



Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031: Pre-Submission Draft

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





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Glossary of Acronyms

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



1. Introduction

1.1 The Purpose of This Report

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

1.2 The Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Draft

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

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



2. Legislative Background

2.1 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

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

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

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

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

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



3. HRA Screening

3.1 Habitat Regulations Assessment of Development Plans

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

This section of this Report aims to:

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

3.2 Court Judgements and their consideration in this Report

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

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

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

3.2.2 CJEU Holohan C- 461/17

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

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



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

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

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

3.3 Habitats (European) Sites

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

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

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

3.3.1 Explanation of SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites

Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

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

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

SACs are areas designated to protect habitat types that are in danger of disappearance, have a small natural range, or are highly characteristic of the region; and to protect species that are endangered, vulnerable, rare, or endemic. Example:



Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens for calcareous fens, *Molinia* meadows and Desmoulin's whorl snail *Legislation: EU Habitats Directive*.

Ramsar Sites (Wetlands of International Importance)

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

3.3.2 Habitats Sites to be considered

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

Table 1: Habitats Sites within 20km of the development

SPA	SAC	Ramsar
Stour and Orwell Estuaries		Stour and Orwell Estuaries

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

3.3.3 Conservation Objectives

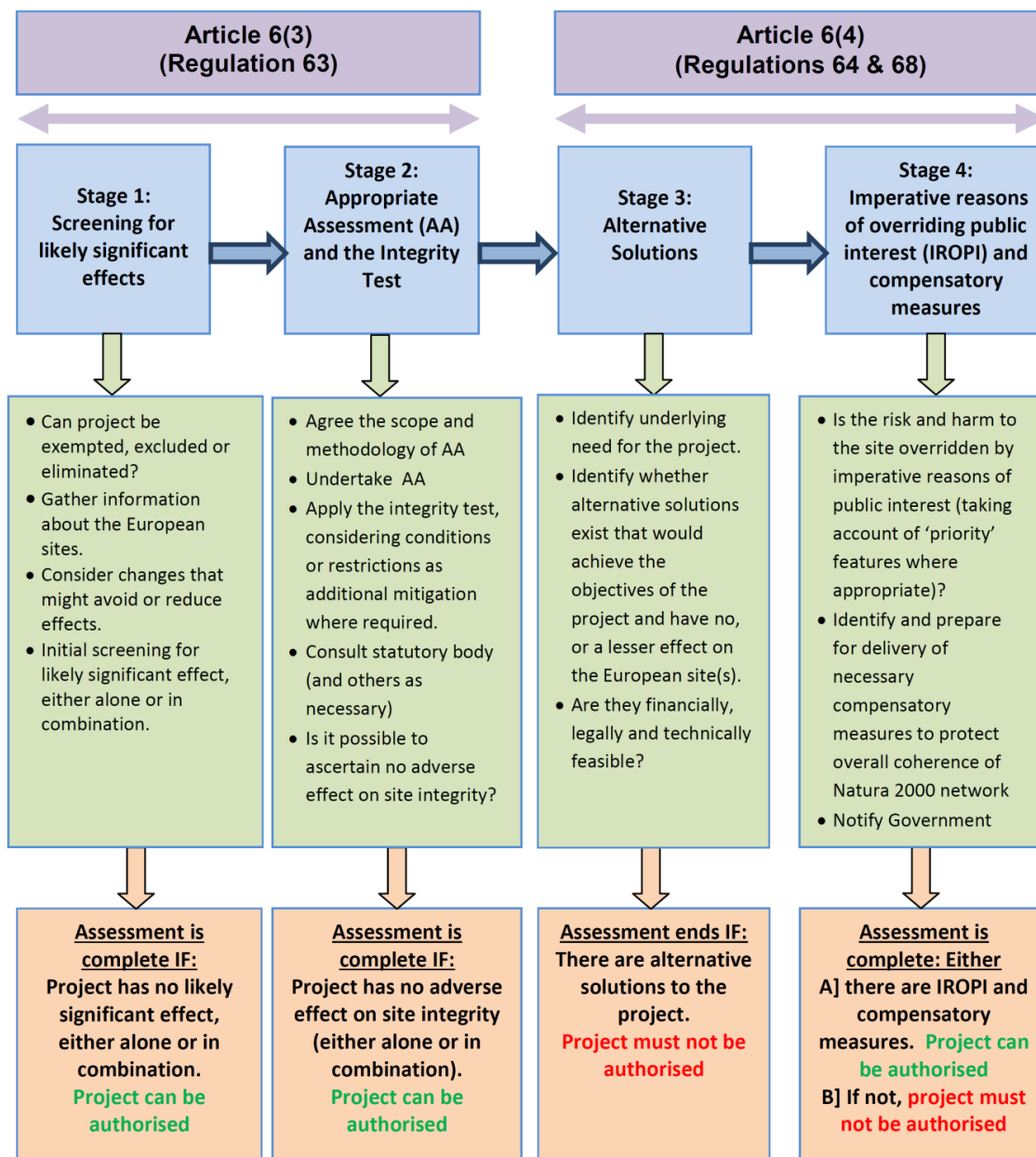
Information on each of the above Habitats sites has been obtained from the Natural England website.

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



3.4 Method and Approach

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



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



3.4.1 Stage 1: HRA screening

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

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

Table 2: Screening categorisation

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

3.4.2 Potential impacts of the Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan on Habitats Sites

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

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



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

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

Table 3: Assessment of potential impacts

Nature of potential impact	How the Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and project) could affect a Habitats site?	Why these effects are/ not considered likely to be significant?
Land take by development	The Plan area is outside the boundaries of the 2 Habitats sites within scope of this HRA.	N/A
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	The Plan area does not contain any functionally linked land for use by designated features of the Habitats sites.	N/A
Recreational pressure and disturbance	HRA / AA work undertaken at the Local Plan level indicates that there is no potential pathway for development in the Plan area to impact on the SAC, SPA & Ramsar sites within the scope of the HRA as the Parish lies outside the 13km Zones of Influence of all Habitats sites within the Suffolk Coast RAMS.	N/A
Water quantity and quality	It is considered that there is no pathway for development to result in impacts on water.	N/A
Changes in air & noise pollution levels	It is considered that there is no pathway for development to result in pollution impacts.	N/A



3.5 Results of HRA Screening of Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan Policies

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

- Policy LWD 1 Spatial Strategy
- Policy LWD 2 Housing Development
- Policy LWD 3 Housing Allocations
- Policy LWD 4 Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites
- Policy LWD 5 Measures for New Housing Development
- Policy LWD 6 Housing Mix
- Policy LWD 7 Special Landscape Area
- Policy LWD 8 Dark Skies
- Policy LWD 9 Local Green Spaces
- Policy LWD 10 Protection of Important Views
- Policy LWD 11 Biodiversity
- Policy LWD 12 Buildings of Local Significance
- Policy LWD 13 Heritage Assets
- Policy LWD 14 Holbrook Park Special Character Area
- Policy LWD 15 Design Considerations
- Policy LWD 16 Sustainable Building
- Policy LWD 17 Flooding and Sustainable Drainage
- Policy LWD 18 Protecting Existing Services and Facilities
- Policy LWD 19 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

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

Table 4: Summary of findings from the HRA screening

Policy	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effect on a Habitats Site?	Recommendations
<p>Policy LWD 1 - Spatial Strategy</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan area will accommodate development commensurate with Little Waldingfield's lack of services and facilities and its designation as a Hamlet in the emerging Joint Local Plan.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations



<p>New development will take place within the Settlement Boundary, as defined on the Policies Map. Only in the most exceptional circumstances will proposals for development located outside the Settlement Boundary be permitted. Such exceptional circumstances will be for development that is essential for the operation of existing businesses, agriculture, horticulture, forestry and outdoor recreation where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that there is an identified local need for the proposal; and ii. it cannot be satisfactorily located within the Settlement Boundaries. 		
<p>Policy LWD 2 - Housing Development</p> <p>This Plan provides for around 10 additional dwellings to be developed in the Neighbourhood Plan area between 2018 and 2036. This growth will be met through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the allocation of sites as identified in separate policies in this Plan and on the Policies Map; and ii. ii small brownfield “windfall” sites and infill plots of one or two dwellings within the Settlement Boundary that come forward during the Plan period and are not identified in the Plan. 	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy LWD 3 - Housing Allocation</p> <p>The following sites, as identified on the Policies Map, are allocated for housing development. Development will be expected to take place in accordance with the current planning consent for each site (as noted) unless superseded by a subsequent planning permission for residential development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Land adjoining The Swan PH, The Street (1 dwelling and 1 conversion – Babergh DC ref DC/19/01283); ii. Land at The Grange, The Street (1 dwelling- Babergh ref DC/17/05333) 		



<p>Policy LWD 4 - Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites</p> <p>Proposals for the development of small-scale affordable housing schemes, including entry level homes for purchase (as defined by paragraph 71 of the NPPF) on rural exception sites outside the Settlement Boundary, where housing would not normally be permitted by other policies, will be supported where there is a proven local need and provided that the housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. remains affordable in perpetuity; and for people that are in housing need because they are unable to buy or rent properties in the Village at open-market prices; and ii. is offered, in the first instance, to people with a demonstrated local connection, as defined by the Babergh district Council Choice Based Lettings Scheme. Where there's no need, a property should then be offered to those with demonstrated need for affordable housing in neighbouring villages. <p>These restrictions should be delivered through legal agreement attached to the planning consent for the housing. Applications for such development will be considered in relation to the appearance and character of the surrounding area, the potential impact on residential amenity and highways safety.</p> <p>To be acceptable, proposals should demonstrate that a local need exists which cannot be met by applying normal planning policy for the provision of affordable homes in association with market housing.</p> <p>Any application for affordable housing in respect of this policy should be accompanied by a detailed need assessment and the accommodation proposed should contribute to meeting this proven need.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances, a small number of market homes will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. no other means of funding the construction of the affordable homes is available; and b. the market housing is subsidiary to the affordable housing element of the proposal and the amount 	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
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<p>of market housing required is, as demonstrated through a viability assessment, the minimum required to deliver the affordable housing. Where sites for affordable housing in the countryside are brought forward with an element of market housing, both housing tenures should be built to the same design standards and contribute towards the character of the area.</p>		
<p>Policy LWD 5 - Measures for New Housing Developments</p> <p>All new dwellings shall achieve appropriate internal space through adherence to the latest Nationally Described Space Standards.</p> <p>Dwellings should also make adequate provision for the covered storage of wheelie bins and cycles and should meet the current adopted car parking standards.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
<p>Policy LWD 6 - Housing Mix</p> <p>Housing development must contribute to meeting the existing and future identified needs of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Proposals that deliver homes with four or more bedrooms will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that there is a particular need for dwellings of that size.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
<p>Policy LWD 7 - Special Landscape Area</p> <p>Development proposals in the Special Landscape Area, as identified on the Proposals Map, will be permitted only where they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protect or enhance the special landscape qualities of the area; and • are designed and sited so as to harmonise with the landscape setting. 	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
<p>Policy LWD 8 - Dark Skies</p> <p>While ensuring that new developments are secure in terms of occupier and vehicle safety, dark skies are to be preferred over lighting. Any future outdoor lighting systems should have a minimum impact on the environment, minimising light pollution and adverse effects on wildlife,</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations



<p>subject to highway safety, the needs of particular individuals or groups, and security. Schemes should reduce the consumption of energy by promoting efficient outdoor lighting technologies, keeping the night-time skies dark and reducing glare.</p>		
<p>Policy LWD 9 - Local Green Spaces</p> <p>The following Local Green Spaces are designated in this Plan and identified on the Proposals Map.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Church Field 2. Green space at Grove Avenue 3. Amenity space at Wade Crescent 4. Amenity space at the entrance to Croft Lea 5. Village sign green space, The Street <p>Development on these sites will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Permitted development rights, including the operational requirements of infrastructure providers, are not affected by this designation.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy LWD 10 - Protection of Important Views</p> <p>Important views from public vantage points out of the surrounding countryside are identified on the Policies Map. Any proposed development should not detract from the key landscape and built development features of those views as identified in the Neighbourhood Plan Character Appraisal.</p> <p>Proposals for new buildings outside the Settlement Boundary will be required to be accompanied by a Landscape Visual Impact Appraisal or other appropriate and proportionate evidence that demonstrates how the proposal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. can be accommodated in the countryside without having a detrimental impact, by reason of the buildings scale, materials and location, on the character and appearance of the countryside and its distinction from the built-up area; and ii. conserves and enhances the unique landscape and scenic beauty within the Parish, having regard to the Suffolk Landscape Character Appraisal and the Neighbourhood Plan Character Appraisal. 	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p>Policy LWD 11 - Biodiversity</p> <p>Where such losses or harm are unavoidable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the benefits of the development proposal must be demonstrated clearly to outweigh any impacts; and ii. suitable mitigation measures, that may include equivalent or better replacement of the lost features, will be required. <p>It is expected that the mitigation proposals will form an integral part of the design concept and layout of any development scheme, and that development will be landscape-led and appropriate in relation to its setting, context and ongoing management.</p> <p>Except in exceptional circumstances, development proposals should avoid the loss of, or substantial harm to, important trees, hedgerows and other natural features such as ponds.</p> <p>Where new access is created, or an existing access is widened through an existing hedgerow, a new hedgerow of native species shall be planted on the splay returns into the site to maintain the appearance and continuity of hedgerows in the vicinity.</p> <p>Development proposals will be supported where they provide a net gain in biodiversity through, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the creation of new natural habitats including ponds; b. the planting of additional trees and hedgerows (reflecting the character of Little Waldingfield's traditional hedgerows), and; c. restoring and repairing fragmented biodiversity networks. 	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
<p>Policy LWD 12 - Buildings of Local Significance</p> <p>The retention and protection of the following and as identified on the Policies Map, will be secured.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parish Rooms, Church Road 2. Old School Rooms, Church Road 3. Cyprus Cottage, Church Road 4. Yew Tree Cottage, Bramley Cottage and Rose Cottage, The Street <p>Proposals for any works that would lead to the loss of, or substantial harm to, a building of local significance should</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations



<p>be supported by an appropriate analysis of the significance of the asset together with an explanation of the wider public benefits of the proposal.</p>		
<p>Policy LWD 13 - Heritage Assets</p> <p>To ensure the conservation and enhancement of the Village's heritage assets, proposals must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. preserve or enhance the significance of the heritage assets of the Village, their setting and the wider built environment, including views into, within and out of the Conservation Area as identified in the Character Appraisal and on the Policies Map; b. retain buildings and spaces, the loss of which would cause harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area; c. contribute to the Village's local distinctiveness, built form and scale of its heritage assets, as described in the Character Assessment, through the use of appropriate design and materials; d. be of an appropriate scale, form, height, massing, alignment and detailed design which respects the area's character, appearance and its setting; e. demonstrate a clear understanding of the significance of the asset and of the wider context in which the heritage asset sits, alongside an assessment of the potential impact of the development on the heritage asset and its context; and f. provide clear justification, through the submission of a heritage statement, for any works that could harm a heritage asset yet be of wider substantial public benefit, through detailed analysis of the asset and the proposal. <p>Proposals will not be supported where the harm caused as a result of the impact of a proposed scheme is not justified by the public benefits that would be provided.</p> <p>Where a planning proposal affects a heritage asset, it must be accompanied by a Heritage Statement identifying,</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p>as a minimum, the significance of the asset, and an assessment of the impact of the proposal on the heritage asset. The level of detail of the Heritage Statement should be proportionate to the importance of the asset, the works proposed and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance and/or setting of the asset.</p>		
<p>Policy LWD 14 - Holbrook Park Special Character Area</p> <p>A Special Character Area is identified on the Proposals Map. Within this area, proposals will be supported where they enhance the distinct characteristics of the existing buildings and their parkland setting.</p> <p>Where the harm caused as a result of the impact of a proposed scheme is not justified by the public benefits that would be provided, it will not be supported.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy LWD 15 - Design Considerations</p> <p>Proposals for new development must reflect the local characteristics and circumstances in the Neighbourhood Plan Area and create and contribute to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment.</p> <p>Planning applications should demonstrate how they satisfy the requirements of the Development Design Checklist in Appendix 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan, as appropriate to the proposal</p> <p>In addition, proposals will be supported where they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. recognise and address the key features, characteristics, landscape/building character, local distinctiveness and special qualities of the area and, where necessary, prepare a landscape character appraisal to demonstrate this; b. maintain or create the Village's sense of place and/or local character; c. do not involve the loss of gardens, important open, green or landscaped areas, which make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of that part of the Village; 	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p>d. taking mitigation measures into account, do not affect adversely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. any historic, architectural or archaeological heritage assets of the site and its surroundings, including those identified Buildings of Local significance and the Listed Buildings set out in Appendix 1; ii. important landscape characteristics including trees and ancient hedgerows and other prominent topographical features identified in the Neighbourhood Plan Character appraisal; iii. identified important views into, out of, or within the Village as identified on the Policies Map; iv. sites, habitats, species and features of ecological interest; v. the amenities of adjacent areas by reason of noise, smell, vibration, overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light, other pollution (including light pollution), or volume or type of vehicular activity generated; and/or residential amenity; <p>e. do not locate sensitive development where its users and nearby residents would be significantly adversely affected by noise, smell, vibration, or other forms of pollution from existing sources, unless adequate and appropriate mitigation can be implemented;</p> <p>f. produce designs that respect the character, scale and density of the locality;</p> <p>g. produce designs, in accordance with standards, that maintain or enhance the safety of the highway network ensuring that all vehicle parking is provided within the plot and seek always to ensure permeability through new housing areas, connecting any new development into the heart of the existing settlement;</p>		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> h. wherever possible ensure that development faces on to existing roads; i. do not result in water run-off that would add-to or create surface water flooding; j. where appropriate, make adequate provision for the covered storage of all wheelie bins and cycle storage in accordance with adopted cycle parking standards; k. include suitable ducting capable of accepting fibre to enable superfast broadband; and l. provide one electric vehicle charging point per new off-street parking place created. 		
<p>Policy LWD 16 - Sustainable Building</p> <p>Proposals that incorporate current best practice in energy conservation will be supported where such measures are designed to be integral to the building design and minimise any detrimental impact on the building or its surroundings. Development proposals should accord with the following energy hierarchy (in order of preference):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minimise energy demand; 2. Maximise energy efficiency; 3. Utilise renewable energy; 4. Utilise low carbon energy; 5. Utilise other energy sources. <p>Proposals should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. incorporate best practice in energy conservation, be designed to achieve maximum achievable energy efficiency through the use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials; b. maximise the benefits of solar gain in site layouts and orientation of buildings; c. where viable, incorporate other renewable energy systems such as Ground Sourced Heat Pumps or Air Sourced Heat Pumps; and d. avoid fossil fuel-based heating systems. 	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p>Policy LWD 17 - Flooding and Sustainable Drainage</p> <p>Proposals for all new development will be required to submit schemes appropriate to the scale of the proposal detailing how on-site drainage will be managed so as not to cause or exacerbate surface water and fluvial flooding elsewhere. Examples include rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling, and run-off and water management such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SDS) or other natural drainage systems where easily accessible maintenance can be achieved.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
<p>Policy LWD 18 - Protecting Existing Services and Facilities</p> <p>Proposals that would result in the loss of valued facilities or services which support the local community (or premises last used for such purposes) will only be permitted where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. it can be demonstrated that the current use is not economically viable and is not likely to become viable. Supporting financial evidence should be provide including any efforts to advertise the premises for sale for a minimum of 12 months; and b. it can be demonstrated, through evidenced research, that there is no local demand for the use and that the building/site is not needed for any alternative social, community or leisure use; or c. alternative facilities and services are available, or replacement provision is made, of at least equivalent standard, in a location that is accessible to the community it serves with good access by public transport or by cycling or walking. 	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
<p>Policy LWD 19 - Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities</p> <p>Proposals for the provision, enhancement and/ or expansion of amenity, sport or recreation open space or</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations



facilities will be permitted subject to compliance with other Policies in the Development Plan. Development which will result in the loss of existing amenity, sport or recreation open space or facilities will not be allowed unless:

- a. it can be demonstrated that the space or facility is surplus to requirements as measured against the local planning authority' standards for the particular location, and the proposed loss will not result in a shortfall during the development Plan period; or
- b. replacement for the space or facilities lost is made available, which is of at least equivalent quantity and quality, and in a suitable location to meet the needs of users of the existing space or facility.

Any replacement provision should take account of the needs of the needs of the village and the current standards of open space and sports facility provision adopted by the local planning authority.

Where necessary to the acceptability of the development, the local planning authority will require developers of new housing, office, retail and other commercial and mixed development to provide open space including play areas, formal sport/recreation areas, amenity areas and where appropriate, indoor sports facilities or to provide land and a financial contribution towards the cost and maintenance of existing or new facilities, as appropriate. These facilities will be secure through the use of conditions and/or planning obligations.

Clubhouses, pavilions, car parking and ancillary facilities must be of a high standard of design and internal layout. The location of such facilities must be well related and sensitive to the topography, character and uses of the surrounding area, particularly when located in or close to residential areas. Proposals which give rise to intrusive floodlighting will not be permitted.

3.5.1 Recommendations

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



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

3.6 Other Plans & Projects: In-Combination Effects

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

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

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

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



<p>Suffolk Coastal District Council</p>	<p>Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan at Final Draft Plan Stage (Dec 2018)</p>	<p>It is recommended that the Suffolk authorities should be mindful of the potential issue for impacts from air quality and plan for more detailed analysis of risks across the county, to inform the next plan reviews. This should include air quality modelling that incorporates a specific consideration of potential deposition rates within 200m of European sites.</p>	<p>Potential risk of traffic emissions to Habitats sites with features sensitive to air pollution.</p> <p>Recommendation that the Council commits to working with neighbouring authorities to gather more data to inform future Local Plan reviews.</p>
<p>Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council</p>	<p>Joint Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment including Appropriate Assessment</p>	<p>Embedded mitigation measures for projects will need to be considered in project level HRA/AA reports and secured by way of any planning consent. The Babergh & Mid Suffolk Districts Joint Local Plan is not predicted to have any adverse effect on integrity (AEOI) on any Habitats Sites.</p>	<p>It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.</p>



4. Conclusions

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

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



5. References

- Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Joint Local Plan (2018)
- Natural England Conservation objectives for European Sites: East of England Website: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/6581547796791296#content>
- Natural England Site Improvement Plans: East of England <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/4873023563759616>
- Place Services (June 2019) Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Joint Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment including Appropriate Assessment
- Little Waldingfield Parish Council (2020) Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan Regulation 14 Draft)
- Footprint Ecology (2019) Habitats Regulations Assessment Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy for Ipswich Borough, Babergh District, Mid Suffolk District and East Suffolk Councils – Technical Report



Appendix I

Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan Area

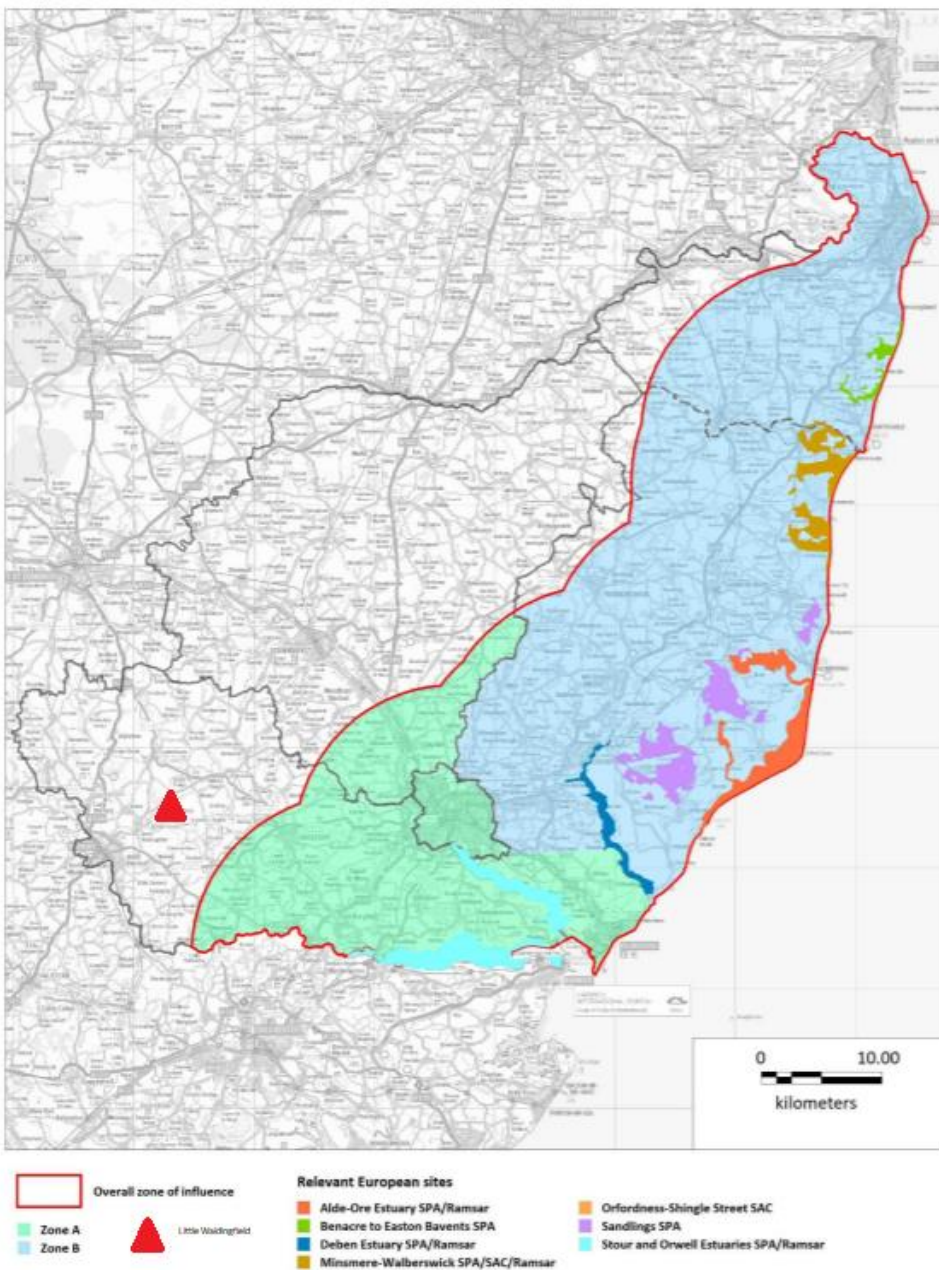
Source: Little Waldingfield Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Draft (Babergh DC, 2018)





Appendix II

Draft Map Little Waldingfield parish and Suffolk Coast RAMS Habitats Sites Zone of Influence



Source: Footprint Ecology (2019) Habitats Regulations Assessment Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy for Ipswich Borough, Babergh District, Mid Suffolk District and East Suffolk Councils – Technical Report





Appendix III

Characteristics of Habitats Sites

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



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



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



<p>EU Code: UK11067</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stiff saltmarsh-grass <i>Puccinellia rupestris</i> • Small cord-grass <i>Spartina maritima</i> • Perennial glasswort <i>Sarcocornia perennis</i> • Lax-flowered sea lavender <i>Limonium humile</i> • Eelgrasses <i>Zostera angustifolia</i>, <i>Z. marina</i> and <i>Z. noltei</i>. <p>Ramsar criterion 5</p> <p>Assemblages of international importance; species with peak counts</p>		<p>sediment replacement for additional erosion that can be attributed to port development and maintenance dredging. A realignment site has been created on-site to make up for the loss of habitat due to capital dredging. General background erosion has not been tackled although a Flood Management Strategy for the site is being produced.</p>
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	<p>in winter; 63,017 waterfowl.</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 6</p> <p>Species/ populations occurring at levels of international importance:</p> <p>Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common redshank , <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i> • Species with peak counts in winter: • Dark-bellied brent goose, <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i> • Northern pintail , <i>Anas acuta</i> • Grey plover , <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> 		
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Red knot , <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i>• Dunlin , <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>• Black-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>• Common redshank , <i>Tringa totanus tetanus</i>		
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