



Hoxne Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2037: Pre-submission (Regulation 14) Draft

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA): Screening Report – February 2022



Essex County Council



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Report Checking and Version Control

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Glossary of Acronyms

AA	Appropriate Assessment
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

The Purpose of This Report

- 1.1 This report screens to determine whether the Hoxne Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2037 Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) Draft requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). A Stage 1 HRA is required when it is deemed that likely adverse significant effects may occur on protected Habitats sites as a result of the implementation of a plan/project, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

The Hoxne Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2037 Pre-submission (Regulation 14) Draft

- 1.2 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 Pre-submission (Regulation 14) Draft of the Hoxne Neighbourhood Development Plan will set out planning policies for Hoxne Parish and within the confines of the Neighbourhood Development Plan boundary as defined (see Appendix 1).
- 1.3 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 Mid Suffolk District Council.



2. Legislative Background

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

- 2.1 Under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations (The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended), 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.
- 2.2 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 were formerly known as Natura 2000 sites and now as Habitats sites in the NPPF (2021).
- 2.3 This HRA Screening Report has been undertaken in order to support the Hoxne Neighbourhood Development Plan which is being produced by Hoxne Parish Council in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The area covered by the Plan is shown in Appendix 1.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 On 23 June 2016, the United Kingdom (UK) held a referendum and voted to leave the European Union (EU). On 26 June 2018 the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 received Royal Assent and the UK has now left the EU. The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 made sure that UK laws continue to operate following the UK's exit from the EU. There is no immediate change to legislation or policy affecting national infrastructure. Relevant EU Directives have been transposed into UK law and those are unchanged until amended by Parliament. The requirements for HRA under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) remain in place with minor changes being affected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Amendment (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Parliament will however be at liberty to introduce future changes to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) since, after 31 December 2020, the UK is no longer bound by the EU Habitats or Wild Birds Directives.
- 2.7 At the present time the position, under section 6(3) EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (as amended), is that the courts in the UK, with the sole exception of the Supreme Court, will continue to be bound by HRA judgements handed down by the CJEU and by domestic courts prior to 31 December 2020 when interpreting the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017



(as amended). This is the case as long as the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) remain unmodified by Parliament.



3. HRA Screening

Habitat Regulations Assessment of Development Plans

- 3.1 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 (as amended).
- 3.2 This section of this Report aims to:
- Identify the Habitats sites within 20km of the Hoxne Neighbourhood Development Plan area.
 - Summarise the reasons for designation and Conservation Objectives for each site to be considered in this assessment.
 - Screen the Hoxne 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.

Court Judgements and their consideration in this Report

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

- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 This HRA Screening Report does not therefore consider mitigation measures within the assessment of Likely Significant Effects resulting from the Hoxne Neighbourhood Development Plan.

CJEU Holohan C- 461/17

- 3.5 This Court judgement 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.

- 3.6 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 Hoxne Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Habitats (European) Sites

- 3.7 Habitats sites is the term used in the (revised) NPPF (2021) to describe any site which would be included within the definition at Regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) for the purpose of those regulations. These now form part of the UK national network of sites for nature protection. The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of UK's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.
- 3.8 All Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are designated for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are designated for other species, and for Habitats. Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) are also part of the National Network of sites. 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.

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. Example: Breckland SPA is internationally important for Nightjar, Stone Curlew and Woodlark. *Legislation: Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).*



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: Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)*.

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*.

Habitats Sites to be considered

3.9 There are five Habitats sites (SPA/SAC/Ramsar) which lie within 20 km of Hoxne parish and are shown on the map in Appendix 2.

Table 1: Habitats Sites within 20km of the development

SPA	SAC	Ramsar
Breckland	Waveney & Little Ouse Valley Fens	Redgrave & South Lopham Fens
	Dew's Pond	
	Norfolk Valley Fens	

3.10 After consideration of the Zones of Influence as shown on MAGIC website www.magic.gov.uk, the Plan area lies outside the Impact Risk Zone for all five Habitats sites - Redgrave & South Lopham Fens Ramsar site, the Waveney & Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC, Norfolk Valley Fens SAC and Dew's Pond SAC. It was therefore concluded that no Habitats sites within scope of this assessment for any likely significant effects resulting from the Hoxne Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2037 Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) Draft.



Conservation Objectives

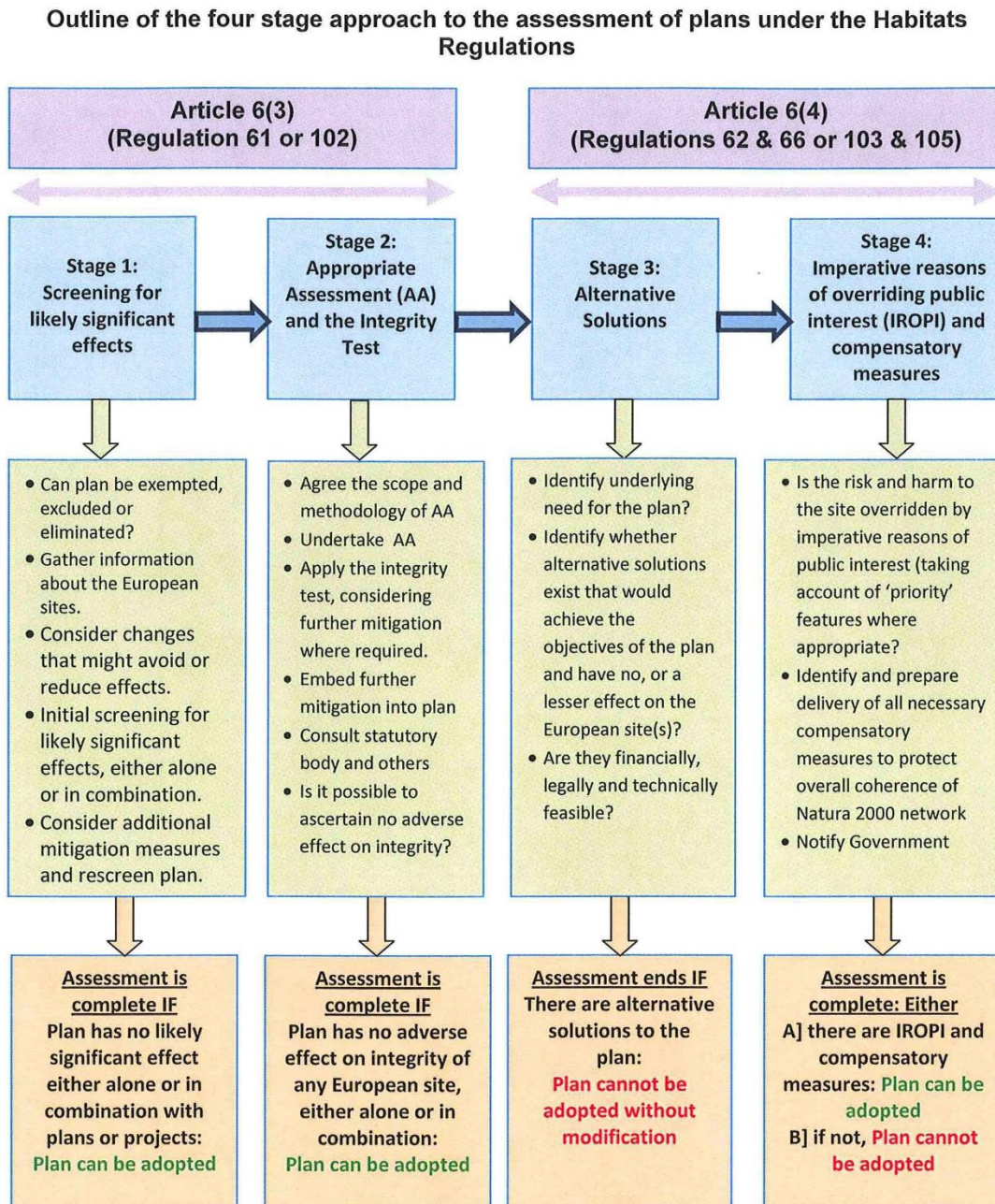
- 3.11 Information on each of the above Habitats sites has been obtained from the Natural England website.
- 3.12 The justification for the importance of each Habitats site and the reasons for designation-the Conservation Objectives and Designation Features- for each site are included in Appendix 3. 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.

Method and Approach

- 3.13 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.



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



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Stage 1: HRA screening

3.14 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 2 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.

3.15 Each of the policies in the Hoxne Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2037 Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) Draft has been screened to identify whether they would have any impact on a Habitats site and allocated to a category as shown in Table 2.

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).

Potential impacts of the Hoxne Neighbourhood Development Plan on Habitats Sites

3.16 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 waste 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.

3.17 However there are no Habitats sites within scope of this assessment. Each policy in the neighbourhood plan will therefore be assessed against the above criteria in the table below as no impacts.

Table 3: Assessment of potential impacts

Nature of potential impact	How the Hoxne 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	However there are no Habitats sites within scope of this assessment.	N/A.
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	There are no Habitats sites within scope of this assessment.	N/A
Recreational pressure and disturbance	There are no Habitats sites within scope of this assessment	N/A
Water quantity and quality	There are no Habitats sites within scope of this assessment.	N/A
Changes in air & noise pollution levels	There are no Habitats sites within scope of this assessment	N/A.

Results of HRA Screening of Hoxne Neighbourhood Development Plan Policies

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

- Policy Hoxne 1 – The Settlement Boundary
- Policy Hoxne 2 – Heritage Assets



- Policy Hoxne 3 – Design
- Policy Hoxne 4 – Key Views
- Policy Hoxne 5 – Local Green Spaces
- Policy Hoxne 6 – Managing Change on the Landscape
- Policy Hoxne 7 – Biodiversity Networks
- Policy Hoxne 8 – Flood Risk
- Policy Hoxne 9 – Sustainable Construction
- Policy Hoxne 10 – Affordable Housing Provision
- Policy Hoxne 11 – House Types and Sizes
- Policy Hoxne 12 – Shreeves Farm
- Policy Hoxne 13 – Land between Denham Low Road and Hoxne Playing Field
- Policy Hoxne 14 – Abbey Farm Business Site
- Policy Hoxne 15 – Infrastructure Requirements

3.19 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 Hoxne 1 – The Settlement Boundary</p> <p>The settlement boundaries for Hoxne Low Street and Hoxne Cross Street/Heckfield Green are defined in Figure 2 and on the Policies Map.</p> <p>Development within these boundaries will be supported where it complies with the policies of the Development Plan.</p> <p>Development outside of these boundaries will only be supported where it meets national and strategic policies on development in the Countryside.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy Hoxne 2 – Heritage Assets</p> <p>All development should protect and enhance the appearance, character and setting of heritage assets shown in Figures 3 and 4 and on the Policies Map, including the non-designated assets and protected trees.</p> <p>Development proposals should demonstrate how they take account of the guidance in the Hoxne Conservation Area Appraisal (2012) and the Hoxne Neighbourhood Design Guide (2021) or any other successor documents.</p> <p>If there is a reasonable likelihood of archaeological remains being found within or adjacent a development sites an archaeological assessment as advised by</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p>Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service will normally be required.</p>		
<p>Policy Hoxne 3 – Design</p> <p>All development should be of high-quality design and respect local characteristics, materials and distinctiveness.</p> <p>The rural setting of Hoxne should be reflected in appropriate levels of landscaping and boundary screening/planting.</p> <p>Development proposals should demonstrate how they take account of the Hoxne Neighbourhood Design Codes (2021) or any other successor documents.</p> <p>All parking should adhere to standards set out in Suffolk Guidance for Parking (2019), or any other successor documents</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations.</p>
<p>Policy Hoxne 4 - Key Views</p> <p>Development proposals should be sited and designed to avoid or mitigate adverse impact the key views identified in Figure 5 and on the Policies Map.</p> <p>Development proposals will not be supported if there is a substantial impact on a key view or views which cannot be mitigated.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations.</p>
<p>Policy Hoxne 5 - Local Green Spaces</p> <p>The following areas below identified in Figure 6 and on the Policies Map area are designated as Local Green Spaces:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Low Street Green 2. The Playing Field 3. Heckfield Green 4. The Green adjoining the Primary School 5. Brakey Wood 6. The Community Orchard off Wittons Lane 7. The area leading up to St Edmunds monument 8. Hoxne Meadow, Cross Street <p>Development that would harm their open character will not normally be supported.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations.</p>
<p>Policy Hoxne 6 – Managing Change in the Landscape</p> <p>Development proposals should maintain and enhance the characteristics of the landscape in which they are set taking into account the guidance in the MSDC Landscape Guidance (2015).</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations.</p>



<p>The Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity identified in Figure 7 and on the Policies Map is of particular importance and development proposals should demonstrate measures to mitigate the impact of the proposal development on this areas. Development proposals that have a significant impact that cannot be mitigated will not be supported.</p>		
<p>Policy Hoxne 7 – Biodiversity Networks</p> <p>Ecological assets should be protected, restored and enhanced. Development proposals should demonstrate the measures proposed to achieve biodiversity net gain.</p> <p>Opportunities should be taken to reconnect the ecological network including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linear features such as the rivers and streams and their associated habitats; Hedgerows, mature trees and ditch networks; • Links between ponds, meadows and woodlands should be created and enhanced. 	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations.</p>
<p>Policy Hoxne 8 – Flood Risk</p> <p>Development proposals should take account of flood risk from all sources, including fluvial and pluvial risk and should not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. A site-specific flood risk assessment may be required to demonstrate that risk will not be increased elsewhere.</p> <p>Development will be supported in the areas of highest flood risk identified in Figure 8 and on the Policies Map.</p> <p>Proposals should include the use of above-ground open Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). These could include: - wetland and other water features, which can help reduce flood risk whilst offering other benefits including water quality, amenity/recreational areas, and biodiversity benefits; and - rainwater and stormwater harvesting and recycling; and other natural drainage systems where easily accessible maintenance can be achieved</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>Policy Hoxne 9 – Sustainable Construction</p> <p>Proposals that incorporate current best practice in energy conservation will be supported where such measures are designed to be integral to the building design and minimise any detrimental impact on the building or its surroundings. Development proposals should demonstrate:</p> <p>a. how they maximise the benefits of solar gain in site layouts and orientation of buildings;</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations.</p>



<p>b. incorporate best practice in energy conservation and be designed to achieve maximum achievable energy efficiency through a 'fabric first' approach;</p> <p>c. maximise the benefits of natural ventilation or utilising heat recovery mechanical ventilation in well sealed properties;</p> <p>d. avoid fossil fuel-based heating systems;</p> <p>e. incorporate EV charging for all home; and,</p> <p>f. incorporate sustainable design and construction measures and energy efficiency measures including, where feasible, ground/air source heat pumps, solar thermal, solar photovoltaic and rainwater and stormwater harvesting.</p>		
<p>Policy Hoxne 10 – Housing Allocations</p> <p>This plan provides for around 66 new dwellings over the plan period (2022-2037). This includes dwellings already granted planning permission that are yet to be completed (13 dwellings), and allocated sites as set out in Policies 13 and 14.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations.</p>
<p>Policy Hoxne 11 – Affordable Housing Provision</p> <p>Residential development sites allocated in this Plan should provide for about 18 affordable homes of which about 13 should be rented and about 5 should be through routes to home ownership.</p> <p>Affordable homes should be integrated within the development.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations.</p>
<p>Policy Hoxne 12 – House Types and Sizes</p> <p>All new residential development proposals will be expected to deliver the mix of house types and sizes set out below, unless it can be suitably demonstrated that the particular circumstances of the site, or the latest publicly available evidence of housing need information for the Plan area suggests otherwise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 42% 1- or 2-bedroom homes - 38% 3-bedroom homes - 20% 4-bedroom homes <p>Some homes suitable for older people should be provided in the form of bungalows or adaptable and accessible homes built to M4(2) standards.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p>Policy Hoxne 13 -Shreeves Farm</p> <p>Land at Shreeves Farm (2.23 hectares), identified in Figure 9 and on the Policies Map, is allocated for the development of 38 homes of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 should be 1- or 2-bedroom homes - 14 should be 3-bedroom homes - 8 should be 4 plus bedroom homes. <p>About 10 homes should be suitable for older people such as bungalows or adaptable and accessible homes built to M4(2) standards.</p> <p>About 13 affordable homes for sale or rent should be provided in accordance with Policy Hoxne 11 or the latest available evidence of need and should not necessarily be restricted to the smaller bedroom types. It should also be designed so that it is 'tenure' blind and, be distributed around the site and not concentrated in any one area.</p> <p>The site should be developed in accord with the Hoxne Design Guide and the indicative Masterplan.</p> <p>Provision of 0.4 hectares of safeguarding land should be made for an extension to the school to allow for future building extension, playing area and parking if required.</p> <p>Substantial planting will be required to screen the development from views from the South.</p> <p>Two green spaces should be included with the design replicating The Green at Low Street in character.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations.</p>
<p>Policy Hoxne 14 – Land between Denham Low Road and Hoxne Playing Field</p> <p>Land between Denham Low Road and Hoxne Playing Field (0.81 hectares) identified in Figure 9 and on the Policies Map is allocated for the development of 15 homes of which at least 10 homes should be suitable for older people such as bungalows or adaptable and accessible homes built to M4(2) standards.</p> <p>About 5 affordable homes for sale or rent should be provided in accordance with Policy Hoxne 11 or the latest available evidence of need and should not necessarily be restricted to the smaller bedroom types. It should also be designed so that it is 'tenure' blind and, be distributed around the site and not concentrated in any one area.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendation.</p>



<p>The site should be developed in accord with the Hoxne Design Guide and the indicative Masterplan.</p> <p>Provision should be made for access to the Playing Field, parking for the playing field and for a multi-use games area.</p> <p>A footpath from the site to the Denham Low Road/Cross Street junction and a new footpath in front of the school should be provided with a reduced carriage way width at the junction to improve school safety.</p>		
<p>Policy Hoxne 15 – Abbey Farm Business Site</p> <p>Proposals for the retention and future development of the existing employment site at Abbey Farm, identified in Figure 9 and on the Policies Map, will be supported for suitable employment uses within E(c) provision of financial services, professional services or other appropriate services to a commercial, business or service locality and Use Class E(g) uses which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity including offices, research and development and industrial processes. All proposals should safeguard the adjoining Scheduled Ancient Monument.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations.</p>
<p>Policy Hoxne 16 – Infrastructure Requirements</p> <p>The development sites allocated in this Plan will be expected to contribute to the infrastructure requirements of the Parish.</p> <p>Provision should be made in CIL spending plans for this infrastructure.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations.</p>

Recommendations

- 3.20 There are no Habitats sites within scope and therefore no recommendations for the policies in this Pre-submission (Regulation 14) draft Neighbourhood Plan as they have all been assigned to Category A (no negative effect) with no need to amend policy text.
- 3.21 This HRA report has concluded that no likely significant effects on the Habitats sites from the Plan alone.
- 3.22 The in-combination effects from other plans and projects are considered in the following section.



Other Plans & Projects: In-Combination Effects

- 3.23 As there are no Habitats sites within scope and no predicted effects from the Plan alone, there are no residual effects to consider in combination with other plans and projects.
- 3.24 As there is no potential for any likely significant effects in combination with other plans and projects, there is no requirement for this HRA screening of the Hoxne Neighbourhood Development Plan Pre-submission (Regulation 14) draft to progress to Appropriate Assessment.



4. Conclusion

- 4.1 Subject to Natural England's review, this HRA Screening Report concludes that the Hoxne Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2037 Pre-submission (Regulation 14) Draft is not predicted to have any Likely Significant Effect on any Habitats site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.
- 4.2 The content of the Hoxne Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2037 Pre-submission (Regulation 14) Draft has therefore been screened out from any further assessment and Mid Suffolk DC can demonstrate its compliance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).



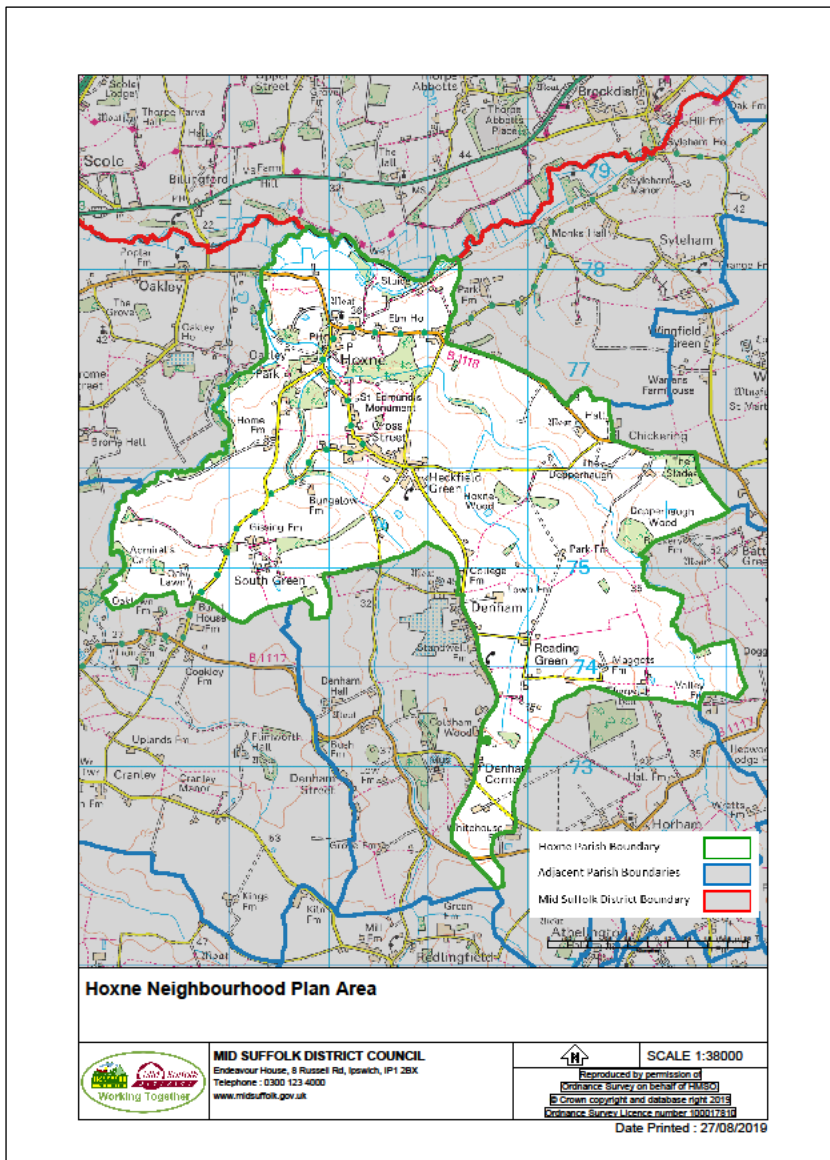
5. References

- 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
- Hoxne Parish Council (January 2022) Hoxne Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2037 Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) Draft



Appendix I

Hoxne Neighbourhood Development Plan Area

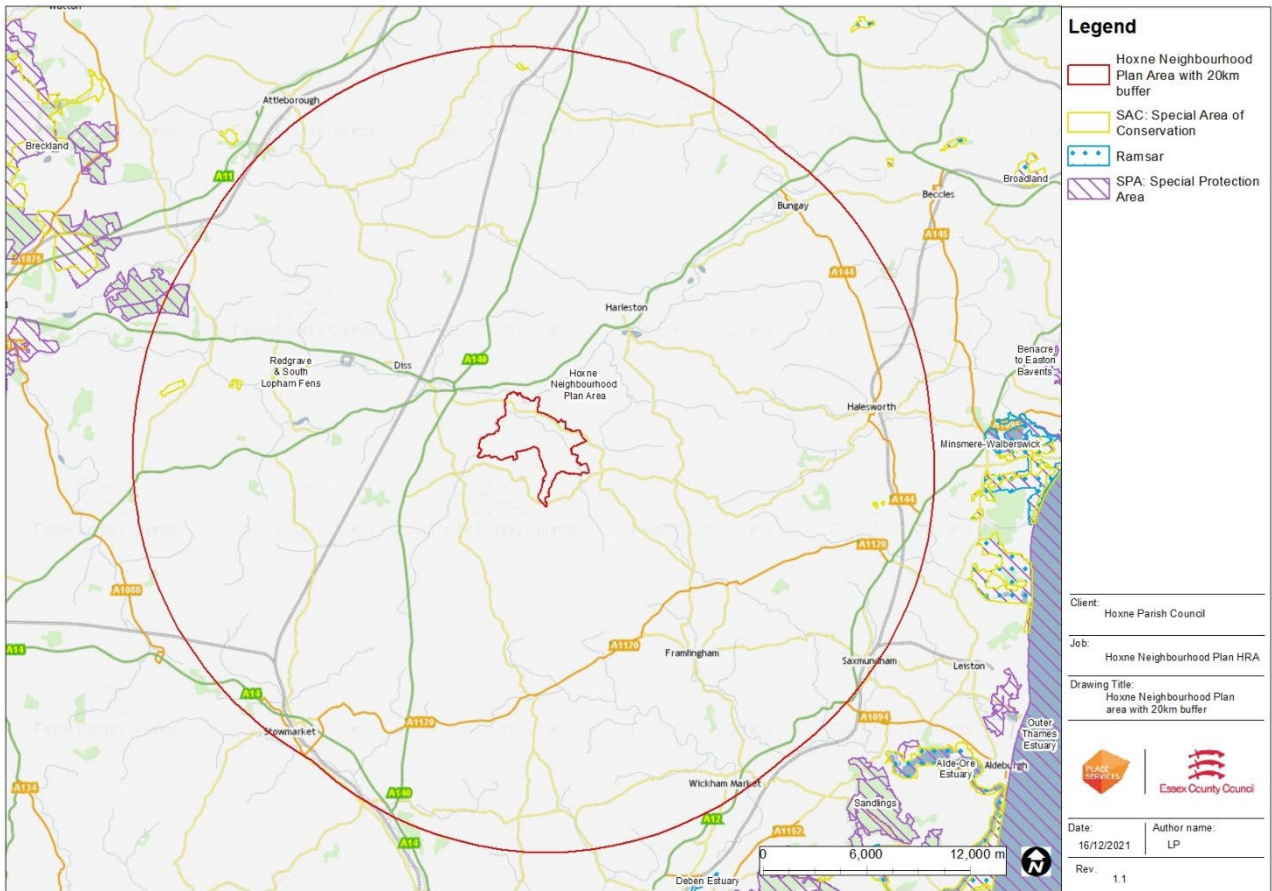


Source: Hoxne Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2037 Pre-submission (Regulation 14) Draft.



Appendix II

Hoxne parish and Habitats Sites within 20km



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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 (RIS) 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. The notes in the RIS for Ramsar sites of factors affecting site's ecological character are not considered as necessary for HRA screening purposes and noteworthy features are not treated as qualifying features in the application of HRA tests. The assessment under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations is strictly limited to the qualifying features which meet the Ramsar criteria.



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
<p>Waveney & Lt Ouse Valley Fens</p> <p>This site which lies predominantly within the South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands Natural Character Area (NCA Profile 83) occurs in the East Anglian centre of distribution of calcareous fens and contains very extensive great fen-sedge <i>Cladium mariscus</i> beds, including managed examples, as well as stands in contact zones between small sedge mire and species-poor <i>Cladium</i> beds. The habitat type here occurs in a number of spring-fed valley fens in the headwaters of the Little Ouse and Waveney rivers.</p> <p>Purple moor-grass – meadow thistle (<i>Molinia caerulea</i> – <i>Cirsium dissectum</i>) fen-meadows are associated with the spring-fed valley fen systems. The <i>Molinia</i> meadows occur in conjunction with black bog-rush – blunt-flowered rush (<i>Schoenus nigricans</i> – <i>Juncus subnodulosus</i>) mire and calcareous fens with great fen-sedge. Where the fen-meadow is grazed it is more species-rich, with frequent southern marsh-orchid <i>Dactylorhiza praetermissa</i>.</p>				
<p><u>Waveney & Lt Ouse Valley Fens SAC</u></p> <p>EU Code: UK0012882</p>	192.37	<p><u>H6410</u>. <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinia caerulea</i>); Purple moor-grass meadows</p> <p><u>H7210</u>. Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i>; Calcium-rich fen dominated by great fen sedge (saw sedge)*</p> <p><u>S1016</u>. <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>; <i>Desmoulin's whorl snail</i></p>	<p>With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;</p> <p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation</p>	<p>Inappropriate Scrub Control: Historically sections of the fen have been allowed to scrub over. These now form wet woodland and scrub with glades containing the remnants of the qualifying features.</p> <p>The aim is to ensure the site includes the same area of <i>Cladium</i> fen (H7210 Calcium-rich fen dominated by great fen sedge (saw sedge)) present at the time of designation.</p>



			<p>Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <p>The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species</p> <p>The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats</p> <p>The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species</p> <p>The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely</p> <p>The populations of qualifying species, and,</p> <p>The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</p>	<p>Inappropriate Water Levels: Concerns have been expressed about water levels in the SAC. Some areas such as Redgrave and Lopham Fens have already been worked on. Others (Blo' Norton and Thelnetham Fens) are currently being investigated through the Water Level Management Plan process. Historical evidence suggests that water levels have significantly dropped over time and as a result habitats and features have been damaged. Parts of the fen supported swingmoor habitats and these are a poor representation of their former selves.</p> <p>Air Pollution - impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition: Nitrogen deposition exceeds site relevant critical loads.</p> <p>Water Pollution: Poor water quality arising from agricultural run-off particularly from nearby outdoor poultry and pig units causes nutrient enrichment and can lead to a reduction in biodiversity.</p>
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Redgrave and South Lopham Fens

Redgrave and South Lopham Fens. The site is an extensive example of lowland base-rich valley, remarkable for its lack of fragmentation. The diversity of the site is due to the lateral and longitudinal zonation of the vegetation types characteristic of valley mires, such as dry birch woodland, scrub and carr, floristically-rich fen grassland, mixed fen, wet heath and areas of reed and saw sedge. The site supports many rare and scarce invertebrates, including a population of the fen raft spider *Dolomedes plantarius*.

<p><u>Redgrave and South Lopham Fens Ramsar</u></p> <p>Site No. 513</p> <p>EU Code: UK11056</p>	<p>127.09</p>	<p>Ramsar criterion 1 – The site is an extensive example of spring-fed lowland base-rich valley, remarkable for its lack of fragmentation.</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 2 – The site supports many rare and scarce invertebrates, including a population of the fen raft spider <i>Dolomedes plantarius</i>. This spider is also considered vulnerable by the IUCN Red List.</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 3 - The site supports many rare and scarce invertebrates, including a population of the fen raft spider <i>Dolomedes plantarius</i>. The diversity of the site is due to the lateral and longitudinal zonation of the vegetation types characteristic of valley mires.</p>	<p>None</p>	
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Breckland SPA

The Breckland of Norfolk and Suffolk lies in the heart of East Anglia on largely sandy soils of glacial origin. In the nineteenth century the area was termed a sandy waste, with small patches of arable cultivation that were soon abandoned. The continental climate, with low rainfall and freedraining soils, has led to the development of dry heath and grassland communities. Much of Breckland has been planted with conifers throughout the twentieth century, and in part of the site, arable farming is the predominant land use.

The remnants of dry heath and grassland which have survived these recent changes support heathland breeding birds, where grazing by rabbits and sheep is sufficiently intensive to create short turf and open ground. These breeding birds have also adapted to live in forestry and arable habitats. Woodlark *Lullula arborea* and nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* breed in clear-fell and open heath areas, whilst stone curlews *Burhinus oedicnemus* establish nests on open ground provided by arable cultivation in the spring, as well as on Breckland grass-heath.

<p><u>Breckland SPA</u></p> <p>EU Code: UK9009201</p>	<p>39432.55</p>	<p>A224, b - Nightjar, <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i></p> <p>A133, b - Stone-curlew, <i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i></p> <p>A246, b - Woodlark, <i>Lullula arborea</i></p>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species; • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species; • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely; 	<p>Current pressures</p> <p>Lack of ground disturbance, under grazing, inappropriate scrub and weed control, inappropriate cutting/mowing.</p> <p>Water pollution: There has been a considerable loss of aquatic species in Ringmere and high nutrient levels recorded in previous water analysis suggest nutrients are impacting the mere. Langmere too shows signs of nutrient enrichment. Changes in species distributions.</p> <p>Potential future threats</p> <p>Air pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition.</p>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The populations of qualifying species; and, • The distribution of qualifying species within the site. 	<p>Public access / disturbance – SAC features may be affected through eutrophication (dog fouling, unauthorised fires) and disturbance of soils.</p> <p>Climate change.</p> <p>Habitat fragmentation.</p>
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Norfolk Valley Fens SAC

This SAC comprises a series of 14 valley-head spring-fed fens scattered across 200km2 of central and north Norfolk; and falling within a number of National Character Areas (NCA) including Mid Norfolk NCA, North West Norfolk NCA, The Brecks NCA, South Norfolk & High Suffolk Claylands NCA; and Central North Norfolk NCA.

Norfolk Valley Fens is one of two sites selected in East Anglia, in eastern England, where the main concentration of lowland Alkaline fens occurs. This site comprises a series of valley-head spring-fed fens. Such spring-fed flush fens are very rare in the lowlands. Most of the vegetation at this site is of the small sedge fen type, mainly referable to M13 Schoenus nigricans – Juncus subnodulosus mire, but there are transitions to reedswamp and other fen and wet grassland types.

The individual fens vary in their structure according to intensity of management and provide a wide range of variation. There is a rich flora associated with these fens, including species such as grass-of-Parnassus Parnassia palustris, common butterwort Pinguicula vulgaris, marsh helleborine Epipactis palustris and narrow-leaved marsh-orchid Dactylorhiza traunsteineri. Six other Annex I habitats are present as qualifying features, but are not a primary reason for the selection of this site.

Two Annex II species are present, narrow-mouthed whorl snail and Desmoulin's whorl snail are also a primary reason for the selection of the site.



<p><u>Norfolk Valley Fens SAC</u></p> <p>EU Code: UK0012892</p>	616.21	<p>H4010. Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix; Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath</p> <p>H4030. European dry heaths</p> <p>H6210. Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (FestucoBrometalia); Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone</p> <p>H6410. Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae); Purple moor-grass meadows</p> <p>H7210. Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae; Calcium-rich fen dominated by great fen sedge (saw sedge)*</p> <p>H7230. Alkaline fens; Calcium-rich springwater-fed fens</p> <p>H91E0. Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae); Alder woodland on floodplains*</p>	<p>These Conservation Objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended from time to time (the "Habitats Regulations"). They must be considered when a competent authority is required to make a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment', including an Appropriate Assessment, under the relevant parts of this legislation.</p> <p>These Conservation Objectives and the accompanying Supplementary Advice (where available) will also provide a framework to inform the measures needed to conserve or restore the European Site and the prevention of deterioration or significant disturbance of its qualifying features.</p> <p>These Conservation Objectives are set for each habitat or species of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Where the objectives are met, the site will be</p>	<p>Current pressures</p> <p>Inappropriate water levels.</p> <p>Inappropriate scrub control.</p> <p>Hydrological changes.</p> <p>Water Pollution.</p> <p>Inappropriate cutting/mowing.</p> <p>Water abstraction.</p> <p>Undergrazing.</p> <p>Invasive species.</p> <p>Change in land management.</p> <p>Changes in species distribution.</p> <p>Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen desposition.</p> <p>Climate change.</p>
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		<p>S1014. <i>Vertigo angustior</i>; Narrow-mouthed whorl snail</p> <p>S1016. <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>; Desmoulin`s whorl snail.</p> <p>*Priority natural habitats or species</p> <p>Some of the natural habitats and species for which UK SACs have been selected are considered to be particular priorities for conservation at a European scale and are subject to special provisions in the Habitats Regulations. These priority natural habitats and species are denoted by an asterisk (*) in Annex I and II of the Habitats Directive. The term 'priority' is also used in other contexts, for example with reference to particular habitats or species that are prioritised in UK Biodiversity Action Plans. It is important to note however that these are not necessarily the priority natural habitats or species within the meaning of the Habitats Regulations.</p>	<p>considered to exhibit a high degree of integrity and to be contributing to achieving Favourable Conservation Status for that species or habitat type at a UK level. The term 'favourable conservation status' is defined in regulation 3 of the Habitats Regulations.</p>	
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