

Report on the receipt and spending of Suffolk Coast Recreation Disturbance Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) Contributions

1. Background Information

- 1.1 The [Suffolk Coast Recreation Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy \(RAMS\)](#) is a partnership between East Suffolk Council, Ipswich Borough Council and Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils. Its aim is to reduce the impact of increased levels of recreational use on Habitat Sites (also often called European Sites), due to new residential development in the Suffolk Coast area, and to provide a simple, coordinated way for developers to deliver mitigation for their developments. Full details of this measure in East Suffolk can be found on the Council's website here: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/developer-contributions/rams/>
- 2.1 The RAMS project allows for a strategic approach to mitigating the in-combination effects of development on these designated areas and allows mitigation to be delivered across the project area.
- 3.1 Taking a coordinated approach to mitigation has benefits and efficiencies compared to project by project mitigation packages. The RAMS partnership approach has support from Natural England. There has been an expectation on East Suffolk to collect mitigation funding for this measure since the adoption of the former Suffolk Coastal District Core Strategy in 2013. Now that contributions within East Suffolk have reached a significant position, the Council and other Council's in the partnership will progress in spending the contributions from early next year. This will first include a RAMS coordinator position being created which will be 100% funded by RAMS contributions and this will initiate the spending of contributions on mitigation projects. Currently this is governed through a recently formed joint Executive Group across the four Councils. This includes close working with Natural England who are required to oversee the collection of mitigation funding and delivery of the mitigation.
- 4.1 In East Suffolk, progress and spending plans will be reported to the CIL Spend Working group twice a year due to RAMS contributions being linked to the

Infrastructure Funding Statement as a form of s106 contribution. A version of this report will accompany the annual Infrastructure Funding Statement report to Cabinet.

2. Where RAMS Applies – the Zone of Influence

- 5.1 The Zone of Influence (ZOI) is the area where increased residential development will result in likely significant effects. As set out in the strategy, evidence shows that there is a 13 km Zone of Influence (ZOI) around the relevant Habitat Sites in the Suffolk Coast area (this includes East Suffolk, Ipswich Borough and Babergh and Mid Suffolk Council areas).

3. Payment of RAMS Contributions.

- 6.1 RAMS contributions can be paid upfront under s111 of the Local Government Act 1972 by completion of a form and then payment of the contribution. Where this is paid in advance of the planning permission the funds are held until the planning permission is approved or until the Council is instructed to refund the contribution (where permission is refused) or transfer the payment (where an alternative application is submitted).
- 7.1 RAMS contributions can also be included within a s106 Agreement alongside other contributions, such as affordable housing, or where stand alone as a part of a Unilateral Undertaking – which is similar to a s106 agreement but simpler for the applicant to complete as it does not require the Council to be a signatory.
- 8.1 Each local authority is responsible for the collection of RAMS Contributions in their area. Annually the joint authorities will review the RAMS contributions they hold which are available to allocate and spend in order to guide the future delivery of mitigation. Full governance arrangements for joint spending will be established in 2021.

9.1 The RAMS payments are held until permission is granted and then development has commenced. Once the permission has commenced, the funds become available to spend. As at 30 September 2020 here are the financial details for RAMS contributions held by East Suffolk:

Total RAMS Received to 30/09/2020*	RAMS available to allocate and spend**	Amounts refunded (refused permissions)	Amounts awaiting transfer or refund***
£342,610.77	£158,338.50	£8,794.74	£39,933.38

*This is the total of RAMS contributions received by the Council including amounts paid upfront but where the permission has not yet commenced (therefore it is not yet available to spend).

**This is the full amount of RAMS contributions received from implemented permissions which must be spent of the RAMS project.

*** This is including payments made for permissions which may have been refused, are awaiting appeal and which have not yet been refunded to applicants.

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