessed, to ascertain whether the plan has an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site.

Stage 3: Identifying mitigation measures and alternative solutions. The aim of this stage is to find ways of avoiding or significantly reducing adverse impacts, so that site integrity is no longer at risk. If there are still likely to be negative impacts, the option should be dropped, unless exceptionally it can be justified by imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

- 1.5 The Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan is being produced by Aldringham cum Thorpe Parish Council. This report considers whether there are likely to be significant effects on protected Habitat Sites and where a full Appropriate Assessment may be required.
- 1.6 The Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan will need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. East Suffolk Council is covered by two Local Plans, the East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan adopted September 2020 and the Waveney Local Plan adopted March 2019. The relevant Local Plan for Aldringham cum Thorpe is the East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan.
- 1.7 The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan was subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment as part of its production. Where screening identified a likely significant effect, an Appropriate Assessment was undertaken and mitigation measures identified were incorporated within the Local Plan, resulting in a conclusion that the plan will not lead to any adverse effects on Habitat sites within and in the vicinity of the (then) Suffolk Coastal District. The Local Plan Appropriate Assessment identified recreational disturbance particularly from dog walkers as the main significant effect. The Council has therefore produced a Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) and requires payment towards mitigation from residential developments within 13km of the protected Habitat Sites.
- 1.8 This screening report contains the results of Stage 1 (above) in relation to the Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan. Stages 2 and 3 are only required if the screening stage concludes that there is likely to be a significant impact on a Habitat site. The initial screening has been undertaken by East Suffolk Council and was subject

to consultation with Natural England as a statutory consultee. Natural England's response (which agreed with the conclusions of the draft assessment) is appended to this report.

## 2. Protected sites covered by this screening report

- 2.1 Sites included in this assessment are listed in Table 1. This includes all sites that are within 20km of the Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan area (for consistency with the distances applied within the HRA of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan and adopting the precautionary approach). The locations of the sites are shown on maps in Appendix 2 and the Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives of the sites are contained in Appendix 3, along with a summary of the pressures and threats as documented in the Appropriate Assessment for the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan.

**Table 1: Relevant Habitat sites**

Name
Alde-Ore and Butley Estuaries SAC
Benacre to Easton Bavents SAC
Dews Pond SAC
Minsmere to Walberswick SAC
Orfordness – Shingle Street SAC
Staverton Park and The Thicks, Wantisden SAC
Southern North Sea SAC
Alde-Ore Estuary SPA
Deben Estuary SPA
Outer Thames Estuary SPA
Sandlings SPA
Benacre to Easton Bavents SPA
Alde-Ore Estuary Ramsar
Deben Estuary Ramsar
Minsmere to Walberswick Ramsar

## 3. Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.1 Aldringham cum Thorpe Parish Council is producing a Neighbourhood Plan for Aldringham cum Thorpe in order to set out the vision, objectives and policies for the development of the parish up to 2036, within the context of the Local Plan. This Habitats

Regulations Assessment screening assessment reviews the draft Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036, Pre Submission Version (October 2024).

- 3.2 The Neighbourhood Plan includes a range of policies covering the Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan area. A number of policies relate to the full Neighbourhood Plan area whilst others are area/location specific. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate specific sites for development.
- 3.3 The policies in the Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan are listed in Table 2 below. An assessment of whether each policy is likely to have a significant effect on Habitat sites is included in section 5 of this report.

**Table 2: List of Neighbourhood Plan policies**

ACT1	Scale and location of new housing development
ACT2	Housing Mix
ACT3	Principal Residence
ACT4	Mitigating the impacts of large scale energy projects
ACT5	Landscape Character and Important Views
ACT6	Biodiversity
ACT7	Coastal Protection
ACT8	Drainage and surface water flooding
ACT9	Thorpeness Heritage Centre
ACT10	Heritage Protection & Non Designated Heritage Assets
ACT11	Design
ACT12	Accessibility and connectivity
ACT13	Public car parking
ACT14	Leisure and recreational facilities
ACT15	Community Facilities
ACT16	Local Green Spaces
ACT17	Business and employment development

## 4. Other Plans and Projects

- 4.1 Regulation 105 of the 2017 Regulations (as amended) requires consideration to be given to whether a Plan will have an effect either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

- 4.2 As noted in the introduction, the other key plan is the Local Plan. The Local Plan was adopted in September 2020. The Local Plan sets out the broad scale and distribution of development across the area of East Suffolk formerly covered by Suffolk Coastal District. This was subject to an Appropriate Assessment as part of its production.
- 4.3 Policy SCLP12.1 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan does not allocate a minimum housing figure to the Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan area beyond what was anticipated to be delivered through the existing Local Plan allocation (SCLP12.42) which has since been delivered, plus anticipates “small scale additional development and windfall”. The draft Neighbourhood Plan does not include any site allocation policies. The draft Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan policies interpret the strategy and policies of the local plan at a local level. The policies contained in the draft Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan are proposed to provide locally specific policy for the determination of planning applications in compliance with the local plan’s strategy.
- 4.4 A screening process considered each policy in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan and concluded whether significant effects were likely and if an Appropriate Assessment was needed. The Appropriate Assessment subsequently considered the following themes - recreation pressure from new residential development, recreation pressure from tourism, urbanisation effects in close proximity, air quality from increased road traffic, water quality and resources and biodiversity net gain. Mitigation measures were identified within the Appropriate Assessment and were incorporated within the final Local Plan, resulting in a conclusion that the plan will not lead to any adverse effects on Habitat Sites within and in the vicinity of the (then) Suffolk Coastal District.
- 4.5 The (now superseded) 2013 Core Strategy was also previously subject to strategic level Appropriate Assessment which concluded that without mitigation there would be a significant effect on Habitat Sites, alone and in combination with other plans. The Appropriate Assessment of that Plan identified recreational disturbance particularly from dog walkers as the main significant effect. The Council subsequently produced a Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy and now requires payment towards mitigation of likely significant effects from residential developments within 13km of a Habitat Site. This approach continues to operate and was included within policies in the Local Plan, adopted in 2020.

## 5. Assessment of likely significant effects of the Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan on Habitat sites

- 5.1 Table 3 below considers each policy of the Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan in relation to whether there is potential for a likely significant effect on Habitat sites.

This constitutes Stage 1 as set out under paragraph 1.4 above. Consideration is given to the characteristics and location of the protected sites. The policies are considered within the context of the Local Plan policies which they must be in general conformity with and which have themselves been subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment, as set out in section 4 above.

**Table 3: Likely significant effects of the Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan**

Policy	Assessment of potential impact on Habitat sites	Habitat sites that could possibly be affected	Likely significant effect identified	AA needed?
ACT1: Scale and location of new housing development	<p>This policy sets out the framework for small scale housing development to be delivered consistent with the identification of Aldringham and Thorpeness as countryside and small village (respectively) in the adopted settlement hierarchy. The policies direct development to within the defined settlement boundary or on specifically allocated sites consistent with Local Plan policies.</p> <p>The policy requires any new housing development that might come forward to be located where it will enhance the form and character of the settlement within which it is located, and retain the distinct identity of the individual settlements of Aldringham, Thorpeness and Sizewell.</p> <p>The policy does not allocate any specific sites for development and does not in itself promote development.</p> <p>This policy has no direct impacts on Habitat sites and therefore no likely significant effects have been identified.</p>	None	None	No

<p>ACT2: Housing Mix</p>	<p>This policy sets out the mix of dwelling sizes and tenures that will be supported for housing development in the Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan Area.</p> <p>The requirements of the policy are supported by the Aldringham cum Thorpe Housing Needs Assessment 2023.</p> <p>The policy builds on Policy SCLP5.8 Housing Mix and Policy SCLP5.10: Affordable Housing on Residential Developments in the Local Plan. The Habitats Regulation Assessment of these policies concluded no likely significant effects.</p> <p>The policy does not in itself promote development and will not have a direct effect on any Habitat Sites and therefore no likely significant effects are identified.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>ACT3: Principal Residence</p>	<p>This policy seeks to restrict new open market housing in Thorpeness to principal residence, defined in the policy as: ‘as a property which is occupied as the sole or main home of the occupants and where the occupants spend the majority of their time when their employment does not require them to be away from home for purposes of their work.’</p> <p>The policy does not in itself promote development and will not have a direct effect on any Habitat Sites and therefore no likely significant effects are identified.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>No</p>

<p>ACT4: Mitigating the impacts of large scale energy projects</p>	<p>This policy seeks to ensure that the cumulative impacts of multiple energy schemes on the Neighbourhood Area are taken into account by the relevant determining body. The policy also seeks to ensure that where such energy schemes are identified as being likely to have adverse impacts on the parish, that those mitigations are prioritised and suitably located within the Neighbourhood Area- in the first instance directly where those impacts are most felt and only if this is not possible or practicable elsewhere in the parish.</p> <p>This policy seeks to manage mitigation measures but does not in itself promote development and will not have a direct effect on any Habitat Sites and therefore no likely significant effects are identified.</p> <p>The policy may also have indirect positive effects by supporting and enhancing appropriate mitigation.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>ACT5: Landscape Character and Important Views</p>	<p>This policy identifies distinct landscape ‘breaks’ that separate the settlements within the Neighbourhood Plan area that should be maintained as open countryside in order to prevent coalescence and loss of settlement identity and distinctiveness.</p> <p>The policy provides a number of landscaped based criteria which should be given priority when considering development proposals. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserving the landscape break between settlements</li> </ul>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>No</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protecting the open coast road between Thorpeness and Aldeburgh</li> <li>• Protecting remnant heathlands from development</li> <li>• Protecting the natural character of the foreshore and its vegetated shingle</li> <li>• Maintaining the open and undeveloped valley floor of the Hundred River to the southwest of Aldringham</li> <li>• Including landscape improvements as an integral part of the development proposal</li> <li>• Ensuring that the special qualities of Thorpeness and Aldringham are retained</li> </ul> <p>This policy also seeks to protect important views within and into and out of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The accompanying maps identify the important views to be given particular protection.</p> <p>The policy does not in itself promote development and builds on SCLP10.4: Landscape Character of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. The Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Local Plan identified no likely significant effects from policy SCLP10.4. This policy has no direct impacts on Habitat sites and therefore no likely significant effects have been identified.</p>			
ACT6: Biodiversity	This policy seeks to avoid the loss of, or substantial harm to, distinctive trees, ponds, hedgerows, blocks of	None	No	No

	<p>woodland, heathland and other semi natural habitats in the Neighbourhood Plan area’.</p> <p>Where such losses or harm are unavoidable, the policy requires that mitigation measures or, as a last resort, compensation measures are secured.</p> <p>The policy builds on SCLP10.1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. The Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Local Plan identified Likely Significant Effects through the HRA screening for policy SCLP10.1. Full Appropriate Assessment was undertaken and mitigation incorporated into the Local Plan which will continue to apply in the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> <p>Policy ACT6 does not promote development and contributes towards the principles of the enhancement of the wider environment and therefore no likely significant effects are identified.</p>			
ACT7: Coastal Protection	<p>This policy defines the Coastal Zone within the accompanying figure, where the demolition and rebuilding of properties will be discouraged in order to prevent unsustainable development.</p> <p>The policy does not in itself promote development and will not have a direct effect on any Habitat Sites and therefore no likely significant effects are identified.</p>	None	None	No

ACT8: Drainage and surface water flooding	<p>This policy requires all new development in the Neighbourhood Plan area to use appropriate sustainable drainage systems to mitigate and protect against pollution, provide drainage and wider amenity, recreational and biodiversity benefits commensurate with the size of the development.</p> <p>The policy also identifies two areas of existing localised flooding where new development must demonstrate that it will not lead to an exacerbation of localised flooding.</p> <p>The policy does not in itself promote development and will not have a direct effect on any Habitat Sites and therefore no likely significant effects are identified.</p>	None	None	No
ACT9: Thorpeness Heritage Centre	<p>This policy supports the enhancement or extension or appropriate redevelopment of the existing Thorpeness heritage centre including proposals for the centre of the car park.</p> <p>The policy does not in itself promote development, beyond enhancement of an existing community asset, and will not have a direct effect on any Habitat Sites and therefore no likely significant effects are identified.</p>	None	None	No
ACT10: Heritage Protection & Non Designated Heritage Assets	<p>This policy sets out a number of criteria in relation to proposals which may impact the character, significance and setting of the parish's designated heritage assets.</p>	None	None	No

	<p>The policy also identifies 25 non-designated heritage assets for protection. The policy states that proposals affecting these will be judged having regard to the scale of any harm or loss to their significance which may include its setting and relationship to its immediate surroundings and the contribution it makes to the character of the local area.</p> <p>The policy builds on Policy SCLP11.6: Non-designated heritage assets of the Local Plan. The Habitats Regulation Assessment of Policy SCLP11.6 concluded no likely significant effects. This policy will not have a direct effect on any Habitat Sites and no likely significant effects are identified.</p>			
ACT11: Design	<p>This policy sets out a number of design criteria for new development in the Neighbourhood Plan area in order to reflect the local distinctiveness and rural character of the area. The policy also requires proposals to have regard to the Aldringham cum Thorpe Design Guidance and Codes for the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> <p>The policy builds on SCLP11.1: Design Quality of the Local Plan. The Habitats Regulation Assessment of Policy SCLP11.1 concluded no likely significant effects. This policy will not have a direct effect on any Habitat Sites and no likely significant effects are identified.</p>	None	None	No
ACT12: Accessibility and connectivity	<p>This policy supports the provision of new, safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes, public rights of</p>	None	None	No

	<p>way and crossings, suitable for all users which link new development with the village community facilities.</p> <p>The policy does not in itself promote development. This policy has no direct impacts on Habitat sites and therefore no likely significant effects have been identified.</p>			
ACT13: Public car parking	<p>This policy supports proposals that would provide safe and easily accessible off street, car parking in Thorpeness available for public use in order to alleviate issues with on street parking. The policy sets out a number of criteria against which such proposals would be considered.</p> <p>The policy does not in itself directly promote development. This policy has no direct impacts on Habitat sites and therefore no likely significant effects have been identified.</p>	None	None	No
ACT14: Leisure and recreational facilities	<p>This policy supports the provision new or improved leisure and recreation facilities, including children's play areas and spaces, sports pitches and outdoor meeting and amenity spaces.</p> <p>The policy does not in itself directly promote development. This policy has no direct impacts on Habitat sites and therefore no likely significant effects have been identified.</p>	None	None	No

ACT15: Community Facilities	<p>This policy resists the loss of existing community facilities except where an improved or equivalent facility can be located elsewhere in the parish in an equally convenient, safe, and accessible location or where there is no reasonable prospect of continued viable use.</p> <p>The policy also supports proposals for new community buildings/facilities such Community Hall or other public meeting place, and green space or play space.</p> <p>The policy builds on SCLP8.1: Community Facilities and Assets of the Local Plan. The Habitats Regulation Assessment of Policy SCLP8.1 concluded no likely significant effects. This policy will not have a direct effect on any Habitat Sites and no likely significant effects are identified.</p>	None	None	No
ACT16: Local Green Spaces	<p>This policy identifies 17 Local Green Spaces for protection.</p> <p>The policy may have indirect positive effects on Habitat Sites by ensuring access to local green spaces, thereby reducing potential for increased pressure on Habitat Sites. Therefore no likely significant effects are identified.</p>	None	None	No
ACT17: Business and employment development	<p>This policy supports the expansion of existing employment uses within the Neighbourhood Plan Area where they do not have a significant adverse impact upon the character of the area, adjoining uses, or the amenity of local residents either through their built form, proposed use or traffic generated.</p>	None	None	No

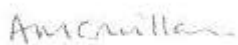
	<p>The policy also includes specific support for proposals for the enhancement, redevelopment or extension of the existing Golf Club and Hotel buildings.</p> <p>The policy does not in itself promote development, beyond the enhancement of an existing asset. This policy has no direct impacts on Habitat Sites and therefore no likely significant effects have been identified.</p>			
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## 6. Summary and conclusions

- 6.1 The Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan will provide policies which will be used for determining planning applications alongside the Local Plan. It includes policies with locally specific criteria to be used for the determination of planning applications within the Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan area. The Plan does not allocate any land for development.
- 6.2 The Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to be in general conformity with the relevant policies in the East Suffolk Council- Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, September 2020.
- 6.3 Screening of the policies in the draft Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan has not identified any Likely Significant Effects on protected Habitat Sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.
- 6.4 Natural England were consulted on a draft of this Screening Statement as statutory nature conservation body and their comments taken into account prior to finalising the statement. Natural England's response (which agreed with the conclusions of the draft assessment) is appended to this report.

Signed:

Dated: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2025



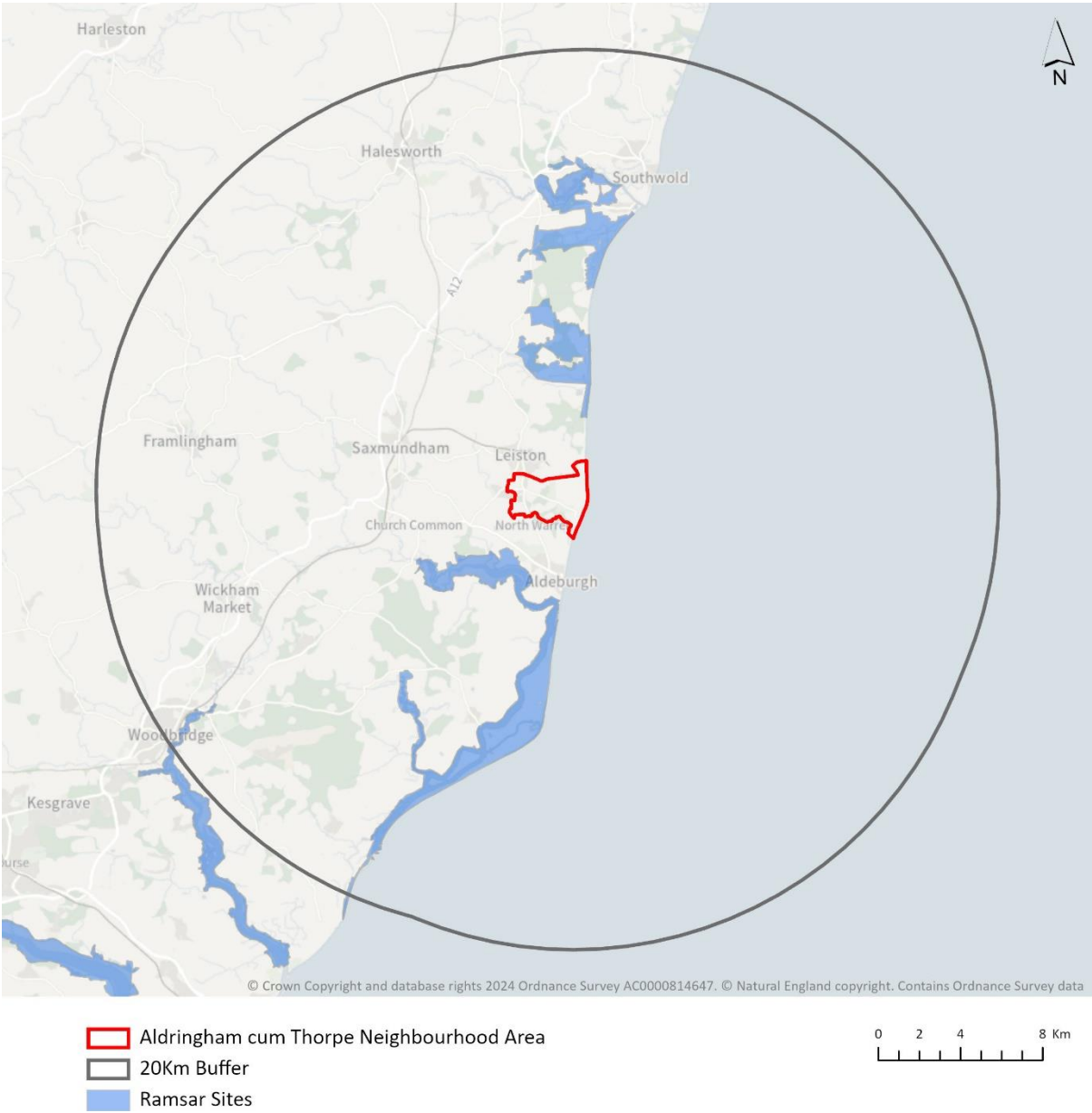
Andrea McMillan  
Planning Manager (Policy, Delivery and Specialist Services)  
East Suffolk Council

## Appendix 1: Sources of background information

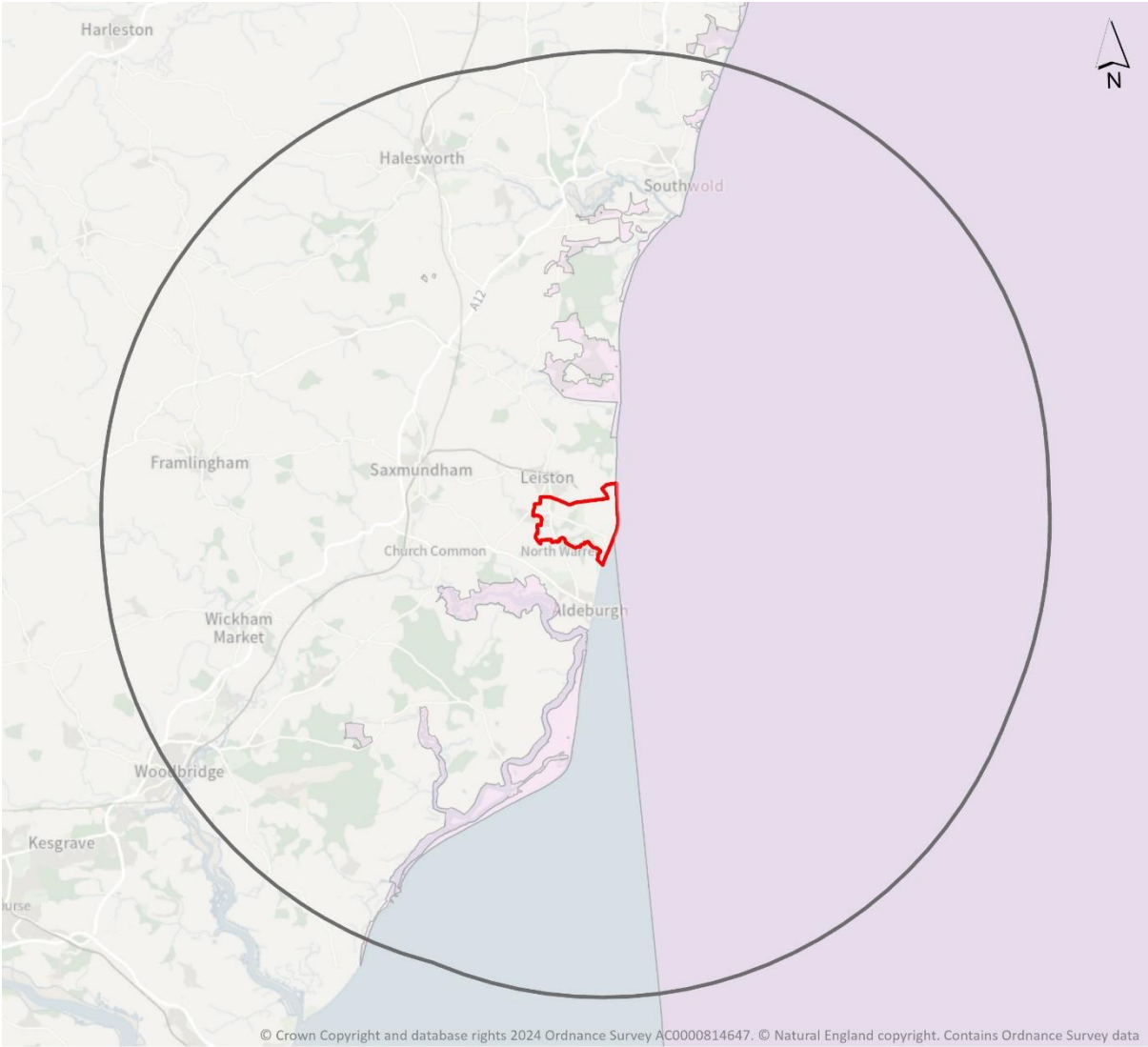
- East Suffolk Council Suffolk Coastal Local Plan adopted September 2020
- Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan at Final Draft Plan stage (December 2018)
- Habitats Regulations Assessment Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy for Ipswich Borough, Babergh District, Mid Suffolk District and East Suffolk Councils (May 2019)

## Appendix 2: Locations of Habitat sites

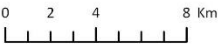
### Ramsar Sites



Special Areas of Conservation



- Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Area
- 20Km Buffer
- Special Areas of Conservation



Special Protection Areas



## Appendix 3: Relevant Habitat sites

Name	Qualifying features	Conservation Objectives	Pressure and threats (as summarised in the Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan at Final Draft Plan Stage (December 2018))
<b>Special Areas of Conservation</b>			
Alde-Ore and Butley Estuaries	H1130: Estuaries H1140: Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; Intertidal mudflats and sandflats H1330: Atlantic salt meadows	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features by maintaining or restoring: The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats; The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.	Hydrological changes, public access/disturbance, inappropriate coastal management, coastal squeeze, inappropriate pest control, changes in species distributions, invasive species, air pollution, fisheries (commercial marine and estuarine) (Alde-Ore and Butley Estuaries SAC and Alde-Ore SPA)
Orfordness – Shingle Street	H1150: Coastal Lagoons H1210: Annual vegetation of drift lines H1220: Perennial vegetation of stony banks; Coastal shingle vegetation outside the reach of waves	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features by maintaining or restoring: The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats; The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; and	Not identified in Suffolk Coastal Final Draft Local Plan HRA.

		The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.	
Staverton Park and The Thicks, Wantisden	H9190: Old acidophilous oak woods with <i>Quercus robur</i> on sandy plains; Dry oak-dominated woodland.	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features by maintaining or restoring: The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats; The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; and The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.	Woodland management, disease, atmospheric pollution.
Dew's Pond	S1166 <i>Triturus cristatus</i> : Great crested newt	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features by maintaining or restoring: The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats; The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.	None identified.
Minsmere to Walberswick Heaths and Marshes SAC (also SPA and Ramsar site)	H4030 European dry heaths H1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines H1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;	Coastal squeeze, public access/disturbance, changes in species distributions, invasive species, inappropriate pest control, air pollution, water pollution, deer,

	<p>A052(B) <i>Anas crecca</i>: Eurasian teal</p> <p>A021(B) <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>: Great bittern</p> <p>A081(B) <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>: Eurasian marsh harrier</p> <p>A082(NB) <i>Circus cyaneus</i>: Hen harrier</p> <p>A224(B) <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>: European nightjar</p> <p>A056(B) <i>Anas clypeata</i>: Northern shoveler</p> <p>A056(NB) <i>Anas clypeata</i>: Northern shoveler</p> <p>A051(B) <i>Anas strepera</i>: Gadwall</p> <p>A051(NB) <i>Anas strepera</i>: Gadwall</p> <p>A132(B) <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>: Pied avocet</p> <p>A195(B) <i>Sterna albifrons</i>: Little tern</p> <p>A394(NB) <i>Anser albifrons</i>: Greater white-fronted goose</p>	<p>The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats,</p> <p>The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and,</p> <p>The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.</p>	<p>fisheries (commercial marine and estuarine)</p>
Southern North Sea	1351: <i>Phocoena phocoena</i>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features by maintaining or restoring:</p> <p>The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats;</p> <p>The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; and</p>	Not identified in Suffolk Coastal Final Draft Local Plan HRA.

		The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.	
Benacre to Easton Bavents Lagoons	H1150# Coastal lagoons, A195(B) <i>Sterna albifrons</i> : Little tern A021(B) <i>Botaurus stellaris</i> : Great bittern A081(B) <i>Circus aeruginosus</i> : Eurasian marsh harrier	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats, The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and, The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.	Public access/disturbance, water pollution, physical modification, changes in species distributions, fisheries (marine and estuarine).
<b>Special Protection Areas</b>			
Alde-Ore Estuary (also Ramsar site)	A081: Eurasian marsh harrier (breeding) A132: Pied avocet (non-breeding) A132: Pied avocet (breeding) A151: Ruff (non-breeding) A162: Common redshank (non-breeding) A183: Lesser black-backed gull (breeding) A191: Sandwich tern (breeding) A195: Little tern (breeding)	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring: The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features; The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features; The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely; The population of each of the qualifying features; and The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.	Hydrological changes, public access/disturbance, inappropriate coastal management, coastal squeeze, inappropriate pest control, changes in species distributions, invasive species, air pollution, fisheries (commercial marine and estuarine) (Alde-Ore and Butley Estuaries SAC and Alde-Ore SPA)
Benacre to Easton Bavents	H1150# Coastal lagoons,	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and	Public access/disturbance, water pollution, physical modification,

	<p>A195(B) <i>Sterna albifrons</i>: Little tern</p> <p>A021(B) <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>: Great bittern</p> <p>A081(B) <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>: Eurasian marsh harrier</p>	<p>ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <p>The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features,</p> <p>The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features,</p> <p>The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely,</p> <p>The population of each of the qualifying features, and,</p> <p>The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</p>	<p>changes in species distributions, fisheries (marine and estuarine).</p>
Deben Estuary (also Ramsar site)	<p>A046a: Dark bellied brent goose (non-breeding)</p> <p>A132: Pied avocet (non-breeding)</p>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <p>The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;</p> <p>The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;</p> <p>The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;</p> <p>The population of each of the qualifying features; and</p> <p>The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</p>	<p>Coastal squeeze, disturbance to birds, water and air pollution.</p>
Outer Thames Estuary	<p>A001: Red-throated Diver (Non-breeding)</p> <p>A195: Common Tern (Breeding)</p> <p>A193: Little Tern (Breeding)</p>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:</p>	<p>Not identified in Suffolk Coastal Final Draft Local Plan HRA. SIP identifies fisheries.</p>

		<p>The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;</p> <p>The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;</p> <p>The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;</p> <p>The population of each of the qualifying features; and</p> <p>The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</p>	
Sandlings	<p>A224: European nightjar (breeding)</p> <p>A246: Woodlark (breeding)</p>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <p>The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;</p> <p>The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;</p> <p>The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;</p> <p>The population of each of the qualifying features; and</p> <p>The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</p>	Changes in species distributions, inappropriate scrub control, deer, air pollution, public access/disturbance.
Minsmere to Walberswick Heaths and Marshes SPA (also Ramsar site)	<p>H4030 European dry heaths</p> <p>H1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines</p> <p>H1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks</p> <p>A052(B) Anas crecca: Eurasian teal</p>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p>	Coastal squeeze, public access/disturbance, changes in species distributions, invasive species, inappropriate pest control, air pollution, water pollution, deer, fisheries (commercial marine and estuarine)

	<p>A021(B) Botaurus stellaris: Great bittern</p> <p>A081(B) Circus aeruginosus: Eurasian marsh harrier</p> <p>A082(NB) Circus cyaneus: Hen harrier</p> <p>A224(B) Caprimulgus europaeus: European nightjar</p> <p>A056(B) Anas clypeata: Northern shoveler</p> <p>A056(NB) Anas clypeata: Northern shoveler</p> <p>A051(B) Anas strepera: Gadwall</p> <p>A051(NB) Anas strepera: Gadwall</p> <p>A132(B) Recurvirostra avosetta: Pied avocet</p> <p>A195(B) Sterna albifrons: Little tern</p> <p>A394(NB) Anser albifrons: Greater white-fronted goose</p>	<p>The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats,</p> <p>The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and,</p> <p>The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.</p>	
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## Appendix 4: Natural England Consultation Response

Your ref: Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan

Ms Laura Mundy  
East Suffolk Council

BY EMAIL ONLY



Hornbeam House  
Crewe Business Park  
Electra Way  
Crewe  
Cheshire  
CW1 6GJ  
T 0300 060 3900

Dear Ms Mundy

### Aldringham cum Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan - SEA & HRA Screening Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 20 December 2024.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

### Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that:

- significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely; and,
- significant effects on Habitats sites<sup>1</sup>, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.

The proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection areas (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs ('candidate SACs', 'possible SACs', 'potential SPAs') or a Ramsar wetland. The plan area is unlikely to have a significant effect on a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 is contained within the [Planning Practice Guidance](#). This identifies three triggers that may require the production of an SEA:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an SEA. Further information is included in Natural England's [standing advice](#) on protected

<sup>1</sup> Habitats sites are those referred to in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (Annex 2 - glossary) as "any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites".

species.

Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. The plan may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land, or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant an SEA. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission [standing advice](#).

We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a SEA is necessary.

Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If a SEA is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk)

Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle  
Consultations Team