



Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement

Cycling and Walking Strategy

September 2022

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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 plans and projects is set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) (as amended).

1.3 Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) 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 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 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 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 draft Cycling and Walking Strategy (the Strategy) is being produced by East Suffolk Council. The Strategy will apply to the whole of the East Suffolk Council area. In the north of the district some recommendations extend into the Broads Authority area and therefore it's anticipated that the Strategy will be endorsed by the Broads Authority. 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 East Suffolk Council (outside the Broads) 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. Part of East Suffolk falls within the Broads Authority area and is therefore covered by the Broads Authority Local Plan which was adopted in May 2019.
- 1.7 Both East Suffolk Local Plans and the Broads Local Plan were subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment as part of their production. Where screening identified a likely significant effect, Appropriate Assessment was undertaken and the mitigation measures identified were incorporated within the Plans, resulting in conclusions that the plans will not lead to any adverse effects. Both

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

Appropriate Assessments of the East Suffolk Local plans identified recreational disturbance particularly from dog walkers as a significant effect. The Council has subsequently produced a Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy and requires payment towards mitigation from residential developments within 13km of the protected Habitat sites. This approach also applies to the East Suffolk part of the Broads Authority area.

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 East Suffolk Council. The locations of the sites are shown on the 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 Assessments for the Local Plans.

Table 1: Relevant Habitat sites

Name
Alde-Ore and Butley Estuaries SAC,
Alde-Ore Estuary SPA, Ramsar
Benacre to Easton Barents SPA
Benacre to Easton Barents Lagoons SAC
Breydon Water SPA, Ramsar
Broadland SPA, Ramsar
Deben Estuary SPA, Ramsar
Dew's Ponds SAC
Great Yarmouth North Denes SPA
Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton SAC
Minsmere to Walberswick Heaths & Marshes SAC
Minsmere – Walberswick SPA, Ramsar
Norfolk Valley Fens SAC
Outer Thames Estuary SPA
Orfordness – Shingle Street SAC
Sandlings SPA
Southern North Sea SAC
Staverton Park and The Thicks, Wantisden SAC
Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA, Ramsar
The Broads SAC
Winterton-Horsey Dunes SAC

3. Cycling and Walking Strategy

- 3.1 This HRA report reviews the draft East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy (published for consultation in November 2021). Since November 2021 the Strategy has been updated and refined in response to consultation comments and small amendments made to some recommendations, but these have not significantly changed the approach within the Strategy.
- 3.2 The Cycling and Walking Strategy identifies potential cycling and walking infrastructure opportunities across East Suffolk. The Strategy focusses on the identification of new infrastructure opportunities rather than the maintenance of existing infrastructure. It provides context and information to support future detailed infrastructure proposals, and inform decision making in order to support cycling, walking, and equestrian use.
- 3.3 Chapters 1 and 2 of the strategy are primarily descriptive, explaining the purpose of the strategy, the preparation process, and the policy context.
- 3.4 The key section of the strategy is the recommendations chapter (chapter 3). The recommendations fall into four categories:
- **Key Corridors** - Key routes between, and through, settlements where there are significant opportunities for modal shift to arise from improved cycling and walking infrastructure.
 - **Leisure route** - A potential Leisure Route has been identified, connecting a number of more rural settlements and projects.
 - **Local Plan Site Allocation Recommendations** - Recommendations for Local Plan site allocations, covering both on and off-site opportunities.
 - **Community Recommendations** - Recommendations submitted to the Council as part of the initial consultation which was held October - December 2020.
- 3.5 The Strategy is accompanied by a supplementary document setting out the assessment of all 800+ community recommendations that were received as part of the initial consultation. These are supplementary to the main body of the Strategy have not therefore been included in the screening table in section 5 of this report.

3.6 Once adopted, the Strategy will replace the Waveney Cycle Strategy (2016).

4. Other Plans and Projects

- 4.1 Regulation 105 of the Habitats Regulations 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 plans are the Local Plans. The Local Plans set out the broad scale and distribution of development across the area of East Suffolk formerly covered by Suffolk Coastal District and Waveney District.
- 4.3 Both Local Plans seek to encourage walking and cycling, and both include specific policies relating to sustainable transport.
- Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Policy SCLP7.1: Sustainable Transport
 - Waveney Local Plan Policy WLP8.21: Sustainable Transport
- 4.4 The Local Plans also allocate land for development, in the form of site allocation policies. Where specific cycling and walking measures were identified through the local plan process these are detailed as policy criteria in the specific site allocation policies. In addition to these policy requirements, the Strategy has, where appropriate, identified a number of additional opportunities for cycling and walking associated with these site allocations.
- 4.5 The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, as part of the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area (ISPA), sets out a further commitment to improvements to support sustainable transport to address the impacts of planned growth on the road network in and around Ipswich. An ISPA Transport Mitigation Strategy was prepared by Suffolk County Council in 2019. The Council is working with other authorities in the ISPA to develop an approach for funding and delivery of key improvements.
- 4.6 The East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy will support the strategic priorities/objectives outlined in both Local Plans.

4.7 A screening process considered each policy in the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Local Plans and concluded whether significant effects were likely and if Appropriate Assessment was therefore needed. The Appropriate Assessments of the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Local Plans considered the following themes:

- Recreation pressure,
- Air quality and traffic emissions,
- Biodiversity net gain,
- Urbanisation,
- Water quality, resources and treatment, and
- Flood risk and coastal erosion.

4.8 Mitigation measures were identified within the Appropriate Assessments and incorporated within both Local Plans, resulting in a conclusion that neither plan would lead to any adverse effects on Habitat Sites within and in the vicinity of the (then) Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Districts.

5. Assessment of likely significant effects of the draft Cycling and Walking Strategy on Habitat sites

- 5.1 Table 3 below considers each relevant section of the draft Cycling and Walking Strategy 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 protected sites. The relevant sections are considered within the context of the Local Plan policies which, have themselves, been subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment, as set out in section 4 above.

Table 3: Likely significant effects of the Draft Cycling and Walking Strategy

Chapter	Assessment of potential impact on Habitat sites	Habitat sites that could possibly be affected	Likely significant effect identified	AA needed?
1.Introduction Purpose of the Strategy and Preparation of the Strategy	This section sets out the overall purpose of the Strategy and confirms that the Strategy will replace the 2016 Waveney Cycle Strategy. This sections also outline the process that has been undertaken to produce the consultation draft. This section is purely descriptive and does not in itself promote new infrastructure or development. This chapter will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
1.Introduction Implementation of the Strategy	<p>This section outlines how the Strategy will be implemented including reference to funding and delivery opportunities. This section explains that the opportunities identified within the Strategy should not be read as prescriptive proposals, or as the only way in which the infrastructure improvements can be delivered, but as high-level opportunities.</p> <p>Paragraph 1.6 of this section, clarifies that the implementation of the draft measures is likely to need to be informed by further evidence gathering and detailed discussions with the Local Highways Authority and that further assessments may also be required including (where necessary) Habitat Regulation Assessment.</p>	None	None	No

	<p>This section provides clarification on implementation and delivery requirements and processes (importantly highlighting potential HRA obligations). This chapter will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p>			
2. Policy Context	<p>This chapter outlines the national, regional and local policy context of relevance to cycling and walking in East Suffolk and signposts the key guidance that should be considered alongside the Strategy. This chapter is purely descriptive and does not in itself promote new infrastructure or development. This chapter will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p>	None	None	No
3. Recommendations- Key Corridors	<p>This section outlines Key Corridors that have been identified as part of the Strategy. The Key Corridors are defined as the “key routes between, and through, settlements where there are significant opportunities for modal shift to arise from improved cycling and walking infrastructure”. This chapter explains that the “Key Corridors have been informed by an analysis of the responses to the initial map-based consultation, and the identification of patterns in those responses”. For each Key Corridor a number of recommendations have been identified which have been ranked as either medium, high or very high priority.</p> <p>Melton to Ipswich Key Corridor</p> <p>This route encompasses the parishes of Rushmere St Andrew, Kesgrave, Martlesham, Woodbridge, Melton, Brightwell, Bucklesham and Foxhall.</p> <p>Draft recommendations IM17, IM18, IM19 IM20, come within close proximity of the Deben SPA/ RAMSAR site, but</p>	<p>Deben SPA/ Ramsar Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA/Ramsar The Broads SAC Broadland SPA/ Ramsar</p>	None	No

	<p>the recommendations primarily relate to improvements on existing pedestrian/ cycle routes and no new direct access points to the habitat sites are proposed. This section will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p> <p>Ipswich to Felixstowe Key Corridor</p> <p>This main route between the two settlements is made up of a combination of segregated cycle lanes, shared paths, modal filtered carriageway, and repurposed ex-dual carriageway. Draft recommendations F9, F52, F85, F95, F115 IM20, come within close proximity of the Stour and Orwell Estuaries and Deben SPA/ RAMSAR sites, but the recommendations primarily relate to improvements on existing pedestrian/ cycle routes and no new direct access points to the Habitat Sites are proposed. This section will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p> <p>Lowestoft Key Corridor</p> <p>This route encompasses the parishes of Oulton, Oulton Broad, Carlton Colville, Gisleham and Lowestoft. Parts of this Key Corridor fall within the Broads Authority area (as explained in paragraph 3.28).</p> <p>Draft recommendations L19, L20, L46 and L47, come within close proximity of The Broads SAC and Broadland SPA/Ramsar site at the Suffolk Wildlife Trust Carlton Marshes site but the recommendations primarily relate to improvements on existing pedestrian/ cycle routes and no new direct access points to the habitat sites are proposed.</p>			
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	<p>This section will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p> <p>Lowestoft to Hopton Key Corridor</p> <p>This route encompasses the parish of Corton and Lowestoft Town Council. None of the recommendations in this section come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This section will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p> <p>Lowestoft to Kessingland</p> <p>This route encompasses the parishes of Gisleham, Kessingland and Lowestoft Town Council. None of the recommendations in this section come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This section will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p> <p>Lowestoft to Bungay Key Corridor</p> <p>The route encompasses the parishes of Carlton Colville, Barnby, Mutford, North Cove, Ellough, Worlingham, Beccles, Weston, Barsham, Ringsfield, Shipmeadow, Ilketshall St Andrew, Mettingham, Ilketshall St John and Bungay. Parts of this Key Corridor fall within the Broads Authority area (as explained in paragraph 3.40).</p> <p>Draft recommendation LB23 comes within close proximity of the Broads Authority area and recommendations LB25 and LB35 run into the Broads Authority area. These recommendations do not, however, infringe on any the relevant SPAs, SACs or Ramsar sites. This section will</p>			
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	therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.			
3.Recommendations- Leisure Route	This section outlines a potential leisure route that has been identified for further consideration in the future. The nature of this area differs from the Key Corridors, with more of a focus on recreational cycling and walking. The exact location of any potential leisure route is not specified in the Strategy. The Strategy makes reference to potential opportunities in the general area but does not in itself promote new infrastructure or development. This section will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
3.Recommendations- Site Allocation Recommendations	This section provides additional detail on Cycling and Walking opportunities associated with the site allocation policies in both the Waveney Local Plan and the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. The high level opportunities identified in this section address both on and off-site opportunities to inform the determination of future planning applications. A screening process considered all allocation policies in both Local Plans and concluded whether significant effects were likely and if Appropriate Assessment was needed. Where likely significant effects were identified appropriate assessment was carried out and mitigation incorporated into the relevant Local Plans. The relevant HRA reports are available here: Suffolk Coastal Local Plan: https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Suffolk-Coastal-Local-Plan/Final-Draft-Local-Plan/Habitats-	None	None	No

	<p>Regulations-Assessment.pdfLocal-Plan/Final-Draft-Local-Plan/Habitats-Regulations-Assessment.pdf Waveney Local Plan: https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Waveneyhttps://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Waveney-Local-Plan/Habitats-Regulations-Assessment.pdf Local-Plan/Habitats-Regulations-Assessment.pdf</p> <p>This section will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p>			
3.Recommendations-Community Recommendations	<p>This section sets out the highest scoring community recommendations received as part of the initial consultation on the Strategy. All comments received were assessed against a Multi-Criteria Assessment Framework (MCAF) which is explained in detail in this section.</p> <p>Each recommendation (which may be made up of more than one consultation response) is assessed below:</p>	-	-	-
Brightwell (529)	<p>This recommendation suggests a safe crossing under the A12, upgrades to an existing bridleway, linking with cycleways to the hospital and Ipswich and the national cycle network.</p> <p>This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p>	None	None	No
Bucklesham (599b)	<p>This recommendation suggests 3 improvements</p> <p>1: To provide a safe way across the A12/A14 junction at Seven Hills.</p>	None	None	No

	<p>2: Provide a pedestrian/cycle bridge.</p> <p>3: Negotiate with the owner of Walk Farm for ATs' to use the tunnel at GR 252396.</p> <p>These recommendations do not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. These recommendations will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p>			
Darsham (338)	<p>This recommendation suggests 6 improvements to the area around Darsham station for improved access to coastal routes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A signalised crossing for pedestrians and cyclists. 2. Lower speed limit on the road at this point. 3. Advance signs warning of cyclists and/or pedestrians crossing. 4. Painting SLOW PEDESTRIANS/CYCLISTS CROSSING on the road in each direction. 5. Install a speed camera at this location. 6. Install a central refuge to allow the road to be crossed in two stages. <p>These recommendations do not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. These recommendations will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p>	None	None	No
Darsham (408)	<p>This recommendation suggests the inclusion of a dedicated cycle/foot path connecting Darsham Station with Westleton Road through the allocated site south of Darsham station by widening the A12 footpath to accommodate cyclists.</p> <p>This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation</p>	None	None	No

	will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.			
Felixstowe (174)	<p>This recommendation suggests improvements to the bridleway surface and new signage to divert cyclists onto the bridleway which passes Hill House Cottages and Candle Farm between Gulpher Road and Thurmans Lane.</p> <p>This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p>	None	None	No
Felixstowe (258)	<p>This recommendation suggests a new cycle connection between Gulpher Road and connections to the Garison Road and Colneis Road roundabout.</p> <p>This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p>	None	None	No
Felixstowe (259)	<p>This recommendation suggests a segregated cycle route alongside the southbound side of the A154 Garrison Lane, between the Grove Road roundabout and the pedestrian entrance to Fairfield Avenue.</p> <p>This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p>	None	None	No
Felixstowe (260)	<p>This recommendation suggests a safe cycle and walking route between Hamilton Road/Town Centre, the railway station and the new North Felixstowe Garden Village development and new leisure centre.</p>	None	None	No

	This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.			
Felixstowe (389)	This recommendation suggests that clearer signage is needed along the walkway/promenade from Cobbolds Pt to Felixstowe Ferry. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
Felixstowe (426)	This recommendation suggests linking up the two sections of cycle route on Walton Avenue (A154). This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
Felixstowe (717)	This recommendation suggests upgrading the Hawkes Lane / footpath to Maidstone Rd & Runnacles Way via railway foot bridge for cycling use. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
Felixstowe (FTC6)	This recommendation suggests converting both east bound footpaths on High Road East, lengthening the pedestrian island and the extending drop kerbs. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation	None	None	No

	will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.			
Felixstowe (FTC60)	This recommendation suggests constructing a new off-road facility from Undercliffe Road to Sea Road. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
Foxhall (571)	This recommendation suggests the provision of a cycleway along the A1156 and additional safety features to enable cyclists to be able to turn right into Straight Road. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
Halesworth (294)	This recommendation suggests improvements along Saxons Way to provide shared cycle and pedestrian paths. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
Leiston (449)	This recommendation suggests improvements to connect the south of Leiston into the Town Centre via a combination of offroad and on-road cycle infrastructure. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No

Levington (199)	This recommendation suggests improvements along 'Old Felixstowe Road' to introduce segregated cycle lanes &/or reduce speed limits &/or prohibit through traffic. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
Lowestoft (189)	This recommendation suggests improving the exit at the top of the High Street onto the A47. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
Lowestoft (256)	This recommendation suggests creating a shared path through to Blundeston Roundabout, with a purpose built cycle track either side of the Yarmouth Rd through to Great Yarmouth. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
Lowestoft (493)	This recommendation suggests improvements to Bascule Bridge by reducing it to two lanes for vehicles with cycling capacity on either side. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No

Lowestoft (522)	This recommendation suggests restricting the nearside lane of Battery Green Road to buses, taxis and cyclists only. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
Lowestoft (524)	This recommendation suggests restricting the inside lane of the A12 dual carriageway as it approaches the Bascule Bridge to buses, taxis and cyclists only. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
Lowestoft (252)	This recommendation suggests connecting the Norfolk Coastal Path at Hopton to the Suffolk Coastal Path at Lowestoft. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
Lowestoft (618)	This recommendation suggests connecting the three settlements of Pakefield, Kessingland and Southwold for cycling. The exact route that this recommendation might follow has not yet been established however the assessment highlights the availability of PROW routes in the vicinity and the minor infrastructure required to implement this recommendation will not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	Benacre to Easton Bavents SPA	None	No
Martlesham (162)	This recommendation suggests a speed limit to Felixstowe Road and the widening of the footpath and cycle lanes. This	None	None	No

	<p>recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p>			
Martlesham (278)	<p>This recommendation suggests 3 improvements as part of the Brightwell Lakes development at Martlesham:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) provide an independent cycle / pedestrian bridge over the A12 connecting with Lancaster Drive. 2) provide some form of safe route to NCN 1 connection at the Gloster Road / Betts Avenue junction and upgrade (widen) the current pedestrian bridge across the A12. 3) Ensure that all roads within the development have combined cycle / footpaths <p>These recommendations do not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. These recommendations will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p>	None	None	No
Martlesham (329)	<p>This recommendation suggests improvements to Sandy Lane, including closing it to through traffic.</p> <p>This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p>	None	None	No
Martlesham (602)	<p>This recommendation suggests that there is a need to ensure that the Brightwell Lakes development delivers good cycleways to the A12 crossings. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p>	None	None	No

Martlesham (681a)	<p>This recommendation suggests safety improvements to Felixstowe Road, Main Road and Sandy Lane including safer crossing points.</p> <p>This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p>	None	None	No
Martlesham (681b)	<p>This recommendation suggests safety improvements to Felixstowe Road, Main Road and Sandy Lane including safer crossing points.</p> <p>This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p>	None	None	No
Melton (489)	<p>This recommendation suggests widening the footpaths along Wilford Bridge Road and providing a cycle lane into Woodbridge.</p> <p>This recommendation does come within close proximity of the Deben SPA/ Ramsar site, but the recommendations primarily relate to improvements on existing pedestrian/ cycle routes and no new direct access points to the habitat sites are proposed. This section will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p>	Deben SPA/ Ramsar	None	No
Melton (574)	<p>This recommendation suggests improvements along the B1438, including providing a purpose-built cycle path and a speed limit. This recommendation does come within close proximity of the Deben SPA/ RAMSAR site, but the recommendations primarily relate to improvements on existing pedestrian/ cycle routes and no new direct access</p>	Deben SPA/ Ramsar	None	No

	points to the habitat sites are proposed. This section will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.			
Nacton (251)	This recommendation suggests providing a full cycle/footpath from Nacton towards Warren Heath (past the Show Ground). This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
Oulton Broad (191)	This recommendation suggests improved access to the Suffolk Wildlife Trust Carlton Marshes site from Oulton Broad South railway station. This recommendation falls within the Broads Authority area and comes within close proximity of The Broads SAC and Broadland SPA/Ramsar site at the Suffolk Wildlife Trust Carlton Marshes site, but the recommendations primarily relate to improvements on existing pedestrian/ cycle routes and no new direct access points to the habitat sites are proposed. This section will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	The Broads SAC and Broadland SPA/Ramsar	None	No
Oulton Broad (671)	This recommendation suggests upgrading to existing footpath to accommodate cycles. This recommendation falls just outside the Broads Authority area and comes within close proximity of The Broads SAC and Broadland SPA/Ramsar site at the Suffolk Wildlife Trust Carlton Marshes site, but the recommendations primarily relate to improvements on existing pedestrian/ cycle routes and no new direct access points to the habitat sites are	The Broads SAC and Broadland SPA/Ramsar	None	No

	proposed. This section will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.			
Rushmere St Andrew (631)	This recommendation suggests widening the A1214 at Rushmere common to create dedicated cycle lanes on either side of the road, segregated from the pedestrian footway. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
Stratton Hall (47)	This recommendation suggests using half of the Felixstowe Road as a cycle track and walkway. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
Theberton (434)	This recommendation suggests using the old railway line between Aldeburgh and Leiston as cycle route. Part of this route would cut through the Sandling SPA, but would follow the route of existing footpath through the site with minimal upgrading required. The recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on the Habitat Site.	Sandlings SPA	None	No
Trimley St Martin (117)	This recommendation suggests restricting Morston Hall Road to residents and bus and cycle lane only. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
Trimley St Martin (139)	This recommendation suggests creating a dedicated cycle lane alongside Morston Hall Road.	None	None	No

	This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.			
Trimley St Martin (378)	This recommendation suggests installing a separate, kerbed cycleway along Howlett Way. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
Trimley St Martin (380)	This recommendation suggests widening the footbridge across the A14 and creating a cycleway which would join both sides of the A14. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
Trimley St Martin (573)	This recommendation suggests providing new footbridge across the A14 and segregated path to provide safe access to the new primary school. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No
Trimley St Mary (265)	This recommendation suggests resurfacing the Blofield Track existing bridleway. This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.	None	None	No

Trimley St Mary (727)	<p>This recommendation suggests upgrading the Candlet Track to enable cyclists to leave North Felixstowe and reach Trimley St Martin and Kirton on a traffic free route.</p> <p>This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p>	None	None	No
Waldringfield (601)	<p>This recommendation suggests upgrading the existing permissive path across Waldringfield Golf Course to a PROW.</p> <p>This recommendation does not come within close proximity of any of the identified habitat sites. This recommendation will not therefore lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p>	None	None	No
Woodbridge (80)	<p>This recommendation suggests providing a designated cycling space on main road from Melton, though Woodbridge, meeting up with the cycling section in Martlesham.</p> <p>This recommendation does come within close proximity of the Deben SPA/ RAMSAR site, but the recommendations relate to improvements on existing routes and no new direct access points to the habitat sites are proposed. This section will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.</p>	Deben SPA/ Ramsar	None	No
Woodbridge (254)	<p>This recommendation suggests closing Sandy Lane to vehicular traffic and making it access only.</p> <p>This recommendation does come within close proximity of the Deben SPA/ RAMSAR site, but the recommendations relate to improvements on existing routes and no new direct access points to the habitat sites are proposed. This section</p>	Deben SPA/ Ramsar	None	No

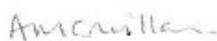
	will therefore not lead to likely significant effects on Habitat Sites.			
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6. Summary and conclusions

- 6.1 The draft East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy identifies potential cycling and walking infrastructure opportunities across East Suffolk. The Strategy focusses on the identification of new infrastructure opportunities rather than the maintenance of existing infrastructure. It provides context and information to support future detailed infrastructure proposals and inform decision making. The recommendations in the Strategy are not prescriptive proposals, but high-level opportunities.
- 6.2 The focus of the majority of the recommendations is on the improvement of existing routes, through the introduction of new infrastructure such as modal filters, signage, and cycle lanes and/or resurfacing. The Strategy is clear that the implementation of any of the draft measures is likely to need to be informed by further evidence gathering and detailed discussions with the Local Highways Authority and that further assessments may also be required including (where necessary) Habitat Regulation Assessment.
- 6.3 Implementation of the East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy Document will not lead to likely significant effects on protected Habitat sites.
- 6.4 Natural England were consulted on a draft of this Screening Statement as statutory nature conservation body. Their response is contained in Appendix 4.

Signed:

Dated: 16th September 2022



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 (September 2020)

East Suffolk Council – Waveney Local Plan (March 2019)

Local Plan for the Broads 2015- 2036 (May 2019)

Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan at Final Draft Plan stage (incorporating Main Modifications) (May 2020)

The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Waveney Local Plan (December 2018)

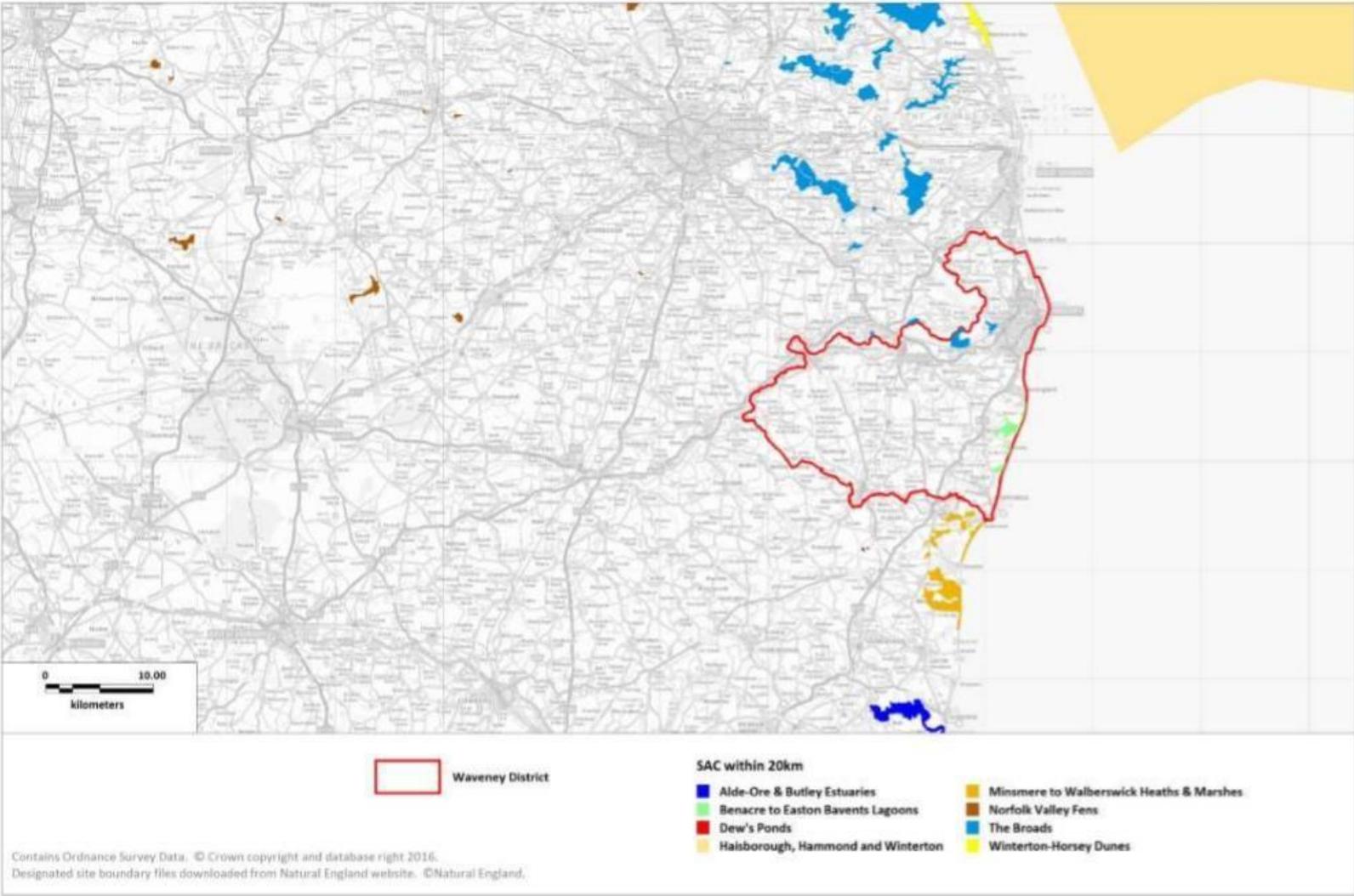
Habitat Regulations Assess of the Local Plan for the Broads (January 2019)

Habitats Regulations Assessment Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy for Ipswich Borough, Babergh District, Mid Suffolk District and East Suffolk Councils (May 2019)

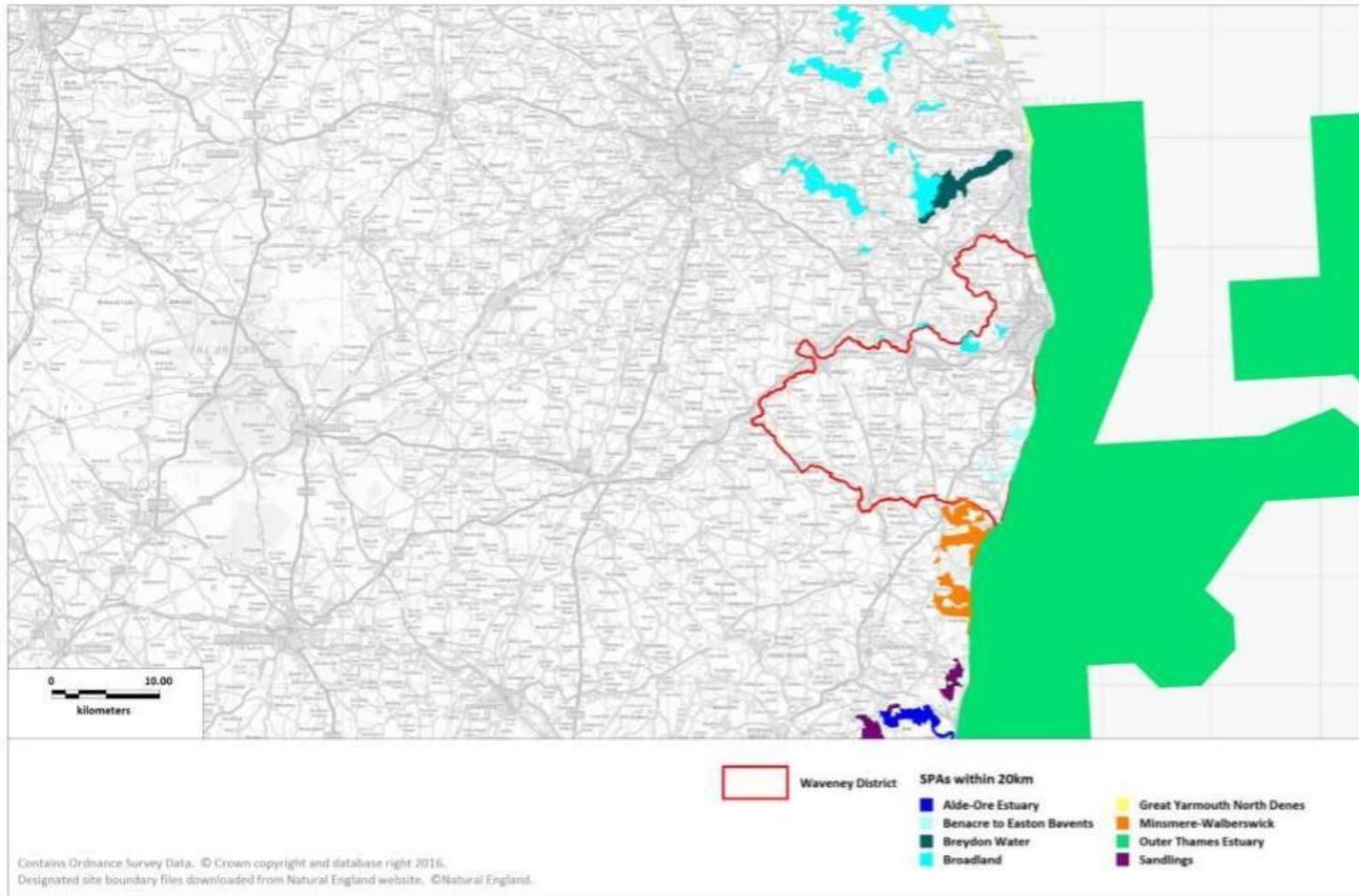
Appendix 2: Locations of Habitat sites

Habitat sites within 20km of the East Suffolk Council-
Waveney Local Plan Area

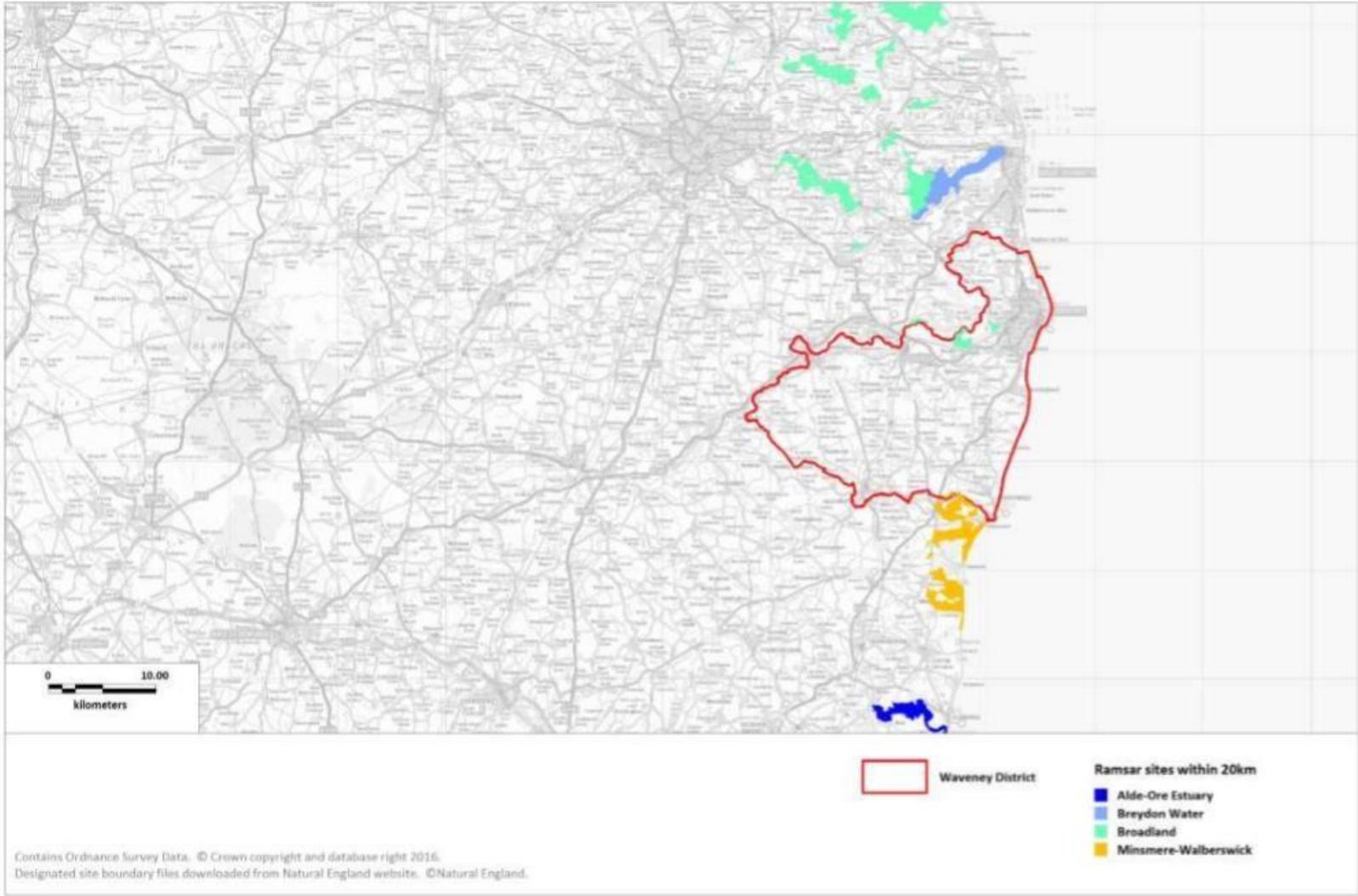
Map 1: SACs



Map 2: SPAs

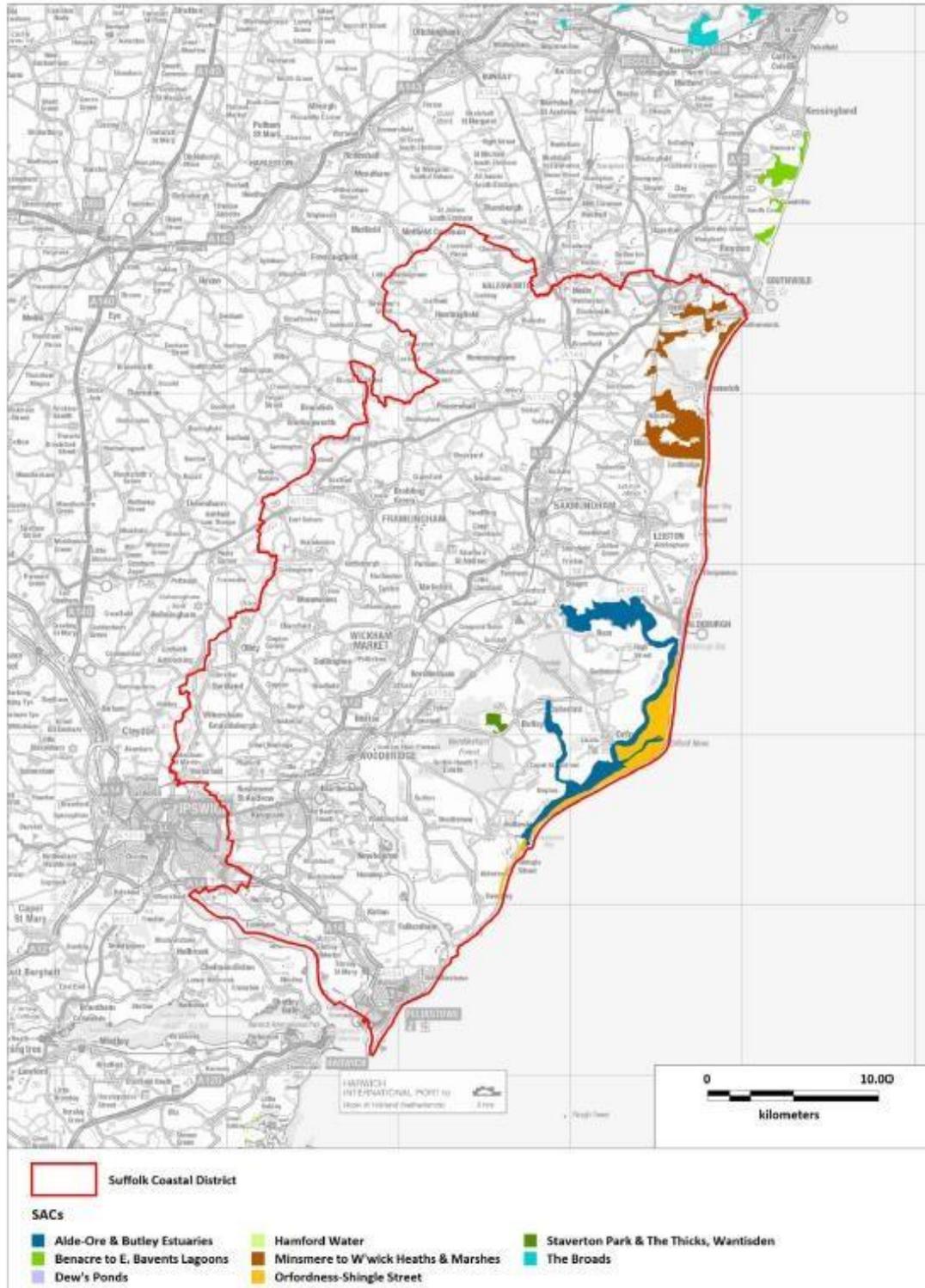


Map 3: Ramsar Sites



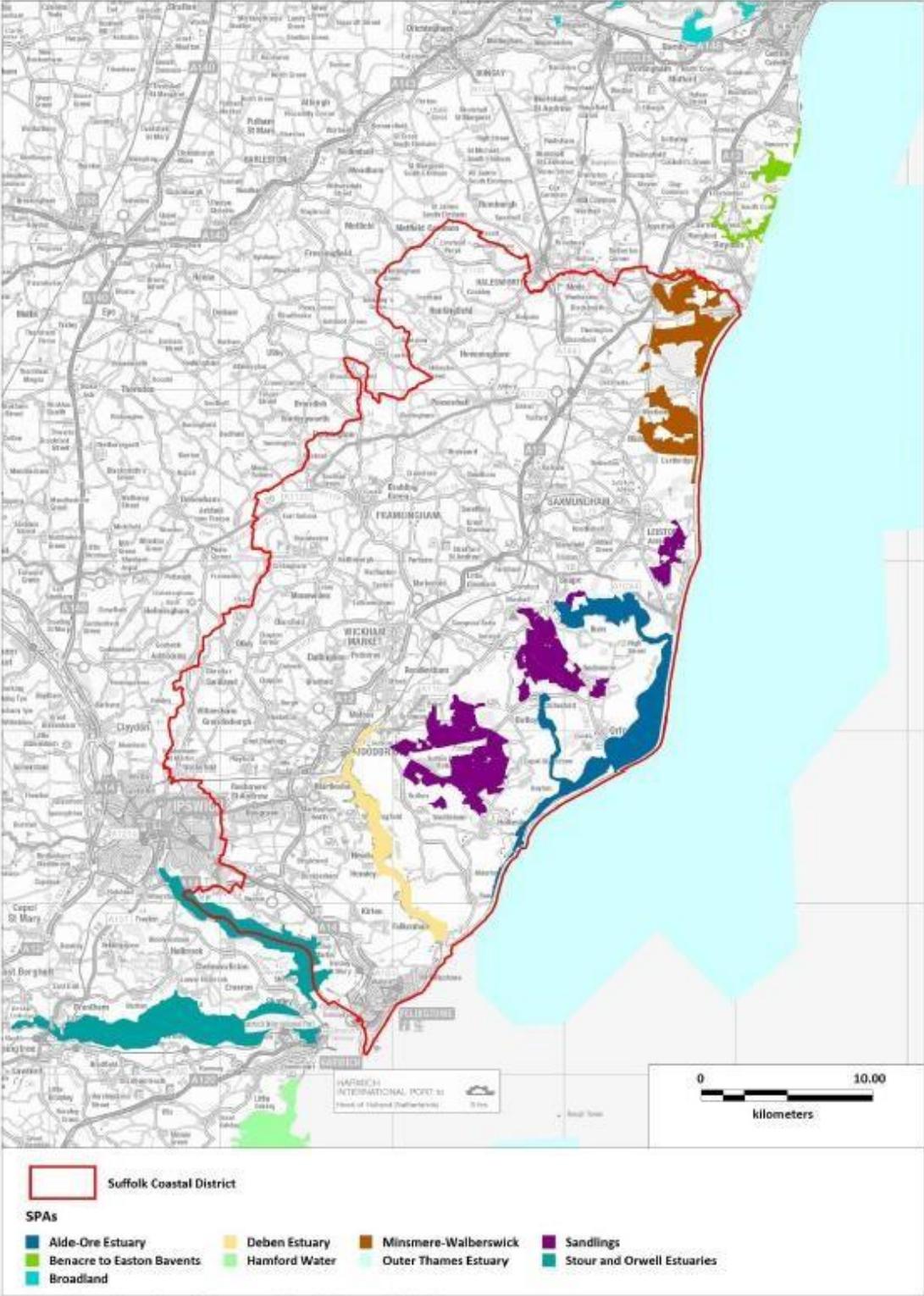
Habitat sites within 20km of the East Suffolk Council- Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Area

Map 1: SAC sites where boundary within 20km of Suffolk Coastal District



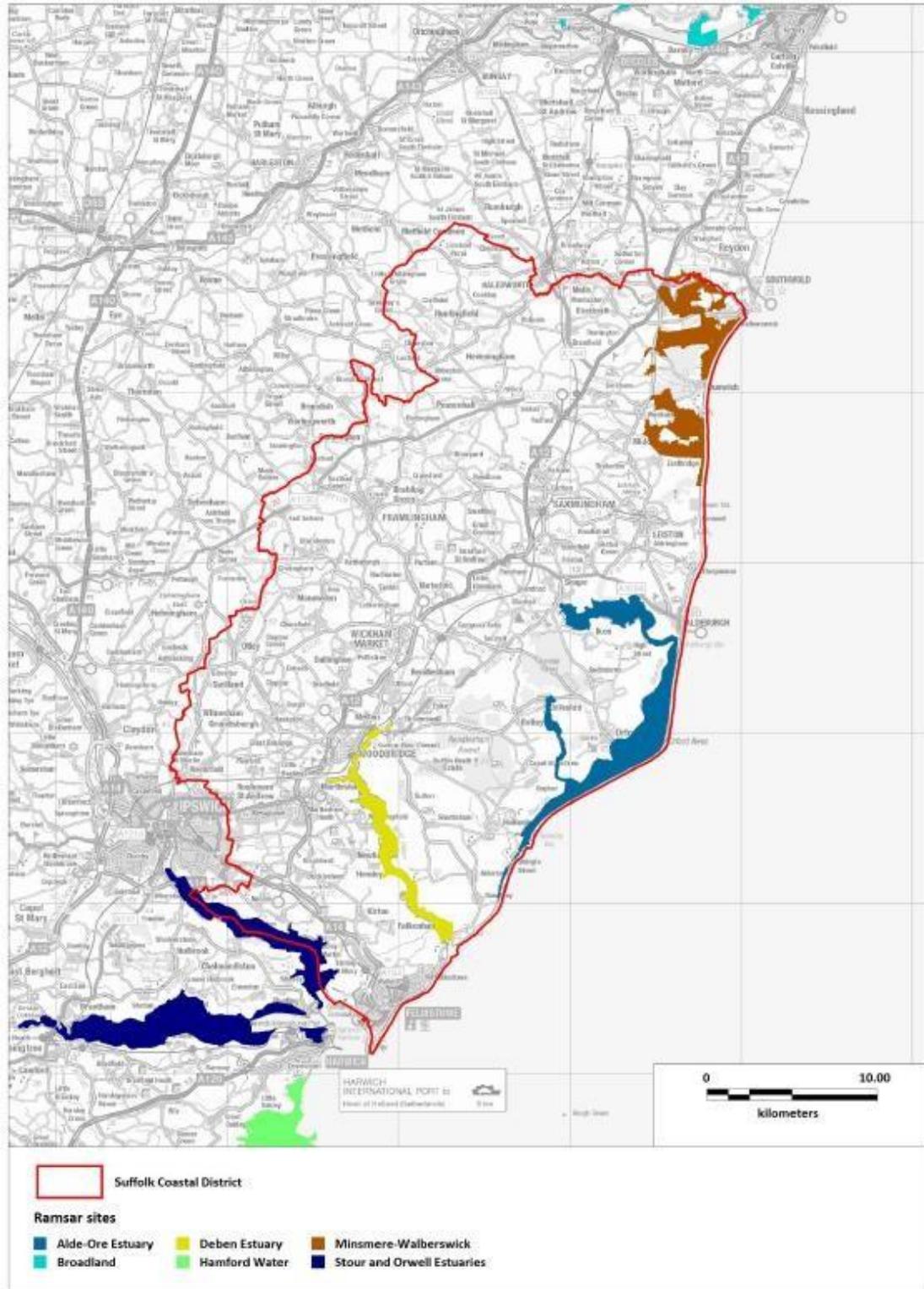
Contains Ordnance Survey Data. © Crown copyright and database right 2017.
 Contains Natural England Information © Natural England and Database Right. All rights Reserved.

Map 2: SPA sites where boundary within 20km of Suffolk Coastal District



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 Contains Natural England Information © Natural England and Database Right. All rights Reserved.

Map 3: Ramsar sites where boundary within 20km of Suffolk Coastal District



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Contains Natural England Information © Natural England and Database Right. All rights Reserved.

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)
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> :	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;	Public access/disturbance, water pollution, physical modification, changes in species distributions, fisheries (marine and estuarine).

	Eurasian marsh harrier	The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats, and the structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and, the supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.	
Dew's Ponds	S1166 Triturus cristatus: 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 the habitats of qualifying species, The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species, The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely, The populations of qualifying species, and, The distribution of qualifying species within the site.	None identified
Minsmere to Walberswick Heaths and Marshes	H4030 European dry heaths H1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines H1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks A052(B) Anas crecca: Eurasian teal A021(B) Botaurus stellaris: Great bittern	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 and habitats,	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>A081(B) Circus aeruginosus: Eurasian marsh harrier A082(NB) Circus cyaneus: Hen harrier A224(B) Caprimulgus europaeus: European nightjar A056(B) Anas clypeata: Northern shoveler A056(NB) Anas clypeata: Northern shoveler A051(B) Anas strepera: Gadwall A051(NB) Anas strepera: Gadwall A132(B) Recurvirostra avosetta: Pied avocet A195(B) Sterna albifrons: Little tern A394(NB) Anser albifrons albifrons: Greater white-fronted goose</p>	<p>The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and, The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.</p>	
<p>Orfordness- Shingle Street</p>	<p>H1150: Coastal Lagoons H1210: Annual vegetation of drift lines H1220: Perennial vegetation of stony banks; Coastal shingle vegetation outside the reach of waves</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;</p>	<p>Not identified in Suffolk Coastal Final Draft Local Plan HRA.</p>

		The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; and 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.
The Broads	H7210# Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> S1016 <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> : Desmoulin's whorl snail H7230 Alkaline fens H6410 <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-siltladen soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) H91E0# Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus</i>	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 and habitats of qualifying species,	Water pollution, climate change, invasive species, siltation, inappropriate water levels, hydrological changes, water abstraction, change in land management, inappropriate ditch management, inappropriate scrub control, changes in species distributions, public access/disturbance, undergrazing, drainage, direct impact from 3rd party

	<p>glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) H7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs H3140 Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp H3150 Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition-type vegetation S1355 Lutra lutra: Otter S1903 Liparis loeselii: Fen orchid S4056 Anisus vorticulus: Little ramshorn whirlpool snail</p>	<p>The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species, The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely, The populations of qualifying species, and, The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</p>	
Special Protection Areas			
<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 (nonbreeding) 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</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>population of each of the qualifying features; and The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</p>	
Benacre to Easton Bawents	<p>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</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>Public access/disturbance, water pollution, physical modification, changes, in species distributions, fisheries (marine and estuarine).</p>
Broadlands (also Ramsar site)	<p>H7210# Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> S1016 <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>: Desmoulin's whorl snail H7230 Alkaline fens H6410 <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-siltladen soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>)</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 and habitats of qualifying species,</p>	<p>Water pollution, climate change, invasive species, siltation, inappropriate water levels, hydrological changes, water abstraction, change in land management, inappropriate ditch management, inappropriate scrub control, changes in species distributions, public access/disturbance, undergrazing, drainage, direct impact from 3rd party.</p>

	<p>H91E0# Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) H7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs H3140 Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp H3150 Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition-type vegetation S1355 <i>Lutra lutra</i>: Otter S1903 <i>Liparis loeselii</i>: Fen orchid S4056 <i>Anisus vorticulus</i>: Little ramshorn whirlpool snail</p>	<p>The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species, The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely, The populations of qualifying species, and, The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</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: 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</p>	<p>Coastal squeeze, disturbance to birds, water and air pollution.</p>

		population of each of the qualifying features; and The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.	
Outer Thames Estuary	A001: Red-throated Diver (Nonbreeding) A195: Common Tern (Breeding) A193: 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.	Not identified in Suffolk Coastal Final Draft Local Plan HRA. SIP identifies fisheries.
Minsmere to Walberswick (also Ramsar site)	H4030 European dry heaths H1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines H1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks A052(B) Anas crecca: Eurasian teal A021(B) Botaurus stellaris: Great bittern A081(B) Circus aeruginosus: 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 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,	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>A082(NB) Circus cyaneus: Hen harrier A224(B) Caprimulgus europaeus: European nightjar A056(B) Anas clypeata: Northern shoveler A056(NB) Anas clypeata: Northern shoveler A051(B) Anas strepera: Gadwall A051(NB) Anas strepera: Gadwall A132(B) Recurvirostra avosetta: Pied avocet A195(B) Sterna albifrons: Little tern A394(NB) Anser albifrons albifrons: Greater white-fronted goose</p>	<p>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>Outer Thames Estuary</p>	<p>A001 (W) Gavia stellate Redthroated Diver A195 (B) Sterna hirundo Common Tern A193 (B) Sternula albifrons Little Tern</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,</p>	<p>Not identified in Suffolk Coastal Final Draft Local Plan HRA. SIP identifies fisheries.</p>

		The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.	
Sandlings	A224: European nightjar (breeding) A246: Woodlark (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.	Changes in species distributions, inappropriate scrub control, deer, air pollution, public access/disturbance.
Stour and Orwell Estuaries (also Ramsar site)	A046a: Dark bellied brent goose (non-breeding) A054: Northern pintail (nonbreeding) A132: Pied avocet (non-breeding) A141: Grey plover (non-breeding) A143: Red knot (non-breeding) A149: Dunlin (non-breeding) A156: Black-tailed godwit (nonbreeding) A162: Common redshank (nonbreeding) Waterbird assemblage	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	Coastal squeeze, disturbance to birds, air pollution and new development.

		The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.	
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Appendix 4: Natural England Consultation Response

Date: 12 November 2021
Our ref: 372722

Anthony.Taylor@eastsoffolk.gov.uk
BY EMAIL ONLY



Hombeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 8GJ

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Mr. Taylor

Planning Consultation: Screening for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) for the Draft East Suffolk Cycling & Walking Strategy

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 01 November 2021 which was received by Natural England on the same date.

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 Opinion Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment

Habitats Regulation Assessment

Natural England notes that your authority, as competent authority under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations, has screened the proposal to check for the likelihood of significant effects. Natural England is a statutory consultee on the appropriate assessment stage of the Habitats Regulations Assessment process, and a competent authority should have regard to Natural England's advice.

Your assessment concludes that the proposal can be screened out from further stages of assessment because significant effects are unlikely to occur, either alone or in combination. On the basis of the information provided, Natural England concurs with this view.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Where plans could have significant environmental effects, they may require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) under the Environment Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended). Further guidance on deciding whether the proposals are likely to have significant environmental effects and the requirements for consulting Natural England on SEA are set out in the [planning practice guidance](#).

Planning practice guidance also outlines that if an appropriate assessment is required for your neighbourhood plan this will also engage the need for a SEA. One of the basic conditions that will be tested by the independent examiner is whether the neighbourhood plan is compatible with European obligations, including those under the SEA Directive. Where a SEA is required it should be prepared in accordance with [regulation 12](#) of the SEA Regulations.

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 and therefore we concur with your conclusion that an SEA is not required.

Natural England advises that where opportunities for cycling and walking enhancement have been identified in proximity to European sites particularly which would lead to increased recreation, careful consideration is given to potential implications of increased recreational pressures on these sites.

Natural England would encourage close collaboration with the Suffolk RAMs strategy to ensure that where increased recreational usage of these sites may take place there is sufficient mitigation to ensure vulnerable features are protected. For example where a new or improved cycle path intersects an entrance into a designated area, there could signage which highlights the designations and the relevant vulnerable features.

This advice has been provided on a draft plan and Natural England recognises that there may be further iterations within which new or altered proposals may feature. Consequently this advice constitutes the best advice that can be given based on the information provided so far. Its quality and detail is dependent upon the quality and depth of the information which has been provided. It does not constitute a statutory response or decision, which will be made by Natural England acting corporately in its role as statutory consultee to the competent authority after an application has been submitted. The advice given is therefore not binding in any way and is provided without prejudice to the consideration of any statutory consultation response or decision which may be made by Natural England in due course. The final judgement on any proposals by Natural England is reserved until an application is made and will be made on the information then available, including any modifications to the proposal made after receipt of discretionary advice. All pre-application advice is subject to review and revision in the light of changes in relevant considerations, including changes in relation to the facts, scientific knowledge/evidence, policy, guidance or law. Natural England will not accept any liability for the accuracy, adequacy or completeness of, nor will any express or implied warranty be given for, the advice. This exclusion does not extend to any fraudulent misrepresentation made by or on behalf of Natural England.

Natural England are happy to discuss any of the advice provided in this email.

Further general advice on neighbourhood planning and the natural environment, including natural environment information sources is provided in Annex I.

For any further consultations on your plan, please contact: consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours Faithfully

Niall Walkden
Senior Adviser | Sustainable Development | Norfolk and Suffolk Team

Annex 1 - Neighbourhood planning and the natural environment: information, issues and opportunities

Natural environment information sources

The [Magic](#)¹ website will provide you with much of the nationally held natural environment data for your plan area. The most relevant layers for you to consider are: Agricultural Land Classification, Ancient Woodland, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Local Nature Reserves, National Parks (England), National Trails, Priority Habitat Inventory, public rights of way (on the Ordnance Survey base map) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including their impact risk zones). Local environmental record centres may hold a range of additional information on the natural environment. A list of local record centres is available [here](#)².

Priority habitats are those habitats of particular importance for nature conservation, and the list of them can be found [here](#)³. Most of these will be mapped either as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, on the Magic website or as Local Wildlife Sites. Your local planning authority should be able to supply you with the locations of Local Wildlife Sites.

National Character Areas (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each character area is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. NCA profiles contain descriptions of the area and statements of environmental opportunity, which may be useful to inform proposals in your plan. NCA information can be found [here](#)⁴.

There may also be a local landscape character assessment covering your area. This is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change in the area. Your local planning authority should be able to help you access these if you can't find them online.

If your neighbourhood planning area is within or adjacent to a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the relevant National Park/AONB Management Plan for the area will set out useful information about the protected landscape. You can access the plans on from the relevant National Park Authority or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty website.

General mapped information on soil types and Agricultural Land Classification is available (under 'landscape') on the [Magic](#)⁵ website and also from the [LandIS website](#)⁶, which contains more information about obtaining soil data.

Natural environment issues to consider

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#)⁷ sets out national planning policy on protecting and enhancing the natural environment. [Planning Practice Guidance](#)⁸ sets out supporting guidance.

Your local planning authority should be able to provide you with further advice on the potential impacts of your plan or order on the natural environment and the need for any environmental assessments.

¹ <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

² <http://www.nbn-nfor.org.uk/nfor.php>

³ <http://web.archive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

⁵ <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

⁶ <http://www.landis.org.uk/index.cfm>

⁷ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807247/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf

⁸ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/>

Landscape

Your plans or orders may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes. You may want to consider identifying distinctive local landscape features or characteristics such as ponds, woodland or dry stone walls and think about how any new development proposals can respect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness.

If you are proposing development within or close to a protected landscape (National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) or other sensitive location, we recommend that you carry out a landscape assessment of the proposal. Landscape assessments can help you to choose the most appropriate sites for development and help to avoid or minimise impacts of development on the landscape through careful siting, design and landscaping.

Wildlife habitats

Some proposals can have adverse impacts on designated wildlife sites or other priority habitats (listed [here⁹](#)), such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or [Ancient woodland¹⁰](#). If there are likely to be any adverse impacts you'll need to think about how such impacts can be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.

Priority and protected species

You'll also want to consider whether any proposals might affect priority species (listed [here¹¹](#)) or protected species. To help you do this, Natural England has produced advice [here¹²](#) to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected species.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Soil is a finite resource that fulfils many important functions and services for society. It is a growing medium for food, timber and other crops, a store for carbon and water, a reservoir of biodiversity and a buffer against pollution. If you are proposing development, you should seek to use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of a higher quality in line with National Planning Policy Framework para 171. For more information, see our publication [Agricultural Land Classification: protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land¹³](#).

Improving your natural environment

Your plan or order can offer exciting opportunities to enhance your local environment. If you are setting out policies on new development or proposing sites for development, you may wish to consider identifying what environmental features you want to be retained or enhanced or new features you would like to see created as part of any new development. Examples might include:

- Providing a new footpath through the new development to link into existing rights of way.
- Restoring a neglected hedgerow.
- Creating a new pond as an attractive feature on the site.
- Planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds.
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings.
- Think about how lighting can be best managed to encourage wildlife.
- Adding a green roof to new buildings.

⁹<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

¹¹ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>

¹³ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35012>

You may also want to consider enhancing your local area in other ways, for example by:

- Setting out in your plan how you would like to implement elements of a wider Green Infrastructure Strategy (if one exists) in your community.
- Assessing needs for accessible greenspace and setting out proposals to address any deficiencies or enhance provision.
- Identifying green areas of particular importance for special protection through Local Green Space designation (see [Planning Practice Guidance on this](#)¹⁴).
- Managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips in less used parts of parks, changing hedge cutting timings and frequency).
- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network, e.g. cutting back hedges, improving the surface, clearing litter or installing kissing gates) or extending the network to create missing links.
- Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition, or clearing away an eyesore).

¹⁴ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/local-green-space-designation/>