



Assington Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036: Pre-Submission Draft

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA): Screening Report – February 2020





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Glossary of Acronyms

AA	Appropriate Assessment
BDC	Babergh District Council
DC	District Council
DPD	Development Plan Document
EA	Environment Agency
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
Ha	Hectare
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
IFCA	Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority
IRZ	Impact Risk Zone (for SSSIs)
Km	Kilometre
LPA	Local Planning Authority
NDP/NP	Neighbourhood Development Plan / Neighbourhood Plan
NE	Natural England
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PRoW	Public Right of Way
RAMS	Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SIP(s)	Site Improvement Plans(s)
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Specific Scientific Interest
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage System
ZOI	Zone of Influence



1. Introduction

1.1 The Purpose of This Report

This report screens to determine whether the Assington Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with Article 6(3) and (4) of the EU Habitats Directive and with Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. A Stage 1 HRA is required when it is deemed that likely adverse significant effects may occur on protected Habitats (European) Sites as a result of the implementation of a plan/project, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

1.2 The Assington Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Draft

The main purpose of the Plan is to set out and identify the best ways to direct local planning towards community wants and needs, while protecting the natural environment and cultural assets, ensuring a more sustainable future for the community. The Regulation 14 draft Neighbourhood Development Plan will set out planning policies for Assington Parish and within the confines of the Neighbourhood Plan boundary as defined (see Appendix 1).

Once formally 'made' or 'adopted', a Neighbourhood Plan carries the same legal weight as Local Development Plans adopted up by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), in this case Babergh District Council.



2. Legislative Background

2.1 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Under the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive and translated into English law by the Habitats Regulations (*The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017*), a competent authority must carry out an assessment of whether a plan or project will significantly affect the integrity of any Habitats Site, in terms of impacting the site's conservation objectives.

The first stage of HRA is the screening assessment of the impacts of a land use proposal against the conservation objectives of Habitats sites. Specifically, it is to ascertain whether or not a proposal (either alone or in combination with other proposals) would potentially damage the internationally designated features of that site. European sites are also known as Natura 2000 sites and Habitats Sites in the NPPF (2019).

This HRA Screening Report has been undertaken in order to support the Assington Neighbourhood Plan which is being produced by Assington Parish Council in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The area covered by the Plan is shown in Appendix 1.

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, state that submitted Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the 'basic conditions' set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with EU obligations, which includes the need to undertake a HRA.

In line with the Court judgement (CJEU People Over Wind v Coillte Teoranta C-323/17), mitigation measures cannot be taken into account when carrying out a screening assessment to decide whether a plan or project is likely to result in significant effects on a Habitats Site.



3. HRA Screening

3.1 Habitat Regulations Assessment of Development Plans

This section forms a plan level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening report as required by Regulation 63 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

This section of this Report aims to:

- Identify the Habitats sites within 20km of the Assington Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Summarise the reasons for designation and Conservation Objectives for each site to be considered in this assessment.
- Screen the Assington Neighbourhood Development Plan for its potential to impact upon a Habitats site.
- Assess the potential for in combination effects from other projects and plans in the area.
- Identify if there are any outstanding issues that need further investigation.

3.2 Court Judgements and their consideration in this Report

3.2.1 CJEU People Over Wind v Coillte Teoranta C-323/17

As previously mentioned, in line with the Court judgement (CJEU People Over Wind v Coillte Teoranta C-323/17), mitigation measures cannot be taken into account when carrying out a screening assessment to decide whether a plan or project is likely to result in significant effects on a Habitats Site.

This HRA Screening Report does not therefore consider mitigation measures within the assessment of Likely Significant Effects resulting from the Assington Neighbourhood Plan.

3.2.2 CJEU Holohan C- 461/17

This Court judgement now imposes more detailed requirements on the competent authority for any plans or projects at Appropriate Assessment stage:

1. [...] an 'Appropriate Assessment' must, on the one hand, catalogue the entirety of habitat types and species for which a site is protected, and, on the other, identify and examine both the implications of the proposed project for the species present on that site, and for which that site has not been listed, and the implications for habitat types and species to be found outside the boundaries of that site, provided that those implications are liable to affect the conservation objectives of the site.
2. [...] the competent authority is permitted to grant to a plan or project consent which leaves the developer free to determine subsequently certain parameters relating to the



construction phase, such as the location of the construction compound and haul routes, only if that authority is certain that the development consent granted establishes conditions that are strict enough to guarantee that those parameters will not adversely affect the integrity of the site.

3. [...] where the competent authority rejects the findings in a scientific expert opinion recommending that additional information be obtained, the 'Appropriate Assessment' must include an explicit and detailed statement of reasons capable of dispelling all reasonable scientific doubt concerning the effects of the work envisaged on the site concerned.

Within this Stage 1 HRA Screening report, the assessment will determine the requirement for whether or not a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is needed for the Assington Neighbourhood Development Plan.

3.3 Habitats (European) Sites

'Habitats sites' is the term used in the (revised) NPPF (2019) to describe the network of sites of nature protection areas. The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and Habitats.

The sites are designated under the European Union (EU) Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds) and the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora).

The Birds Directive requires the establishment of Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The Habitats Directive similarly requires Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be designated for other species, and for Habitats. Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) are also part of the Habitats (Sites) network. This is because all SPAs and SACs are comprised of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and all Ramsar sites in England are SSSIs. Together, SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites make up the Habitats Sites in England. The following offers a description and explanation of SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites.

3.3.1 Explanation of SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites

Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

SPAs are areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within EU countries. Example: Deben Estuary SPA is internationally important for wintering waterfowl. *Legislation: EU Birds Directive.*

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

SACs are areas designated to protect habitat types that are in danger of disappearance, have a small natural range, or are highly characteristic of the region; and to protect species that are endangered, vulnerable, rare, or endemic. Example: Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens for calcareous fens, *Molinia* meadows and Desmoulin's whorl snail *Legislation: EU Habitats Directive.*



Ramsar Sites (Wetlands of International Importance)

Ramsar Sites are designated to protect the biological and physical features of wetlands, especially for waterfowl Habitats. Example: Redgrave and South Lopham Fens is an extensive example of lowland base-rich valley, remarkable for its lack of fragmentation which supports many rare and scarce invertebrates, including a population of the fen raft spider *Dolomedes plantarius*. Ramsar sites often overlap with SACs and SPAs and UK planning policy determines that they should be accorded the same importance when developments are proposed. *Legislation: Ramsar Convention (1971) – Wetlands of International Importance.*

3.3.2 Habitats Sites to be considered

There are 6 Habitats sites (SPA/SAC/Ramsar) which lie within 20 km of Assington parish and are shown on the map in Appendix 2. However, the Plan area is not within the Zone of Influence for any of these Habitats sites, as checked on Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) map.

Table 1: Habitats Sites within 20km of the development

SPA	SAC	Ramsar
Abberton Reservoir		Abberton Reservoir
Colne Estuary		Colne Estuary
Stour and Orwell Estuaries		Stour and Orwell Estuaries

As the Plan area is not within the Zones of Influence for any of these Habitats sites, none screened in for assessment for any likely significant effects resulting from the Assington Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Draft.

3.3.3 Conservation Objectives

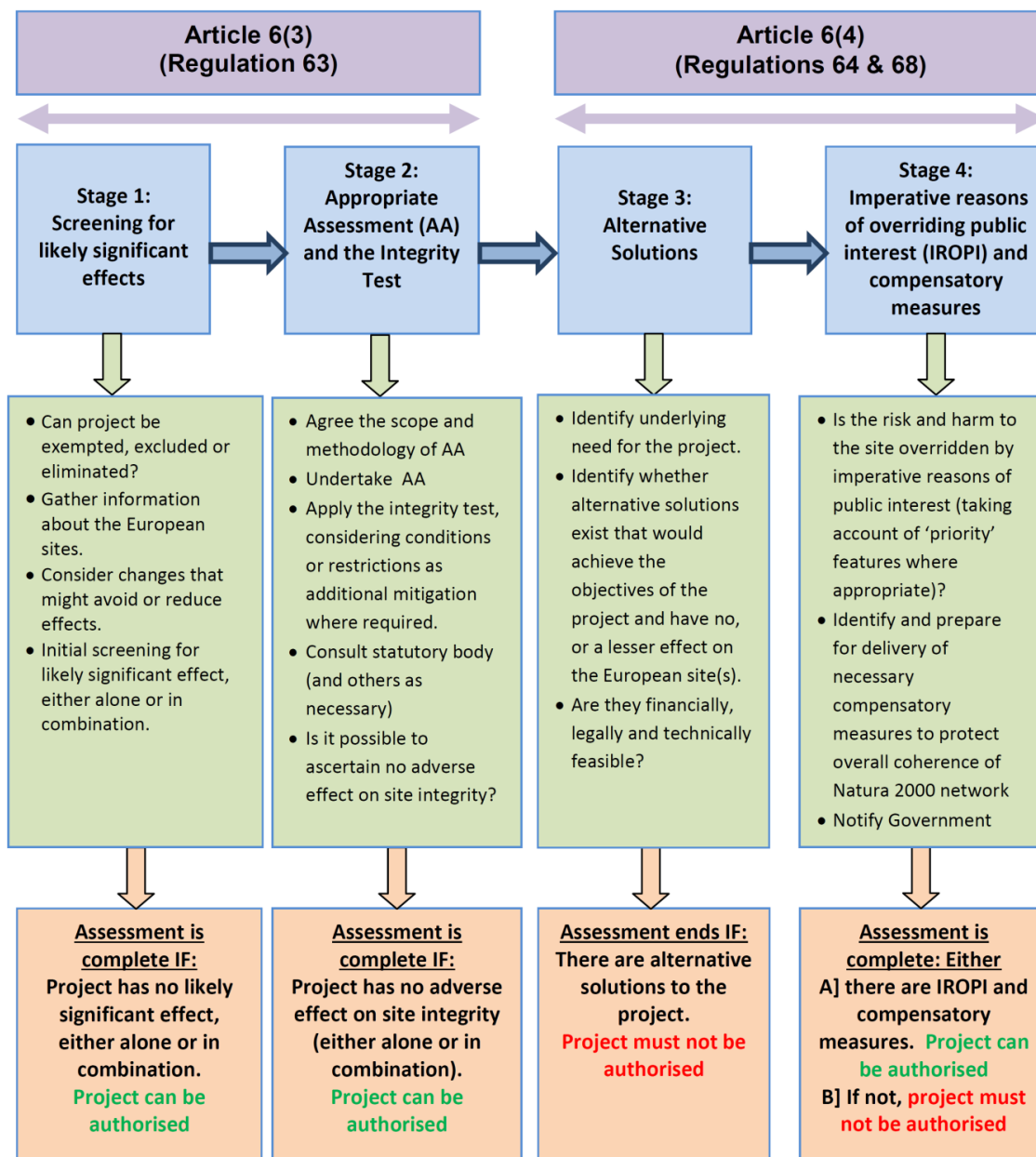
Information on each of the above Habitats sites has been obtained from the Natural England website.

The justification for the importance of each Habitats site and the reasons for designation-the Conservation Objectives and Designation Features- for each site are included in Appendix 3. It also reflects the Supplementary Advice for Conservation Objectives which describes the range of ecological attributes that are most likely to contribute to a site's overall integrity and key vulnerabilities to consider within Habitats Regulations assessments.



3.4 Method and Approach

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, state that submitted Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the 'basic conditions' set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with EU obligations, which includes the need to undertake a HRA screening report; this is necessary to ensure the making of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a Habitats (European site or a European offshore marine site), either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.



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Figure 1: Outline of the Four Stage Approach to the Assessment of Plans under the Habitats Regulations



3.4.1 Stage 1: HRA screening

This screening stage identifies if alternatives are needed because any policies or projects will have an impact on a Habitats Site, amendments need to be made in Neighbourhood Development Plans. Table 3 identifies the different categories assigned to each policy in the plan: Category A identifies those policies or projects that may not result in a Likely Significant Effect and are considered to have No Negative Effect. Category B identifies those policies or projects that will have No Likely Significant Effect. Category C identifies those policies or projects that might have Likely Significant Effect and thus upon a European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

Each of the policies in the Assington Neighbourhood Plan has been screened to identify whether they would have any impact on a Habitats Site and allocated to a category as shown in Table 3.

Table 2: Screening categorisation

Category A: No negative effect
Policies or projects that will not be likely to have any negative effect on a Habitats site.
Category B: No Likely Significant Effect
Policies or projects that could have an effect but would not be likely to have a likely significant effect on a Habitats site alone or in combination. This conclusion could only be reached if the effects, even in combination and taking the precautionary principle into account, are considered trivial.
Category C: Likely Significant Effect
Policies or projects which are predicted to have a likely significant effect on a Habitats Site either on its own or in combination with other plans and projects and require revision or further assessment (Appropriate Assessment).

3.4.2 Potential impacts of the Assington Neighbourhood Plan on Habitats Sites

There are a wide range of potential impacts from development which can be summarised as -

- Land take by developments;
- Impact on protected species found within but which travel outside the protected sites (functionally linked land) may be relevant where development could result in effects on qualifying interest species within the Habitats site, for example through the loss of feeding grounds for an identified species.
- Increased disturbance, for example from recreational use resulting from new housing development and / or improved access due to transport infrastructure projects;
- Changes in water availability, or water quality as a result of development and increased demands for water treatment, and changes in groundwater regimes due to increased impermeable areas;



- Changes in atmospheric pollution levels due to increased traffic, waste management facilities etc. Pollution discharges from developments such as industrial Developments, quarries and waste management facilities.

Each policy in the neighbourhood plan will therefore be assessed against the above criteria in the table below.

Table 3: Assessment of potential impacts

Nature of potential impact	How the Assington Neighbourhood Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and project) could affect a Habitats site?	Why these effects are/ not considered likely to be significant?
Land take by development	The Plan area is outside the boundaries of the 6 Habitats sites within scope of this HRA.	N/A
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	The Plan area does not contain any functionally linked land for use by designated features of the Habitats sites.	N/A
Recreational pressure and disturbance	HRA / AA work undertaken at the Local Plan level indicates that there is no potential pathway for development in the Plan area to impact on the SAC, SPA & Ramsar sites within the scope of the HRA as the Parish lies outside the 13km Zones of Influence of all Habitats sites within the Suffolk Coast RAMS.	N/A
Water quantity and quality	It is considered that there is no pathway for development to result in impacts on water.	N/A
Changes in air & noise pollution levels	It is considered that there is no pathway for development to result in pollution impacts.	N/A



3.5 Results of HRA Screening of Assington Neighbourhood Plan Policies

The HRA Screening exercise explores whether there will be any Likely Significant Effect resulting from the Plan's policies. These Policies are:

- Policy ASSN1 – Spatial Strategy
- Policy ASSN2 – Housing Development
- Policy ASSN3 – Site at Assington Barn
- Policy ASSN4 – Land East of St Edmund's Close
- Policy ASSN5 – Land North of Assington Barn
- Policy ASSN6 – Land Adjacent to Cornerways, The Steet
- Policy ASSN7 – Land South of Maxton and Russets, The Street
- Policy ASSN8 – Land East of Meadow Way
- Policy ASSN9 – Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites
- Policy ASSN10 – Housing Mix
- Policy ASSN11 – Measures for New Housing Development
- Policy ASSN12 – Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity
- Policy ASSN13 – Protected Views
- Policy ASSN14 – Dark Skies
- Policy ASSN15 – Local Green Spaces
- Policy ASSN16 – Biodiversity
- Policy ASSN17 – Heritage Assets
- Policy ASSN18 – Assington Special Character Area
- Policy ASSN19 – Design Considerations
- Policy ASSN20 – Sustainable Construction Practices
- Policy ASSN21 – Discharge of Sewage
- Policy ASSN22 – Community Facilities
- Policy ASSN23 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities
- Policy ASSN24 – Local Businesses

This section considers each policy in turn and the results of the screening exercise is recorded in Table 4.



Table 4: Summary of findings from the HRA screening

Policy	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effect on a Habitats Site?	Recommendations
<p>Policy ASSN1 – Spatial Strategy</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan area will accommodate development commensurate with Assington’s designation as a Hinterland Village in the Local Plan.</p> <p>The focus for any new development will be within the Settlement Boundary, as defined on the Policies Map.</p> <p>Proposals for development located outside the Settlement Boundary will only be permitted for those that are essential for the operation of an existing business, agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other exceptional uses, where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that there is an identified local need for the proposal; and ii) it cannot be satisfactorily located within the Settlement Boundaries. <p>In exceptional circumstances, the redevelopment of existing brownfield sites that create unacceptable impacts on the local environment, highways and the amenity of residents for alternative uses, including residential, may be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that the public benefit will outweigh the loss of the existing use.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
<p>Policy ASSN2 – Housing Development</p> <p>This Plan provides for around 67 additional dwellings in the Neighbourhood Plan area between 2018 and 2036. This growth will be met through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the implementation of planning permissions for additional dwellings granted between 1 April 2018 and 1 November 2019, including those allocated in ii below; 	No, Category A	No specific recommendations



- ii. the site allocations as identified in Policies ASSN3 to ASSN8 in the Plan and on the Policies Map; and
- iii. small brownfield “windfall” sites within the Settlement Boundary that come forward during the plan period and are not identified in the Plan; and
- iv. iv in exceptional circumstances, in accordance with Policy ASSN1, outside the Settlement Boundary.

In addition, proposals for the conversion of redundant or disused agricultural barns outside the Settlement Boundaries into dwellings will be permitted where:

- a) the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for extension, significant alteration or reconstruction; and
- b) the proposal is a high-quality design and the method of conversion retains the character and historic interest of the building; and
- c) the proposal would lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting of the building, and the creation of a residential curtilage and any associated domestic paraphernalia would not have a harmful effect on the character of the site or setting of the building, any wider group of buildings, or the surrounding area.

As well as the criteria set out in Policy ASSN1, proposals for new permanent dwellings outside the Settlement Boundary should also satisfy the following criteria:

- a) a clearly established existing essential functional need for resident workers;
- b) the need relates to a full-time, not part-time requirement;
- c) the unit and activity concerned are well established, profitable and have sound financial prospects; and
- d) the functional need can only be met by the proposed dwelling.



<p>Policy ASSN3 – Site at Assington Barn</p> <p>A site with an area of 1.1 hectares, as identified on Map 3 and the Policies Map, is allocated for no more than 15 dwellings. The development shall provide a new access off The Street to the development and the adjoining Assington Barns complex.</p> <p>Development will be expected to take place in accordance with the current planning consents unless superseded by a subsequent planning permission for residential development.</p>		
<p>Policy ASSN4 – Land East of St Edmund’s Close</p> <p>A site with an area of 0.25 hectares, as identified on Map 4 and the Policies Map, is allocated for no more than six dwellings.</p> <p>Development will be expected to take place in accordance with the current planning consent unless superseded by a subsequent planning permission for residential development.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
<p>Policy ASSN5 – Land North of Assington Barn</p> <p>A site with an area of 1.1 hectares, as identified on Map 5 and the Policies Map, is allocated for up to 8 two, three and four-bedroomed dwellings. The development shall provide a new access off The Street.</p> <p>Development will be expected to take place in accordance with the current planning consent unless superseded by a subsequent planning permission for residential development.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
<p>Policy ASSN6 – Land Adjacent to Cornerways, The Street</p> <p>A site with an area of 0.05 hectares, as identified on Map 6 and the Policies Map, is allocated for no more than two semi-detached bungalows of no more than 5.8m in height (excluding chimneys).</p> <p>Development will be expected to take place in accordance with the current planning consent for each site (as noted)</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations



<p>unless superseded by a subsequent planning permission for residential development.</p>		
<p>Policy ASSN7 – Land South of Maxton and Russets, The Street</p> <p>A site with an area of 0.10 hectares, as identified on Map 7 and the Policies Map, is allocated for one one and a half storey dwelling of up to three bedrooms.</p> <p>Development will be expected to take place in accordance with the current planning consent for each site (as noted) unless superseded by a subsequent planning permission for residential development.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy ASSN8 – Land East of Meadow Way</p> <p>A site with an area of 0.4 hectares, as identified on Map 8 and the Policies Map, is allocated for up to three bungalows. Each dwelling shall have no more than three bedrooms and with a maximum floorspace of 95 square metres.</p> <p>Development of the site will not be allowed to commence before 2031.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy ASSN9 – Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites</p> <p>Proposals for the development of small-scale affordable housing schemes, including entry level homes for purchase (as defined by paragraph 71 of the NPPF) on rural exception sites outside but adjoining the Settlement Boundary, where housing would not normally be permitted by other policies, will be supported where there is a proven local need and provided that the housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. remains affordable in perpetuity; and ii. is for people that are in housing need because they are unable to buy or rent properties in the village at open-market prices; and iii. is offered, in the first instance, to people with a demonstrated local connection, as defined by the Babergh Choice Based Lettings Scheme. Where there are no such people in 	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p>Assington, a property should then be offered to those with a demonstrated need for affordable housing in neighbouring villages.</p> <p>These restrictions should be delivered through a legal agreement attached to the planning consent for the housing. Applications for such development will be considered in relation to the appearance and character of the surrounding area, the potential impact on residential amenity and highway safety.</p> <p>To be acceptable, proposals should demonstrate that a local need exists which cannot be met by applying normal planning policy for the provision of affordable homes in association with market housing.</p> <p>Any application for affordable housing in respect of this policy should be accompanied by a detailed need and the accommodation proposed should contribute to meeting this proven need.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances, a small number of market homes will be permitted where it can be demonstrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. that no other means of funding the construction of the affordable homes is available; and b. the market housing is subsidiary to the affordable housing element of the proposal and the amount of market housing required is, as demonstrated through a viability assessment, the minimum required to deliver the affordable housing. <p>Where sites for affordable housing are brought forward with an element of market housing, both housing tenures should be built to the same design standards and contribute towards the character of the area.</p>		
<p>Policy ASSN10 – Housing Mix</p> <p>In all housing developments there shall be an emphasis on providing a higher proportion of two and three-bedroomed homes, unless it can be demonstrated that:</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the particular circumstances relating to the tenure of the housing dictate otherwise; or ii. the latest publicly available housing needs information for the Plan area identify a need for a different mix. <p>The provision of bungalows will also be supported where the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the character of the area in the vicinity of the site.</p>		
<p>Policy ASSN11 – Measures for New Housing Development</p> <p>All new dwellings shall achieve appropriate internal space through adherence to the latest Nationally Described Space Standards.</p> <p>Dwellings should also make adequate provision for the covered storage of all wheelie bins and cycles. Cycle parking provision shall be in accordance with the adopted cycle parking standards.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
<p>Policy ASSN12 – Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity</p> <p>Development proposals in the Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity, as identified on the Policies Map, will be permitted only where they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. protect and enhance the special landscape qualities of the area; and ii. are designed and sited so as to harmonise with the landscape setting. 	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
<p>Policy ASSN13 – Protected Views</p> <p>Development proposals must not reduce the quality of the 'protected views' identified on the Policies Map in the Assington Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Draft</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
<p>Policy ASSN14 – Dark Skies</p> <p>While ensuring that new developments are secure in terms of occupier and vehicle safety, dark skies are to be preferred over streetlights. Any future outdoor lighting systems should have a minimum impact on the environment, minimising light pollution and adverse effects</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations



<p>on wildlife subject to highway safety, the needs of particular individuals or groups, and security. Schemes should reduce the consumption of energy by promoting efficient outdoor lighting technologies, keeping the night-time skies dark and reducing glare. For the avoidance of doubt, no 'permanently on' external lighting should feature in new developments and security lighting should be motion activated. No uplighting features will be permitted on any new development.</p>		
<p>Policy ASSN15 – Local Green Spaces</p> <p>The following Local Green Spaces are designated in this Plan and identified on the Policies Map.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assington Park, north part 2. Assington Park, south part 3. Area of the Old Vicarage 4. Hill Farm Land, with rear of "Celandine" 5. Meadow View 6. Wildlife Area 7. The Mere 8. Oatetch Grove and Meadow 9. The Reservoir 10. Part of Old Orchards 11. Cotton Wood 12. Mill Farm Land <p>Development on these sites will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Permitted development rights, including the operational requirements of infrastructure providers, are not affected by this designation.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy ASSN16 – Biodiversity</p> <p>Except in exceptional circumstances, development proposals should avoid the loss of, or material harm to important trees, hedgerows and other natural features such as ponds. Where such losses or harm are unavoidable:</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the benefits of the development proposal must be demonstrated clearly to outweigh any impacts; and ii. suitable mitigation measures, that may include equivalent or better replacement of the lost features, will be required. <p>It is expected that the mitigation proposals will form an integral part of the design concept and layout of any development scheme, and that development will be landscape-led and appropriate in relation to its setting, context and ongoing management.</p> <p>Where new access is created, or an existing access is widened through an existing hedgerow, a new hedgerow of native species shall be planted on the splay returns into the site to maintain the appearance and continuity of hedgerows in the vicinity.</p> <p>Development proposals will be supported where they provide a net gain in biodiversity through, for example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the creation of new natural habitats including ponds; b) the planting of additional trees and hedgerows (reflecting the character of Assington’s traditional hedgerows), and; c) restoring and repairing fragmented biodiversity networks. 		
<p>Policy ASSN17 – Heritage Assets</p> <p>To ensure the conservation and enhancement of the village’s heritage assets, proposals must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. preserve or enhance the significance of the heritage assets of the village, their setting and the wider built environment, including views into, within and out of the conservation area as identified on the Policies Map; b. retain buildings and spaces, the loss of which would cause harm to the character or appearance of the conservation area; 	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. contribute to the village’s local distinctiveness, built form and scale of its heritage assets, as described in the Landscape Appraisal and Built Character Assessment, through the use of appropriate design and materials; d. be of an appropriate scale, form, height, massing, alignment and detailed design which respects the area’s character, appearance and its setting, in line with the AECOM Design Guidelines for Assington; e. demonstrate a clear understanding of the significance of the asset and of the wider context in which the heritage asset sits, alongside an assessment of the potential impact of the development on the heritage asset and its context; and f. provide clear justification, through the submission of a heritage statement, for any works that could harm a heritage asset yet be of wider substantial public benefit, through detailed analysis of the asset and the proposal. <p>Proposals will not be supported where the harm caused as a result of the impact of a proposed scheme is not justified by the public benefits that would be provided.</p> <p>Where a planning proposal affects a heritage asset, it must be accompanied by a Heritage Statement identifying, as a minimum, the significance of the asset, and an assessment of the impact of the proposal on heritage assets. The level of detail of the Heritage Statement should be proportionate to the importance of the asset, the works proposed and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance and/or setting.</p>		
<p>Policy ASSN18 – Assington Special Character Area</p> <p>A Special Character Area is identified on the Policies Map. Within this area, as well as having regard to the need to preserve and enhance the significance of the heritage assets in or adjoining the area, consideration will be given</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p>as to how a proposal enhances the distinct characteristics of the identified area.</p> <p>Where the harm caused as a result of the impact of a proposed scheme is not justified by the public benefits that would be provided, it will not be supported.</p>		
<p>Policy ASSN19 – Design Considerations</p> <p>Proposals for new development must reflect the local characteristics and circumstances in the Neighbourhood Plan area and create and contribute to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment.</p> <p>Planning applications should, as appropriate to the proposal, demonstrate how they satisfy the requirements of the Development Design Checklist in Appendix B of the Assington Neighbourhood Plan and, as appropriate to the proposal.</p> <p>In addition, proposals will be supported where they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) recognise and address the key features, characteristics, landscape/building character, local distinctiveness and special qualities of the area and/or building and, where necessary, prepare a landscape character appraisal to demonstrate this; b) maintain or create the village’s sense of place and/or local character avoiding, where possible, cul-de-sac developments which do not reflect the lane hierarchy and form of the settlement; c) do not involve the loss of gardens, important open, green or landscaped areas identified on the Policies Map, which make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of that part of the village; d) taking mitigation measures into account, do not affect adversely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. any historic character, architectural or archaeological heritage assets of the site and its surroundings, 	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. important landscape characteristics including trees and hedgerows and other prominent topographical features; iii. the character and appearance of the building, street scene and surroundings and reflects and respects the relationship of the site and its context setting and those of any adjoining properties; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. identified protected views into, out of, or within the village as identified on the Policies Map; ii. sites, habitats, species and features of ecological interest; iii. the amenities of adjacent areas by reason of noise, smell, vibration, overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light, other pollution (including light pollution), or volume or type of vehicular activity generated; and/or residential amenity; e) not locate sensitive development where its users and nearby residents would be significantly and adversely affected by noise, smell, vibration, or other forms of pollution from existing sources, unless adequate and appropriate mitigation can be implemented; f) produce designs that respect the character, scale and density of the locality; g) produce designs, in accordance with standards, that maintain or enhance the safety of the highway network ensuring that all vehicle parking is provided within the plot and seek always to ensure permeability through new housing areas, connecting any new development into the heart of the existing settlement; h) wherever possible ensure that development faces on to existing lanes, retaining the rural character and creates cross streets or new back 		
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<p>streets in keeping with the settlement's hierarchy of routes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) not result in water run-off that would add-to or create surface water flooding; j) where appropriate, make adequate provision for the covered storage of all wheelie bins and for cycle storage in accordance with adopted cycle parking standards. k) include suitable ducting capable of accepting fibre to enable superfast broadband; and l) provide one electric vehicle charging point per new off-street parking place created. 		
<p>Policy ASSN20 – Sustainable Construction Practices</p> <p>Proposals that incorporate current best practice in energy conservation will be supported where such measures are designed to be integral to the building design and minimise any detrimental impact on the building or its surroundings. Development proposals should demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. how they maximise the benefits of solar gain in site layouts and orientation of buildings; b. incorporate best practice in energy conservation and be designed to achieve maximum achievable energy efficiency; c. avoid fossil fuel-based heating systems; and d. incorporate sustainable design and construction measures and energy efficiency measures including, where feasible, ground/air source heat pumps, solar panels and grey/rainwater harvesting and recycling; 	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy ASSN21 – Discharge of Sewage</p> <p>Given the relatively low flow rate of Assington's stream, any new development will not be permitted to discharge sewage outputs to the stream, even if treated. New</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p>developments will be encouraged to improve the stream quality by providing remediation through reed beds or weeper drains into the fields, or by supporting schemes to reintroduce and establish swan mussels.</p>		
<p>Policy ASSN22 – Community Facilities</p> <p>Proposals that would result in the loss of valued facilities or services which support a local community (or premises last used for such purposes), including those identified on the Policies Map, will only be permitted where:</p> <p>a. it can be demonstrated that the current use is not economically viable nor likely to become viable. Where appropriate, supporting financial evidence should be provided including any efforts to advertise the premises for sale for a minimum of 12 months; and</p> <p>b. it can be demonstrated, through evidenced research, that there is no local demand for the use and that the building/site is not needed for any alternative social, community or leisure use; or</p> <p>c. alternative facilities and services are available, or replacement provision is made, of at least equivalent standard, in a location that is accessible to the community it serves with good access by public transport or by cycling or walking.</p> <p>The provision of the following community facilities will be supported where they can be implemented such as not to adversely impact upon the rural character of the parish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved high speed broadband provision • Improved mobile phone reception • Increased post office facilities, mobile library provision • Improvements to the playing field • Healthcare provision 	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy ASSN23 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities</p> <p>Proposals for the provision, enhancement and/or expansion of amenity, sport or recreation open space or facilities will be permitted subject to compliance with other</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p>Policies in the Development Plan. Development which will result in the loss of existing amenity, sport or recreation open space or facilities will not be allowed unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. it can be demonstrated that the space or facility is surplus to requirement against the local planning authority’s standards for the particular location, and the proposed loss will not result in a likely shortfall during the plan period; or b. replacement for the space or facilities lost is made available, of at least equivalent quantity and quality, and in a suitable location to meet the needs of users of the existing space or facility. <p>Any replacement provision should take account of the needs of the settlement where the development is taking place and the current standards of open space and sports facility provision adopted by the local planning authority.</p> <p>Where necessary to the acceptability of the development, the local planning authority will require developers of new housing, office, retail and other commercial and mixed development to provide open space including play areas, formal sport/recreation areas, amenity areas and where appropriate, indoor sports facilities or to provide land and a financial contribution towards the cost and maintenance of existing or new facilities, as appropriate. These facilities will be secured through the use of conditions and/or planning obligations.</p> <p>Clubhouses, pavilions, car parking and ancillary facilities must be of a high standard of design and internal layout. The location of such facilities must be well related and sensitive to the topography, character and uses of the surrounding area, particularly when located in or close to residential areas. Proposals which give rise to intrusive floodlighting will not be permitted.</p>		
<p>Policy ASSN24 – Local Businesses</p> <p>The retention and intensification of employment premises will be supported provided that proposals do not have a detrimental impact on the local landscape character, the</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p>amenity of residents and would not generate unacceptable levels of vehicular traffic on local roads.</p> <p>Proposals for non-employment uses that are expected to have an adverse effect on employment generation will only be permitted where one or more of the following criteria are met:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. evidence can be provided that genuine attempts he made to sell/let the site in its current use, and that no suitable and viable alternative employment uses can be found or are likely to be found in the foreseeable future; b. the existing use has created over-riding environmental problems (e.g. noise, odours or traffic) and permitting an alternative use would be a substantial environmental outweigh the loss of an employment site; c. an alternative use or mix of uses would assist in regeneration and offer greater benefits to the community in meeting local business and employment needs; d. it is for an employment related support facility such as employment training / education, workplace crèche or workplace related café; e. an alternative use or mix of uses would provide other sustainability benefits that would outweigh the loss of an employment site. 		
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3.5.1 Recommendations

There are no recommendations for the policies in this Regulation 14 draft Neighbourhood Development Plan as they have all been assigned to Category A (no negative effect) with no need to amend policy text.

As there is no Likely Significant Effect from the Plan alone, it is necessary to assess the likely effects from the Plan, in combination with other plans and projects; these are considered in Section 3.6.



3.6 Other Plans & Projects: In-Combination Effects

There are four relevant Plan level HRAs that has been carried out by Babergh DC or other organisations and these have been found, not to have an adverse effect on the integrity of Habitats sites being assessed in-combination with other plans and projects. There are no Projects considered to be relevant to this section.

In the context of this HRA, as the Regulation 14 draft Assington Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan does allocate sites for development, but it does not require any mitigation measures and therefore there are no likely significant effects in combination with other plans and projects.

Table 5: Other plans or projects considered for in combination effects

Statutory Body	Title of HRA or Project	Findings of HRA or Project	Potential for in combination effects
Mid Suffolk District Council	Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment (Appropriate Assessment) October 2007)	The HRA found no likely significant effects from the Plan on the Breckland SAC/SPA and Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC.	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.
St Edmundsbury Borough Council	Core Strategy HRA screening (2010)	The HRA found no potential for in combination effects as no other current plans or projects that are likely to lead to significant effects on the Breckland SAC/SPA or the Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC have been identified, or where impacts have been identified they have been adequately mitigated.	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted
Babergh District Council	Habitat Regulations Assessment of Core Strategy 2011	The Core Strategy aims to minimise impacts on the Orwell and Stour estuaries, a European-designated site which supports species that	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.



<p>Suffolk Coastal District Council</p>	<p>Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan at Final Draft Plan Stage (Dec 2018)</p>	<p>It is recommended that the Suffolk authorities should be mindful of the potential issue for impacts from air quality and plan for more detailed analysis of risks across the county, to inform the next plan reviews. This should include air quality modelling that incorporates a specific consideration of potential deposition rates within 200m of European sites.</p>	<p>Potential risk of traffic emissions to Habitats sites with features sensitive to air pollution.</p> <p>Recommendation that the Council commits to working with neighbouring authorities to gather more data to inform future Local Plan reviews.</p>
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4. Conclusions

Subject to Natural England's review, this HRA Screening Report concludes that the Assington Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan is not predicted to have any Likely Significant Effect on any Habitats site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

The content of the Assington Neighbourhood Plan has therefore been **screened out** for any further assessment and Babergh DC can demonstrate its compliance with the UK Habitats Regulations 2017.



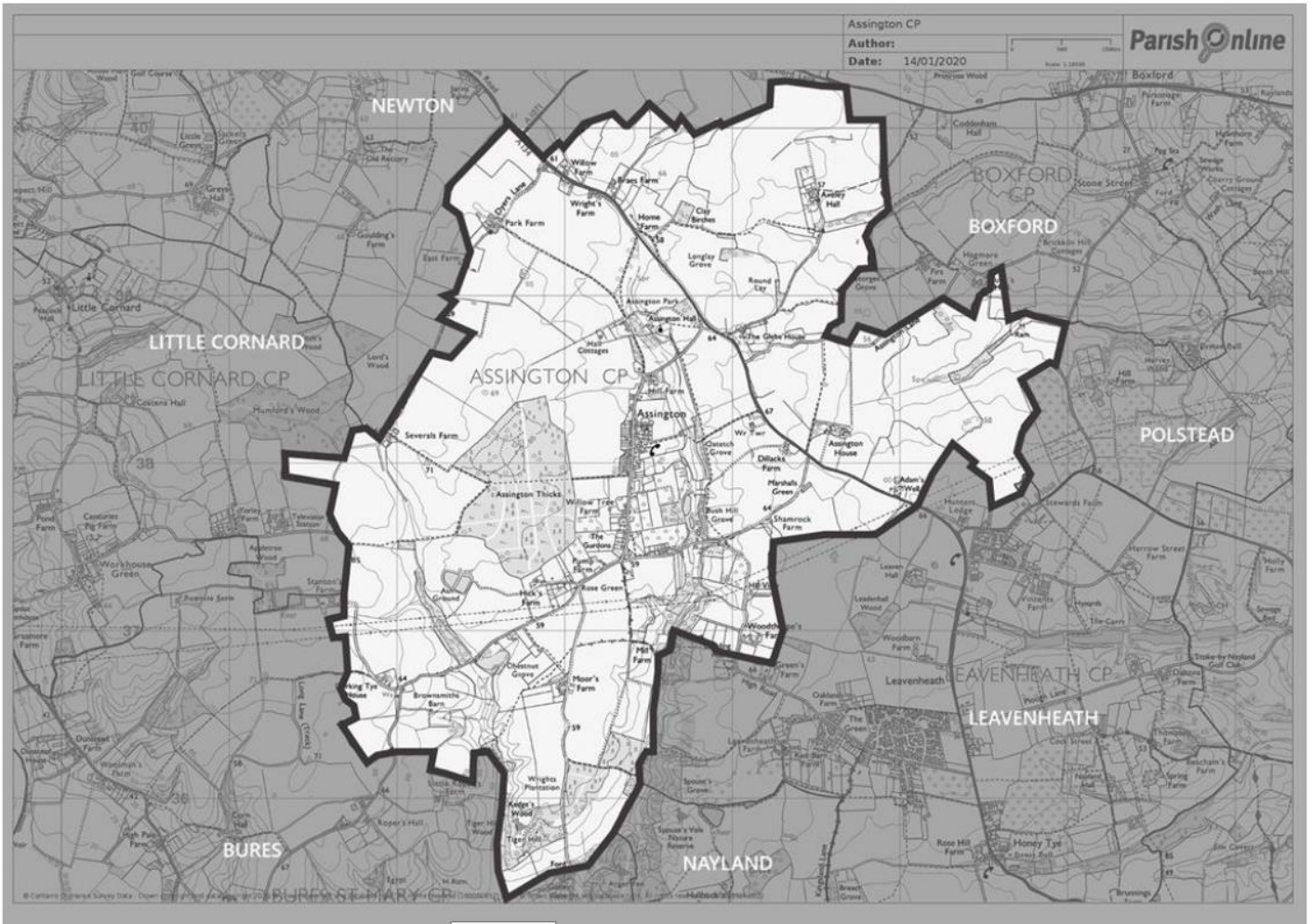
5. References

- Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Joint Local Plan (2018)
- Natural England Conservation objectives for European Sites: East of England Website: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/6581547796791296#content>
- Natural England Site Improvement Plans: East of England <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/4873023563759616>
- Place Services (June 2019) Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Joint Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment including Appropriate Assessment
- Assington Parish Council (2019) Assington Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan Regulation 14 Draft)



Appendix I

Assington Neighbourhood Plan Area

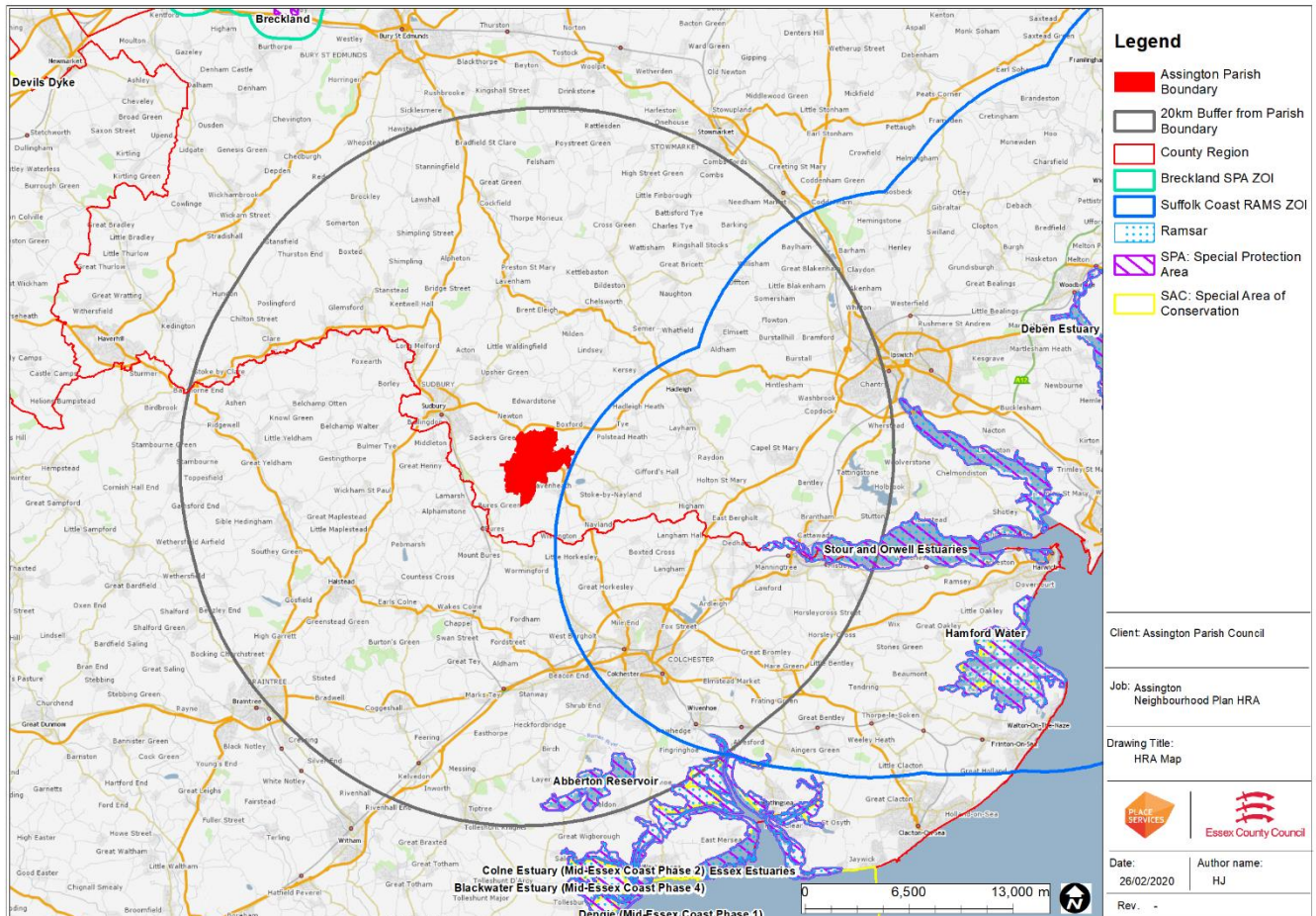


Source: Assington Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Draft (Babergh DC, 2018)



Appendix II

Assington parish and Habitats Sites within 20km



Source: Place Services, 2020



Appendix III

Characteristics of Habitats Sites

This appendix contains information about the Habitats Sites included in the scoping for this HRA. Information about each site's area, the site descriptions, qualifying features and pressures and threats are drawn from Natural England's Site Improvement Plans (SIPs) and the Standard Data Forms or Ramsar Information Sheets available from the JNCC website. Site conservation objectives are drawn from Natural England's website and are only available for SACs and SPAs. Supplementary Advice has also been added to describe the range of ecological attributes that are most likely to contribute to a site's overall integrity and key vulnerabilities to consider within Habitats Regulations assessments.



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
The Stour and Orwell estuaries				
<p>These estuaries straddle the eastern part of the Essex/Suffolk border in eastern England. The estuaries include extensive mud-flats, low cliffs, saltmarsh and small areas of vegetated shingle on the lower reaches. The mud-flats hold <i>Enteromorpha</i>, <i>Zostera</i> and <i>Salicornia</i> spp. The site also includes an area of low-lying grazing marsh at Shotley Marshes on the south side of the Orwell. In summer, the site supports important numbers of breeding Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>, while in winter they hold major concentrations of waterbirds, especially geese, ducks and waders. The geese also feed, and waders roost, in surrounding areas of agricultural land outside the SPA. The site has close ecological links with the Hamford Water and Mid-Essex Coast SPAs, lying to the south on the same coast.</p>				
Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA EU Code: UK9009121	3676.92	<p>Qualifying Species:</p> <p>Annex I species:</p> <p>Over winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i> <p>Over winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> 	<p>With regard to the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified ("the Qualifying Features" listed below);</p> <p>Avoid the deterioration of the Habitats of the qualifying features, and the significant disturbance of the qualifying features, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of the Birds Directive.</p>	<p>Coastal squeeze :</p> <p>Coastal defences are present along most of the Orwell coastline to mitigate for impacts from climate change, such as rising sea level. Unless changes are made to the management of the coastline, Habitats supporting qualifying SPA birds will be lost or degraded through coastal squeeze, sedimentation and reduced exposure.</p> <p>Public access/disturbance :</p> <p>Stour and Orwell Estuaries is subject to land- and water-based activities, including boating and water sports; walking; bait-digging; fishing; wildfowling; and military overflight training. These activities are likely to impact Habitats supporting breeding and overwintering water birds. A better understanding of which species and Habitats are most susceptible; which types of activity are</p>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> • Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> • Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> • Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> • Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> • Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i> <p>Waterbird assemblages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> • Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> • Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> 	<p>Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:</p> <p>The extent and distribution of the Habitats of the qualifying features;</p> <p>The structure and function of the Habitats of the qualifying features;</p> <p>The supporting processes on which the Habitats of the qualifying features rely;</p> <p>The populations of the qualifying features;</p> <p>The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</p>	<p>most disturbing; and which locations and times of year are most sensitive is required to ensure the Estuaries are appropriately managed.</p> <p>Changes in species distribution:</p> <p>Declines in the number of bird species present at Orwell coastline have occurred. This is likely to be the result of changes in population and distribution on an international scale, due to climate change.</p> <p>Invasive species:</p> <p>An increase in <i>Spartina anglica</i> may be affecting the growth of <i>Spartina maritime</i>, a key habitat feature for qualifying bird roosting and feeding areas of saltmarsh and mudflat.</p> <p>Planning permission- general:</p> <p>The issue of development in combination with other factors is not fully understood. To ensure management is appropriate to the SPA a better understanding of the sensitivities relating to each habitat, species and location to different types of development is required. Difficult issues highlighted by the SIP include; a) Assessing the cumulative effects of numerous, small and often 'non- standard' developments. b) Development outside the SPA boundary can have negative impacts, particularly on the estuaries' birds. c) Assessing the indirect, 'knock-on' effects of proposals. d) Pressure to relax planning conditions on existing developments.</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> • Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> • Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> • Redshank <i>Tringa tetanus</i> • Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> • Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> • Curlew <i>Numerius arquata</i> • Dark-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i> • Wigeon <i>Anas Penelope</i> 		<p>Air pollution- impact from atmospheric nitrogen deposition:</p> <p>Atmospheric nitrogen deposition exceeds the relevant critical loads for coastal dune Habitats used by breeding terns and hence there is a risk of harmful effects.</p> <p>Inappropriate coastal management:</p> <p>Due to the presence of existing hard sea defences, such as sea walls there is little scope for adaptation to rising sea levels. Any freshwater Habitats behind failing seawalls are likely to be inundated by seawater, which would result in the loss of this habitat within the SPA.</p> <p>Fisheries- Commercial and estuarine:</p> <p>Commercial fishing activities can be very damaging to inshore marine Habitats and the bird species dependent on the communities they support. Any 'amber or green' categorised commercial fishing activities in Habitats Marine Sites are assessed by Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA). This assessment takes into account any in-combination effects of amber activities and/or appropriate plans or projects.</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goldeneye <i>Bucephala clangula</i> • Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> • Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> • Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i> • Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres.</i> <p>Further information can be found via Natural England's Supplementary Advice.</p>		
Stour and Orwell Estuaries Ramsar site	3676.92	<p>Ramsar criterion 2</p> <p>Contains seven nationally scarce plants:</p>	None available.	<p>Similar to Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA (See above).</p> <p>A key threat identified by RIS was erosion.</p> <p>Erosion:</p> <p>Natural coastal processes exacerbated by fixed sea defences, port development and maintenance dredging. Erosion is being tackled through</p>



<p>EU Code: UK11067</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stiff saltmarsh-grass <i>Puccinellia rupestris</i> • Small cord-grass <i>Spartina maritima</i> • Perennial glasswort <i>Sarcocornia perennis</i> • Lax-flowered sea lavender <i>Limonium humile</i> • Eelgrasses <i>Zostera angustifolia</i>, <i>Z. marina</i> and <i>Z. noltei</i>. <p>Ramsar criterion 5</p> <p>Assemblages of international importance; species with peak counts</p>		<p>sediment replacement for additional erosion that can be attributed to port development and maintenance dredging. A realignment site has been created on-site to make up for the loss of habitat due to capital dredging. General background erosion has not been tackled although a Flood Management Strategy for the site is being produced.</p>
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		<p>in winter; 63,017 waterfowl.</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 6</p> <p>Species/ populations occurring at levels of international importance:</p> <p>Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common redshank , <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i> • Species with peak counts in winter: • Dark-bellied brent goose, <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i> • Northern pintail , <i>Anas acuta</i> • Grey plover , <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> 		
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red knot , <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i> • Dunlin , <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> • Black-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> • Common redshank , <i>Tringa totanus tetanus</i> 		
<p>Colne Estuary</p> <p>Colne Estuary is a comparatively short and branching estuary, with five tidal arms which flow into the main river channel. The estuary has a narrow intertidal zone predominantly composed of flats of fine silt with mudflat communities typical of south-eastern estuaries. The estuary is of international importance for wintering Brent Geese and Black-tailed Godwit and of national importance for breeding Little Terns and five other species of wintering waders and wildfowl. The variety of habitats which include mudflat, saltmarsh, grazing marsh, sand and shingle spits, disused gravel pits and reedbeds, support outstanding assemblages of invertebrates and plants.</p>				
Colne Estuary Ramsar Site	2701.43	<p>Ramsar criterion 1</p> <p>The site is important due to the extent and diversity of saltmarsh present. This</p>	None available	N/A



<p>EU Code: UK11015</p>	<p>site, and the four other sites in the Mid-Essex Coast complex, includes a total of 3,237 ha, that represent 70% of the saltmarsh habitat in Essex and 7% of the total saltmarsh in Britain.</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 2 The site supports 12 species of nationally scarce plants and at least 38 British Red Data Book invertebrate species.</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 3 This site supports full and representative sequences of saltmarsh plant communities covering the range of variation in Britain.</p>		
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		<p>Ramsar criterion 5</p> <p>Assemblages of international importance; species with peak counts in winter; 32041 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 6</p> <p>Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dark-bellied brent goose; <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>, 		
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common redshank; <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>, <p>Species/populations identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration under criterion 6.</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black-tailed godwit ; <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> 		
Colne Estuary SPA	2701.43	<p>Qualifying species:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dark-bellied brent goose; <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i> (Non-breeding) 	<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:</p> <p>Coastal defences along much of the Essex coastline prevent intertidal habitats from shifting landward in response to rising sea levels. As a result, these habitats are being gradually degraded and reduced in extent, with knock-on effects on the waterbirds and other species they support. 'Managed</p>



<p>EU code: UK9009243</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common pochard; <i>Aythya ferina</i> (Breeding) • Hen harrier; <i>Circus cyaneus</i> (Non-breeding) • Ringed plover; <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> (Breeding) • Common redshank; <i>Tringa totanus</i> (Non-breeding) • Little tern; <i>Sterna albifrons</i> (Breeding) <p>Waterbird assemblage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</p>	<p>realignment' schemes and additional intervention measures to create new areas of intertidal habitat and reduce erosion rates are being implemented but more will be needed to offset future losses. Grazing marshes in the area of the Mid Essex Coast SPAs are important for waterbirds and are also threatened by sea level rise because most are near or below mean high tide level, currently protected behind seawalls.</p> <p>Public access /disturbance:</p> <p>Breeding and overwintering waterbirds are susceptible to human disturbance from a range of land- and water-based activities - including boating and watersports, walking, bait-digging, fishing and wildfowling - as well as low-flying aircraft. Some activities, such as powerboating, may produce physical disturbance to habitats.</p> <p>Planning permission- general:</p> <p>Several of the issues affecting the Essex Estuaries and the management of disturbance effects on the sites are related to each other, and addressing them is likely to require an improved overview of the relative sensitivities of different habitats, species and locations to different types of development.</p>
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				<p>Changes in species distributions:</p> <p>Declines have occurred in the numbers of some of the waterbird species using the Essex Estuaries SIP area but these may be due to changes in their distributions or population levels at a national or continental scale, possibly linked to climate change.</p> <p>Invasive species:</p> <p>An increase in Pacific oyster <i>Crassostrea gigas</i> settlement and colonisation within the European Marine Site (EMS) may result in areas of foreshore being covered in such numbers as to make them difficult to access and utilise as feeding grounds for overwintering birds. Invasive common cord grass may adversely affect other species and habitats, including feeding and roosting areas of SPA bird species.</p> <p>Fishing:</p> <p>Recreational bait digging may impact waterbirds e.g. by reducing prey availability, or damaging the intertidal mudflats and sandflats and associated communities. The extent of the activity and potential impacts on site features are not currently well understood. Certain forms of commercial fishing, e.g.</p>
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				<p>bottom towed fishing gear; can be very damaging to inshore marine habitats and the bird species dependent on the communities they support.</p> <p>Air Pollution- risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition:</p> <p>Atmospheric nitrogen deposition exceeds the relevant critical loads for coastal dune habitats used by breeding terns and hence there is a risk of harmful effects. However, on the Essex estuaries declines in the numbers of breeding terns appear to be due mainly to erosion of a man-made cockle-shingle bank (at Foulness) and to disturbance (elsewhere), rather than to over-vegetation of breeding areas caused by nitrogen deposition.</p>
<p>Abberton Reservoir</p> <p>Abberton Reservoir is a large storage reservoir built in a long shallow valley. It is the largest freshwater body in Essex and is one of the most important reservoirs in Britain for wildfowl. It is less than 8 km from the coast and its primary role is as a roost for the local estuarine wildfowl population.</p>				
Abberton Reservoir SPA	718.31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great crested grebe; <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> (Non-breeding) 	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the	<p>Air quality:</p> <p>The structure and function of the habitats which support this SPA feature may be sensitive to changes in air quality. Exceeding critical values for air pollutants may result in changes to the chemical status of its habitat substrate,</p>



<p>EU Code: UK9009141</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great cormorant; <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> (Breeding) • Mute swan; <i>Cygnus olor</i>; (Non-breeding) • Eurasian wigeon; <i>Anas penelope</i> (Non-breeding) • Gadwall; <i>Anas strepera</i>; (Non-breeding) • Eurasian teal; <i>Anas crecca</i> (Non-breeding) • Northern shoveler; <i>Anas clypeata</i> (Non-breeding) • Common pochard; <i>Aythya ferina</i> (Non-breeding) 	<p>aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>accelerating or damaging plant growth, altering vegetation structure and composition and thereby affecting the quality and availability of nesting, feeding or roosting habitats.</p> <p>Management:</p> <p>The availability of an abundant food supply is critically important for successful breeding, adult fitness and survival and the overall sustainability of the population. As a result, inappropriate management and direct or indirect impacts which may affect the distribution, abundance and availability of prey may adversely affect the population.</p> <p>Water quality/quantity:</p> <p>For many SPA features which are dependent on wetland habitats supported by surface water, maintaining the quality and quantity of water supply will be critical, especially at certain times of year during key stages of their life cycle. Poor water quality and inadequate quantities of water can adversely affect the availability and suitability of breeding, rearing, feeding and roosting habitats. Typically, meeting the surface water and groundwater environmental standards set out by the Water Framework Directive (WFD 2000/60/EC) will also be sufficient to support the SPA Conservation Objectives but in some cases more stringent standards may be needed to support the SPA feature.</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tufted duck; <i>Aythya fuligula</i> (Non-breeding) • Common goldeneye; <i>Bucephala clangula</i> (Non-breeding) • Common coot; <i>Fulica atra</i> (Non-breeding) • Waterbird assemblage 		Further site-specific investigations may be required to establish appropriate standards for the SPA.
Abberton Reservoir Ramsar EU Code: UK11001	718.31	<p>Ramsar criterion 5</p> <p>Assemblages of international importance; species with peak counts in winter; 23787 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)</p>	None available	N/A



	<p>Ramsar criterion 6</p> <p>Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):</p> <p>Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gadwall, <i>Anas strepera strepera</i> • Northern shoveler, <i>Anas clypeata</i> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eurasian wigeon, <i>Anas Penelope</i> <p>Species/populations identified subsequent to designation for possible</p>		
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		<p>future consideration under criterion 6.</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mute swan, <i>Cygnus olor</i>,• Common pochard, <i>Aythya farina</i>		
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