



**Bures Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2037**  
Pre-Submission Version  
Preliminary Screening Assessment

## Contents

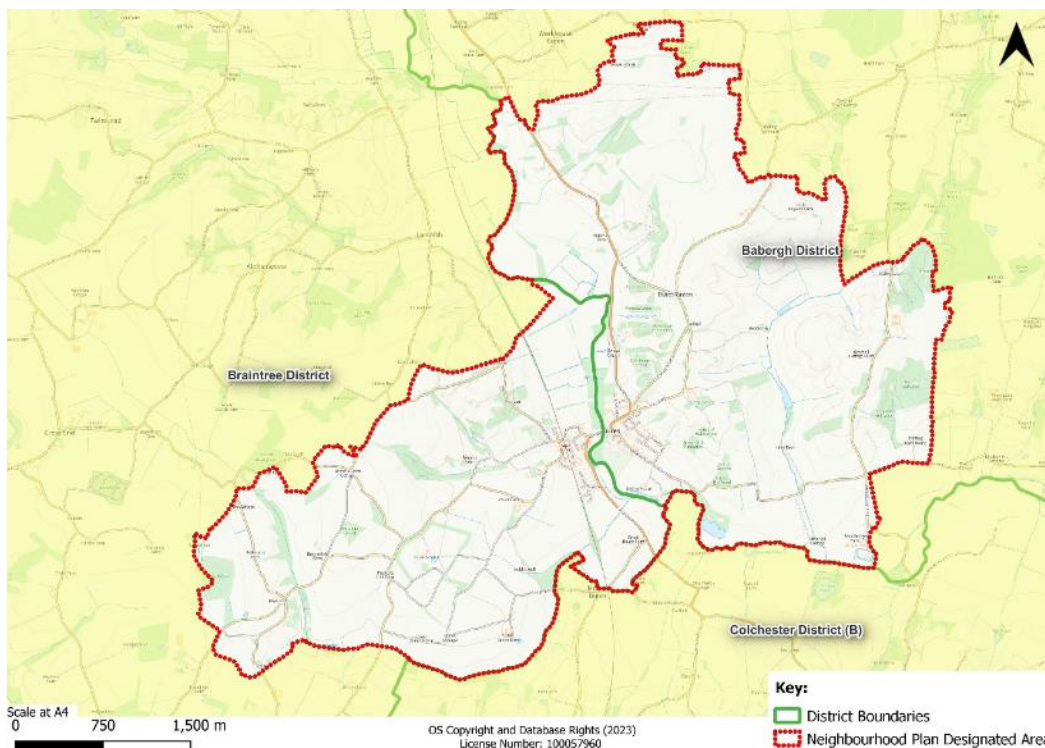
<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>SEA SCREENING .....</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1	SCOPE OF THE BURES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN.....	2
<b>3</b>	<b>BASELINE INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
3.1	CONTEXT .....	3
3.2	BIODIVERSITY, FLORA, AND FAUNA.....	4
3.3	POPULATION .....	6
3.4	HUMAN HEALTH .....	7
3.5	SOIL .....	8
3.6	WATER.....	8
	AIR AND CLIMATIC FACTORS.....	11
	MATERIAL ASSETS .....	11
3.7	CULTURAL HERITAGE.....	15
<b>4</b>	<b>SEA SCREENING .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>SEA SCREENING CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>HRA SCREENING ASSESSMENT .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>HRA SCREENING CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>51</b>
7.1	APPENDIX A- CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES OF THE EUROPEAN SITES .....	52
	<b>Figure 1: Designated Neighbourhood Area .....</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Figure 2- Wildlife Designations (Source: Natural England, 2023).....</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>Figure 3- County Wildlife Sites (Source Suffolk County Council, 2023).....</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>Figure 4- Priority Habitats (Source: Natural England, 2023).....</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>Figure 5-NP Area Age Structure in 2021 (Census 2021) .....</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>Figure 6- 2011 Age Structure in the parishes (Census, 2011).....</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>Figure 7-Agricultural Land Classification (Source: Natural England, 2022) .....</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>Figure 8-Extent of flooding from rivers/sea In the NP area .....</b>	<b>9</b>
	<b>Figure 9- Extent of surface water flooding In the NP area .....</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Figure 10- Extent of surface water flooding in the built-up part of the NP area .....</b>	<b>11</b>
	<b>Figure 11- Public Footpaths within the built-up settlement (Source: Essex County Council, 2023; Suffolk County Council, 2023).....</b>	<b>13</b>
	<b>Figure 12- Public Footpath Sign along Cuckoo Hill (Left) and Smallbridge Entry a narrow rural road (Right) Source: Google Maps, 2023 .....</b>	<b>14</b>
	<b>Figure 13- Public Rights of Way (Source: Essex County Council, 2023; Suffolk County Council, 2023) .....</b>	<b>14</b>
	<b>Figure 14- Heritage Assets .....</b>	<b>15</b>
	<b>Figure 15- Bures Conservation Areas (Source Historic England, 2023) .....</b>	<b>17</b>
	<b>Figure 16-Adapted Map Marking 'X' within the Bures NP area different landscape character areas (Source: Suffolk County Council, 2023).....</b>	<b>19</b>

<b>Figure 17-Map of the Bures NP Designated Area and location of the Dedham Vale National Lanscape.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Figure 18- Valued Landscapes Stour Valley Project Area (Source: Alison Farmer Associates, 2020).....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Figure 19-Schedule 1 Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Figure 20-Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Figure 21-Application of SEA Directive to BNP .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Figure 22-Likely Significant Effects .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Figure 23- Table of the International Designated Wildlife Sites within 20km radius of BNP .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Figure 24- Map of the International Designated Wildlife Sites within 20km radius of BNP.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Figure 25-Summary of Impact Pathways.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Figure 26- HRA Screening Assessment.....</b>	<b>50</b>

## 1 INTRODUCTION

---

1. Bures Hamlet Parish Council and Bures St Mary Parish Council are preparing a joint Neighbourhood Plan for the two neighbouring villages known as BNP throughout this document. The planning period will be 2021-2037 and the designated area (**See Figure 1**) is located within Braintree District Council and Babergh District Council. [Collective Community Planning](#) has been appointed by the parish councils to consider whether there is a need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be undertaken on BNP. This is required under European Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive), transposed into UK law through the SEA Regulations<sup>1</sup>.
2. SEA may be required for a Neighbourhood Plan if it is likely to have significant environmental effects. A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is like an SEA but includes assessment of the likely significant effects of a plan or programme on economic and social factors, as well as environmental factors. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) clarifies that there is no legal requirement for a Neighbourhood Plan to be subject to a SA, but that SA can be used to demonstrate how the plan will contribute to sustainable development.



**Figure 1: Designated Neighbourhood Area**

---

<sup>1</sup> The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/1633), as amended by the Environmental Assessment and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/1232). It should be noted that the purpose of the amendments to the SEA Regulations is to ensure that the law functions correctly after the UK has left the European Union. No substantive changes are made to the way the SEA regime operates.

## 2 SEA SCREENING

---

### 2.1 SCOPE OF THE BURES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

3. A draft (Regulation 14) version of BNP is currently being prepared. It is intended that this is subject to public consultation in early 2024. BNP includes a vision for the long-term future of Bures, along with aims to support delivery of this vision. The current draft vision is:

- a) *The distinctly special qualities of our **beautiful village**, nestled as it is in the **historic and natural setting** of the **River Stour**, will be valued, protected and enhanced.*
- b) *The qualities highly valued by Bures residents including its **strong identity, community spirit and kindness and diversity** will be sustained.*
- c) *We will embrace **green technical innovation** to address and protect against the impact of climate change whilst **valuing the heritage of the village and protecting its historic buildings and natural boundaries**.*
- d) *Bures will continue to be a **working village** with **real vitality**.*

Our village will remain **well connected** with the world beyond and will provide **safe** streets and improved walking and cycling routes.

4. The draft plan currently includes 18 specific objectives to deliver this vision:

- A. *To protect the ancient rolling farmland and landscape of Bures, unique only to this area of Suffolk and to preserve ancient lanes and paths.*
- B. *Protect and preserve key views of the village.*
- C. *To preserve the ancient woodland that surrounds the village and protect valued trees in the landscape.*
- D. *To protect valued green spaces in Bures.*
- E. *To ensure the quality of water in the River Stour meets or exceeds bathing standards which in turn assures protection for flora and fauna.*
- F. *To ensure that Bures has community buildings to meet the changing needs of residents.*
- G. *To protect and improve community facilities.*
- H. *To ensure that open areas for sport, recreation and relaxation are well maintained and developed according to need.*
- I. *Residents in Bures should have access to the River Stour for a range of recreational activities.*
- J. *To maintain the wealth of community spirit*
- K. *To ensure that any new residential development will satisfy Bures housing needs, in particular younger people and those needing support in their later years, whilst preserving the character of Bures as a rural village.*

- L. To ensure all development adheres to Bures design codes and to ensure the heritage sites are not overpowered or degraded.*
- M. To protect and enhance the important scheduled and ancient monuments and listed buildings in Bures.*
- N. To protect Locally Listed Heritage Assets.*
- O. For Bures train and bus services to be maintained for the benefit of the residents and the environment.*
- P. To provide a safe and accessible village environment for pedestrians cyclists and vehicles to move freely through and around the village.*
- Q. To encourage the use of sustainable forms of transport, to reduce dependency on the private car, while recognising that, as a rural area, remoter residents are reliant on the private car to access essential services and facilities.*
- R. To provide additions and enhancements to the rights of way in Bures.*

5. BNP will have a range of non-strategic planning policies to realise and deliver the above vision and aims. This includes policies:

- To ensure the housing mix and type, including affordable housing, on new development sites meets local need;
- Support the delivery of community led development;
- To achieve high quality design with the input of Bures design guidance and codes, that reinforces and complements local distinctiveness;
- Support the delivery of new and enhanced community buildings/facilities;
- Focus on strengthening biodiversity and green/blue Infrastructure enhancements in new developments;
- To protect important local views, local green spaces, important valued trees and the River Stour within the plan area for future enjoyment;
- To achieve proposals responding positively to flood mitigation solutions In flood risk areas;
- To promote improvements to active travel routes and connectivity including new and existing walking routes that can be a focus for investment;
- To protect Bures Non-Designated Heritage Assets, historic buildings, and heritage value of the different NPA character areas.

**6. The plan does not allocate land for development.**

### **3 BASELINE INFORMATION**

---

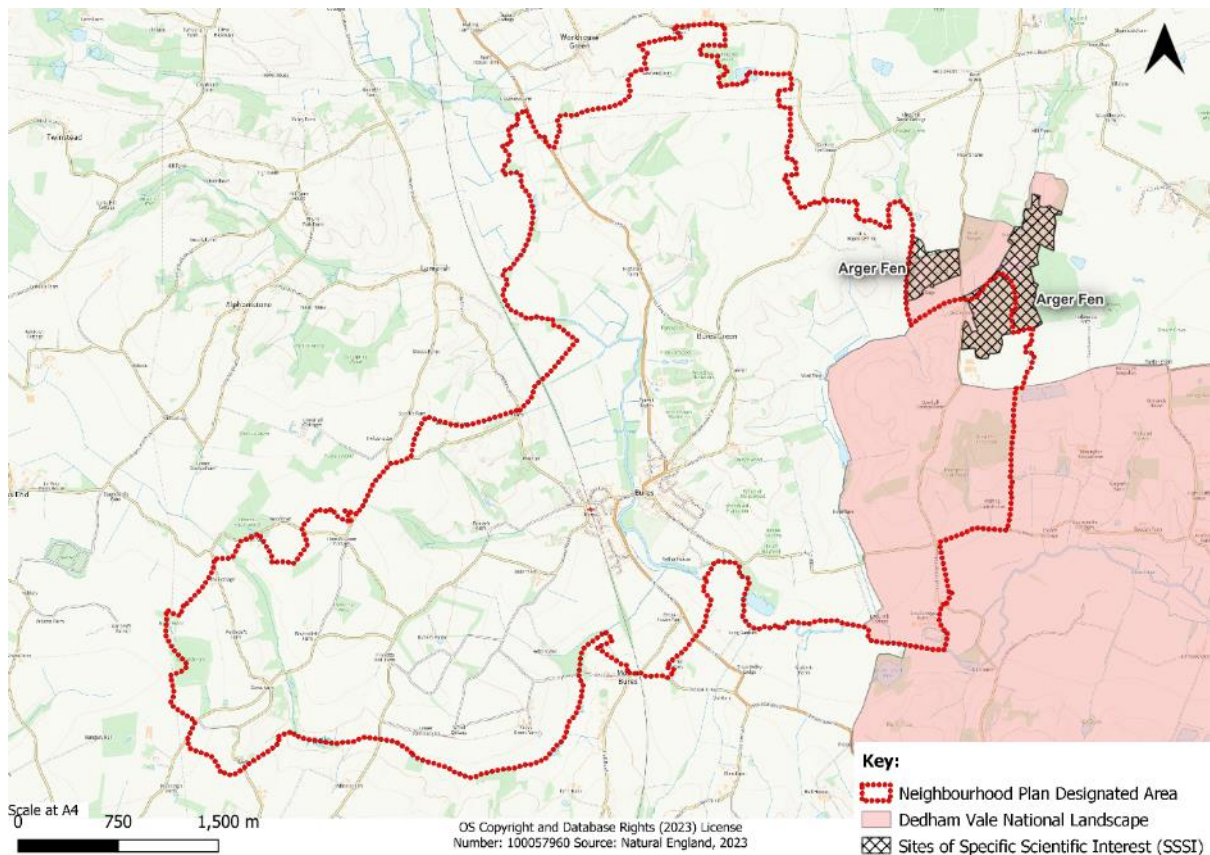
7. This section summarises baseline information for the BNP area, drawing on the Evidence Base which will accompany the Neighbourhood Plan.

#### **3.1 CONTEXT**

8. The Neighbourhood Plan Area (NPA) comprises of two parishes.

### 3.2 BIODIVERSITY, FLORA, AND FAUNA

9. The NPA is rich in wildlife and in recognition there are a few national and local Natural England statutory designated sites in the neighbourhood area or in close proximity as shown in **Figure 2**. These sites as shown on the map overlap and sit to the north and west of the NPA.



**Figure 2- Wildlife Designations (Source: Natural England, 2023)**

10. The designations within the NPA and adjacent include:

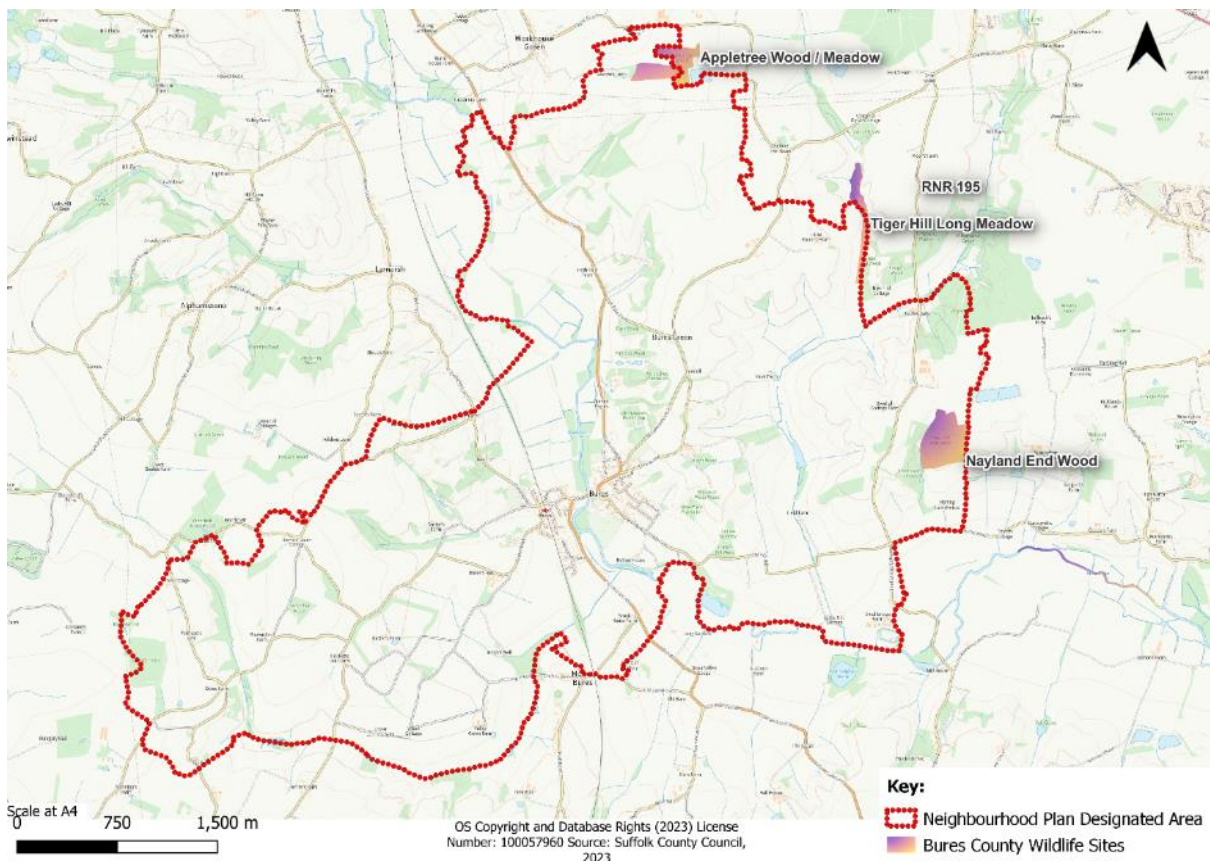
- The Arger Fen & Spouse's Vale (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- Dedham Vale National Landscape

11. The Arger Fen was designated as a Site for Specific Scientific Interest in 1986 due to biological interest. The area size is 49.7ha and falls within the South Suffolk and Norfolk Essex Clayland Character Area. The current potential pressures on site are freshwater impacts due to water level changes and around 40% of the site is considered to be unfavourable/recovering<sup>2</sup>. The Arger Fen & Spouse's Vale consists of a mosaic area of ancient coppice woodland alongside fen meadow and regenerating woodland. It is a woodland reserve which is open to visitors (including dogs) and has an interesting mix of trees including oak, ash, field maple, holly, crab

<sup>2</sup> [SSSI detail \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk)

apple, superb large alder, and hazel stools. This reserve is also one of only a few ancient woodlands in Suffolk with wild cherry<sup>3</sup>.

12. There are three County Wildlife Sites (CWS) that fall within the NPA (**Figure 3**) to the north and east. These include Tiger Hill Long Meadow (CWS186) which is a wet acid fen meadow, Appletree Wood/Meadow (CWS84) and Nayland End Wood (CWS40) which are both ancient woodlands. There are also two CWS In close proximity to the east of the NPA Including RNR 195 which is a lesser calamint and River Stour (Sections) which is a wetland area with flora and Insects. These wildlife sites are not designated on a statutory basis, though they do receive a degree of protection through the planning process and are often recognised in district local plans. In this context, site protection relies on the commitment of local authorities and public bodies.



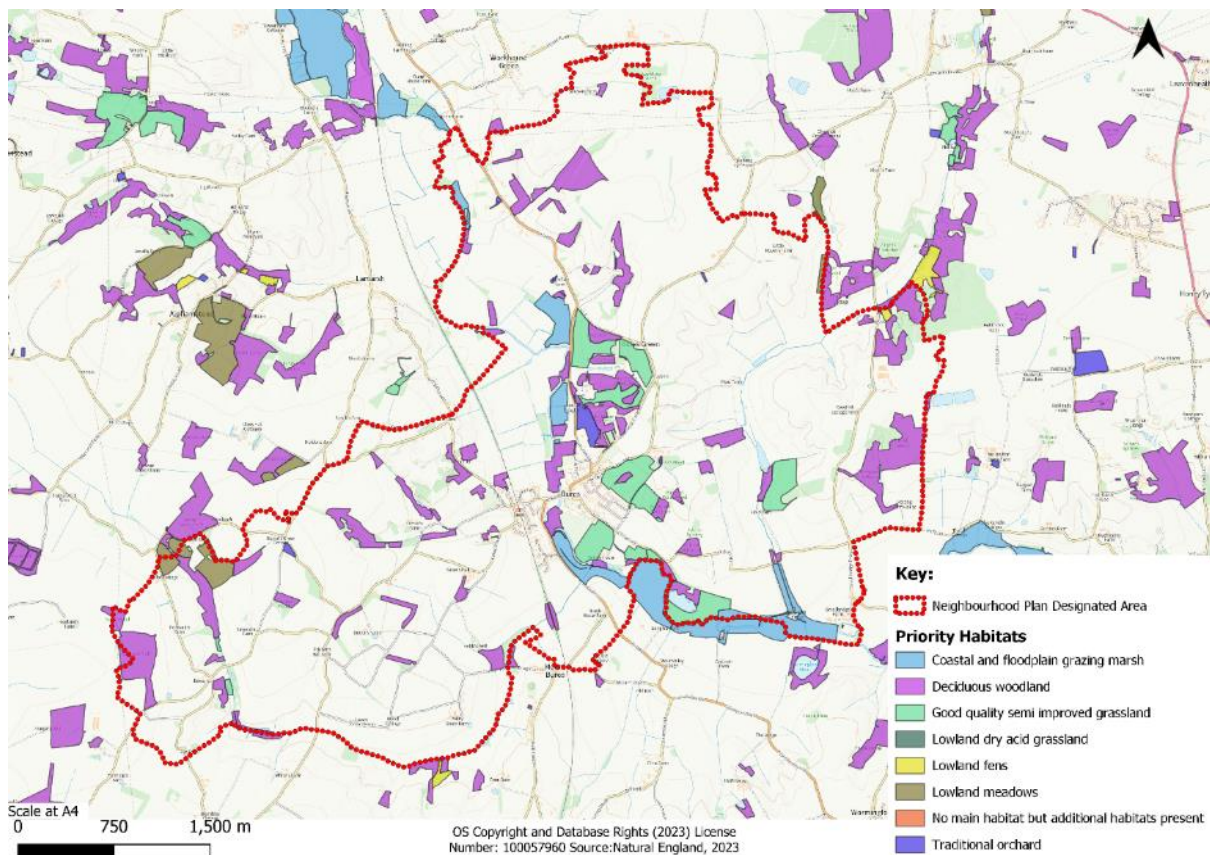
**Figure 3- County Wildlife Sites (Source Suffolk County Council, 2023)**

13. A significant area of the parish contains priority habitat – those which have been identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). The Priority Habitat Inventory (England) is a spatial dataset that describes the geographic extent and location of habitats of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006).

<sup>3</sup> [Arger Fen & Spouse's Vale | Suffolk Wildlife Trust](#)



14. There are 6 main types of priority habitat within the BNP (see **Figure 4**), coastal and floodplain grazing marsh; deciduous woodland; good quality semi-improved grassland; lowland meadows; no main habitat but additional habitats present and traditional orchard. The most apparent main habitats to cover the NPA is deciduous woodland. Coastal and flood plain grazing marsh and good quality semi-improved grassland is also predominantly present around the built-up area. Not all of these will be protected under national designation, though they can be sensitive to development and should be considered when growth is being planned to avoid negative impacts.



**Figure 4- Priority Habitats (Source: Natural England, 2023)**

### 3.3 POPULATION

15. According to 2021 Census the total population in the NP area was approximately 1,800 with a +12% change from 1,667 in 2011. In 2011, there was 749 usual residents within Bures Hamlet and 918 within Bures St Mary parish.<sup>4</sup> In 2011 population there was nearly a 50:50 even mix of males and females within both parishes. This has remained similar for the NP area in 2021 which shows females make up 51.1% of the area and males 48.9%<sup>5</sup>

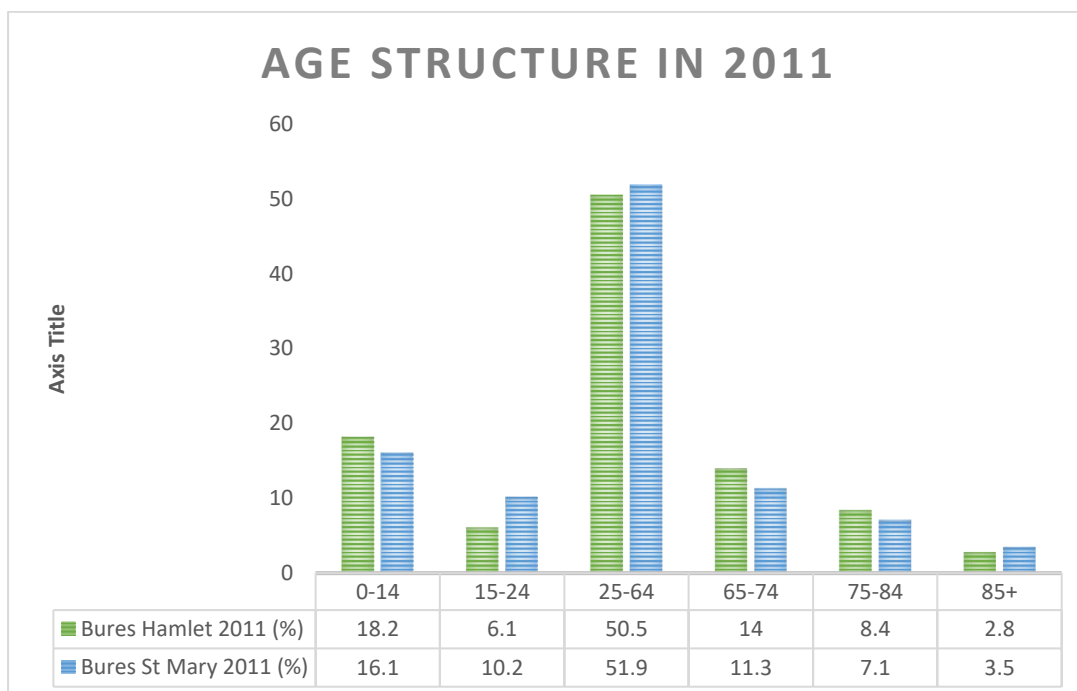
<sup>4</sup> Nomis. 2011. Population Bures Hamlet. Source: [Local Area Report for areas in England and Wales - Nomis \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk) and Bures St Mary. Source: [Local Area Report for areas in England and Wales - Nomis \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk)

<sup>5</sup> Census 2021. Bures. Source: [Build a custom area profile - Census 2021, ONS](https://www.ons.gov.uk)

16. In 2011, for Bures Hamlet the median age group was 48 years old and mean age 45.4 years and for Bures St Mary the median age was 47 years and mean age 44 years. In 2021, the age profile of the parish was predominately of a working age followed by 27.2% being retirement age and above and 25.1% being the younger generation (**Figure 5**). In 2011 the age structure was similar in both parishes regarding the working age being the highest percentage of usual residents (**Figure 6**). This shows that within the NP area there are a real mix of age groups who are residing in the area so the plan must cater for all needs.

Age (Yrs)	2021 (%)
0-14	16.6
15-24	8.5
25-64	47.6
65-74	15.1
75-84	9.5
85+	2.6

**Figure 5-NP Area Age Structure in 2021 (Census 2021)**



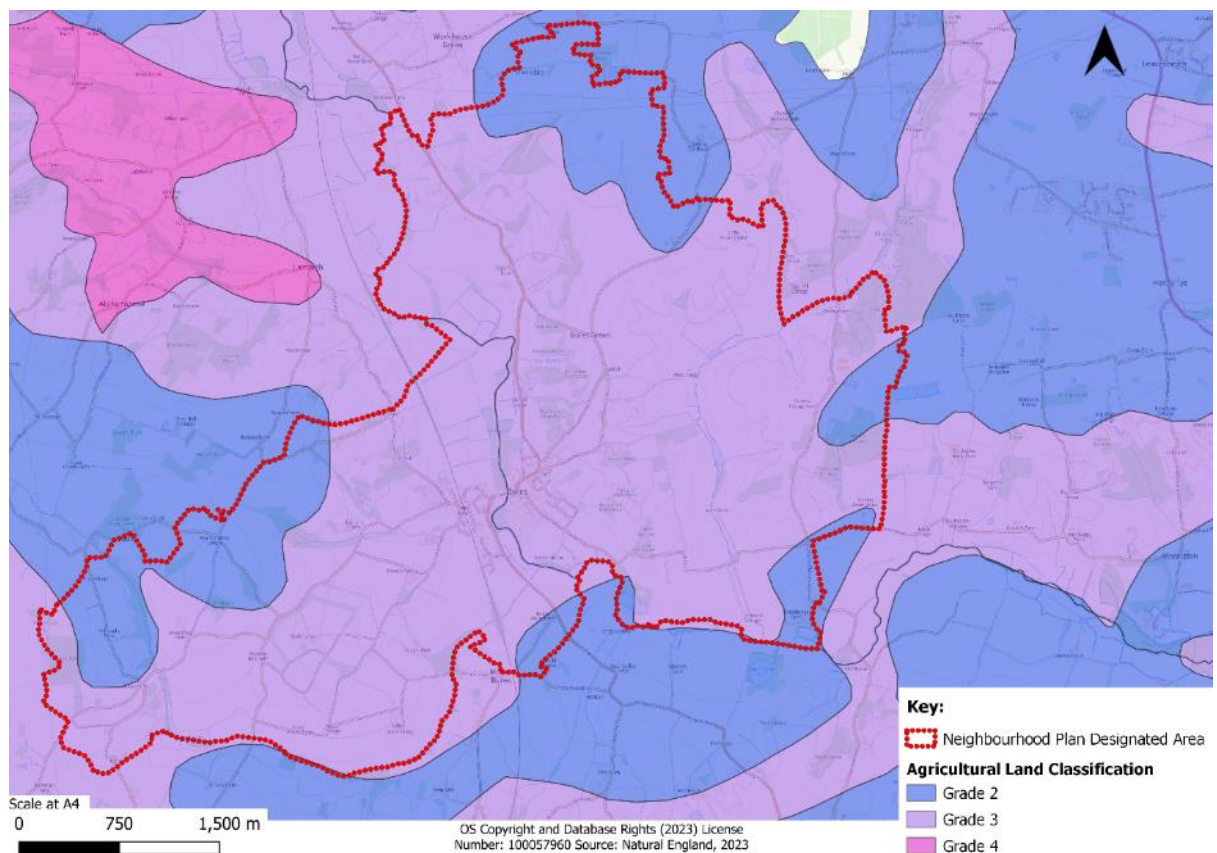
**Figure 6- 2011 Age Structure in the parishes (Census, 2011)**

### 3.4 HUMAN HEALTH

17. Provision of age-related services is likely to become an increasing consideration for the neighbourhood plan area as the proportion of over 65s according to the Census 2021 makes up 27.2% of the NPA<sup>66</sup>.

### 3.5 SOIL

18. The parish contains some of the best and most versatile agricultural land in England, as identified by the Agricultural Land Classification Scale, see **Figure 7**. Grade 2 is present predominately near the parish boundary lines to the north and west and some areas of the south and east. The majority of land, including the built-up settlement, of the NPA is made up of Grade 3 land.



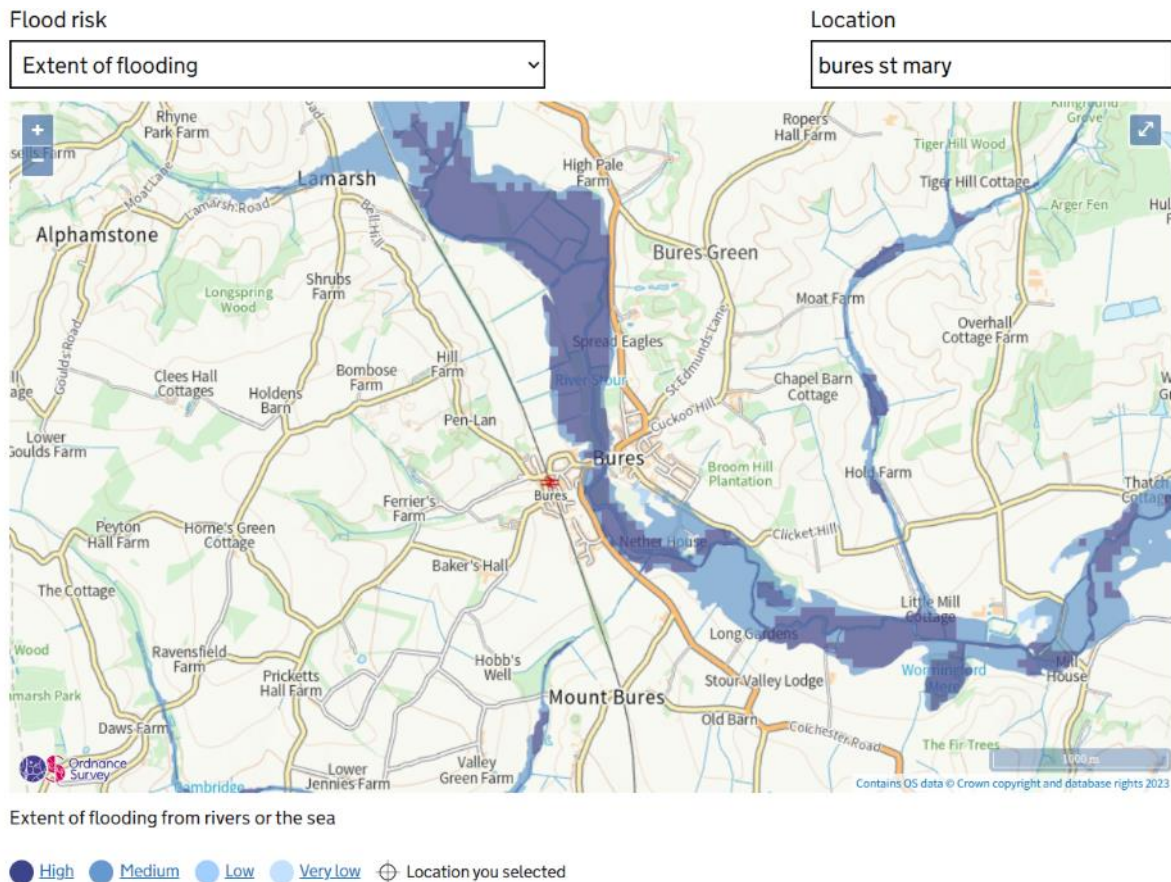
**Figure 7-Agricultural Land Classification (Source: Natural England, 2022)**

### 3.6 WATER

19. The River Stour flows through the centre of Bures and this part of the NP area is vulnerable to flooding from the river/seas (**Figure 8**) as well as from surface water flooding (**Figures 9 and 10**) such as along Nayland Road, High Street, Station Hill and Water Lane. The majority of the settlement is situated within Flood Zone 1 with parts of the parish around the River Stour, including part of the built up settlement, being within Flood Zones 2 and 3. Areas which fall into Flood Zone 3 means there's a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river

<sup>66</sup> Census 2021. Age Profile. Source: [Build a custom area profile - Census 2021, ONS](#)

flooding and areas that fall into Flood Zone 2 means there is a probability of 1 in 1000.



**Figure 8-Extent of flooding from rivers/sea In the NP area**

20. In the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 Report (SFRA, 2020<sup>7</sup>) historical flooding due to rainfall and fluvial causes has been recorded in Bures in September 1968, January 1982 and August 1987 along the River Stour Catchment which led to several properties being flooded. As stated in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk SFRA (2020), the primary fluvial and tidal flood risk within the district is along the River Stour and with climate change the extent of tidal flooding will also increase along River Stour with the tidally influenced areas moving further upstream.

21. In the Braintree Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 Report (2016<sup>8</sup>), historical flooding has been reported in 2001, 2006 and 2014 due to ditches overflowing from field runoff and risk of flooding from the River Stour specific areas referenced were along Water Lane, the main road and the pub. In the Braintree Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 2 Report (2017)<sup>9</sup> Bures was assessed due to a potential allocation in the Local Plan which was Land at

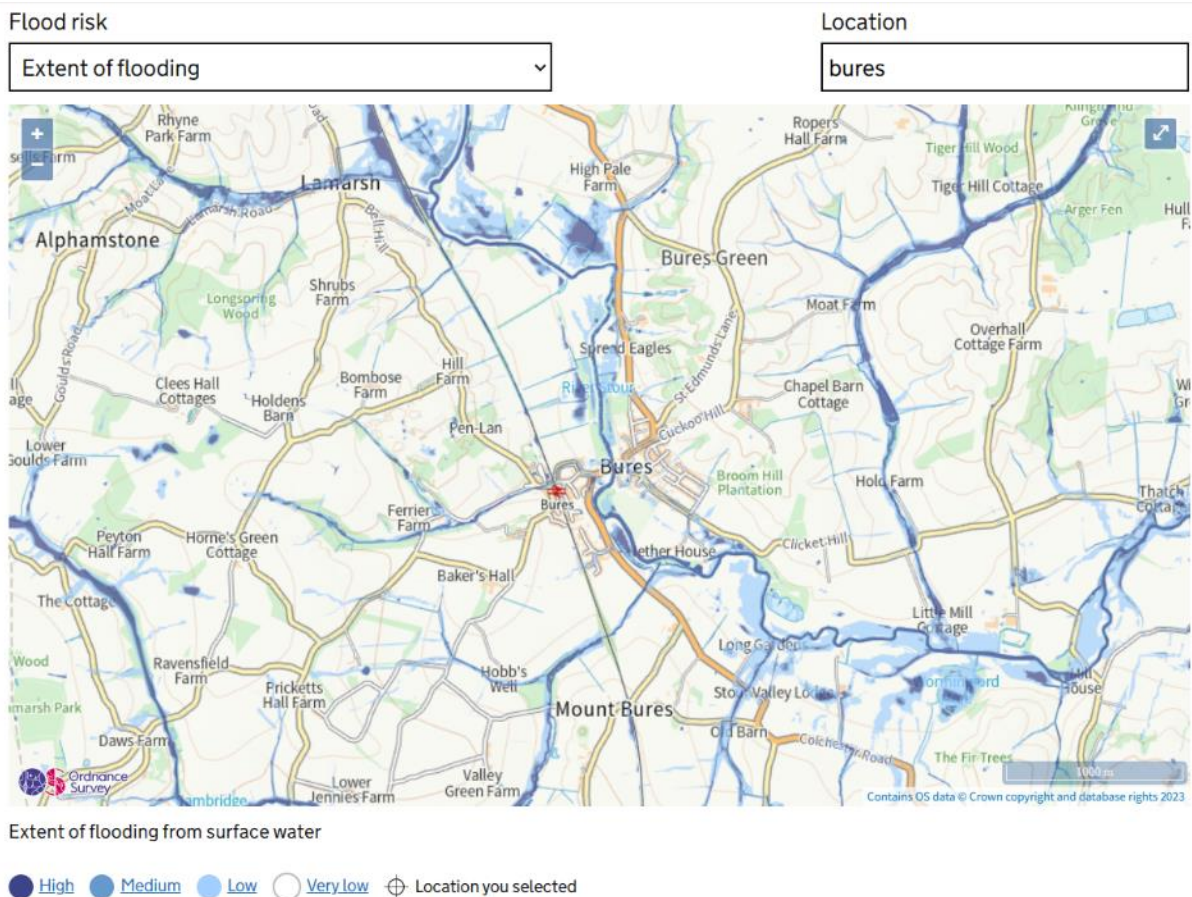
<sup>7</sup>Babergh and Mid Suffolk Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 Report (2020). Source: [JBA Consulting Report Template 2015 \(placecube.com\)](#)

<sup>8</sup>Braintree District Council (2016). SFRA Level 1 Source: [BDC049 1 5 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Update Level 1 November 2016 - Documents for the section 1 examination – Braintree District Council](#)

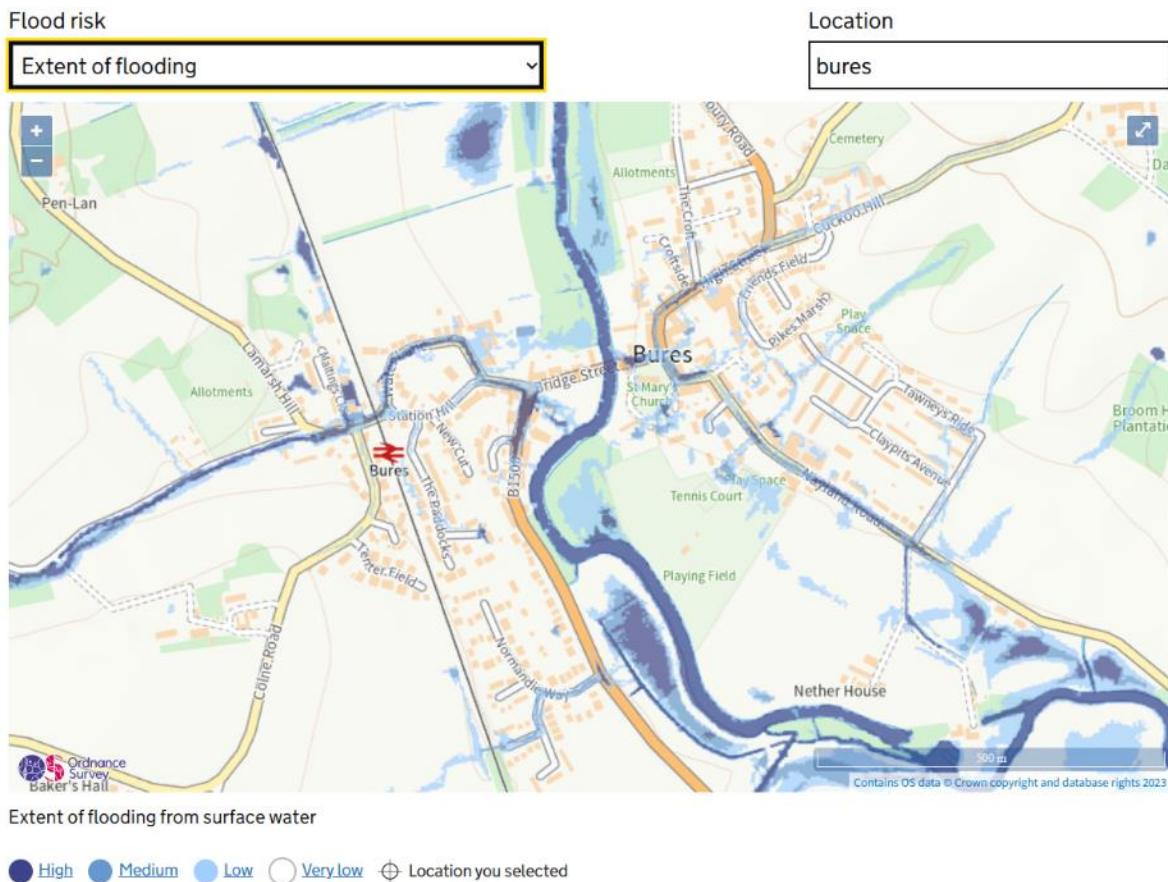
<sup>9</sup>Braintree District Council (2017). SFRA Level 2 Source: [Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment \(braintree.gov.uk\)](#)

Colchester Road. Based on the strategic assessment of flood risk and the recommendations for mitigation measures set out in the report, it was considered that proposed development on the proposed site could be suitably designed to satisfy part 2) of the Exception Test subject to submission of a detailed site-specific FRA. However, this hasn't been taken forward In the Local Plan.

22. The Environment Agency identifies the areas vulnerable to flooding in the future. Environment Agency data sets provide details of several flood incidents dating back to 1953 with the main flood event being tidal flooding from the River Stour and River Orwell in 1953. The river has made roads impassable and entered properties in Bures on many occasions notably in 1963, 1987, 2022 and 2023.



**Figure 9- Extent of surface water flooding In the NP area**



**Figure 10- Extent of surface water flooding in the built-up part of the NP area**

## AIR AND CLIMATIC FACTORS

23. As part of the National Air Quality Strategy all local authorities are obliged to establish air quality levels in their area that meet national air quality objectives. If an area does not meet these objectives Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) area declared. The latest Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Air Quality Annual Status Report (2022) and confirms that there are no Air Quality Management Areas in the districts or nearby to the BNP area<sup>10</sup>. This would suggest that air quality is generally not of a concern, and indeed the report confirms that air quality within Bures area is good.

## MATERIAL ASSETS

24. The previously adopted Babergh Core Strategy (2014) identified Bures St Mary as a 'Core Village' in Policy CS2. These were villages that would act as a focus for development within their functional cluster and, where appropriate, site allocations would be made to meet identified housing needs. The newly

<sup>10</sup> Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District. 2022. Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) . Source: [asr-2022-website \(babergh.gov.uk\)](https://www.babergh.gov.uk/2022-website) and Braintree District Council. 2022. Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR). Source: [Executive summary \(braintree.gov.uk\)](https://www.braintree.gov.uk/2022-website)

adopted Babergh & Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Part 1 (Nov 2023), only identifies a housing requirement figure for the district as a whole. A new settlement hierarchy and site allocations are matters that will be addressed in Part 2 of the Plan, which is at an early stage of development and is unlikely to be adopted until late 2025. In the Braintree Local Plan (Adopted 2022) designates Bures Hamlet as a Second-Tier village within the spatial strategy. Second Tier villages are those which may not serve a wider hinterland but provide the ability for some day to day needs to be met, although they lack the full range of facilities of a Key Service Villages. Development of a small scale may be considered sustainable within a Second-Tier village, subject to the specific constraints and opportunities of that village.

25. There is reasonable access to a range of services and facilities as measured by distance, many within walking distance in the NPA. The availability of local services is more prominent in the built-up areas of both Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary. Services which can meet every day needs include but are not limited to a train station, a primary school, churches, surgery, shops/pubs/restaurants/takeaway, community centre, recreation ground, village hall, and allotments. Although the area provides some local services for everyday needs, for higher order services such as secondary schools or a hospital, people will need to travel to Colchester City Centre. The city centre is approximately 10 miles and would be a 25–30-minute car journey or a 1-hour cycle from Bures built up settlement for example. If children of a secondary school age needed to get to school via public transport, the most reliable way is the train service via Greater Anglia, this service runs hourly between 7am and 12am, and takes 20-30 mins to get from Bures to Colchester<sup>11</sup>.
26. There is also a public transport bus service to/from Colchester City Centre (Number 83<sup>12</sup> or 754<sup>13</sup>) which provides accessibility for people to visit the area or access services in the city. However, the 83 service which stops at Bures Church Is not frequent only picking up at 11.10am and 14.35pm leaving many to not rely on such times for employment/school purposes. This is also similar with the 754 service to Colchester City Centre which stops at Bridge Street this service runs every hour between 11:52am and 13:52pm then ends suggesting no afternoon/evening buses run in this area.
27. Bures village has a historic core with the B1508 road running through the narrow streets with tight bends, bordered by historic buildings with narrow pavements. The B1508 is the main artery connecting Bures with Sudbury and Colchester via West Bergholt. Bures has both rail and bus links to Colchester, Sudbury and beyond which are used for work commuting and leisure. With Bures located some six miles and eight miles from Sudbury and Colchester respectively, transport has a key role to play in promoting sustainable development and improving the quality of life in Bures.

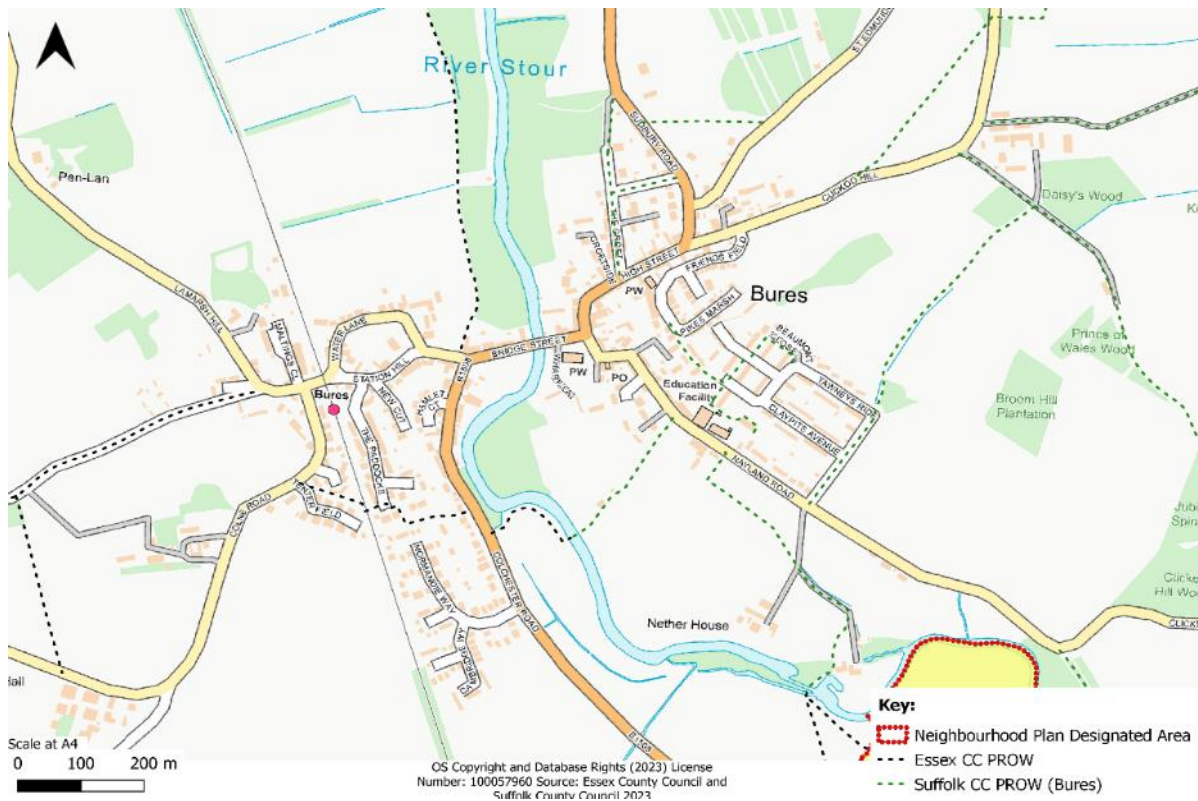
---

<sup>11</sup> [Buy Greater Anglia Train Tickets](#)

<sup>12</sup> [colchester route 83 83B sep23 PROOF 0.pdf \(firstbus.co.uk\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> [Journey planner | First Bus](#)

28. In a rural setting such as Bures, accessibility by car is vital for most residents to be able to access employment, major shopping, education, and other services. A large proportion of working age residents commute for work to either nearby towns or to London. Speeding and lack of parking, the two commonly identified problems in villages were at the forefront of responses for this area. Within the settlements the roads are subject to 30mph speeds limits within the built-up areas, which should make cycling reasonably safe, and there are numerous footways too which are present on either one or both sides of the street for pedestrians such as along the B1508 and Nayland Rd (**Figure 11**).



**Figure 11- Public Footpaths within the built-up settlement (Source: Essex County Council, 2023; Suffolk County Council, 2023)**

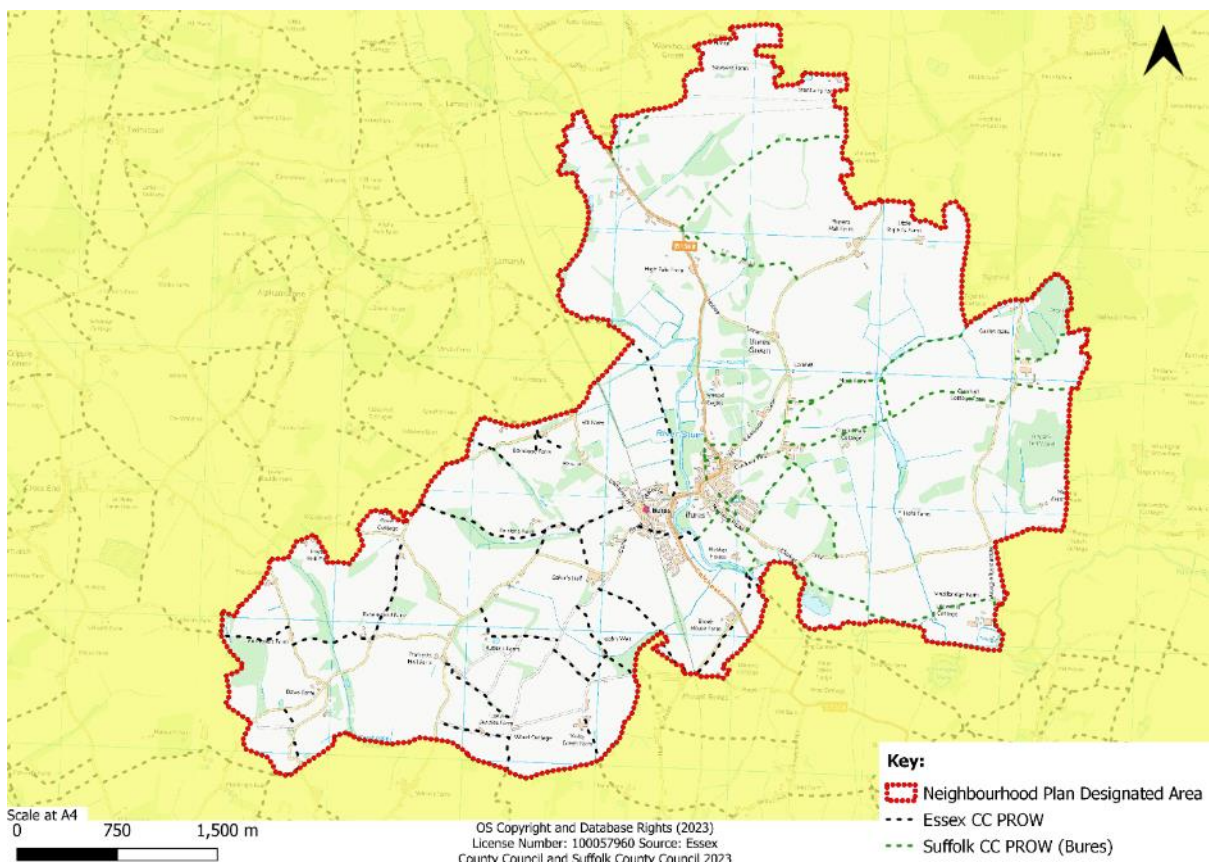
29. Many of the rural roads are narrow and well vegetated with trees, hedgerows, or fields either side and have limited footpaths available such as Smallbridge Entry (**Figure 12**). However, whilst parts of the rural setting within the NPA offers limited footpaths along roads there are numerous public footpaths available off road in different areas such as along Cuckoo Hill towards Moat Farm or Overhall Cottage Farm, Smallbridge Entry towards Arger Fen (SSSI), Colne Road towards Ferrier's Farm and more (**Figure 13**).





**Figure 12- Public Footpath Sign along Cuckoo Hill (Left) and Smallbridge Entry a narrow rural road (Right) Source: Google Maps, 2023**

30. At times using some of the rural roads like Clicket Hill would not be suitable for pedestrians when travelling outside of the built-up settlement because there are no footpaths on this 60mph road. However, people may still walk here since there are a few public footpaths that can be accessed south of Clicket Hill towards Little Mill Cottage or north towards Daisy's Wood (**Figure 13**). Due to the areas are predominantly rural at times it is not uncommon for public footpaths to pass through agricultural land leading from a 60mph B Road with no paths. These scenic routes may be ones that are material assets to the community.

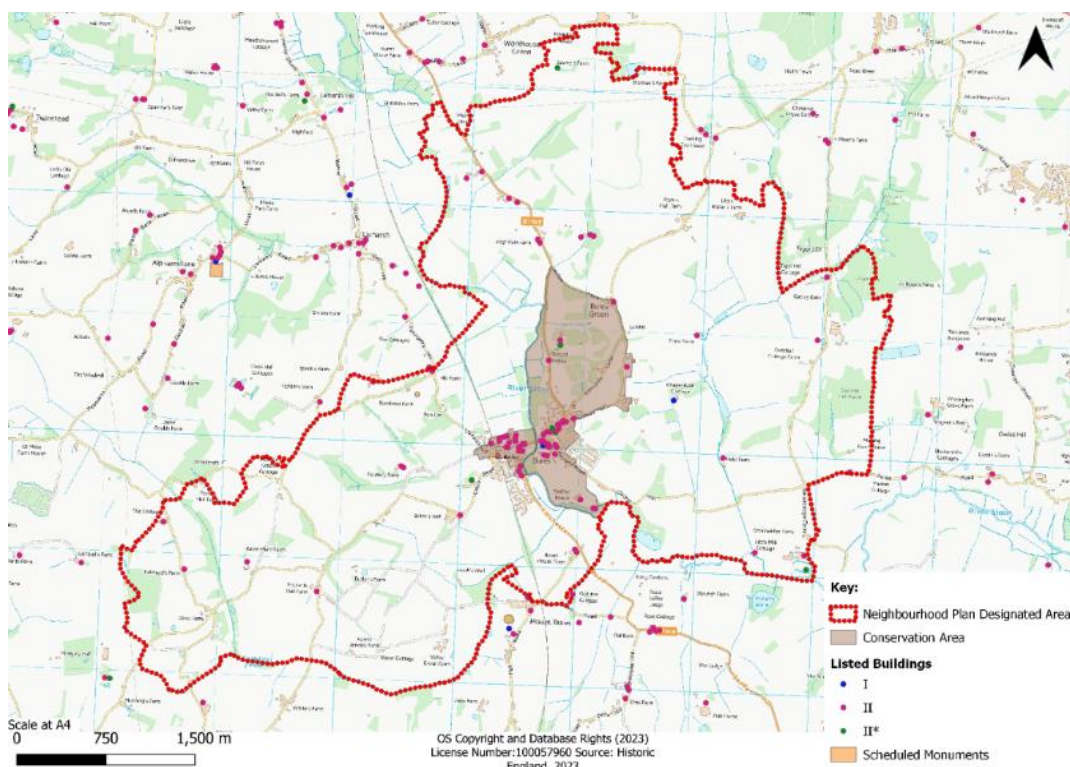


**Figure 13- Public Rights of Way (Source: Essex County Council, 2023; Suffolk County Council, 2023)**

31. There are a number of B roads, lanes, and quieter streets throughout the NPA where paths do not exist, paths are narrow or on one side of the street. A number of popular walking trails run through the NPA including the Stour Valley Path which is a 60-mile route that runs through Bures on route between Newmarket and Cattawade near Manningtree<sup>14</sup>. There is also St Edmund's Way which runs through the area as part of its route from Manningtree to Brandon<sup>15</sup>. Many of the trails and walking routes which run through the NPA pass through the Bures Conservation Areas, the Dedham Vale National Landscape, close to priority habitats, and Arger Fen SSSI meaning recreational pressure from residents and tourists could put strain on these habitat areas. Any further development within the NPA would need to consider recreational pressures to wildlife and historic designations and important habitats.

### 3.7 CULTURAL HERITAGE

32. The NPA has a wealth of historic value including two conservation areas (Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary), X number of listed buildings (Grade I to II\*) and one scheduled monument being the circular cropmark at Ferriers Farm, 190m south-west of Hill Farm. The scheduled monument is listed on the Historic England Heritage at Risk register 2023 as having a declining trend with extensive significant problems from arable ploughing as its principal vulnerability<sup>16</sup>. These historic assets are fairly spread out across the parish (**Figure 14**).



**Figure 14- Heritage Assets**

<sup>14</sup> [Stour Valley Path - Discover Suffolk](#)

<sup>15</sup> [St Edmund Way - Discover Suffolk](#)

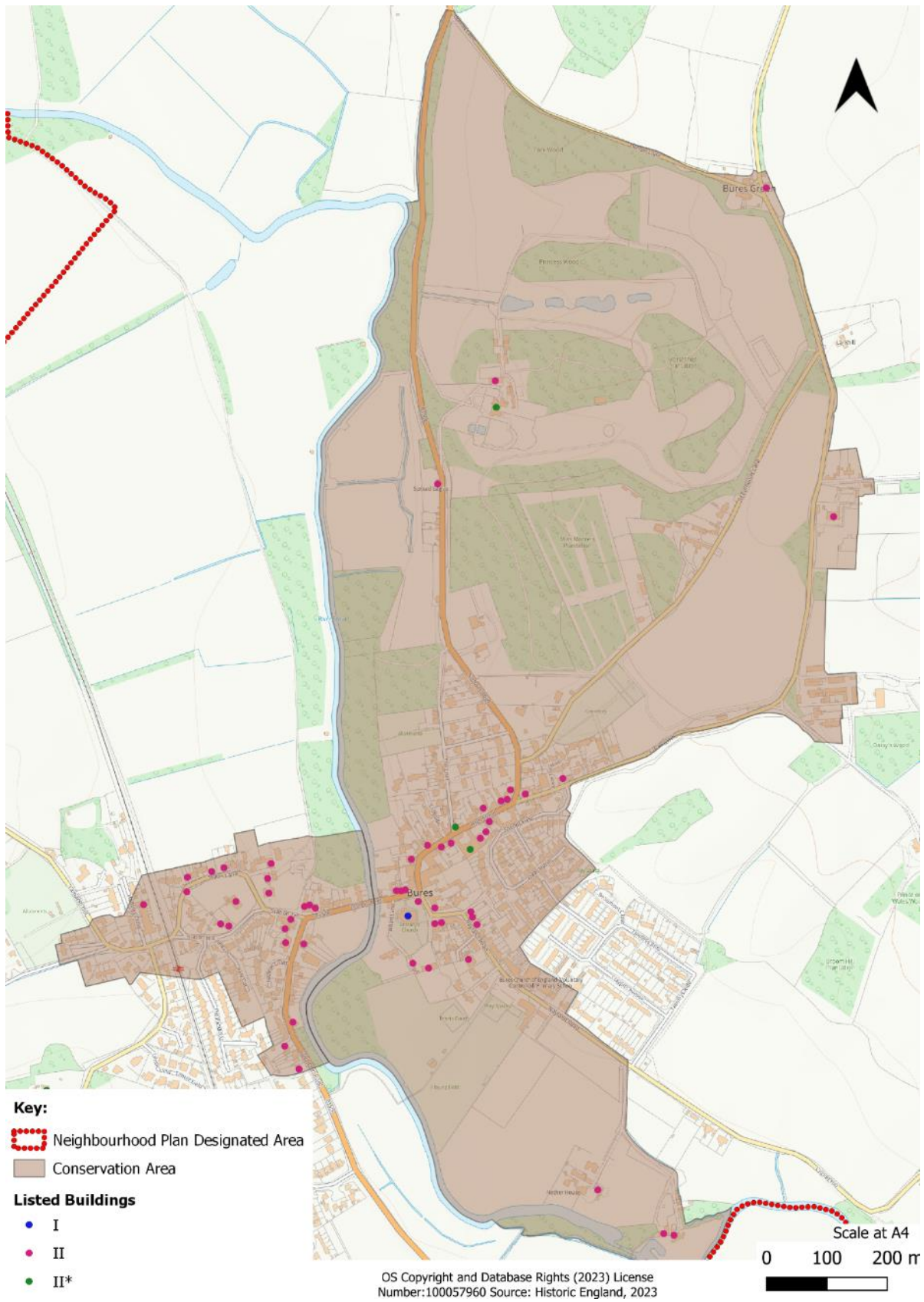
<sup>16</sup> [Historic England - Heritage at Risk Register 2023, East of England](#)

33. In Bures St Mary there are 56 listed buildings according to Historic England's records and 34 in Bures Hamlet<sup>17</sup> (**Figure 15**). The Bures Hamlet Conservation Area was designated In October 1969 and Is situated around the built-up area along such as Station Hill, Bridge Street, Water Lane and part of the B1508, the Paddocks, Lamarsh Hill and Colne Road<sup>18</sup>. There are 22 listings within the conservation area, and they are all Grade II; the majority of listings are buildings such as old cottages, barns, farmhouses, and public houses.
34. In Bures St Mary the conservation area was designated In 1973 and extends beyond the built-up settlement towards Bures Green and south to the parish boundary near the River Stour and Bures Mill. In Bures St Mary Conservation Area the majority of buildings are Grade II, however, there are three Grade II\* buildings being the Great Bevills east of the Spread Eagles (B1508), The Old Bakery and Malthouse and Premises along the High Street. These Grade II buildings on the high street are timber-framed and plastered. There Is also one Grade I building being the Church of St Mary the Virgin which is on account of its architectural, historical and topographical value described by Pevsner as a Stately Church. It Is mainly 14th century with some 16th century additions Including a fine brick south porch. Many of the 38 listings in the conservation area are buildings such as churches, public houses, cottages, houses and old work premises.
35. As stated in the Bures St Mary Conservation Area Appraisal: *"the parish of Bures St Mary extends well beyond the village proper and contains ancient remains from as far back as the Neolithic period, including one of only nine examples in Suffolk of a type of oval enclosure, which may have been a long barrow. In the later Middle Saxon period of the 8th Century, a royal vill was sited in Bures, one of only seven known in Suffolk as a whole. The domesday survey of 1086 lists a church with 18 acres, as well as two manors for the parish. The only sites of archaeological interest listed in the county Sites and Monuments Record for the central part of Bures, however, are the Medieval church itself and the adjoining Post Medieval bridge. The presence of both of these does give weight to the likelihood of an older settlement on the site built around an early crossing point. The remains of this probably lie buried beneath the many listed buildings making up the historic core of the village. The village had its own medieval market and fair granted in 1271, although this was defunct by the 17th Century."*

---

<sup>17</sup> [The List Search Results for bures hamlet | Historic England](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Bures Hamlet - Conservation areas – Braintree District Council](#)



**Figure 15- Bures Conservation Areas (Source Historic England, 2023)**

## 4. LANDSCAPE

36. Bures falls into three-character areas within the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment, including Ancient Rolling Farmlands, Rolling Valley Farmlands and Valley Meadows (**Figure 16**). Some key characteristics of this type of landscape include:

- Rolling arable landscape of chalky clays and loams;
- Blocks of ancient woodland; dissected widely and often deeply by river valleys;
- Hedges of hawthorn and elm with oak ash and field maple as hedgerow trees;
- A network of winding lanes and paths often associated with hedges, creating visual intimacy.

37. For Ancient Rolling Farmlands the key characteristics include:

- Rolling arable landscape of chalky clays and loams
- Dissected widely, and sometimes deeply, by river valleys
- Field pattern of ancient random enclosure. Regular fields associated with areas of heathland enclosure
- Hedges of hawthorn and elm with oak, ash and field maple as hedgerow trees
- Substantial open areas created for airfields and by post WWII agricultural improvement
- Scattered with [ancient woodland](#) parcels containing a mix of oak, lime, cherry, hazel, hornbeam, ash and holly
- Network of winding lanes and paths, often associated with hedges, create visual intimacy
- Dispersed settlement pattern of loosely clustered villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads of mediaeval origin
- Farmstead buildings are predominantly timber-framed, the houses [colour-washed](#) and the barns blackened with tar. Roofs are frequently tiled, though thatched houses can be locally significant
- Villages often associated with village [greens](#) or the remains of [greens](#)<sup>19</sup>.

38. For Rolling Valley Farmlands the key characteristics include:

- Gentle valley sides with some complex and steep slopes
- Deep well drained loamy soils
- Organic pattern of fields smaller than on the plateaux
- Distinct areas of regular field patterns
- A scattering of landscape parks
- Small ancient woodlands on the valley fringes
- Sunken lanes

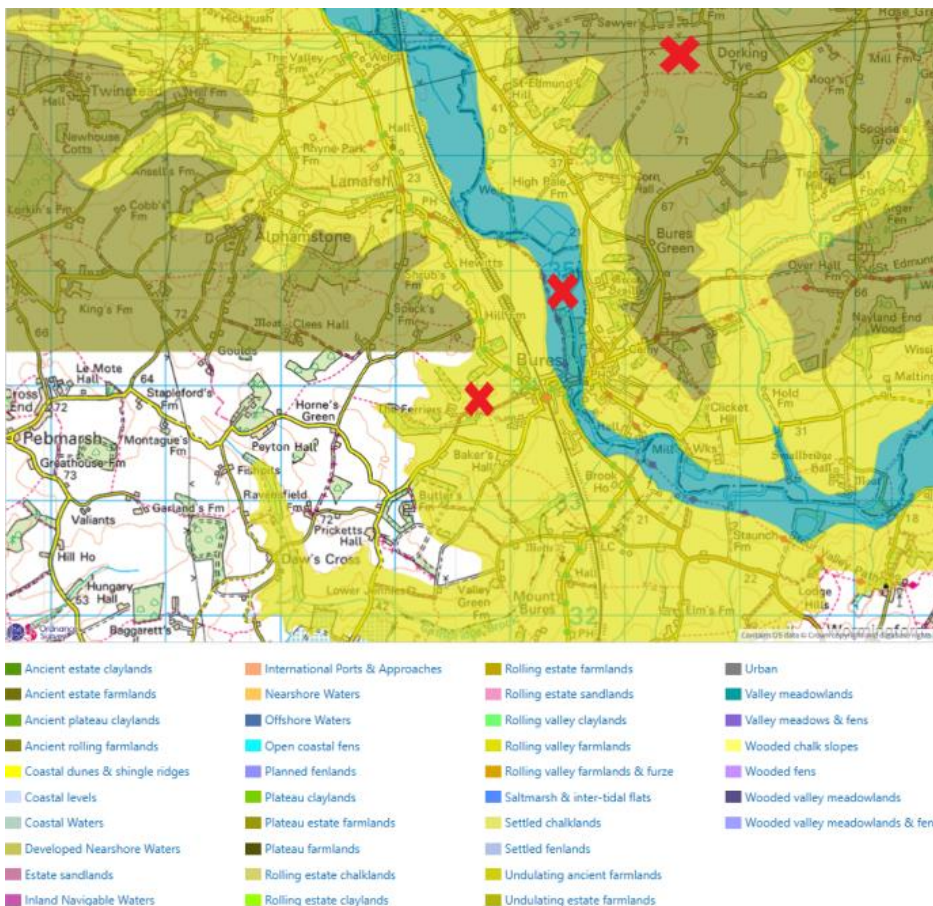
---

<sup>19</sup> [Ancient rolling farmlands - Suffolk Landscapes](#)

- Towns and villages with distinctive mediaeval cores and late mediaeval churches
- Industrial activity and manufacture, continuing in the Gipping valley
- Large, often [moated](#), houses<sup>20</sup>

39. For the Valley Meadows character area, the key characteristics include:

- Flat, narrow, river valley bottoms
- Deep peat or mixtures of peat and sandy deposits
- Ancient meres within the valley bottoms & important fen sites
- Small grassland fields, bounded by dykes running at right angles to the main river
- Sparse scattering of small alder carr & plantation woodlands
- Part of a wider estate type landscape
- Largely unsettled, except for the occasional farmstead
- Drier fields turned over to the production of arable crops
- Cattle grazing now often peripheral to commercial agriculture
- Loss to scrub encroachment, tree planting and horse paddocks<sup>21</sup>.



**Figure 16-Adapted Map Marking 'X' within the Bures NP area different landscape character areas (Source: Suffolk County Council, 2023)**

<sup>20</sup> [Rolling valley farmlands - Suffolk Landscapes](#)

<sup>21</sup> [Valley meadows & fens - Suffolk Landscapes](#)

40. In the Essex Landscape Character Assessment (2003<sup>22</sup>) the Bures NPA falls with the Stour Valley (C8) Profile. The Stour Valley is a wide valley with a broad flat valley floor for much of its length. In the north and west arable farmland tends to dominate the valley, but it becomes much more pastoral in character further east. Here there is a patchwork of pasture and arable farmland and woodland on the valleysides and mainly meadows divided by hedgerows and/or wet ditches on the valley floor. Plantations of cricket bat willows and hybrid poplars are also common on the floodplain. Traditional small settlements and isolated farmsteads with limited modern development occur throughout the area, linked by narrow, sometimes sunken, valleyside lanes. Where the landscape is more open, there are panoramic views of the valley. In more enclosed parts, views are framed and focused.

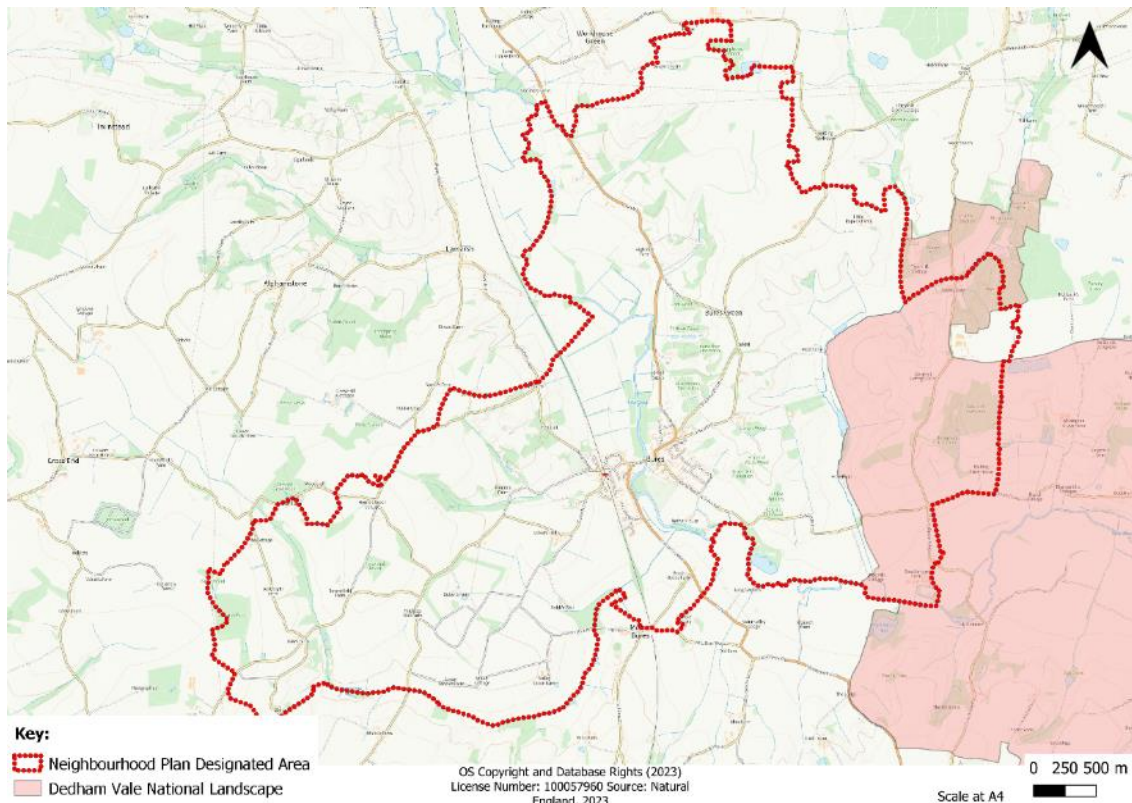
41. The key characteristics include:

- Typically wide flat valley floor with floodplain meadows, riverbank willow trees and small wet woodlands.
- Rolling rounded valleysides with a complex mosaic of small woods, pasture and arable fields in the east, gentler arable valleysides in the north and west.
- Church towers, traditional villages, farmsteads, barns and mills are distinctive features.
- Sinuous pattern of lanes and roads.
- Mostly tranquil, secluded character.

42. The River Stour, which runs through the village forms most of the county boundary between Suffolk and Essex, running from its source in West Wickham in Cambridgeshire and joining the North Sea at Harwich in Essex. The Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (National Landscape) lies just east of Bures and is designated to protect the vulnerable pastoral landscape. The western boundary of the current National Landscape is within the Bures NP area, as shown on **Figure 17**. Collectively the Dedham Vale and the River Stour valley, where Bures sits, is characterised by picturesque villages, rolling farmland, rivers, meadows, ancient woodlands, and a wide variety of local wildlife.

---

<sup>22</sup> Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan Review. 2003. Essex Landscape Character Assessment. Source: [Welcome \(essexdesignguide.co.uk\)](http://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk)

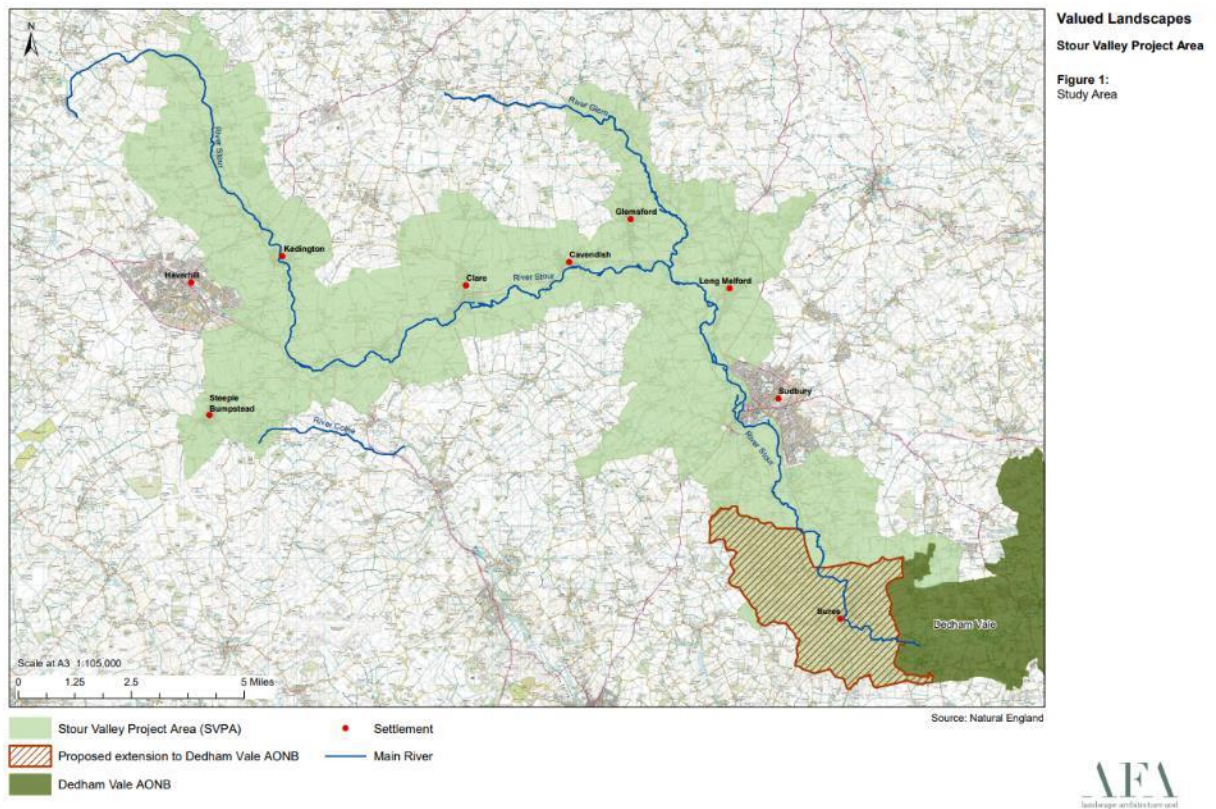


**Figure 17-Map of the Bures NP Designated Area and location of the Dedham Vale National Landscape**

43. The Dedham Vale National Landscape covers an area of 90km<sup>2</sup>. The designation includes the lower reaches of the River Stour and extends eastwards as far as Cattawade Marshes. The western boundary runs westwards between Bures NPA and Wormingford while the northern and southern boundaries extend a few kilometres either side of the River Stour. The National Landscape is an attractive place to live, work and visit. As stated on the Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley Partnership website, this area is under increasing development pressure for new housing, economic development, and transport schemes<sup>23</sup>.
44. The rest of the NP area falls within the Stour Valley Project Area. The Stour Valley Project Area lies immediately adjacent to the Dedham Vale National Landscape and extends upstream following the River Stour, forming the boundary between Essex and Suffolk. This area covers 302km<sup>2</sup> and extends westwards from the National Landscape boundary at Wormingford, towards the Cambridgeshire border. The Project Area does not benefit from the same statutory protection as the National Landscape, however, parts of this are considered to exhibit similar qualifying characteristics as the nationally designated National Landscape and it is therefore considered a Valued Landscape. The National Landscape team commissioned Alison Farmer Associates to undertake a Valued Landscape Assessment of the Stour Valley Project Area (**Figure 18**).

<sup>23</sup> [Planning – Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty \(dedhamvale-nl.org.uk\)](https://dedhamvale-nl.org.uk/)





**Figure 18- Valued Landscapes Stour Valley Project Area (Source: Alison Farmer Associates, 2020)**

45. The final report released in 2020<sup>24</sup> was commissioned to ensure that the Valued Landscape is properly considered at the plan making and planning application stage<sup>25</sup>. The National Landscape and Stour Valley Project Area Management Plan 2021-2026<sup>26</sup> further identifies that the Stour Valley has been recognised as an important landscape for local residents and statutory and non-statutory organisations for several decades, so the decision was to include the area in the management plan 2021-26 (**Figure 18**).

<sup>24</sup> [Final-Report-Stour-Valley-Project-Area-Valued-Landscapes-Assessment.pdf \(dedhamvale-nl.org.uk\)](https://www.dedhamvale-nl.org.uk/Final-Report-Stour-Valley-Project-Area-Valued-Landscapes-Assessment.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> [Guidance for planning in the AONB – Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty \(dedhamvale-nl.org.uk\)](https://www.dedhamvale-nl.org.uk/Guidance-for-planning-in-the-AONB-Dedham-Vale-Area-of-Outstanding-Natural-Beauty)

<sup>26</sup> [Management Plan - Dedham Vale AONB · Colchester City Council](https://www.colchester.gov.uk/management-plan-dedham-vale-aonb)

## 4 SEA SCREENING

---

### Legislative Background

46. The European Directive 2001/42/EC<sup>27</sup> is the basis for Strategic Environmental Assessments and Sustainability Appraisal legislation, which was transposed into English secondary legislation by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 otherwise known as the SEA Regulations. A SEA would be required if the implementation of the contents of the Bures Neighbourhood Plan are likely to cause significant environmental effects.
47. The assessment undertaken will follow and answer specific questions using criteria drawn from the European SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of the UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 when determining the likely significance of effects as shown in **Figure 19**<sup>28</sup>.
48. **Figure 20** presents the flow diagram entitled Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes which is taken from the Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, published in September 2005<sup>29</sup>. **Figure 21** below assesses whether BNP will require a full SEA. The questions in the first column are drawn from **Figure 20** which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied.
49. An assessment has been undertaken to determine whether the draft BNP requires SEA in accordance with the SEA Regulations. Where the results can be viewed below.

---

<sup>27</sup> [EUR-Lex - 32001L0042 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>28</sup> [The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

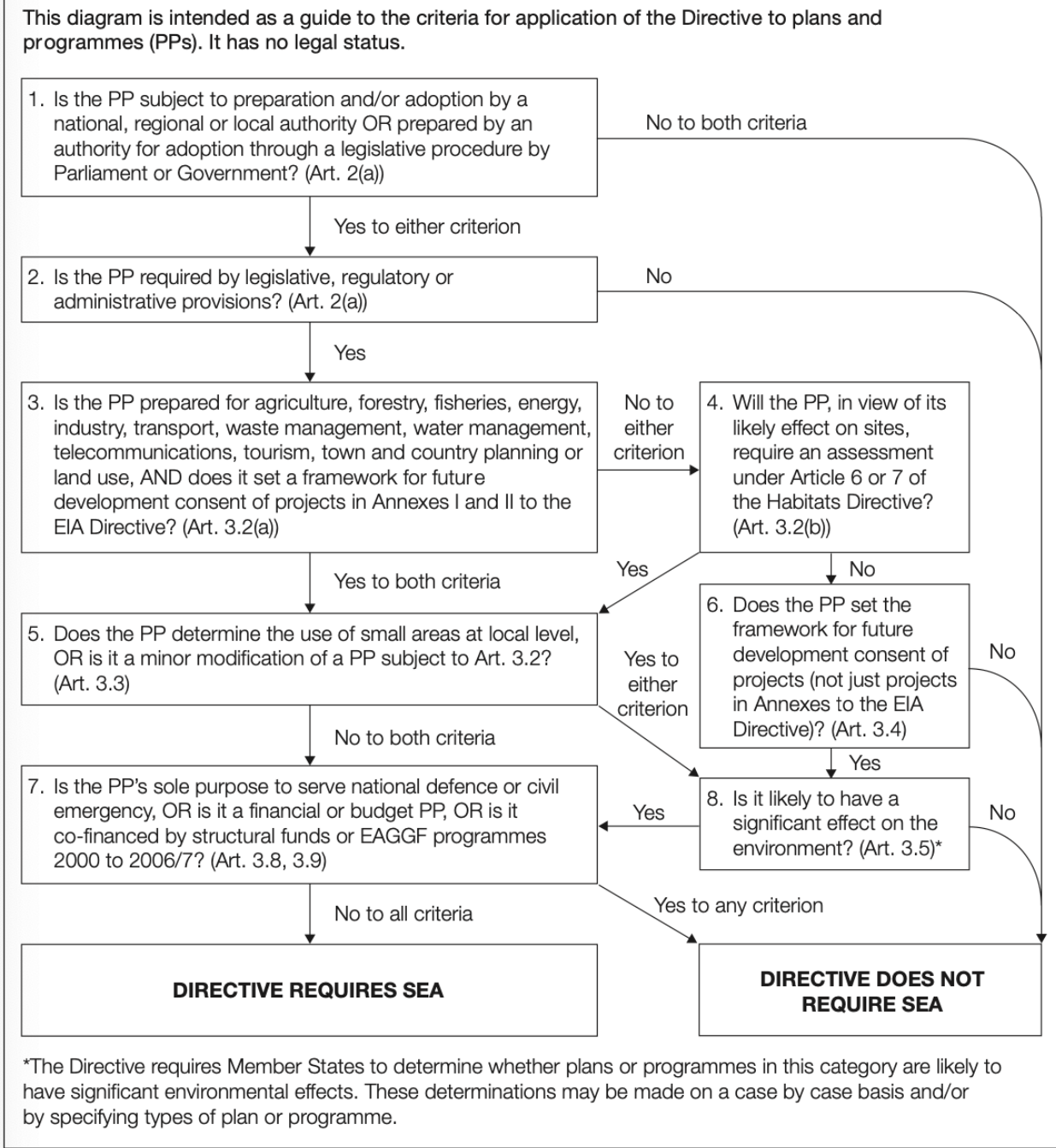
<sup>29</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf)

## SCHEDULE 1- CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:
  - a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;
  - b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;
  - c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;
  - d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and
  - e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of [F1retained EU law] on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).
  
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:
  - a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
  - b) the cumulative nature of the effects;
  - c) the transboundary nature of the effects;
  - d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);
  - e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
  - f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to—
    - (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
    - (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or
    - (iii) intensive land-use; and
  - g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

**Figure 19-Schedule 1 Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects**



**Figure 20-Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes**

	Stage	Y/N	Justification
1	Is the Neighbourhood Plan (PP) subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government (Art. 2(a))	Y	<p>The NP is being prepared by Bures St Mary parish council and Bures Hamlet Parish Council (as the “relevant qualifying bodies”) and will be made Braintree District Council and Babergh District Council, subject to Bures passing an independent examination and successful local community referendum.</p> <p>The preparation of the Bures Neighbourhood Plan is allowed under primary legislation: The Town and Country Planning Act (1990) as amended by the Localism Act (2011).</p> <p>The preparation of NP’s are subject to several relevant regulations as shown below (not intend to be a complete list):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012,</li> <li>• the Neighbourhood Planning (referendums) Regulations 2012</li> <li>• the Neighbourhood Planning (General)(Amendment) Regulations 2015</li> <li>• the Neighbourhood Planning (General)and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2016</li> <li>• the Neighbourhood Planning (General)and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2012</li> </ul> <p><b>GO TO QUESTION 2</b></p>
2	Is the Neighbourhood Plan (PP) required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Y	<p>Whilst it is not a requirement for a parish to create a Neighbourhood Plan under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) and Localism Act (2011), the NP will eventually be “made” and form part of the Development Plan for Braintree District Council and Babergh</p>

			<p>District Council. These authorities are directed by legislative processes, and it is important that the screening process considers whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects and hence whether an SEA is required under the Directive.</p> <p><b>GO TO QUESTION 3</b></p>
3	<p>Is the Neighbourhood Plan (PP) prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art. 3.2(a))</p>	Y	<p>Developments that fall within Annex I are 'excluded' development for Neighbourhood Plans (as set out in Section 61(k) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as subsequently amended)<sup>30</sup> and the Localism Act 2011 Schedule 9 Part 2 Para 7 Section 38 B (1)(b),(6)<sup>31</sup>.</p> <p>A Neighbourhood Plan is prepared for Town and Country Planning and Land use. The Bures neighbourhood plan can include at a neighbourhood level, through different policy areas, the framework for development that would fall within Annex II of the EIA Directive.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared to set out a framework for town and country planning and land use within the parishes of Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary. Its intention is to complement the higher order strategic framework that already exists for land use planning across the Braintree District and Babergh District. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to align and be in general conformity with the strategic framework.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan is not allocating any development itself but anticipates being one of the key tools</p>

<sup>30</sup> [Town and Country Planning Act 1990 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

<sup>31</sup> [Localism Act 2011 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

			to manage future development with Bures.  <b>GO TO QUESTION 5</b>
4	Will the Neighbourhood Plan (PP), in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.3)		A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening of the Neighbourhood Plan has been undertaken in the next section and has concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on any European site, either alone or in combination.  <b>GO TO QUESTION 6</b>
6	Does the Neighbourhood Plan (PP) set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art. 3.4)		Although the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for development, it includes non-strategic policies which proposals for development within the parish will be assessed against when materially relevant.  <b>GO TO QUESTION 8</b>
8	Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	N	<b>SEE FIGURE 20 AND 22 – PLAN DOES NOT REQUIRE SEA.</b>

### Figure 21-Application of SEA Directive to BNP

*\*PP in this instance refers to Neighbourhood Plan*

50. Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations sets out the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects. These are listed in **Figure 22** below along with comments on the extent to which the BNP meets these criteria.

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
<b>Characteristics of the plan and programmes, having regard in particular, to:</b>		
<p>a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources</p>	<p>Once made, BNP will become part of the statutory development plan and will guide the delivery of development within the designated plan area.</p> <p>The parish of Bures St Mary is located within Babergh District and Bures Hamlet Is located within Braintree District. The previously adopted Babergh Core Strategy (2014) identified Bures St Mary as a 'Core Village' in Policy CS2. This policy sought to direct new development sequentially to the towns/urban areas, and then to the Core and Hinterland Villages. The recently adopted Babergh &amp; Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Part 1 (Nov 2023) does not set out a settlement hierarchy. An updated one will now come forward in Part 2 of the Plan, which is still in preparation. or windfall development.</p> <p>In the Braintree Local Plan (2022) under Policy Bures Hamlet is designated as a Second-Tier village within the spatial strategy. Development of a small scale may be considered sustainable within a Second-Tier village, subject to the specific constraints and opportunities of that village.</p> <p>There are no housing allocations being allocated within Bures NPA in the Braintree Local Plan (2022) or</p>	<p><b>N</b></p>



SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
	<p>Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Part 1 (2023).</p> <p><b>The local authorities allow for Bures NP to allocate in addition to their district plans, but they have chosen not to. In terms of the degree to which BNP sets a framework, it does not allocate land for development.</b></p>	
<p>b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy</p>	<p>The Bures Neighbourhood Plan will be adopted alongside the higher order adopted Local Plans and National Planning Policy Framework and form part of the Braintree District and Babergh District Development Plans. The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity to the strategic framework and will expand upon some of the Local Plan policies, providing supplementary information on a local scale.</p> <p>It does not have an influence over other plans. However, once made BNP will form part of the statutory development plans for Bures and will be used in conjunction with the current development plans to determine planning applications.</p>	<p><b>N</b></p>
<p>c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development</p>	<p>One of the Basic Conditions which BNP must meet is to contribute towards sustainable development. Several policies within the plan will focus on environmental protection and mitigation, including designation of Local Green Spaces, protection of important public views and heritage assets. These aim to ensure effects on the environment are minimised within the plan area and promote positive action. Given</p>	<p><b>N</b></p>

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
	the non-strategic nature of the BNP this does not have the potential to restrict the delivery of other plans or programmes.	
d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	<p>Baseline information relating to BNP was described earlier in this Screening Document. Some of these designations are of national importance and are of high conservation value, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Arger Fen &amp; Spouse's Vale (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR)</li> <li>• Dedham Vale National Landscape</li> </ul> <p>There are three county wildlife sites and seven priority habitats in the NPA. The plan seeks to provide protective policies that will have Influence over these environmental assets such as designating some of the priority habitat areas as local green spaces. Also, setting important local views towards the Dedham Vale National Landscape and within the Conservation Areas.</p> <p><b>The plan itself will not specifically allocate land for development and will not exacerbate any significant known environmental problems to the plan area or adjacent sites.</b></p>	<b>N</b>
e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (eg plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)	The implementation of community legislation is unlikely to be significantly compromised by the Neighbourhood Plan.	<b>N</b>

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
<b>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to</b>		
a) The probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects	BNP does not contain any site-specific development proposals that will result in complex, widespread, long lasting, or serious environmental effects.	<b>N</b>
b) The cumulative nature of the effects	As it will not allocate land for development BNP will not lead to any cumulative effects in combination with existing or emerging plans.	<b>N</b>
c) Transboundary nature of effects	The emerging BNP area provides supplementary policy areas on a local scale. The impacts for transboundary effects beyond the designated area are unlikely to be significant.	<b>N</b>
d) The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	BNP is unlikely to produce any significant effects to human health or the environment.	<b>N</b>
e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The BNP area has a total population of around 1,800 (Census, 2021). In Bures Hamlet this is around 790 out of 155,300 in Braintree District (Census, 2021) and 1,010 in Bures St Mary out of 92,300 in Babergh (Census, 2021 <sup>32</sup> ).	<b>N</b>
f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to – i. Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;	i) As noted earlier, there are a few national designations located within BNP such as the Arger Fen SSSI and Dedham Vale National Landscape to the east.	<b>N</b>

<sup>32</sup> [Build a custom area profile - Census 2021, ONS](#)

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
<p>ii. Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or</p> <p>iii. Intensive land-use</p>	<p>There are also non-designated wildlife sites and priority habitat within the plan area.</p> <p>Bures is partly a tourist destination, and the plan promotes the retention of important community facilities which support residents and tourists. Even though land could be identified through the development plan period and impact upon the natural characteristics outlined above the plan does not allocate land itself for such development, so it is not anticipated to have likely significant effects. In addition, BNP has put forward environmental policies including landscape, Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley Project Area, Biodiversity, Local green spaces, and Important local views to recognise and protect wildlife areas.</p> <p>The area has a range of historic features, including 1 scheduled monument and 56 Listed Buildings made up of Grades I to II*. Three of the buildings are Grade II* Including the Old Bakery, Malthouse Premises and Great Bevills. Just 5.8% of listed buildings in England are Grade II* showing the</p>	

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
	<p>NPA has a wealth of history<sup>33</sup>.</p> <p>There are two Conservation Areas (Bure Hamlets and Bures St Mary) which are designated for their historic significance.</p> <p>ii) BNP is unlikely to result in exceedance of environmental quality standards, such as those relating to air, water, and soil quality.</p> <p>iii) BNP is unlikely to bring forward development of an extent that would result in a significant intensification of Local Land Use.</p> <p><b>The emerging BNP does not include site allocations and therefore are not anticipated to have likely significant effects on the parish.</b></p>	
g) The effects on areas of landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	<p>Bures falls into three-character areas within the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment, including Ancient Rolling Farmlands, Rolling Valley Farmlands and Valley Meadows.</p> <p>In the Essex Landscape Character Assessment (2003<sup>34</sup>) the Bures NPA falls with the Stour Valley (C8) Profile. The Stour Valley is a wide valley with a broad flat valley floor for much of its length. The River</p>	<b>N</b>

<sup>33</sup> [What are Listed Buildings? How England's historic buildings are protected | Historic England](#)

<sup>34</sup> Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan Review. 2003. Essex Landscape Character Assessment. Source: [Welcome \(essexdesignguide.co.uk\)](http://www.welcome.essexdesignguide.co.uk)

SEA Directive Criteria (Annex II)	Comments	Likely Significant Effect? Y/N
	<p>Stour, which runs through the village forms most of the county boundary between Suffolk and Essex, running from its source in West Wickham in Cambridgeshire and joining the North Sea at Harwich in Essex.</p> <p>The Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (National Landscape) lies just east of Bures and is designated to protect the vulnerable pastoral landscape. The western boundary of the current National Landscape is within the Bures NP area. Collectively the Dedham Vale and the River Stour valley, where Bures sits, is characterised by picturesque villages, rolling farmland, rivers, meadows, ancient woodlands, and a wide variety of local wildlife.</p> <p>BNP is not anticipated to have likely significant effects on the landscape areas or Dedham Vale National Landscape given the plan will not allocate land for development and it contains various protecting policies to conserve landscape quality including Biodiversity Improvements, Design Codes, Landscape, Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley Project Area, Important Local Views, Locally Important Trees and Local Green Spaces.</p> <p>The environmental effects on areas of biodiversity designations have also been considered through the Local Plans.</p>	

**Figure 22-Likely Significant Effects**

## 5 SEA SCREENING CONCLUSION

---

51. A Screening Assessment has been undertaken by applying the criteria from the SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations to determine whether or not the BNP is likely to have significant environmental effects when assessed against the topics listed in the SEA Regulations.
52. BNP will set out a vision and non-strategic planning policies to shape development in Bures up to 2037. The plan does not allocate sites for development but does contain policies that protect locally important assets (green spaces, heritage, important views) and promotes environmental improvement. Such mitigating policies will compliment those set out in the local plans. The assessment concludes that this will not result in likely significant effects on the environment.
53. **On this basis, it is considered that BNP does not have the potential to have significant environmental impacts, and SEA is not required.**

### What is a Habitats Regulation Assessment?

12. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is the process by which a 'competent authority' is required to assess the potential impacts of plans and projects (such as Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans or development proposals put forward in planning applications) on International Sites in accordance with Article 6 (3) of the EU Habitats Directive and Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). A competent authority, such as the Local Planning Authority, must determine if a plan or project may affect the protected features set out in the Conservation Objectives of an International habitat site before deciding whether to undertake, permit or authorise it.

### What are the International (European) Designated Sites?

13. There are three types of International Sites designations:

- **Ramsar:** Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance, designated under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands<sup>35</sup>.
- **Special Area of Conservation (SAC):** Areas which have been given special protection for a variety of wild animals, plants and habitats.
- **Special Protection Area (SPA):** 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.

### Screening

14. To fulfil the legal requirements if likely significant effects will occur with the implementation of the BNP upon the International Sites (Natura 2000 sites) an initial screening assessment has been undertaken which is the first stage of the HRA process. If any likely significant effects on International Sites will occur then the screening is followed by an appropriate assessment (second stage of the HRA process) which needs to consider these impacts in more detail and what mitigation measures, if any, can be achieved to address these<sup>36</sup>.

15. The purpose of the Screening stage is to:

- Identify all features of the BNP that would have **no effect** on an International/European site. These features can be eliminated from further consideration in respect of this and other plans.
- Identify all aspects of the BNP that would **not be likely to have a significant effect** on an International/European site (i.e. would have some effect because

---

<sup>35</sup> The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. It is named after the city of Ramsar in Iran, where the Convention was signed in 1971. It came into force in 1975.

<sup>36</sup> [Habitats regulations assessments: protecting a European site - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)



of links/connectivity but the effect is not significant), either alone or in combination with other aspects of the same plan or other plans or projects. These do not require 'Appropriate Assessment'.

- Identify those aspects of the BNP where it is **not possible to rule out the risk of significant effects** on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This provides a clear scope for the parts of the plan that will require Appropriate Assessment.

### **Case Law and the Interpretation of 'likely significant effects'**

16. Before undergoing the assessment, it is useful to reflect on relevant case law to help interpret when effects should be considered as a likely significant effect, when carrying out HRA of a neighbourhood plan. In the Waddenzee case the European Court of Justice ruled on the interpretation of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (translated into Reg. 102 in the Habitats Regulations):

*"An effect should be considered 'likely', "if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that it will have a significant effect on the site" (paragraph 44). An effect should be considered 'significant', "if it undermines the conservation objectives" (paragraph 48). Where a plan or project has an effect on a site "but is not likely to undermine its conservation objectives, it cannot be considered likely to have a significant effect on the site concerned" (paragraph 47)."*

17. As well as this another relevant opinion delivered to the Court of Justice of the European Union stated:

*"The requirement that an effect in question be 'significant' exists in order to lay down a de minimis threshold. Plans or projects that have no appreciable effect on the site are thereby excluded. If all plans or projects capable of having any effect whatsoever on the site were to be caught by Article 6(3), activities on or near the site would risk being impossible by reason of legislative overkill."*

18. This opinion on the interpretation of significant effects in the 'Sweetman' case allows for the authorisation of plans and projects whose possible effects, alone or in combination, can be considered 'trivial' or de minimis; referring to such cases as those "that have no appreciable effect on the site". In practice such effects could be screened out as having no likely significant effect – they would be 'insignificant'. The HRA Screening assessment therefore considers whether the Pre-Submission Draft of Bures Neighbourhood Plan and its policies could have likely significant effects either alone or in combination.

### **Assessment**

19. Firstly, it is established practice in HRA to identify any International/European Sites that could possibly be affected within the area covered by the plan proposal or project and other sites that may be affected beyond this area. In this screening assessment the area screened was the BNP designated area as

well as a distance of 20 kilometres (km) taken from the centre of BNP as shown in **Figure 23**. A distance of 20 kilometres from the centre point of the BNP area was used in the first instance because this has been agreed with Natural England for the relevant Local Plans HRAs in this region<sup>37</sup> and is considered precautionary. In line with HRA requirements, the application of a 20-kilometre buffer is considered a highly precautionary distance with relation to potential impacts to the surrounding area.

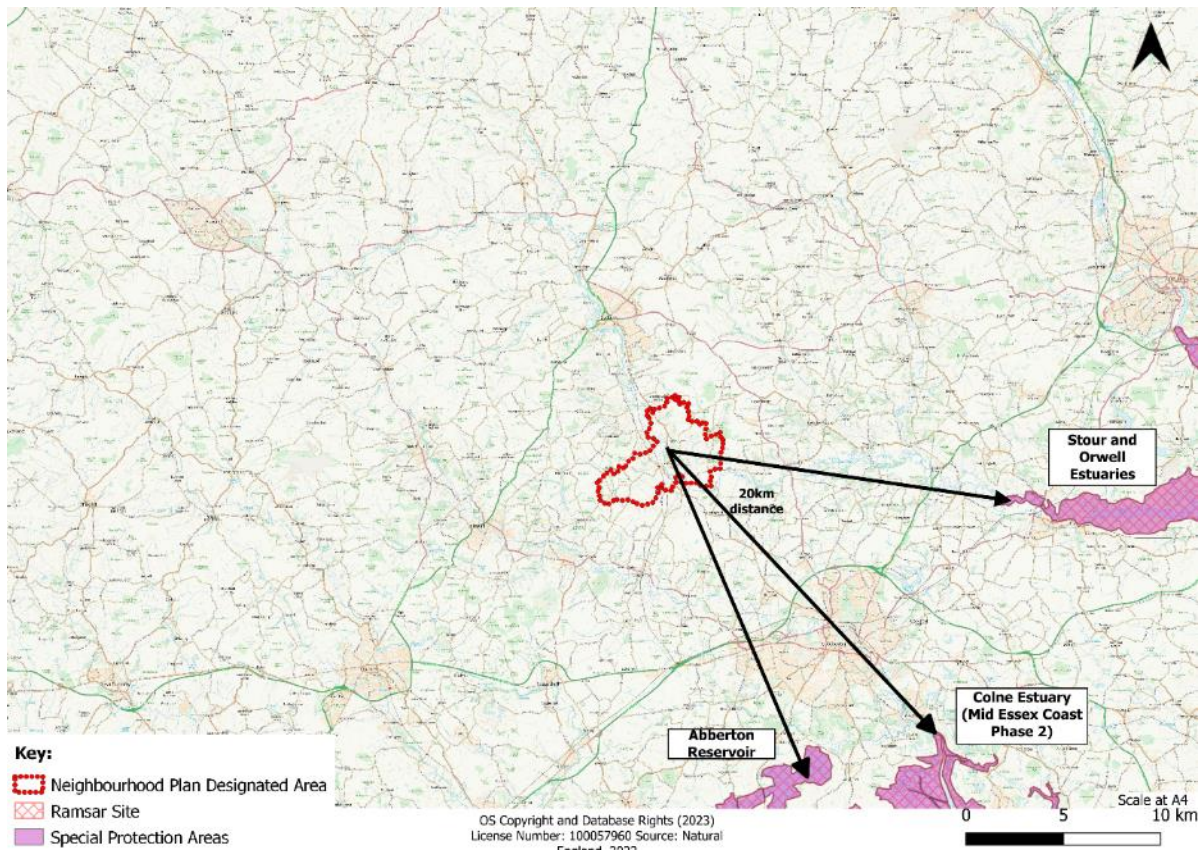
20. The assessment also considers areas that may be functionally linked to the International/European sites. The term 'functional linkage' refers to the role or 'function' that land or sea beyond the boundary of a European site might fulfil in terms of ecologically supporting the populations for which the site was designated or classified. Such land is therefore 'linked' to the European site in question because it provides an important role in maintaining or restoring the population of qualifying species at favourable conservation status<sup>38</sup>.
21. Whilst the boundary of a International/European site will usually be drawn to include key supporting habitat for a qualifying species, this cannot always be the case where the population for which a site is designated or classified is particularly mobile. Individuals of the population will not necessarily remain in the site all the time. The mobility of qualifying species is considerable and may extend so far from the key habitat that forms the designated area (SAC or SPA) that it would be entirely impractical to attempt to designate or classify all of the land or sea that may conceivably be used by the species.
22. In the BNP area it was found that **there are no designated International/European sites**. This screening assessment has also considered the impact on International Sites within a 20km radius of the BNP area as an in-combination assessment (**Figure 23**). The point for measuring 20km has been taken from the centre of BNP as shown in **Figure 24**. A number of International Sites are shown to be located within 20km radius of the BNP area including:

Ramsar Sites	Special Areas of Conservation	Special Protection Areas
Abberton Reservoir		Abberton Reservoir
Stour and Orwell Estuaries		Stour and Orwell Estuaries
Colne Estuary Mid Essex Coast Phase 2		Colne Estuary Mid Essex Coast Phase 2

**Figure 23- Table of the International Designated Wildlife Sites within 20km radius of BNP**

<sup>37</sup> Braintree District Council Source: [HRA Screening Report for Braintree District Local Plan](#) and Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Source: [habitats-regulations-assessment-including-appropriate-assessment-of-jlp-part-1 \(babergh.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>38</sup> [Functional linkage: How areas that are functionally linked to European sites have been considered when they may be affected by plans and projects - a review of authoritative decisions - NECR207 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#)



**Figure 24- Map of the International Designated Wildlife Sites within 20km radius of BNP**

23. Appendix A provides detailed information about the European Sites described with reference to Standard Data Forms for the SPA sites and Natural England’s Site Improvement Plans<sup>39</sup>. Natural England’s conservation objectives<sup>40</sup> for the SPA sites have also been reviewed. These state that site integrity must be maintained or restored by maintaining or restoring the habitats of qualifying features, the supporting processes on which they rely, and populations of qualifying species.

24. As required under Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), an assessment has been undertaken of the potential ‘likely significant effects’ of the plan. The assessment has been prepared in order to identify which policies would be likely to have a significant effect on European sites. The Screening assessment has been conducted without taking mitigation into account, in accordance with the ‘People Over Wind’ judgment which took place in April 2018<sup>41</sup>. The judgment clarified that when making screening decisions for the purposes of deciding whether an appropriate assessment is required, competent authorities cannot take into

<sup>39</sup> [Natural England Access to Evidence - Site Improvement Plans: East of England](#)

<sup>40</sup> [Natural England Access to Evidence - Conservation Objectives for European Sites](#)

<sup>41</sup> The Court of Justice of the European Union delivered its judgment in [Case C-323/17 People Over Wind & Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta \(‘People over Wind’\)](#).

account any mitigation measures in neighbourhood plans, permissions in principle and certain development orders<sup>42</sup>.

25. Each European site has a set of interest features which are the ecological features for which the site is designated or classified, and the features for which Member States should ensure the site is maintained or where necessary restored (as set out in Appendix A). European sites are at risk if there are possible means by which any aspect of a plan or project can, when being taken forward for implementation, pose a potential threat to the wildlife interest of the sites. This is often referred to as the 'impact pathway'. Potential impact pathways which have been considered in this assessment for significant effects are:

- Physical loss or damage to habitat;
- Non-physical disturbance (noise, vibration and light pollution);
- Non-toxic contamination;
- Air pollution;
- Recreational pressure;
- Changes to hydrology, including water quantity and quality
- Urban effects

26. Where the plan is likely to have an effect on its own (due to impact pathways being present), but it is not likely to be significant, the in-combination assessment at Screening stage needs to determine whether there may also be the same types of effect from other plans or projects that could combine with the plan to produce a significant effect. If so, this likely significant effect arising from the plan in combination with other plans or projects, would then need to be considered through the Appropriate Assessment stage to determine if the impact pathway would have an adverse effect on integrity of the relevant European site. Where the Screening assessment has concluded that there is no impact pathway between development proposed in the plan and the conditions necessary to maintain qualifying features of a European site, then there will be no in-combination effects to assess at the Screening or Appropriate Assessment stage.

27. The potential for in-combination impacts will therefore focus on plans prepared by local authorities that overlap with European sites that are within the scope of this HRA. The findings of any associated HRA work for those plans will be reviewed where available. Where relevant, any strategic projects in the area that could have in-combination effects with the plan will also be identified and reviewed. The online HRA Handbook suggests that proposals in draft plans may be relevant to consider as part of the in-combination assessment.

## **HRA Impacts Screening**

---

<sup>42</sup> GOV. Para 009 . Source: [Appropriate assessment - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

28. A risk-based approach involving the application of the precautionary principle was adopted in the assessment, such that a conclusion of 'no likely significant effect' (LSE) would only be reached where it was considered unlikely, based on current knowledge and the information available, that a BNP policy would have a significant effect on the integrity of a European site. BNP does not allocate land for development and therefore will not directly result in an increase in the number of new dwellings within the vicinity of European Sites. A summary of findings is presented in **Figure 25** with regard to the different impact pathways and an assessment of potential impacts of the draft policies contained within BNP is provided in **Figure 26**.

Impact Pathway	Findings
<p><b>Physical loss or damage to habitat</b></p>	<p>Habitat loss from development in areas outside of the European site boundaries may result in likely significant effects where that habitat contributes towards maintaining the interest feature for which the European site is designated. This includes land which may provide offsite movement corridors or foraging and sheltering habitat for mobile species such as birds, bats and fish. European sites susceptible to the indirect effects of habitat loss are restricted to those with qualifying species that rely on offsite habitat. Natural England has advised that its recognised distance for the consideration of offsite functionally linked land for wintering birds is generally 2km, but for certain wader species, namely Golden Plover and Lapwing, a greater distance of 15km may be appropriate.</p> <p>As the BNP area is approximately 20 kilometres from SPA/Ramsar Sites Abberton Reservoir, Stour and Orwell Estuaries, and Colne Estuary Mid Essex Coast Phase 2, no likely significant effect is predicted in relation to this site. The BNP also does not have influence over any development outside of the BNP designated area. Therefore, no likely significant effects will occur from BNP as a result of physical damage and loss to offsite habitat, either alone or in combination with other plans and policies.</p>
<p><b>Non-physical disturbance (noise, vibration and light pollution)</b></p>	<p>Non-physical disturbance effects such as noise and vibration are most likely to disturb bird species and thus are a key consideration with respect to potential effects on European sites where birds are the qualifying features. Light pollution from artificial lighting at night also has the potential to affect species where it occurs in close proximity to key habitat areas, such as key roosting sites of SPA birds.</p> <p>It has been assumed that the effects of non-physical disturbances are most likely to be significant within a distance of 500 metres from the source. There is also evidence of 300</p>

Impact Pathway	Findings
	<p>metres being used as a distance up to which certain bird species can be disturbed by the effects of noise; however, it has been assumed (on a precautionary basis) that the effects of noise, vibration and light pollution are capable of causing an adverse effect if development takes place within 500 metres of a European site with qualifying features sensitive to these disturbances.</p> <p>Abberton Reservoir, Stour and Orwell Estuaries, and Colne Estuary Mid Essex Coast Phase 2 SPA/Ramsar Sites are located significantly more than 500 metres from the Neighbourhood Plan area and therefore is not considered susceptible to non-physical disturbance from development in the BNP area. Offsite impacts can also be screened out, due to the 20km distance of the SPAs from the BNP area.</p>
<b>Non-toxic contamination</b>	<p>A non-toxic environment is understood to be an environment that is free from chemical pollution and of exposures to hazardous chemicals at levels that are harmful to human health and to the environment. An example of non-toxic contamination in the environment is the creation of dust. Dust can smother terrestrial habitats, preventing natural processes, and an increased sediment can potentially affect the aquatic habitats/species.</p> <p>As BNP is not allocating any sites for development in the area it is considered there will be no likely significant effects of non-contamination and is screened out of the assessment.</p>
<b>Air pollution</b>	<p>There are number of atmospheric pollutants which can result in direct or indirect impacts to Habitats sites. These impacts are usually caused when the qualifying features are plants, soils and wetland habitats. However, some species may also be indirectly impacted from air pollution causing changes in habitat composition.</p> <p>The primary contributor to atmospheric pollution is transport related activities. Therefore, the main pollutants to atmospheric pollution are considered to be oxides of nitrogen (NOx) or sulphur dioxide (SO2) from traffic emissions. s. Deposition of nitrogen compounds may lead to both soil and freshwater acidification, and NOx can cause eutrophication of soils and water.</p>

Impact Pathway	Findings
	<p>Based on the 2019 Highways England Design Manual for Road and Bridges (DMRB) LA 105 Air quality<sup>43</sup> (which sets out the requirements for assessing and reporting the effects of highway projects on air quality), the report states that an assessment of the impact of pollutant concentrations on sensitive receptors should be done within 200m from the road itself.</p> <p>It can be assumed that air pollution from roads is unlikely to be significant beyond 200 metres from the road itself. As BNP is not allocating any sites for development in the area it is considered there will be no likely significant effects of air pollution on the European Sites which are 20km away and is screened out of the assessment.</p>
<p><b>Recreational pressure</b></p>	<p>Recreational activities and human presence can result in significant effects on European sites. European sites with qualifying bird species are likely to be particularly susceptible to recreational disturbances from walking, dog walking, angling, illegal use of off-road vehicles and motorbikes, wildfowling, and water sports. In addition, recreation can physically damage habitat as a result of trampling, fire or vandalism and also through erosion associated with terrestrial activities.</p> <p>Each European site will typically have a 'Zone of Influence' (ZOI) within which increases in population would be expected to result in likely significant effects. Zones of influence are areas from within which it is deemed there will be likely significant effects arising from additional residents living within the zone and travelling to European sites for recreation. This determines where new development may result in changes in recreation and therefore where mitigation will be necessary.</p> <p>ZOIs are usually established following targeted visitor surveys<sup>44</sup> and the findings are therefore typically specific to each European site (and often to specific areas within a European site). The ZOI for the three SPAs within 20km distance of BNP are:</p> <p>Abberton Reservoir- 15km Stour and Orwell Estuaries- 8km</p>

<sup>43</sup> [LA 105 - Air quality \(standardsforhighways.co.uk\)](http://standardsforhighways.co.uk)

<sup>44</sup> Colchester Borough Council (2013), Habitat Regulations Assessment Survey and Monitoring Programme - Spring 2013

Impact Pathway	Findings
	<p>Colne Estuary Mid Essex Coast Phase 2- 24km<sup>45</sup></p> <p>BNP is further than 15 kilometres from the above SPAs and it is likely that significant effects on Abberton Reservoir, Stour and Orwell Estuaries, and Colne Estuary Mid Essex Coast Phase 2 SPA/Ramsar Sites as a result of recreation can therefore be ruled out at this stage.</p>
<p><b>Changes to hydrology, including water quantity and quality</b></p>	<p>An increase in demand for water abstraction and treatment resulting from any growth proposed in the BNP area could result in changes in hydrology at European sites. Depending on the qualifying features and particular vulnerabilities of the European sites, this could result in likely significant effects, for example, due to changes in environmental or biotic conditions, water chemistry and the extent and distribution of preferred habitat conditions.</p> <p>The qualifying features of Abberton Reservoir, Stour and Orwell Estuaries, and Colne Estuary Mid Essex Coast Phase 2 SPA/Ramsar Sites are birds which are not directly susceptible to impacts from changes in water quantity and quality although it is possible that there may be indirect effects if habitats are affected, upon which the species depend. However, the SPA is located around 20km from the BNP area and there is no indication of hydrological connectivity with the SPA.</p> <p>The BNP also does not have influence over any development outside of the BNP designated area. Therefore, no likely significant effects will occur from BNP as a result of changes to hydrology either alone or in-combination with other plans and policies.</p>

**Figure 25-Summary of Impact Pathways**

Policy	Description	Likely Significant Effects (LSE)	Recommendation at Screening Stage
Policy BP1: Landscape, Dedham Vale National	Policy sets out details of supporting development	No LSE- This policy is qualitative and will not directly result in development.	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate

<sup>45</sup> As set out in Braintree District Councils Local Plan Part 1 HRA (2016)



<b>Policy</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Likely Significant Effects (LSE)</b>	<b>Recommendation at Screening Stage</b>
Landscape and Stour Valley Project Area	which will reflect the intrinsic quality and character of the landscape.		assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken.
Policy BP2: Bures Rural Lanes	Policy sets out how new development should retain the traditional character and tranquility of rural lanes.	No LSE- This policy is qualitative and will not directly result in development.	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy BP3: Key Views	To conserve the current landscape setting through the protection of important local views	No LSE – mitigation policy for any growth that may come forward in the neighbourhood area.	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy BP4: Biodiversity	Requirement to deliver at least a 10% net gain in ecological value and conservation of existing natural features.	No LSE – mitigation policy for growth	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy BP5: Protection of Wildlife	Policy details that developments where possible within or adjacent to an existing green/blue corridor should use features to enhance the area by incorporating wildlife friendly design features.	No LSE – mitigation policy for any growth that may come forward in the neighbourhood area.	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy BP6: Locally Valued Trees	Policy sets out that proposals affecting trees/hedgerows should be	No LSE- This policy is qualitative and will not directly result in development.	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Likely Significant Effects (LSE)</b>	<b>Recommendation at Screening Stage</b>
	accompanied by a survey and should promote the use of deciduous/ever green planting.		Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy BP7: Local Green Space	Protection of green spaces of local importance from future development.	No LSE – supports retention of green open spaces, conserving the natural environment	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy BP8: River	Policy not supporting developments which have an adverse impact on the quality of water.	No LSE – mitigation policy for any growth that may come forward in the neighbourhood area.	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy BP9: Foul Water and Waste Infrastructure	Policy sets out to protect water quality, adequate water and wastewater treatment capacity or infrastructure upgrades shall be in place prior to development proceeding.	No LSE – mitigation policy for any growth that may come forward in the neighbourhood area.	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
BP10: Flood Risk Management	Protective policy requiring appropriate flood risk management.	No LSE – protective policy	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
BP11: Community Buildings	Supporting applications which will enhance community buildings and pay regard to the	No LSE- This policy is qualitative and will not directly result in development.	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Likely Significant Effects (LSE)</b>	<b>Recommendation at Screening Stage</b>
	Bures Design Codes.		
BP12: Community Assets	Policy sets out that development which could threaten the provision of a valued community asset should be accompanied by a rationale appropriate to that asset.	No LSE- This policy is qualitative and will not directly result in development.	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
BP13: Recreational Areas	Policy sets out that enhancement of recreational areas will be supported, and development should not detract from the benefit gained by the community from recreational areas in the village.	No LSE- This policy is qualitative and will not directly result in development.	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
BP14: Housing Mix	Requirements that ensure future housing development meets the needs of local people and reflects the BNP HNA 2022.	No LSE – does not promote development but relates to qualitative criteria for development	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy BP15: Affordable Housing	Sets a tenure split for affordable housing in line with the BNP HNA 2022 and the discount required for First Homes and rent to buy.	No LSE- This policy is qualitative and will not directly result in development.	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy BP16: Rural	Sets out detail that should be provided on RES.	No LSE- This policy is qualitative and will not	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Likely Significant Effects (LSE)</b>	<b>Recommendation at Screening Stage</b>
Exception Sites		directly result in development.	appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy BP17: Community Led Development	Community-led development should generally be supported. This may include schemes for affordable housing, small business units or renewable energy generation. The policy sets out criteria for CLD which may be permitted outside of development limits	No LSE- This policy is qualitative and will not directly result in development.	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy BP18: New Housing Development	Policy sets out criteria regarding new built development within the development boundary	No LSE- This policy is qualitative and will not directly result in development.	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy BP19: Design	Requiring high quality design that accords with the Bures Design Guide 2022.	No LSE- This policy is qualitative and will not directly result in development.	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy BP20: Conservation Areas	This policy focuses on detail applications should consider in regard to the Bures Design Guide Character Areas.	No LSE- This policy is qualitative and will not directly result in development.	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Likely Significant Effects (LSE)</b>	<b>Recommendation at Screening Stage</b>
Policy BP21: Heritage Assets and Non-designated heritage assets	Development to conserve the historic character, appearance and setting of heritage assets and locally listed non-designated heritage assets.	No LSE- This policy is qualitative and will not directly result in development.	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy BP22: Businesses in Bures	Existing businesses in Bures should be protected unless it's shown the business is no longer needed or viable.	No LSE- This policy is qualitative and will not directly result in development.	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy BP23: Walking and Cycling Network	Supportive policy promoting active travel and improved connectivity in the parish. The policy also sets out criteria new built developments should consider.	No LSE – This policy does not promote development, but encourages walking and cycling in the local environment. It will not directly result in development.	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken
Policy BP24: Walking Routes	Policy looks to protect existing public rights of way and support the opportunity to extend/improve public rights of way along the proposed mapped routes.	No LSE- the mapped routes in Figure 87 of the NP shows that this does not cross into any designated sites. No development has been allocated. However, the policy seeks to improvement routes in the development period if an opportunity arises.	None. This policy does not trigger the need for an appropriate assessment (HRA Stage 2) to be undertaken

**Figure 26- HRA Screening Assessment**

## **7 HRA SCREENING CONCLUSION**

---

The HRA Screening Assessment concludes that no significant effects are likely to occur with regards to the integrity of European Wildlife Sites within 20km. As such a full HRA and Appropriate Assessment is not required at this point and is **screened out**.

## **7.1 APPENDIX A- CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES OF THE EUROPEAN SITES**

This appendix contains information on the European sites that are within 20km to BNP area. The site area and designated features are drawn from Natural England's website. Site conservation objectives are drawn from Natural England's website too and are only available for SACs and SPAs. Site Improvement Plans which have been published for the SPA/Ramsar Sites have been reviewed and included for information purposes.

It must be noted this information has been gathered from Natural England. This document should be read in conjunction with Supplementary Advice documents provided by the Statutory Body, which provides more detailed advice and information to enable the application and achievement of the Conservation Objectives.

### ***7.1.1.1 Abberton Reservoir***

#### **Site location overview**

In 1991 the SPA Citation for Abberton Reservoir stated it is a large water storage reservoir lying about four miles south of Colchester. In numerical terms, Abberton is the most important reservoir in Great Britain for wintering wildfowl. It owes this position to its proximity to the coast and to the strict protection given to the site. Most of the SSSI is statutorily protected by the Wild Birds (Abberton Reservoir Sanctuary) Order 1967. Abberton reservoir qualifies under Article 4.2 by regularly supporting a nationally important breeding population of cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* (360 pairs, 5% of the British breeding population). This colony is unusual in Great Britain because the birds are nesting in trees inland, rather than on coastal cliff ledges or rocky islets.

The reservoir qualifies also under Article 4.2 as a Wetland of International Importance by regularly supporting, in winter, in excess of 20,000 waterfowl. In addition, the site qualifies under Article 4.2 by regularly supporting, in the late summer, substantial concentrations of five migratory wildfowl species (peak August counts for the five-year period 1985-89): 450 mute swan (3% of British wintering population); 110 gadwall; 420 shoveler; 2,700 pochard; and 2,700 tufted duck. Many of these birds moult at the site<sup>46</sup>.

Causeways divide the reservoir into three sections. In 2014 the Site Improvement Plan of the Abberton Reservoir stated that currently the water level of the main, eastern section is being raised by 3 metres to increase storage capacity. As part of the level-raising scheme, the original concrete banks have been removed and the shoreline re-profiled, creating extensive new areas of shallow wetland habitat for the site's waterfowl.

---

<sup>46</sup> Natural England. 1991. SPA Citation. Source: [European Site Conservation Objectives for Abberton Reservoir SPA - UK9009141 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Species/Conservation/Conservation-Objectives/Abberton-Reservoir)

## Qualifying features

With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), are subject to natural change.

A005 Podiceps cristatus; Great crested grebe (Non-breeding)  
A017 Phalacrocorax carbo; Great cormorant (Breeding)  
A036 Cygnus olor; Mute swan (Non-breeding)  
A050 Anas penelope; Eurasian wigeon (Non-breeding)  
A051 Anas strepera; Gadwall (Non-breeding)  
A052 Anas crecca; Eurasian teal (Non-breeding)  
A056 Anas clypeata; Northern shoveler (Non-breeding)  
A059 Aythya ferina; Common pochard (Non-breeding)  
A061 Aythya fuligula; Tufted duck (Non-breeding)  
A067 Bucephala clangula; Common goldeneye (Non-breeding)  
A125 Fulica atra; Common coot (Non-breeding) Waterbird assemblage

## Conservation objectives<sup>47</sup>

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:

- a) The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- b) The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
- c) The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
- d) The population of each of the qualifying features, and,
- e) The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

## Key vulnerabilities

Reviewing the Site Improvement Plan (2014) there were a number of prioritised issues for the site and the features they affect. Measures were set out to address these.<sup>48</sup> These can be considered as key vulnerabilities and are listed below:

- Siltation
- Public access/disturbance
- Planning permission
- Changes in species distribution
- Bird strike
- Water pollution
- Air pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition.

---

<sup>47</sup> Natural England. 2019. European Site Conservation Objectives for Abberton Reservoir Special Protection Area Site Code: UK9009141. Source: [European Site Conservation Objectives for Abberton Reservoir SPA - UK9009141 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Information-and-data/European-Site-Conservation-Objectives-for-Abberton-Reservoir-SPA-UK9009141)

<sup>48</sup> [Site Improvement Plan: Abberton Reservoir - SIP001 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Information-and-data/Site-Improvement-Plan-Abberton-Reservoir-SIP001)



## **Non-qualifying habitats and/or species in which the qualifying habitats and/or species depend**

In general, the qualifying species all rely on the sites ecosystem as a whole and areas of shallow wetland habitat and freshwater for waterfowl. The species will rely on the maintenance of populations of species in which they feed on and potentially off-site habitat foraging for these species. The diet of qualifying species includes fish, aquatic and terrestrial plants.

### ***7.1.1.2 Stour and Orwell Estuaries***

#### **Site location overview**

The Stour and Orwell estuaries straddle the eastern part of the Essex/Suffolk border in eastern England. The SPA is coincident with Cattawade Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Orwell Estuary SSSI and Stour Estuary SSSI. The estuaries include extensive mudflats, low cliffs, saltmarsh and small areas of vegetated shingle on the lower reaches. The mudflats hold *Enteromorpha*, *Zostera* and *Salicornia* spp. The site also includes areas of low-lying grazing marsh at Shotley Marshes on the south side of the Orwell and at Cattawade Marshes at the head of the Stour. Trimley Marshes on the north side of the Orwell includes several shallow freshwater pools, as well as areas of grazing marsh, and is managed as a nature reserve by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. In summer, the site supports important numbers of breeding avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*, while in winter it holds major concentrations of waterbirds, especially geese, ducks and waders. The geese also feed, and some 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.

#### **Qualifying features**

A156(NB) *Limosa limosa islandica*: Black-tailed godwit  
A143(NB) *Calidris canutus*: Red knot  
A149(NB) *Calidris alpina alpina*: Dunlin Waterbird assemblage  
A162(NB) *Tringa totanus*: Common redshank  
A141(NB) *Pluvialis squatarola*: Grey plover  
A046a(NB) *Branta bernicla bernicla*: Dark-bellied brent goose  
A054(NB) *Anas acuta*: Northern pintail  
A132(B) *Recurvirostra avosetta*: Pied avocet

#### **Conservation objectives**

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:

a) The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features

- b) The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
- c) The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
- d) The population of each of the qualifying features, and
- e) The distribution of the qualifying features within the site

### **Key vulnerabilities**

Reviewing the Site Improvement Plan (2015<sup>49</sup>) there were a number of prioritised issues for the site and the features they affect. Measures were set out to address these.<sup>50</sup> These can be considered as key vulnerabilities and are listed below:

- Coastal squeeze
- Public access/disturbance
- Changes in species distributions
- Invasive species
- Planning permissions
- Air pollution
- Inappropriate coastal management
- Fisheries

### **Non-qualifying habitats and/or species in which the qualifying habitats and/or species depend**

In general, the qualifying species all rely on the sites ecosystem as a whole and areas of mudflats, marshes and shingle for waterfowl. The species will rely on the maintenance of populations of species in which they feed on and potentially off-site habitat foraging for these species. The diet of qualifying species includes crustaceans, invertebrates, aquatic and terrestrial plants. This includes beetles, flies, small crabs, fish, spiders and worms.

#### ***7.1.1.3 Colne Estuary Mid Essex Coast Phase 2***

##### **Site location overview**

In 1993 the Colne Estuary was designated a SPA for supporting bird species of international and national importance. The Mid-Essex Coast comprises an extensive complex of estuaries and intertidal sand and silt flats, including several islands, shingle and shell beaches and extensive areas of saltmarsh. The proposed Special Protection Area follows the boundaries of five SSSIs: the Colne Estuary, the Blackwater Estuary, Dengie, River Crouch Marshes and Foulness.

The Colne Estuary qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Birds Directive by supporting nationally important breeding populations of an Annex 1 species including the little tern (*Sterna albifrons*) and supporting an important wintering population of Annex 2

---

<sup>49</sup> [Site Improvement Plan: Stour and Orwell Estuaries - SIP232 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>50</sup> [Site Improvement Plan: Abberton Reservoir - SIP001 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#)

1 species such as the hen harrier (*Circus cyaneus*). The Colne Estuary qualifies under Article 2 of the Birds Directive by supporting in the summer, nationally important populations of two regularly occurring migratory species being the pochard (*Aythya farina*) and the ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*). The Colne Estuary also qualifies under Article 4.2 as a wetland of international importance by regularly supporting, in winter, over 20,000 waterfowl<sup>51</sup>.

### **Qualifying features**

A046a *Branta bernicla bernicla*; Dark-bellied brent goose (Non-breeding)

A059 *Aythya ferina*; Common pochard (Breeding)

A082 *Circus cyaneus*; Hen harrier (Non-breeding)

A137 *Charadrius hiaticula*; Ringed plover (Breeding)

A162 *Tringa totanus*; Common redshank (Non-breeding)

A195 *Sterna albifrons*; Little tern (Breeding) Waterbird assemblage

### **Conservation objectives<sup>52</sup>**

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:

- a) The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- b) The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
- c) The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
- d) The population of each of the qualifying features, and,
- e) The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

### **Key vulnerabilities**

There was not a site improvement plan for Colne Estuary. However, key vulnerabilities could be ones similar to other SPA when it comes to:

- Public access/disturbance
- Changes in species distributions
- Invasive species
- Planning permissions
- Air pollution
- Inappropriate coastal management
- Fisheries

---

<sup>51</sup> Natural England. 1993. SPA Citation. Source: [European Site Conservation Objectives for Colne Estuary \(Mid-Essex Coast Phase 2\) SPA - UK9009243 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-for-colne-estuary-mid-essex-coast-phase-2-spa-uk9009243)

<sup>52</sup> Natural England. 2019. European Site Conservation Objectives for Colne Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 2) Special Protection Area Site Code: UK9009243 Source: [European Site Conservation Objectives for Colne Estuary \(Mid-Essex Coast Phase 2\) SPA - UK9009243 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-for-colne-estuary-mid-essex-coast-phase-2-spa-uk9009243)

## **Non-qualifying habitats and/or species in which the qualifying habitats and/or species depend**

In general, the qualifying species all rely on the sites ecosystem as a whole and areas of marshland, sand flats and beaches for waterfowl. The species will rely on the maintenance of populations of species in which they feed on and potentially off-site habitat foraging for these species. The diet of qualifying species includes small birds and mammals, invertebrates, aquatic and terrestrial plants. This includes small fish, insects, reptiles, spiders and worms.