



Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Draft Otley Neighbourhood Plan

January 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) 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) 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 Habitat 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 Union¹, which has ruled that where 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 Habitat 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 Otley Neighbourhood Plan is being produced by Otley 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. This screening was carried out in 2023 on the Draft Otley Neighbourhood Plan (Version 1.19) and subject to consultation with Natural England at the time. The screening report was then finalised in January 2025 at the point at which the Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to East Suffolk Council. Natural England's consultation response is set out in Appendix 4.

1.6 The Otley 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 the Otley Neighbourhood Plan area is the East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan.

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

1.7 The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan was subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment as part of its production. Where screening of the Local Plan identified a likely significant effect, an Appropriate Assessment was undertaken and mitigation measures 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.

2. Protected sites covered by this report

2.1 Sites included in this assessment are listed in Table 1. This includes all sites that are within 20km of the Otley 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
Orfordness – Shingle Street SAC
Staverton Park and The Thicks, Wantisden SAC
Alde-Ore Estuary SPA
Deben Estuary SPA
Outer Thames Estuary SPA
Sandlings SPA
Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA
Alde-Ore Estuary Ramsar
Deben Estuary Ramsar
Stour and Orwell Estuaries Ramsar

3. Otley Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.1 Otley Parish Council is producing a Neighbourhood Plan for Otley in order to set out the vision, objectives and policies for the development of the parish up to 2036, within the context of the East Suffolk Council- Suffolk Coastal Local Plan.
- 3.2 The Neighbourhood Plan includes a range of policies covering the Otley Neighbourhood Plan area. A number of polices relate to the full Neighbourhood Plan area whilst others are area/location specific. The Plan does not allocate land for development but does include a policy relating to the Local Plan allocation Policy SCLP12.58: Land adjacent to Swiss Farm, Otley from the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan 2020.
- 3.3 The policies in the Otley 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

ONHP1	Natural Environment – Ecology and Biodiversity
ONHP2	Natural Environment – Landscape and Amenity
ONHP3	Conserving the setting of the church
ONHP4	Local Green Space
ONHP5	Sustainable transport
ONHP6	Sustainable construction
ONHP7	Design Quality
ONHP8	Site and Plot boundaries
ONHP9	Digital Infrastructure
ONHP10	Housing Types
ONHP11	Land Adjacent to Swiss Cottage Farm
ONHP12	Business and Commercial
ONHP13	Transport and Traffic
ONHP14	Provision for Car Parking

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 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 The Otley Neighbourhood Plan policies interpret the strategy and policies of the Local Plan at a local level. The policies contained in the Draft Otley Neighbourhood Plan are proposed to provide locally specific, criteria based policy guidance for the determination of planning applications.
- 4.4 Policy SCLP12.1 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan does not allocate a minimum housing figure to the Otley Neighbourhood Plan area and the draft Neighbourhood Plan does not include any site allocation policies. The Local Plan does however include an allocation within which falls within the Neighbourhood Plan area - Policy SCLP12.58: Land adjacent to Swiss Farm, Otley. The area of land allocated within the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan policy is allocated for approximately 60 dwellings.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 The Council has subsequently produced a Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy and requires payment towards mitigation of significant

effects from residential developments within 13km of the protected Habitat sites.

5. Assessment of likely effects of the Otley Neighbourhood Plan on Habitat Sites

- 5.1 Table 3 below considers each policy of the Otley Neighbourhood Plan in relation to whether there is potential for a likely significant effect on protected Habitat Sites. This constitutes Stage 1 as set out under paragraph 1.4 above. Consideration is given to the characteristics and location of the Habitat 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 Otley Neighbourhood Plan

Policy	Assessment of potential impact on Habitat Sites	Habitat Sites that could possibly be affected	Likely significant effect identified	AA needed?
<p>Policy ONHP1 Natural Environment – Ecology and Biodiversity</p>	<p>This policy seeks to enhance and complement the ecology and biodiversity of the neighbourhood plan area and maintain and enhance the visual character and appearance of the area. The policy requires new development to preserve the character and appearance of the area whilst also making provision for biodiversity and protecting existing key landscape features such as trees and hedges, ponds, streams and wildlife corridors.</p> <p>This policy builds on SCLP10.1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity and 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, but did identify Likely Significant Effects for policy SCLP10.1, therefore full Appropriate Assessment of SCLP10.1 was undertaken and mitigation incorporated into the Local Plan resulting in a conclusion that the plan will not lead to any adverse effects on Habitat Sites</p> <p>ONHP1 will be applied alongside SCLP10.1 and does not in itself promote development but rather contributes towards the principles of the enhancement of the wider environment, therefore no likely significant effects are identified.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>No.</p>

Policy	Assessment of potential impact on Habitat Sites	Habitat Sites that could possibly be affected	Likely significant effect identified	AA needed?
<p>Policy ONHP2 Natural Environment – Landscape and Amenity</p>	<p>This policy seeks to maintain and enhance the important key views of the countryside and improve access to the countryside via public rights of way across the Neighbourhood Plan area. Any new developments will support the policy aims by taking careful consideration of existing views and making provision for improvements to the public rights of way network. This policy does not look to implement any new public rights of way routes that would lead to increased access to protected habitat sites.</p> <p>This policy expands on policies SCLP10.4 Landscape Character and SCLP11.1: Design Quality of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. The Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Local Plan identified no likely significant effects from either policy SCLP10.4 or policy SCLP11.1. Therefore, policy ONHP2 will not result in any likely significant effects.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Policy ONHP3 Conserving the setting of the church</p>	<p>This policy seeks to protect the character setting of St Mary’s Church, Otley from the impact of any new development that occurs within close proximity to the church. This policy will not deliver any new built development.</p> <p>This policy builds upon policy SCLP11.3: Historic Environment and policy SCLP11.4: Listed Buildings of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. The Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Local Plan identified no likely significant effects from policy SCLP11.3</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>No</p>

Policy	Assessment of potential impact on Habitat Sites	Habitat Sites that could possibly be affected	Likely significant effect identified	AA needed?
	or policy SCLP11.4. Therefore, policy ONHP3 will not result in any likely significant effects.			
Policy ONHP4 Local Green Space	<p>This policy identifies specific areas within the Neighbourhood Area to designate as Local Green Spaces. This policy seeks to protect and enhance these areas through designation.</p> <p>This policy builds upon Local Plan policy SCLP8.2: Open Space. The Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Local Plan identified no likely significant effects from policy SCLP8.2. 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, policy ONHP4 will not result in any likely significant effects.</p>	None.	None.	No
Policy ONHP5 Sustainable Transport	<p>This policy seeks to encourage the provision and use of sustainable methods of transport for local residents. Any new development will be required through this policy to make provisions for a range of sustainable transport infrastructure.</p> <p>This policy builds upon Local Plan policy SCLP7.1: Sustainable Transport. The Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Local Plan identified no likely significant effects from policy SCLP7.1. Therefore, policy ONHP5 will not result in any likely significant effects.</p>	None.	None.	No
Policy ONHP6 Sustainable Construction	This policy seeks to ensure that new development within the Neighbourhood Plan area incorporates sustainable construction methods, design and materials.	None.	None.	No

Policy	Assessment of potential impact on Habitat Sites	Habitat Sites that could possibly be affected	Likely significant effect identified	AA needed?
	<p>This policy builds upon Local Plan policy SCLP9.2: Sustainable Construction. The Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Local Plan identified no likely significant effects from policy SCLP9.2. Therefore, policy ONHP6 will not result in any likely significant effects.</p>			
Policy ONHP7 Design Quality	<p>This policy seeks to ensure that new development is designed in a way that reflects the existing character of the Neighbourhood Plan area whilst also mitigating any impacts to quality of life for existing residents.</p> <p>This policy expands on Local Plan policies SCLP11.1: Design Quality and SCLP11.2: Residential Amenity. The Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Local Plan identified no likely significant effects from policy SCLP11.1 or policy SCLP11.2. Therefore, policy ONHP7 will not result in any likely significant effects.</p>	None.	None.	No
Policy ONHP8 Site and Plot boundaries	<p>This policy seeks to provide natural screening for new developments within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The screening will be supported with tree and hedgerow planting and will be maintained by the Parish Council or management company.</p> <p>This policy will not, in itself deliver any new built development. The policy contributes towards the principles of the</p>	None.	None.	No

Policy	Assessment of potential impact on Habitat Sites	Habitat Sites that could possibly be affected	Likely significant effect identified	AA needed?
	enhancement of the wider environment and therefore no likely significant effects are identified.			
Policy ONHP9 Digital Infrastructure	<p>This policy seeks to deliver high speed broadband alongside new development in the Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>This policy expands on Local Plan policy SCLP8.4: Digital Infrastructure. The Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Local Plan identified no likely significant effects from policy SCLP8.4. Therefore, policy ONHP9 will not result in any likely significant effects.</p>	None.	None.	No
Policy ONHP10 Housing Types	<p>This policy seeks to deliver a diverse housing mix from new developments to represent the needs of the local community.</p> <p>This policy expands on Local Plan policy SCLP5.8: Housing Mix. The Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Local Plan identified no likely significant effects from policy SCLP5.8. Therefore, policy ONHP10 will not result in any likely significant effects.</p>	None.	None.	No
Policy ONHP11 Land Adjacent to Swiss Cottage Farm	The Neighbourhood Plan does not include any new site allocation policies, but policy ONP11 adds further detail to Local Plan policy SCLP12.58: Land adjacent to Swiss Farm, Otley. The policy requires the development to provide natural screening and other associated landscaping to reduce the visual impact of the development. The supporting text to the policy includes reference to the guidance relating to green infrastructure provision contained within Annex 1 of the	None.	None.	No

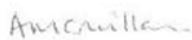
Policy	Assessment of potential impact on Habitat Sites	Habitat Sites that could possibly be affected	Likely significant effect identified	AA needed?
	<p>Habitats Regulations Assessment Record used by East Suffolk Council to support the determination of planning applications.</p> <p>This policy builds upon Local Plan policy SCLP12.58: Land adjacent to Swiss Farm, Otley. This policy does not in itself promote additional development beyond the Local Plan allocation and will not therefore result in any likely significant effects.</p>			
Policy ONHP12 Business and Commercial	<p>This policy seeks to guide employment development in the Neighbourhood Plan area to ensure that it does not negatively impact the surrounding area. Any new employment development will be sympathetic with the surrounding character, historic and built environment as well as considering the effect on nearby residential areas. Moreover, the policy supports the reuse of existing buildings provided that any scheme is supported by Local Plan policies.</p> <p>This policy builds upon policy SCLP4.2: New Employment Development and policy SCLP4.5: Economic Development in Rural Areas. The Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Local Plan identified no likely significant effects from policy SCLP4.2 or policy SCLP4.5. Therefore, policy ONHP12 will not result in any likely significant effects.</p>	None.	None.	No
Policy ONHP13 Transport and Traffic	This policy seeks to improve pedestrian safety and supports the provision of sustainable modes of transport for residents of Otley.	None.	None.	No

Policy	Assessment of potential impact on Habitat Sites	Habitat Sites that could possibly be affected	Likely significant effect identified	AA needed?
	<p>This policy builds upon Local Plan policy SCLP7.1: Sustainable Transport. The Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Local Plan identified no likely significant effects from policy SCLP7.1. Therefore, policy ONHP13 will not result in any likely significant effects.</p>			
<p>Policy ONHP14 Provision for Car Parking</p>	<p>This policy seeks to improve the provision for car parking for any new development within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Any new development will be required to meet the parking standards set out within this policy.</p> <p>This policy builds upon policy SCLP7.2: Parking Proposals and Standards. The Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Local Plan identified no likely significant effects from policy SCLP7.2. Therefore, policy ONHP14 will not result in any likely significant effects.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>No</p>

6. Summary and conclusions

- 6.1 The Otley Neighbourhood Plan will provide policies which will be used for determining planning applications alongside the East Suffolk Council- Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, 2020. It includes locally specific criteria based policies to be used for the determination of planning applications. The Plan does not allocate any sites for development.
- 6.2 The Otley Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared to be in general conformity with the relevant policies in the East Suffolk Council- Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, September 2020.
- 6.3 Natural England were consulted on a draft of this Screening Statement as statutory nature conservation body. Their response is contained in Appendix 4.
- 6.4 Screening of the Otley Neighbourhood Plan has concluded that the plan will not lead to likely significant effects on protected Habitat sites either alone or in combination with other plans.

Signed:



Dated: 30 January 2025

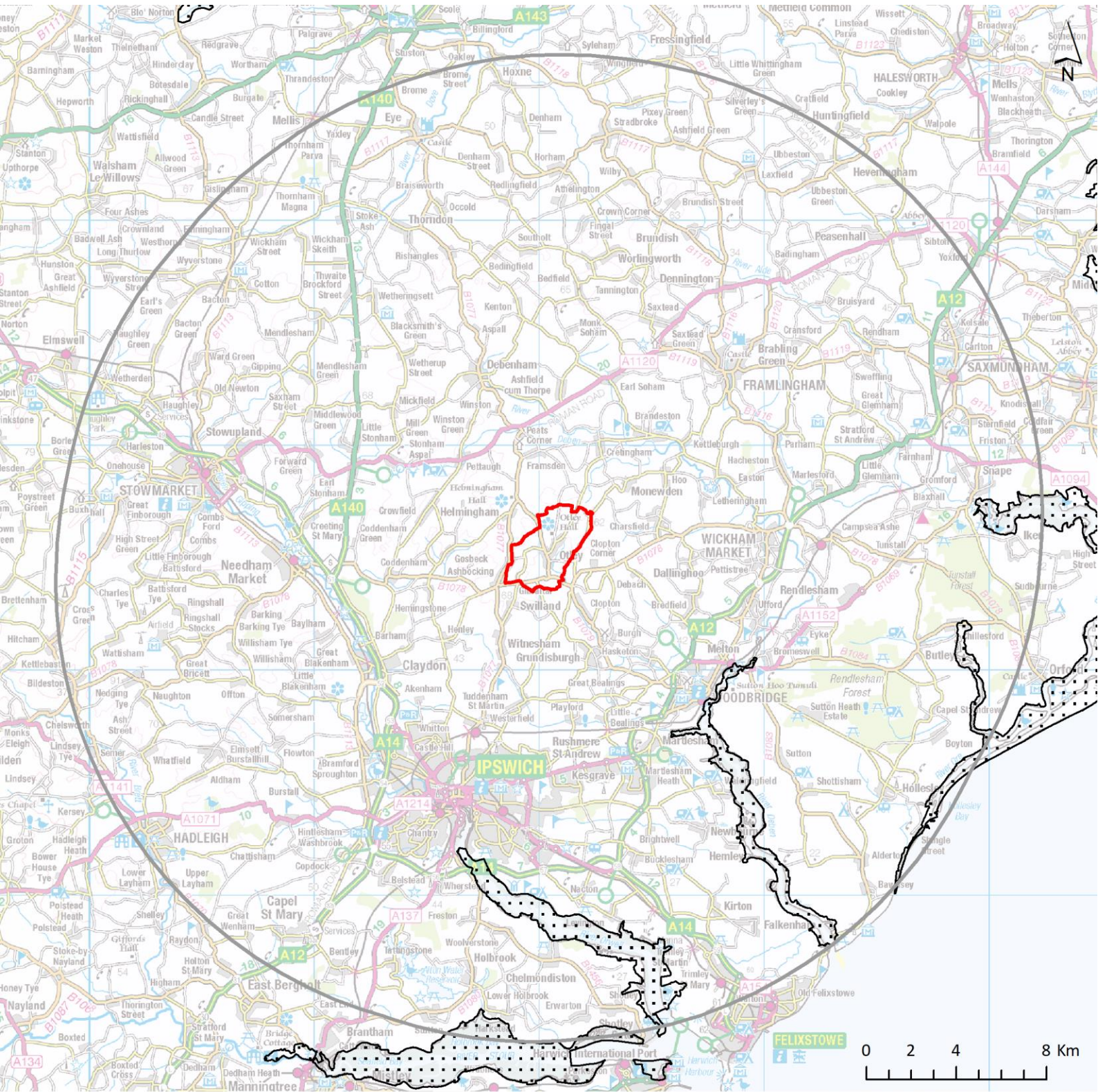
Andrea McMillan
Planning Manager (Policy, Delivery and Specialist Services)
East Suffolk Council

Appendix 1: Sources of background information

- 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)
- East Suffolk Council- Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, September 2020

Appendix 2: Locations of Habitat Sites

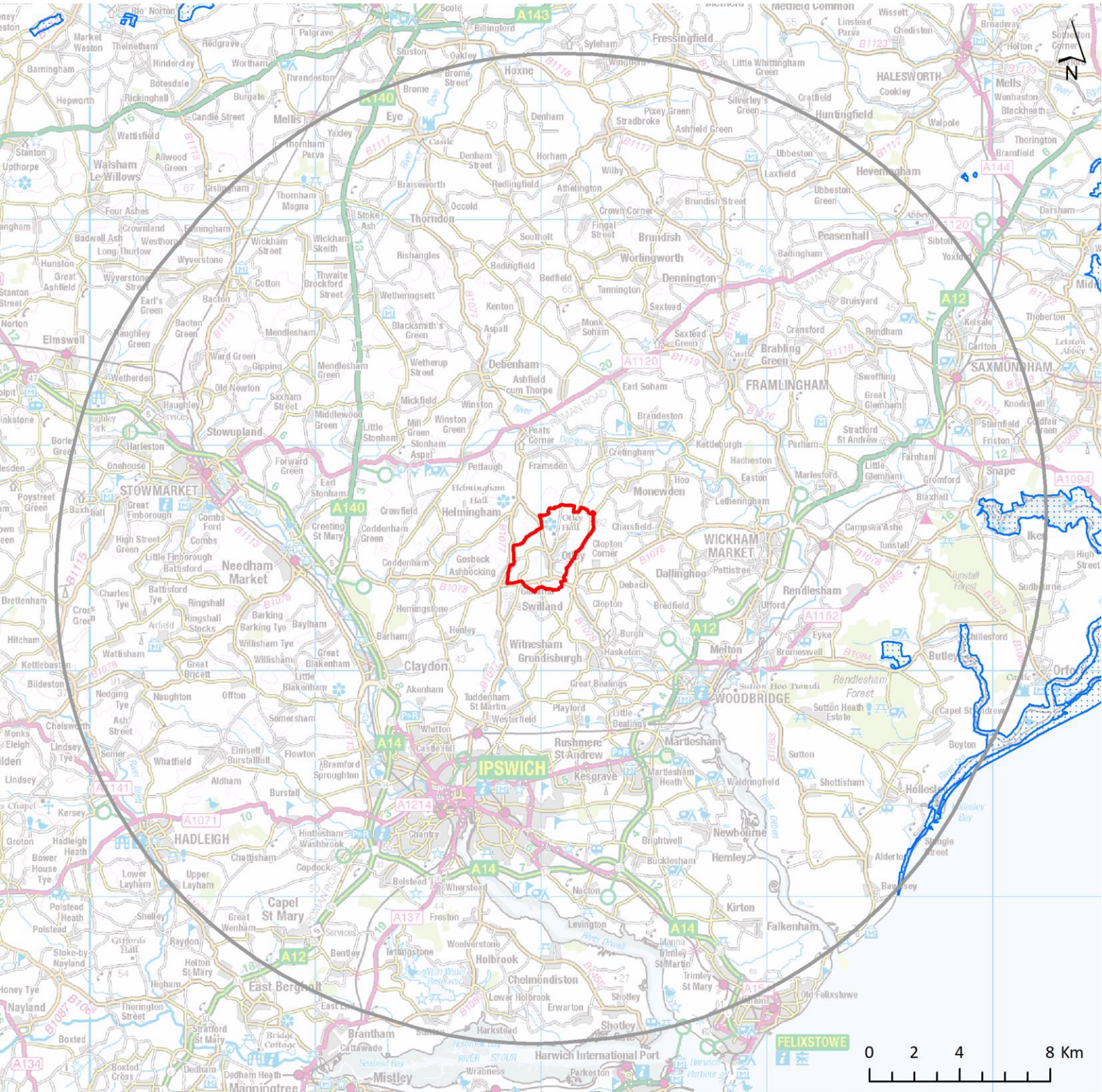
RAMSAR



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- Otley Neighbourhood Area
- 20km Buffer
- RAMSAR

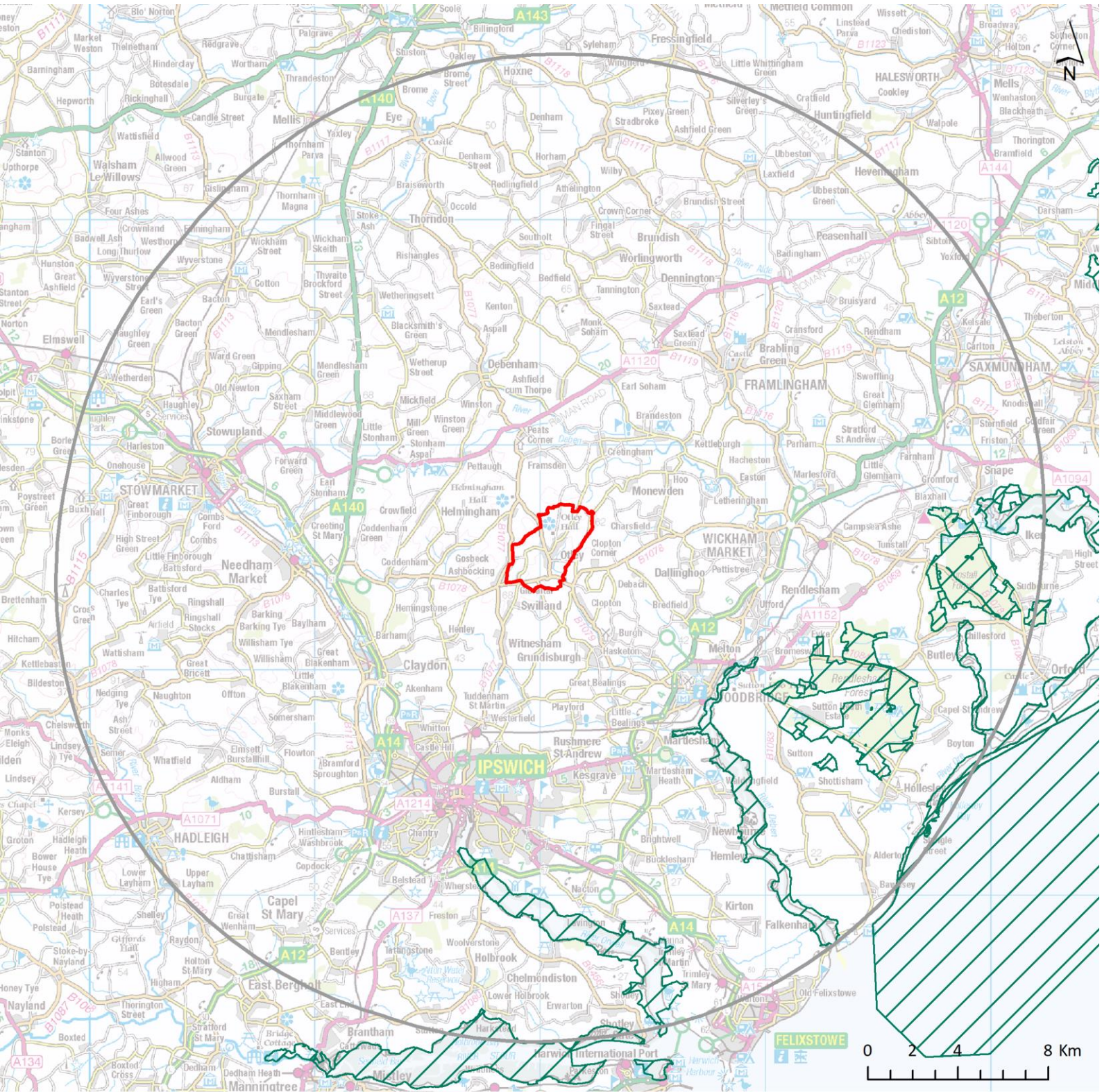
Special Areas of Conservation



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-  Otley Neighbourhood Area
-  20km Buffer
-  Special Areas of Conservation

Special Protection Areas



- Otley Neighbourhood Area
- 20km Buffer
- Special Protection Area

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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))
Special Areas of Conservation			
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 The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.	Not identified in Suffolk Coastal Final Draft Local Plan HRA.

<p>Staverton Park and The Thicks, Wantisden</p>	<p>H9190: Old acidophilous oak woods with Quercus robur on sandy plains; Dry oak-dominated woodland.</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: 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.</p>	<p>Woodland management, disease, atmospheric pollution.</p>
<p>Special Protection Areas</p>			
<p>Alde-Ore Estuary (also Ramsar site)</p>	<p>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)</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: 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.</p>	<p>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)</p>
<p>Deben Estuary (also Ramsar site)</p>	<p>A046a: Dark bellied brent goose (non-breeding) 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>Coastal squeeze, disturbance to birds, water and air pollution.</p>

		<p>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.</p>	
Outer Thames Estuary	<p>A001: Red-throated Diver (Non-breeding) A195: Common Tern (Breeding) 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: 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.</p>	<p>Not identified in Suffolk Coastal Final Draft Local Plan HRA. SIP identifies fisheries.</p>
Sandlings	<p>A224: European nightjar (breeding) 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: The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;</p>	<p>Changes in species distributions, inappropriate scrub control, deer, air pollution, public access/disturbance.</p>

		<p>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.</p>	
<p>Stour and Orwell Estuaries (also Ramsar site)</p>	<p>A046a: Dark bellied brent goose (non-breeding) A054: Northern pintail (non-breeding) A132: Pied avocet (non-breeding) A141: Grey plover (non-breeding) A143: Red knot (non-breeding) A149: Dunlin (non-breeding) A156: Black-tailed godwit (non-breeding) A162: Common redshank (non-breeding) Waterbird assemblage</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: 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.</p>	<p>Coastal squeeze, disturbance to birds, air pollution and new development.</p>

Appendix 4: Natural England Consultation Response

Date: 16 January 2023
Our ref: 417094
Your ref: Otley Neighbourhood Plan



Mr I Plummer
East Suffolk Council
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CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Mr Plummer

Re: Otley Neighbourhood Plan - Draft SEA and HRA Screening

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 06 January 2023

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.

HRA Screening Opinion

Natural England has no detailed comments to make on the HRA

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment

It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils) are concerned, that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan.

Neighbourhood Plan

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in light of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended), is contained within the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#). The guidance highlights three triggers that may require the production of an SEA, for instance where:

- 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.

We have checked our records and based on the information provided, we can confirm that in our view the proposals contained within the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect.

We are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species

are likely to be affected.

Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an SA/SEA is necessary.

Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.

For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Widgey
Consultations Team