



# Laxfield Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036: Pre-Submission Draft

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





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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
MSDC	Mid Suffolk District Council
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

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This report screens to determine whether the Pre-Submission draft Laxfield 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 Laxfield Neighbourhood Plan

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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 draft Neighbourhood Development Plan will set out planning policies for Laxfield 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 Mid Suffolk District Council.



## 2. Legislative Background

### 2.1 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

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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 Laxfield Neighbourhood Plan which is being produced by Laxfield 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

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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 Laxfield Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Summarise the reasons for designation and Conservation Objectives for each site to be considered in this assessment.
- Screen the Laxfield 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

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#### 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 Laxfield 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 Laxfield Neighbourhood Development Plan.

### 3.3 Habitats (European) Sites

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'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 16 Habitats sites (SPA/SAC/Ramsar) which lie within 20 km of Laxfield parish and are listed in Table 1 and shown on the map in Appendix 2. The Plan area lies with the Zones of Influence of 11 Habitats Sites (5 underpinning SSSIs) as identified by Natural England to consider potential impacts on statutory sites.

Table 1: Habitats Sites within 20km of the development

SPA	SAC	Ramsar
Minsmere-Walberswick	Minsmere to Walberswick Heaths & Marshes	Minsmere-Walberswick
Alde-Ore Estuary	Alde-Ore & Butley Estuaries	Alde-Ore Estuary
Broadlands	The Broads	Broadland
Deben Estuary	Dew's Pond	Deben Estuary
Sandlings	Staverton Park & the Thicks	
Benacre to Easton Bavents	Benacre to Easton Bavents Lagoons	

The only Habitats sites listed by Natural England as in scope for residential development in Laxfield Parish are Minsmere-Walberswick SPA and Ramsar site and Minsmere to Walberswick Heaths & Marshes SAC.

After consideration of the Zones of Influence as shown on MAGIC website [www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk), it is concluded that the three Habitats Sites should now be assessed for any likely significant effects resulting from the Regulation 14 Draft Pre-Submission Draft Laxfield Neighbourhood Plan.

Development sites allocated by the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan are covered by the Suffolk Coast RAMS to avoid and mitigate for recreational disturbance predicted from new residential development within the 13km Zone of Influence.



### 3.3.3 Conservation Objectives

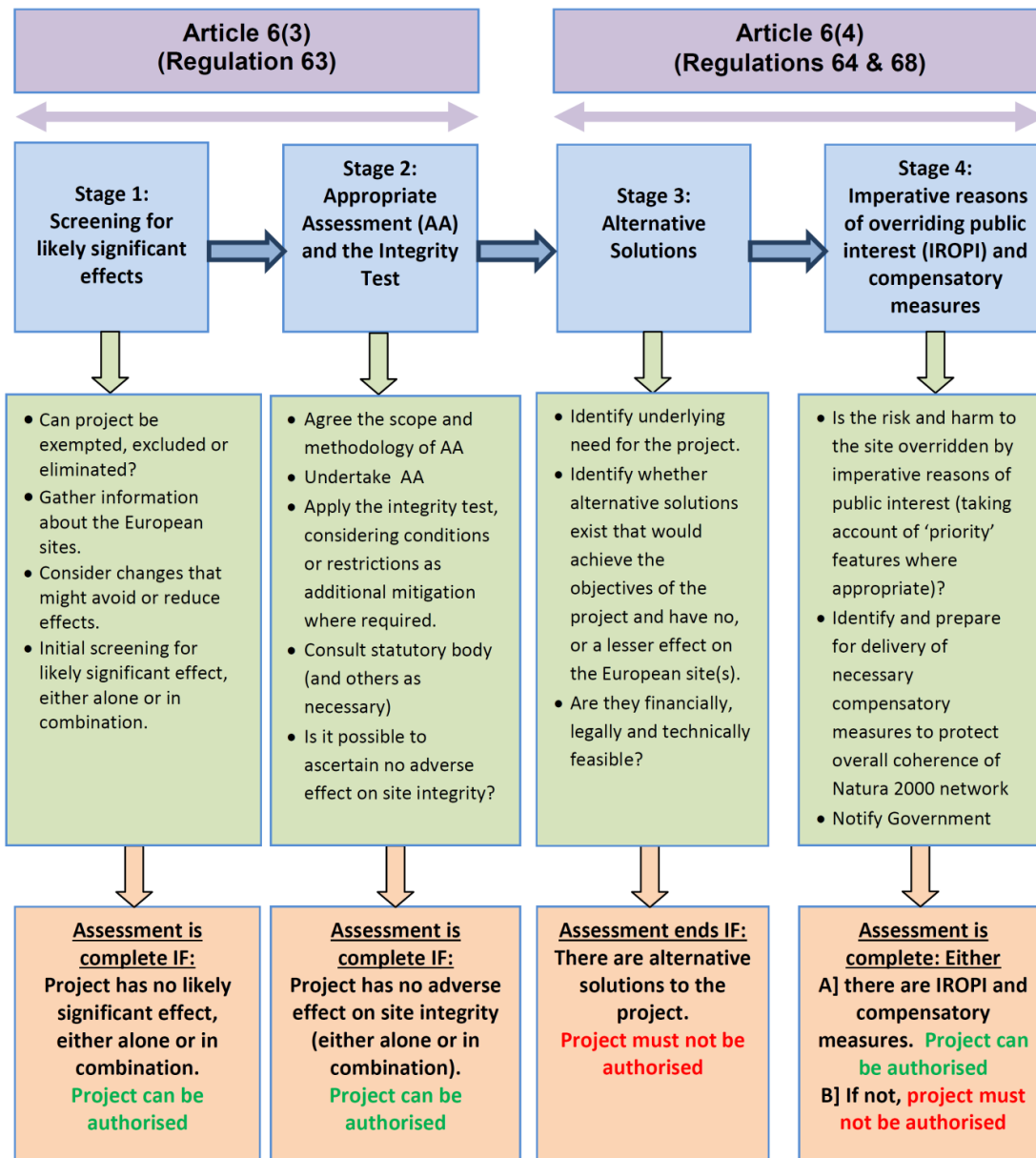
Information on each of the above Habitats sites has been obtained from the Natural England website.

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

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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 Laxfield 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

<b>Category A: No negative effect</b>
Policies or projects that will not be likely to have any negative effect on a Habitats site.
<b>Category B: No Likely Significant Effect</b>
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.
<b>Category C: Likely Significant Effect</b>
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 Laxfield 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 Laxfield 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 15 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 could be a potential pathway for development in the Plan area to impact on the SPA & Ramsar sites within the scope of the HRA as part of the Parish lies within the Zones of Influence of Habitats sites within the Suffolk Coast RAMS.	Only one small part of the Plan area on the south-eastern boundary lies within the 13km Zone of Influence for the Suffolk Coast Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS). The Plan does not allocate any land for residential development within these areas so there is no pathway for impacts.
Water quantity and quality	It is considered that there is no pathway for development to result in impacts on water quantity or quality.	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 Laxfield Neighbourhood Plan Policies

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

- Policy LAX 1 - Spatial Strategy for Laxfield Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Policy LAX 2 - Housing Development
- Policy LAX 3 - Land at Mill Road
- Policy LAX 4 - Land off Cullingford Close
- Policy LAX 5 - Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites
- Policy LAX 6 - Housing Mix
- Policy LAX 7 - Measures for New Housing Development
- Policy LAX 8 - Buildings of Local Significance
- Policy LAX 9 - Heritage Assets
- Policy LAX 10 - Dark Skies
- Policy LAX 11 - Design Considerations
- Policy LAX 12 - Sustainable Construction Practices
- Policy LAX 13 - Protection of Landscape Setting of Laxfield
- Policy LAX 14 - Biodiversity
- Policy LAX 15 - Local Green Spaces
- Policy LAX 16 - Protecting Existing Services and Facilities
- Policy LAX 17 - Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities
- Policy LAX 18 - New Businesses and Employment
- Policy LAX 19 - Farm Diversification
- Policy LAX 20 - Public Rights of Way

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

	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effect on a Habitats Site?	Recommendations
<p><b>Policy LAX 1 - Spatial Strategy for Laxfield Neighbourhood Plan Area</b></p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan area will accommodate development commensurate with Laxfield's designation as a Primary Village in the 2008 Core Strategy (Policy CS1) and emerging designation as a Hinterland Village in the Joint Local Plan.</p> <p>The focus for new development will be within the Settlement Boundary as defined on the Policies Map.</p> <p>Proposals for new development located outside the Settlement Boundary will only be permitted for that which is essential for the operation of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other exceptional uses, where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that there is an identified local need for the proposal; and</li> <li>ii. it cannot be satisfactorily located within the Settlement Boundary.</li> </ul>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
<p><b>Policy LAX 2 - Housing Development</b></p> <p>This Plan provides for around 70 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"> <li>a. the site allocations as identified in Policies LAX 3 and LAX 4 in the Plan and on the Policies Map; and</li> <li>b. small brownfield "windfall" sites and infill plots within the Settlement Boundary that come forward during the plan period and are not identified in the Plan; and</li> <li>c. in exceptional circumstances, dwellings outside the Settlement Boundary where it can be demonstrated that the dwelling is essential for the operation of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other exceptional uses for which it can satisfactorily be demonstrated that it needs to be located in the countryside.</li> </ul>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations



<p>In addition, proposals for the conversion of redundant or disused agricultural barns outside the Settlement Boundary into dwellings will be permitted where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for extension, significant alteration or reconstruction; and</li> <li>b) the proposal is a high-quality design and the method of conversion retains the character and historic interest of the building; and</li> <li>c) the proposal would lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting of the building, and the creation of a residential curtilage and any associated domestic paraphernalia would not have a harmful effect on the character of the site or setting of the building, any wider group of buildings, or the surrounding area.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Policy LAX 3 - Land at Mill Road</b></p> <p>A site of 0.32 hectares east of Mill Road, as identified on the Policies Map, is allocated for four, three bedroomed bungalows with access from Mill Road.</p> <p>Development will be expected to take place in accordance with the current planning consent unless superseded by a subsequent planning permission for residential development.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p><b>Policy LAX 4 – Land off Cullingford Close</b></p> <p>A site of 0.71 hectares east of Mill Road, as identified on the Policies Map, is allocated for thirteen dwellings including four affordable homes.</p> <p>Development will be expected to take place in accordance with the current planning consent unless superseded by a subsequent planning permission for residential development.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p><b>Policy LAX 5 – Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites</b></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"> <li>i. remains affordable in perpetuity; and</li> </ul>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>





<p>ii. is for people that are in housing need because they are unable to buy or rent properties in the village at open-market prices; and</p> <p>iii. is offered, in the first instance, to people with a demonstrated local connection, as defined by the Mid Suffolk Choice Based Lettings Scheme. Where there is no need, a property should then be offered to those with a demonstrated need for affordable housing in neighbouring villages.</p> <p>These restrictions should be delivered through a legal agreement attached to the planning consent for the housing. Applications for such development will be considered in relation to the appearance and character of the surrounding area, the potential impact on residential amenity and highway safety.</p> <p>To be acceptable, proposals should demonstrate that a local need exists which cannot be met by applying normal planning policy for the provision of affordable homes in association with market housing.</p> <p>Any application for affordable housing in respect of this policy should be accompanied by a detailed need and the accommodation proposed should contribute to meeting this proven need.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances, a small number of market homes will be permitted where it can be demonstrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) that no other means of funding the construction of the affordable homes is available; and</li> <li>b) the market housing is subsidiary to the affordable housing element of the proposal and the amount of market housing required is, as demonstrated through a viability assessment, the minimum required to deliver the affordable housing.</li> </ul> <p>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><b>Policy LAX 6 - Housing Mix</b></p> <p>In all new housing developments of ten or more homes, there shall be an emphasis on providing a balanced mix of two, three and four bedroomed homes within the scheme, unless it can be demonstrated that the particular circumstances relating to the tenure of the housing dictate otherwise or where such provision is demonstrated to not</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p>be in accordance with the latest available housing needs information for the Plan Area.</p>		
<p><b>Policy LAX 7 - Measures for New Housing Development</b></p> <p>All new dwellings shall achieve appropriate internal space through adherence to the latest Nationally Described Space Standards. Proposals to deliver new residential development to Lifetime Homes standards will be strongly supported.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p><b>Policy LAX 8 - Buildings of Local Significance</b></p> <p>The retention and protection of local heritage assets and buildings of local significance, including buildings, structures, features and gardens of local interest, will be secured.</p> <p>Proposals for any works that would lead to the loss of, or substantial harm to, a building of local significance should 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>Appendix 2 (of the Pre-Submission Draft Laxfield Neighbourhood Development Plan) identifies buildings of local significance, which are also identified on the Policies Map.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p><b>Policy LAX 9 – Heritage Assets</b></p> <p>To ensure the conservation and enhancement of the village’s heritage assets, proposals must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) preserve or enhance the significance of the heritage assets of the village, their setting and the wider built environment, including views into, within and out of the conservation area as identified on the Policies Map;</li> <li>b) retain buildings and spaces, the loss of which would cause harm to the character or appearance of the conservation area;</li> <li>c) contribute to the village’s local distinctiveness, built form and scale of its heritage assets, as described in the Landscape Appraisal and Built Character Assessment, through the use of appropriate design and materials;</li> <li>d) be of an appropriate scale, form, height, massing, alignment and detailed design which</li> </ul>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p>respects the area's character, appearance and its setting</p> <p>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</p> <p>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> <p>Proposals will not be supported where the harm caused as a result of the impact of a proposed scheme is not justified by the public benefits that would be provided.</p> <p>Where a planning proposal affects a heritage asset, it must be accompanied by a Heritage Statement identifying, as a minimum, the significance of the asset, and an assessment of the impact of the proposal on heritage assets. The level of detail of the Heritage Statement should be proportionate to the importance of the asset, the works proposed and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance and/or setting.</p>		
<p><b>Policy LAX 10 - Dark Skies</b></p> <p>While ensuring that new developments are secure in terms of occupier and vehicle safety, dark skies are to be preferred over streetlights. Any future outdoor lighting systems should have a minimum impact on the environment, minimising light pollution and adverse effects on wildlife subject to highway safety, the needs of particular individuals or groups, and security. Schemes should reduce the consumption of energy by promoting efficient outdoor lighting technologies, keeping the night-time skies dark and reducing glare.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p><b>Policy LAX 11 - Design Considerations</b></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>In particular, proposals will be supported where, as appropriate to the proposal, they:</p> <p>a) recognise and address the key features, characteristics, landscape/building character, local distinctiveness and special qualities of the</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p>area and/or building as identified in the Built Character Assessment and, where necessary, prepare a landscape character appraisal to demonstrate this;</p> <p>b) maintain or create the village's sense of place and/or local character avoiding, where possible, cul-de-sac developments which do not reflect the lane hierarchy and form of the settlement;</p> <p>c) do not involve the loss of gardens, important open, green or landscaped areas or the erosion of the settlement gaps identified on the Policies Map, which make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of that part of the village;</p> <p>d) taking mitigation measures into account, do not affect adversely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. any historic character, architectural or archaeological heritage assets of the site and its surroundings, including those locally identified Buildings of Local Significance listed in Appendix 2 and as identified on the Policies Map;</li> <li>ii. important landscape characteristics including trees and ancient hedgerows and other prominent topographical features;</li> <li>iii. identified important views into, out of, or within the village as identified on the Policies Map;</li> <li>iv. sites, habitats, species and features of ecological interest;</li> <li>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;</li> </ul> <p>e) do not locate sensitive development where its users and nearby residents would be significantly and adversely affected by noise, smell, vibration, or other forms of pollution from existing sources, unless adequate and appropriate mitigation can be implemented;</p>		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>f) produce designs that respect the character, scale and density of the locality;</li> <li>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;</li> <li>h) wherever possible ensure that development faces on to existing lanes, retaining the rural character and creates cross streets or new back streets in keeping with the settlement’s hierarchy of routes;</li> <li>i) do not result in water run-off that would add to or create surface water flooding;</li> <li>j) where appropriate, make adequate provision for the covered storage of all wheelie bins and for cycle storage in accordance with adopted cycle parking standards.</li> <li>k) include suitable ducting capable of accepting fibre to enable superfast broadband; and</li> <li>l) provide one electronic vehicle charging point per new off-street parking place created.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Policy LAX 12 - Sustainable Construction Practices</b></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.</p> <p>Development proposals should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. demonstrate how they maximise the benefits of solar gain in site layouts and orientation of buildings;</li> <li>b. incorporate best practice in energy conservation and be designed to achieve maximum achievable energy efficiency;</li> <li>c. maximise the benefits of solar gain in site layouts and the orientation of buildings;</li> <li>d. avoid installing new fossil fuel-based heating systems; and</li> <li>e. incorporate sustainable design and construction measures and energy efficiency measures including, where feasible, ground/air source heat pumps, photovoltaics, solar panels and grey/rainwater harvesting.</li> </ul>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p><b>Policy LAX 13 - Protection of Landscape Setting of Laxfield</b></p> <p>To conserve the essential landscape, heritage and rural character of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, development proposals shall, where appropriate, demonstrate how they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. have regard to the rural and landscape character and the setting of the village;</li> <li>ii. conserve the open countryside in and around the village area; and</li> <li>iii. will not have a detrimental impact on the important views identified on the Policies Map.</li> </ul>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
<p><b>Policy LAX 14 - Biodiversity</b></p> <p>Development proposals should avoid the loss of, or substantial harm to, important trees, hedgerows and other natural features such as ponds and ditches. Where such losses or harm are unavoidable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. the benefits of the development proposal must be demonstrated clearly to outweigh any impacts; and</li> <li>ii. suitable mitigation measures, that may include equivalent or better replacement of the lost features, will be required.</li> </ul> <p>It is expected that the mitigation proposals will form an integral part of the design concept and layout of any development scheme, and that development will be landscape-led and appropriate in relation to its setting, context and ongoing management.</p> <p>Where new access is created, or an existing access is widened through an existing hedgerow, a new hedgerow of native species shall be planted on the splay returns into the site to maintain the appearance and continuity of hedgerows in the vicinity.</p> <p>Development proposals will be supported where they provide a net gain in biodiversity through, for example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the creation of new natural habitats including ponds;</li> <li>b) the planting of additional trees and hedgerows, and;</li> <li>c) restoring and repairing fragmented biodiversity networks</li> </ul>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
<p><b>Policy LAX 15 - Local Green Spaces</b></p> <p>The following Local Green Spaces are designated in this Plan and identified on the Policies Map.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Allotments, Bickers Hill</li> <li>2. Allotments, Station Road</li> <li>3. Mobbs Meadow</li> <li>4. Village Pond</li> </ul>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations



<p>5. Field behind Church Walk 6. High Street verges</p> <p>Development on these sites will only be permitted in very special circumstances. Permitted development rights, including the operational requirements of infrastructure providers, are not affected by this designation.</p>		
<p><b>Policy LAX 16 - Protecting existing services and facilities</b></p> <p>Proposals that would result in the loss of valued facilities or services which support a local community (or premises last used for such purposes) will only be permitted where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. it can be demonstrated that the current use is not economically viable nor likely to become viable. Where appropriate, supporting financial evidence should be provided including any efforts to advertise the premises for sale for a minimum of 12 months; and</li> <li>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</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p><b>Policy LAX 17 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities</b></p> <p>Proposals for the provision, enhancement and/or expansion of amenity, sport or recreation open space or facilities, as shown on the Policies Map, will be permitted subject to compliance with other Policies in this and other adopted Local Plans. Development which will result in the loss of existing amenity, sport or recreation open space or facilities will not be allowed unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) it can be demonstrated that the space or facility is surplus to requirement against the local planning authority’s standards for the particular location, and the proposed loss will not result in a likely shortfall during the plan period; or</li> <li>b) replacement for the space or facilities lost is made available, of at least equivalent quantity and quality, and in a suitable location to meet the needs of users of the existing space or facility.</li> </ul> <p>Any replacement provision should take account of the needs of the settlement where the development is taking</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p>place, and the current standards of open space and sports facility provision adopted by the local planning authority.</p> <p>Where necessary to the acceptability of the development, the local planning authority will require developers of new housing, office, retail or other commercial and mixed development to provide open space including play areas, formal sport/recreation areas, amenity areas and where appropriate, indoor sports facilities or to provide land and a financial contribution towards the cost and maintenance of existing or new facilities, as appropriate. These facilities will be secured through the use of conditions and/or planning obligations.</p> <p>Clubhouses, pavilions, car parking and ancillary facilities must be of a high standard of design. The location of such facilities must be well related and sensitive to the topography, character and uses of the surrounding area, particularly when located in or close to residential areas. Proposals which give rise to intrusive floodlighting will not be permitted.</p>		
<p><b>Policy LAX 18 - New Businesses and Employment</b></p> <p>Proposals for new business development will be supported where sites are located within the Settlement Boundary identified on the Policies Map, where they would not have an unacceptable impact on residential amenity, heritage assets and the highways network.</p> <p>Outside the Settlement Boundary, proposals will be supported where</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) they are located on land designated in the development plan for business uses;</li> <li>b) or they relate to small scale leisure or tourism activities, or other forms of commercial/employment-related development or agriculture related development of a scale and nature appropriate to a countryside location and a need to be located outside the Settlement Boundary can be satisfactorily demonstrated.</li> </ul> <p>Where possible, business developments should be sited in existing buildings or on areas of previously developed land and be of a size and scale that do not adversely affect the character, highways, infrastructure, residential amenity and environment of the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p><b>Policy LAX 19 – Farm Diversification</b></p> <p>Applications for new employment uses of redundant traditional farm buildings will be supported, providing it has been demonstrated that they are no longer viable or needed for farming. Re-use for economic development</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>





<p>purposes is preferred, but proposals which would result in unacceptable harm to the rural economy or would adversely affect the character, highways, infrastructure, residential amenity, environment (including national and international designated sites) and landscape character will not be supported.</p>		
<p><b>Policy LAX 20 - Public Rights of Way</b></p> <p>Development which would adversely affect the character or result in the loss of existing or proposed rights of way, will not be permitted unless alternative provision or diversions can be arranged which are at least as attractive, safe and convenient for public use. This will apply to rights of way for pedestrian, cyclist, or horse rider use. Improvements and additions to such rights of way shall be delivered as an integral part of new development to enable new or improved links to be created within the settlement, between settlements and/or providing access to the countryside or green infrastructure sites as appropriate.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>

### 3.5.1 Recommendations

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

Although the Pre-Submission draft Laxfield Neighbourhood Plan does allocate sites for development, none lie within the 13km Zone of Influence for the Suffolk Coast Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS). As the Plan does not allocate any land for residential development within this ZOI, there is no pathway for impacts.

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

## 3.6 Other Plans & Projects: In-Combination Effects

There are four relevant Plan level HRAs that has been carried out by Mid Suffolk 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.

As the Plan does not allocate sites for development which lie within the 13km Zone of Influence for the Suffolk Coast Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS), there is no pathway for impacts in combination with other plans and projects. There is therefore no requirement for any mitigation measures to be embedded in the Plan to avoid any likely significant effects.



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
Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan	Babergh and Mid Suffolk Local Plan: Habitat Regulations Assessment and Appropriate Assessment (Place Services, 2019)	The HRA report including Appropriate Assessment indicates that the Babergh & Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan is not predicted to have any adverse effect on integrity (AEOI) on any Habitats Sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.	None
Mid Suffolk District Council	Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment (Appropriate Assessment) October 2007)	The HRA found no likely significant effects from the Plan on the Breckland SAC/SPA and Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC.	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.
St Edmundsbury Borough Council	Core Strategy HRA screening (2010)	The HRA found no potential for in combination effects as no other current plans or projects that are likely to lead to significant effects on the Breckland SAC/SPA or the Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC have been identified, or where impacts have been identified they have been adequately mitigated.	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted
Babergh District Council	Habitat Regulations Assessment of Core Strategy 2011	The Core Strategy aims to minimise impacts on the Orwell and Stour estuaries, a European-designated site which supports species that	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.



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

Subject to Natural England's review, this HRA Screening Report concludes that the Pre-Submission draft Laxfield 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 Laxfield Neighbourhood Plan has therefore been **screened out** for any further assessment and Mid Suffolk DC can demonstrate its compliance with the UK Habitats Regulations 2017.



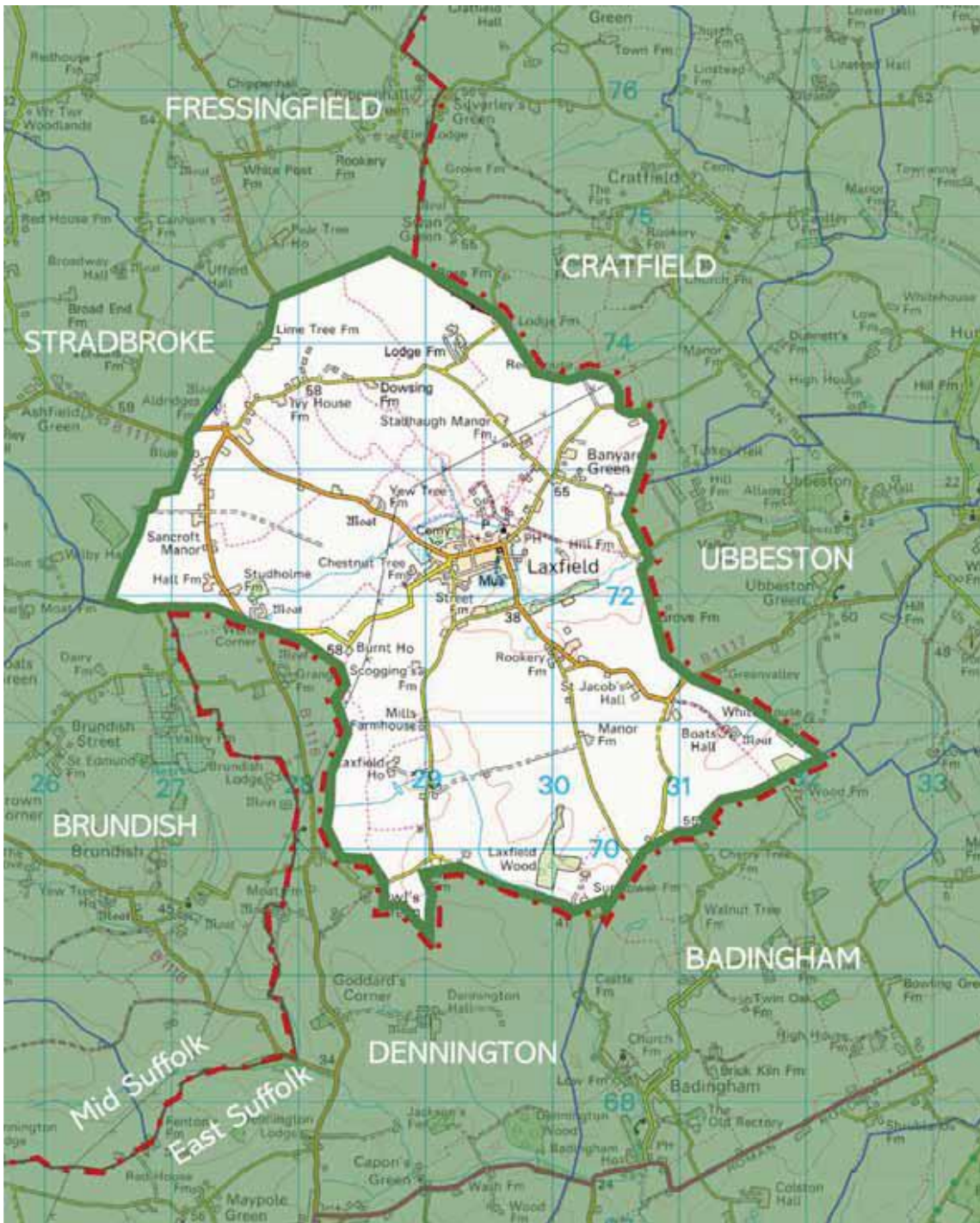
## 5. References

- 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 Joint Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment including Appropriate Assessment
- Laxfield Parish Council (2019) Laxfield Neighbourhood Development Plan Pre-Submission Draft)



# Appendix I

## Laxfield Neighbourhood Plan Area



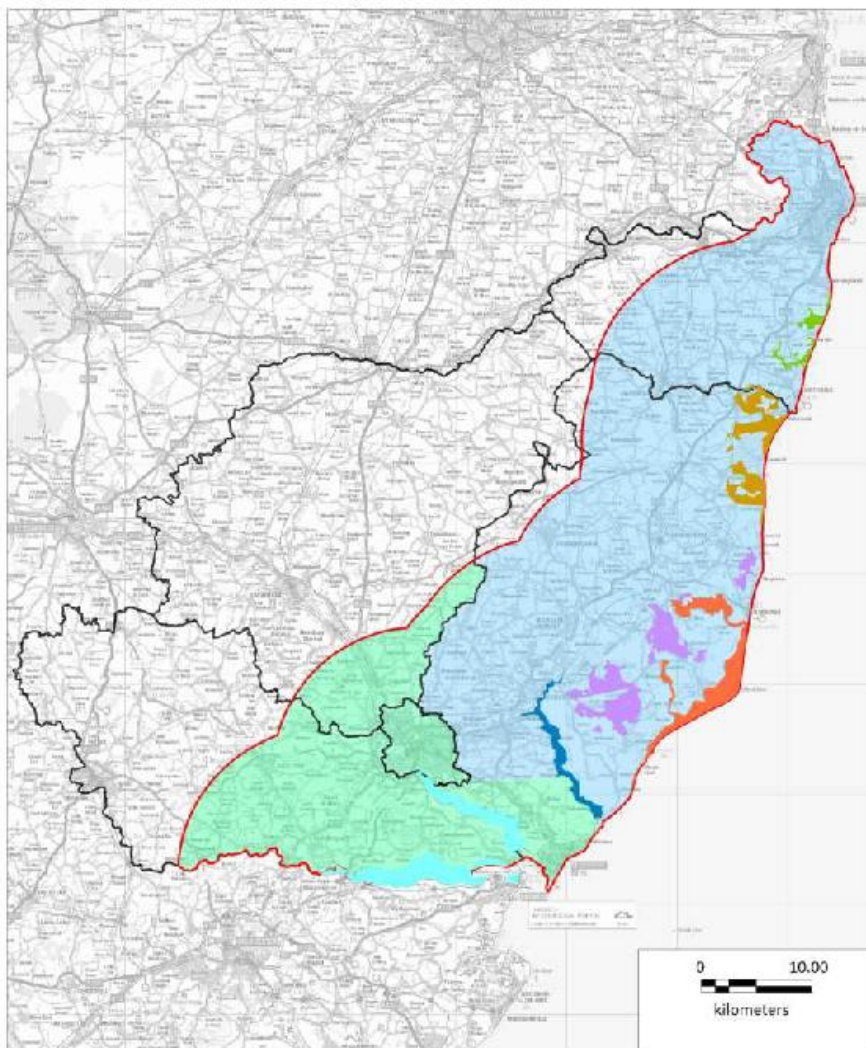
Source: Pre-Submission Draft Laxfield Neighbourhood Development Plan (Laxfield Parish 2020)



# Appendix II

## Laxfield parish and Habitats Sites within 20km

Map 8: Overall zone of influence and split into Zones A and B



- Overall zone of influence
- Zone A
- Zone B
- Relevant European sites
  - Alde Ore Estuary SPA/Ramsar
  - Benacre to Easton Baywards SPA
  - Deben Estuary SPA/Ramsar
  - Minsterley-Walberswick SPA/SAC/Ramsar
  - Orfordness-Shingle Street SAC
  - Snettisham SPA
  - Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA/Ramsar

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**TEMPORARY MAP SHOWING SUFFOLK COAST RAMS ZONE B JUST CLIPPING MID SUFFOLK & LAXFIELD PARISH**  
**- FINAL MAP TO FOLLOW**

Source: Place Services, 2020



## Appendix III

### Characteristics of Habitats Sites

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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
<p><b>The Deben Estuary</b></p> <p>The Deben Estuary lies within Suffolk Coastal District at the southern border of Suffolk. 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 spp.</i> In summer, the site supports important numbers of breeding Avocet 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.</p>				
Deben Estuary SPA  EU Code: UK9009261	978.93	<p><b>Qualifying Species:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dark-bellied brent goose <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i> (Non-breeding);</li> <li>Pied avocet , <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i> (breeding)</li> </ul>	<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ul>	<p><b>Coastal squeeze:</b></p> <p>The Deben Estuary coastline is undergoing widespread decline in the quality of saltmarsh, and an increase in lower marsh habitats at the expense of mid and upper marsh vegetation communities. This is likely due to 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</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
			<p>contribution to achieving the aims of The Birds Directive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:</li> <li>• The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;</li> <li>• The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;</li> <li>• The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;</li> <li>• The populations of the qualifying features;</li> </ul>	<p>degraded through coastal squeeze, sedimentation and reduced exposure.</p> <p><b>Public access/disturbance:</b></p> <p>The Deben Estuary is subject to land and water-based activities, including boating and water sports; walking; wildfowling; and low flying aircrafts. 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 most disturbing; and which locations and times of year are most sensitive is required to ensure the Estuaries are appropriately managed</p> <p><b>Changes in species distribution:</b></p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Spartina anglica</i> is encroaching onto estuarine muds. This may reduce bird roosting and feeding areas of saltmarsh and mudflat.</p> <p><b>Air Pollution- Impacts of atmospheric nitrogen deposition:</b></p> <p>Modelled aerial deposits of nitrogen within Deben Estuary exceed the threshold limit above which the diversity of saltmarsh vegetation begins to be altered (possibly to reed) and adversely impacted. This is likely being caused by in combination impacts from land spreading and land use practices with high nutrient inputs e.g. outdoor pig farms.</p> <p><b>Water Pollution:</b></p> <p>Inappropriate water quality may impact on the supporting habitats of SPA</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				<p>birds. Eutrophication may be having an influence on reed growth and saltmarsh composition.</p> <p>Increased flood events could lead to habitat change/loss of diversity. Nutrient run off from farming operations could exacerbate the issue. Further monitoring and management of key issues are required.</p> <p><b>Fisheries: Commercial marine estuarine</b> – In combination impacts from fisheries in European Marine Sites need to be monitored and appropriately managed to avoid potential threats to site condition.</p>
Deben Estuary Ramsar site	978.93	<p><b>Ramsar criterion 2</b></p> <p>Supports a population of the mollusc <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Habitats Directive Annex II (S1014));</p>	None available	Similar to Deben Estuary SPA (See above).



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
EU Code: UK11017		<p>British Red Data Book Endangered). Martlesham Creek is one of only about fourteen sites in Britain where this species survives</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 6</b> - species/populations occurring at levels of international importance:</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dark-bellied brent goose, <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>,</li> </ul> <p><b>Noteworthy fauna:</b></p> <p>Species currently occurring at levels of national importance:</p> <p>Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i></li> </ul>		<p>A key threat identified by RIS was erosion.</p> <p><b>Erosion:</b></p> <p>English Nature provides advice to the Environment Agency and coastal local authorities in relation to flood and coastal protection management. This will inform the development of the Suffolk Estuaries strategies and the second generation shoreline management plan.</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common greenshank, <i>Tringa nebularia</i></li> </ul> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bean goose, <i>Anser fabalis fabalis</i>,</li> <li>• Common shelduck, <i>Tadorna tadorna</i></li> <li>• Pied avocet, <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i></li> <li>• Spotted redshank, <i>Tringa erythropus</i>,</li> <li>• Common redshank, <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>,</li> </ul> <p>Nationally important species occurring on the site:</p> <p>Invertebrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Nationally Scarce)</li> <li>• <i>Vertigo pusilla</i> (Nationally Scarce)</li> </ul>		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
<b>Minsmere to Walberswick</b>				
The Minsmere-Walberswick contains areas of grazing marsh, extensive reedbeds, the estuary of the River Blyth, and areas of lowland heath and woodland				
Minsmere-Walberswick SPA  EU code: UK9009101	1238.253	<b>Qualifying species:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>; Great bittern (Breeding)</li> <li>• <i>Anas strepera</i>; Gadwall (Non-breeding)</li> <li>• <i>Anas strepera</i>; Gadwall (Breeding)</li> <li>• <i>Anas crecca</i>; Eurasian teal (Breeding)</li> <li>• <i>Anas clypeata</i>; Northern shoveler (Breeding)</li> <li>• <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>; Eurasian marsh harrier (Breeding)</li> <li>• <i>Circus cyaneus</i>; Hen harrier (Non-breeding)</li> <li>• <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>; Pied avocet (Breeding)</li> </ul>	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features</li> <li>➤ The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features</li> <li>➤ The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely</li> <li>➤ The population of each of the qualifying features, and,</li> </ul>	<b>Coastal squeeze:</b>  As coastal change takes place there's a loss of SPA wintering and breeding habitat. Coastal Squeeze and greater frequency of coastal flooding is leading to loss of reedbed (at Walberswick and Corporation Marshes) and to loss of freshwater marsh (between Dunwich and Walberswick). There is evidence of erosion and accretion on leading edges at the Blyth (limited in most places) where coastal management is in line with the Shoreline Management



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sterna albifrons</i>; Little tern (Breeding)</li> <li>• <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>; European nightjar (Breeding)</li> <li>• <i>Anser albifrons albifrons</i>; Greater white-fronted goose (Non-breeding)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</li> </ul>	Plan and deemed appropriate, but this may change in the future with sea level rise, increased flood risk and increased/reduced tidal prism. There is a risk of saline incursion into Westward Marshes if Waller's Wall is no longer maintained.
Minsmere to Walberswick Heaths & Marshes SAC  EU Code: UK0012809	1238.253	<b>Qualifying habitats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual vegetation of drift lines</li> <li>• Perennial vegetation of stony banks</li> <li>• European dry heaths</li> </ul>	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; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats</li> <li>➤ The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and</li> <li>➤ The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely</li> </ul>	<b>Public access/disturbance:</b>  A great number of recreational visitors are attracted by area contributing to bird disturbance (e.g. human and dog disturbance to Little terns, Nightjar and Woodlark).  Increased corvid predation is perceived as birds are flushed. The downward trends for these species are a concern. Trampling of heathland





Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				<p>habitat and vegetated shingle (and Dune) habitat is an issue. Private aircraft (helicopters and planes, paramotorists) and MOD aircraft (helicopters and planes) regularly fly low over the site leading to disturbance of SPA features. Whilst wildfowling/shooting activities on site are fully assessed the impact of disturbance from unregulated shooting activity adjacent to the SPA/SAC is not fully understood.</p> <p><b>Changes in species distribution:</b></p> <p>The downward trend in population numbers of Woodlark, Nightjar, Marsh Harrier and Little Tern presents concerns. Reasons for decline (predation, disturbance, habitat</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				<p>management, food sources, possibly persecution, etc.) need to be better understood and mitigated as appropriate. This issue links to Public Access/Disturbance issues.</p> <p><b>Invasive species:</b></p> <p><i>Spartina anglica</i> is encroaching on estuarine muds. With <i>Spartina</i> at the front, and reed encroaching at back, saltmarsh could be squeezed out.</p> <p><b>Inappropriate pest control:</b></p> <p>Corvids and gulls are attracted by feed of nearby outdoor pig farming, predating and disturbing SPA features</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				<p><b>Air pollution- impacts of atmospheric nitrogen deposition:</b></p> <p>Air pollution can impact on vegetation diversity. Modelled aerial deposits of nitrogen exceed the threshold limit above which the diversity of heathland vegetation begins to be altered and adversely impacted. Many land use practices contribute to this problem including land spreading, outdoor pigs, high nutrient inputs on fields, etc.</p> <p><b>Water pollution:</b></p> <p>Inappropriate surface and ground water quality may impact on SAC habitats and the supporting habitats of</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				<p>some SPA birds. The estuary water is nutrient rich with high pollutant levels. Eutrophication is having an influence on reed. Increased flood events could lead to habitat change/loss of diversity. nutrient run off from outdoor pig farming could exacerbate the issue locally. Ground water pollution on light lands from land use practices such as treatment plants, land spreading, outdoor pigs, high nutrient inputs on fields, etc, may be an issue locally. There is a lack of groundwater monitoring in place.</p> <p><b>Deer:</b></p> <p>High numbers of red deer are damaging reedbed (runways and wallows/loss of structure), woodland</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				<p>(reduced structural diversity) and heathland (erosion and reduced structural diversity) habitat. Minsmere RSPB Reserve has started a culling programme. Some areas/habitats benefit from deer browsing whilst others are damaged. There is no coordinated approach to deer control in the wider area. This issue links with Changes in species distribution and should be viewed in parallel with Public Access/Disturbance.</p> <p><b>Fisheries- commercial marine and estuarine:</b></p> <p>Many different fishing pressures close to shore that may include bycatch of</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				<p>juveniles' numbers/ disturbance of fish nursery areas that could potentially have an impact on Little tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i>. Commercial fishing activities categorised as 'amber or green' under Defra's revised approach to commercial fisheries in EMSs require assessment and (where appropriate) management. This assessment will be undertaken by EIFCA. For activities categorised as 'green', these assessments should take account of any in-combination effects of amber activities, and/or appropriate plans or projects, in the site. Where these assessments indicate management is required, appropriate measures will be introduced by the Regulator by 2016. If management measures are</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				established to protect the feature(s), on-going work will be required by the Regulator to ensure compliance and an appropriate level of reporting to ensure sites are well managed and to enable Natural England to provide advice on the condition of features and potential condition threats.
Minsmere-Walberswick Ramsar  EU code: UK11044	2018.9	<b>Ramsar Criterion 1:</b>  The site contains a mosaic of marine, freshwater, marshland and associated habitats, complete with transition areas in between. Contains the largest continuous stand of reedbeds in England and Wales and rare transition in grazing marsh ditch plants from brackish to fresh water.	N/A	N/A



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
		<p><b>Ramsar criterion 2</b></p> <p>This site supports nine nationally scarce plants and at least 26 red data book invertebrates.</p> <p>Supports a population of the mollusc <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Habitats Directive Annex II; British Red Data Book Endangered), recently discovered on the Blyth estuary river walls.</p> <p>An important assemblage of rare breeding birds associated with marshland and reedbeds including: <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>, <i>Anas strepera</i>, <i>Anas crecca</i>, <i>Anas clypeata</i>, <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>, <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>, <i>Panurus biarmicus</i></p>		

### Benacre to Easton Bavents Lagoons

Benacre to Easton Bavents Lagoons is a series of percolation lagoons on the east coast of England. The lagoons (the Denes, Benacre Broad, Covehithe Broad and Easton Broad) have formed behind shingle barriers and are a feature of a geomorphologically dynamic system. Sea water enters the lagoons by percolation through the barriers, or by overtopping them during storms and high spring tides. The lagoons show a wide range of salinities, from nearly fully saline in South





Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
<p>Pool, the Denes, to extremely low salinity at Easton Broad. This range of salinity has resulted in a series of lagoonal vegetation types, including beds of narrow-leaved eelgrass <i>Zostera angustifolia</i> in fully saline or hypersaline conditions, beds of spiral tasselweed <i>Ruppia cirrhosa</i> in brackish water, and dense beds of common reed <i>Phragmites australis</i> in freshwater. The site supports a number of specialist lagoonal species.</p>				
Benacre to Easton Barents Lagoons SAC EU Code: UK0013104	366.93	<b>Qualifying habitats:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal lagoons</li> </ul>	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; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats</li> <li>➤ The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and</li> <li>➤ The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely</li> </ul>	<b>Public access/disturbance:</b> The popularity of the beaches and the Ness for walking and dog-walking means the suitability of these areas for terns is greatly reduced. An estimated 36,000 people visit the site and both they and their dogs disturb potential breeding birds on shingle features. Long term disturbance means features are not always recorded where they would be expected.



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
Benacre to Easton Bavents SPA  EU Code: UK9009291	470.6052	<b>Qualifying species:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bittern, Botaurus stellaris</li> <li>• Little tern, Sterna albifrons</li> <li>• Marsh Harrier, Circus aeruginosus</li> </ul>	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features</li> <li>➤ The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features</li> <li>➤ The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely</li> <li>➤ The population of each of the qualifying features, and,</li> <li>➤ The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</li> </ul>	<b>Water pollution:</b> Poor water quality in the saline lagoon is causing increased algal growth and a decline in the diversity of invertebrates, and thus the biotope code is being changed.  <b>Physical modification:</b> The barrier beaches are retreating into the saline lagoons and reedbed habitat through natural coastal processes, leading to a decrease and potential future loss of the lagoon habitat. The artificial coastal management may exacerbate this problem.  <b>Chances in species distribution:</b>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				<p>The Natura 2000 sites are on an actively changing coast and the shingle feature is moving north at approximately 30m per year. The current SPA no longer includes the main area used by little tern for nesting. Bare shingle is becoming vegetated rendering the current habitats unsuitable for the nesting terns, so they are moving north to take up nesting areas on newer shingle.</p> <p><b>Fisheries- commercial marine and estuarine:</b></p> <p>Commercial fishing activities categorised as 'amber or green' under Defra's revised approach to commercial fisheries in EMSs are being assessed by EIFCA to determine whether management is</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				required. For activities categorised as 'green', these assessments should take account of any relevant in-combination effects with other fishing activities.
<p><b>Broadlands</b></p> <p>Broadland is a low-lying wetland complex in eastern England. The Broads are a series of flooded medieval peat cuttings within the floodplains of five principal river systems. The area includes the river valley systems of the Bure, Yare and Waveney and their major tributaries. The distinctive open landscape comprises a complex and interlinked mosaic of wetland habitats including open water, reedbeds, carr woodland, grazing marsh and fen meadow, forming one of the finest marshland complexes in the UK.</p>				
Broadland SPA  EU Code: UK9009253	5502.338	<p><b>Qualifying species:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>; Great bittern (Breeding)</li> <li>• <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>; Bewick's swan (Non-breeding)</li> <li>• <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>; Whooper swan (Non-breeding)</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features</li> </ul>	<p><b>Water pollution:</b></p> <p>Diffuse water pollution (DWP) is a key issue potentially affecting all Broads sites and remains one of the priority issues to address in the Broads. There are a variety of</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Anas penelope</i>; Eurasian wigeon (Non-breeding)</li> <li>• <i>Anas strepera</i>; Gadwall (Non-breeding)</li> <li>• <i>Anas clypeata</i>; Northern shoveler (Non-breeding)</li> <li>• <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>; Eurasian marsh harrier (Breeding)</li> <li>• <i>Circus cyaneus</i>; Hen harrier (Non-breeding)</li> <li>• <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>; Ruff (Non-breeding)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features</li> <li>➤ The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely</li> <li>➤ The population of each of the qualifying features, and,</li> <li>➤ The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</li> </ul>	<p>sources, pathways and effects, and interactions with climate change. Hence, a variety of solutions is required to address the problem. In many cases measures are required throughout the catchment, rather than within the site or adjacent to the site. The over-arching mechanism for identifying and actioning DWP issues are DWP Plans. These should be used to drive DWP action throughout the Broads where they exist. DWP actions should be undertaken throughout the whole Broads' catchment, and new plans drawn up where the need is identified.</p> <p>Saline incursion is an increasing threat to much of the Broads' system (although most acutely in the lower Broads) due to climate change and</p>
The Broads SAC	5885.347	<p><b>Qualifying habitats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic veg of <i>Chara</i> spp.</li> <li>• Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i></li> <li>• <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peat or clay-silt soil</li> <li>• Transition mires and quaking bogs</li> </ul>	<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"> <li>➤ The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species</li> </ul>	



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calcareous fens with <i>C. mariscus</i> and species of <i>C. davallianae</i></li> <li>• Alkaline fens</li> <li>• Alluvial woods with <i>A. glutinosa</i>, <i>F. excelsior</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Qualifying species:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desmoulin's whorl snail, <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i></li> <li>• Otter, <i>Lutra lutra</i></li> <li>• Fen orchid, <i>Liparis loeselii</i></li> <li>• Little ram's-horn whirlpool snail, <i>Anisus vorticulus</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats</li> <li>➤ The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species</li> <li>➤ The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely</li> <li>➤ The populations of qualifying species, and,</li> <li>➤ The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</li> </ul>	<p>increasing likelihood of both regular and extreme tidal impacts.</p> <p>Many point sources of pollution have been addressed in the Broads. However, some points sources require additional work to reduce their contribution of nutrients and/ or other pollutants to the Broads' water bodies. Diffuse pollution from the Brograve level due to past drainage in the catchment has lead to elevated salinity and ochre levels in both Horsey Mere and Hickling Broad. The Brograve project is currently a study to investigate possible mechanisms to moderate the impact of saline drainage water on the Upper Thurne Broads and Marshes. A fieldscale trial is currently underway and depending on the results of this, sub-</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				<p>catchment scale studies may follow. If the mechanisms are shown to be effective, implementation would require changes in drainage infrastructure, water level management and land use, which would occur significant additional costs.</p> <p><b>Climate change:</b></p> <p>Climate change is a cross-cutting issue that potentially impacts on many of the other identified issues. There is a need to improve the understanding of the potential effects on the Broads and the features it supports. This will be with a view to developing appropriate adaptation</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				<p>strategies going forward into the future.</p> <p><b>Invasive species:</b></p> <p>Invasive species involving a number of different species are impacting on SAC and SPA features; this is a key issue in the Broads and could be exacerbated by climate change.</p> <p><b>Siltation:</b></p> <p>Many of the open water bodies in the Broads have been subjected to siltation over many decades. Whilst many sites have been in receipt of a range of lake restoration</p>





Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				<p>measures, a number of sites require significant lake restoration to restore SAC quality open water features. There is a strong link to DWP to ensure that sediment/nutrient sources are largely removed in conjunction with lake restoration works.</p> <p><b>Inappropriate water levels:</b></p> <p>Water level management is key to the maintenance of features throughout the Broads. As such, it is essential that the correct water management infrastructure and operating protocols are in place to deliver the optimum hydrological regime for the features of interest at a site, also in the context of a changing climate. Operating</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				<p>procedures need to be updated at a number of locations following the implementation of Water Level Management Plan works. Appropriate water level management is critical to the maintenance of dykes and infield water features (for breeding waders). Where landowners choose not to enter appropriate agri-environment agreements, other mechanisms need to be found to deliver the appropriate regime.</p> <p><b>Hydrological changes:</b></p> <p>Water availability to sites from both surface and groundwater sources will come under increasing pressure in a changing climate. This relates to both</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				<p>management of water within sites and also in their wider catchments.</p> <p><b>Water abstraction:</b></p> <p>Water abstraction is a key issue potentially affecting the full range of Broads' habitats and species. Whilst many of the concerns have been addressed through EA's Review of Consents (RoC) and Restoring Sustainable Abstraction (RSA) programmes, and the water companies' Asset Management Plan (AMP) programme, there remain concerns in some situations, and also a need to review licences in the context of a changing climate.</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				<p><b>Changes in water management:</b></p> <p>Changes in land management within the catchment of sites as a result of expiring agreements and/or changes in land management practice could have a significant impact on water supply and quality affecting sites.</p> <p><b>Inappropriate ditch management:</b></p> <p>Understanding of the role and function of catch dykes (dykes lying between the floodplain and the upland) is indicating that they may play a key role both in the transfer of diffuse pollution into sites, the interruption of the hydrosereal succession from wet to dry habitats on</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				<p>the valley sides, impacts on water chemistry, and impacts on saline incursion.</p> <p><b>Inappropriate scrub control:</b></p> <p>Encroachment of scrub into fens remains an issue across the Broads, either in terms of one-off capital programmes or ongoing maintenance. This issue has to a large degree been addressed through the large capital programmes over the last 20 years, and maintenance through agri-environment. It remains an issue on sites outside agreement, where HLS payments are insufficient to meet costs, and where the expertise is not available to deliver the works.</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				<p><b>Changes in species distribution:</b></p> <p>Understanding changes in principally plant and invertebrate species and communities (in terms of distribution and composition) over time are critical to identifying general and site-specific trends, particularly in a changing climate and changes in salinity. This in turn allows issues to be identified and addressed at an early stage.</p> <p><b>Public access/disturbance:</b></p> <p>Recreational impacts on SAC habitats and disturbance to wintering waterfowl in particular, is an issue on a number</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				<p>of Broads' sites. This is largely a result of boat-based use of the water bodies.</p> <p><b>Undergrazing:</b></p> <p>Undergrazing is an issue on a number of sites within the Broads that have been historically grazed or require grazing. Often the issues are associated with the difficult ground, the difficulty of implementing grazing infrastructure, and/ or the lack of suitable stock. This can also impact on dyke margins, as is the case at Muckfleet Marshes.</p> <p><b>Drainage:</b></p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				<p>A Water Level Management Plan to address ochre has now been costed and is planned to be delivered by 2015 by the Broads IDB. Recent developments in the catchment mean that this plan now needs to be reviewed to identify whether the proposed solution or an alternative solution is still required.</p> <p><b>Direct impact from third party:</b> The presence of military and police aircraft performing training exercises within the SPA is causing disturbance to the wildfowl interest features.</p> <p>Inappropriate scrub control:</p> <p>The presence of the sea wall at Winterton-Horsey Dunes</p>





Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				<p>compromises the coastal processes, and the dynamism within the dune features. This is a difficult issue to address due to the historical management of the coast, the complexities of the coastal environment, potential impacts on the Broads (Upper Thurne Broads &amp; Marshes SSSI), and potential impacts on people and property. This is managed through the Shoreline Management Plan.</p> <p><b>Air pollution- impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition:</b></p> <p>Nitrogen deposition exceeds the site relevant critical load for ecosystem protection and hence there is a risk of</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
				harmful effects, particularly in the light of a changing climate.
Broadlands Ramsar  EU code: UK11010	5488.61	<p><b>Ramsar criterion 2</b></p> <p>The site supports a number of rare species and habitats within the biogeographical zone context, including the following Habitats Directive Annex I features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i></li> <li>• Calcium-rich fen dominated by great fen sedge (saw sedge).</li> <li>• Alkaline fens Calcium-rich springwater-fed fens.</li> <li>• Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) Alder woodland on floodplains,</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
		<p>Annex II species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vertigo moulinsiana Desmoulin`s whorl snail</li> <li>• Lutra lutra Otter</li> <li>• Liparis loeselii Fen orchid.</li> </ul> <p>The site supports outstanding assemblages of rare plants and invertebrates including nine British Red Data Book plants and 136 British Red Data Book invertebrates.</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 6 – species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.</b></p>		



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
		Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):  Species with peak counts in winter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tundra swan</li> <li>• Eurasian wigeon</li> <li>• Gadwall ,</li> <li>• Northern shoveler</li> </ul>		

### Staverton Park and The Thicks

Staverton Park and The Thicks,, Wantisden is representative of old acidophilous oak woods in the eastern part of its range, and its ancient oaks *Quercus* spp. have rich invertebrate and epiphytic lichen assemblages. Despite being in the most 'continental' part of southern Britain, the epiphytic lichen flora of this site includes rare and Atlantic species, such as *Haemotomma elatinum*, *Lecidea cinnabarina*, *Thelotrema lepadinum*, *Graphis elegans* and *Stenocybe septata*. Part of the site includes an area of old holly *Ilex aquifolium* trees that are probably the largest in Britain. The site has a very well-documented history and good conservation of woodland structure and function.



<p>Staverton Park and the Thicks SAC</p> <p>EU code: UK0012741</p>	84.28	<p><b>Qualifying habitats:</b></p> <p>Old acidophilous oak woods with <i>Quercus robur</i> on sandy plains; Dry oak-dominated woodland</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> <p>The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats</p> <p>The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and</p> <p>The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely</p>	<p><b>Air pollution:</b></p> <p>This habitat type is considered sensitive to changes in air quality. Exceedance of these critical values for air pollutants may modify the chemical status of its substrate, accelerating or damaging plant growth, altering its vegetation structure and composition and causing the loss of sensitive typical species associated with it</p> <p><b>Climate change:</b></p> <p>The overall vulnerability of this SAC to climate change has been assessed by Natural England (2015) as being moderate, taking into account the sensitivity, fragmentation, topography and management of its habitats.</p>
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### Sandlings

The Sandlings SPA lies near the Suffolk Coast between the Deben Estuary and Leiston. In the 19th century, the area was dominated by heathland developed on glacial sandy soils. During the 20th century, large areas of heath were planted with blocks of commercial conifer forest and others were converted to arable agriculture. Lack of traditional management has resulted in the remnant areas of heath being subject to successional changes, with the consequent spread of bracken, shrubs and trees, although recent conservation management work is resulting in their restoration. The heaths support both acid grassland and heather-dominated plant communities, with dependant invertebrate and bird communities of conservation value. Woodlark *Lullula arborea* and Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* have also adapted to breeding in the large conifer forest blocks, using areas that have recently been felled and recent plantation, as well as areas managed as open ground



<p>Sandlings SPA</p> <p>EU code: UK9020286</p>	<p>3,391.80</p>	<p><b>Qualifying species:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European nightjar; <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>; (Breeding)</li> <li>• Woodlark; <i>Lullula arborea</i> (Breeding)</li> </ul> <p>Further information can be found via Natural England's <a href="#">Supplementary Advice</a>.</p>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <p>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 population of each of the qualifying features, and,</p> <p>The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</p>	<p><b>Recreation pressure:</b></p> <p>The nature, scale, timing and duration of some human activities can result in the disturbance of birds at a level that may substantially affect their behaviour, and consequently affect the long-term viability of the population. Such disturbing effects can for example result in changes to feeding or roosting behaviour, increases in energy expenditure due to increased flight, abandonment of nest sites and desertion of supporting habitat (both within or outside the designated site boundary where appropriate). This may undermine successful nesting, rearing, feeding and/or roosting, and/or may reduce the availability of suitable habitat as birds are displaced and their distribution within the site contracts. Disturbance associated with human activity may take a variety of forms including noise, light, sound, vibration, trampling, and presence of people, animals and structures. This may become more of an issue as the population recovers and if an increase in development locally leads to an</p>
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increase in recreational pressure in the Sandlings.

**Air pollution:**

The structure and function of the habitats which support this SPA feature may be sensitive to changes in air quality. Exceeding critical values for air pollutants may result in changes to the chemical status of its habitat substrate, accelerating or damaging plant growth, altering vegetation structure and composition and thereby affecting the quality and availability of nesting, feeding or roosting habitats

**Alde-Ore Estuaries**

This estuary, made up of three rivers, is the only bar-built estuary in the UK with a shingle bar. This bar has been extending rapidly along the coast since 1530, pushing the mouth of the estuary progressively south-westwards. The eastwards-running Alde River originally entered the sea at Aldeburgh, but now turns south along the inner side of the Orfordness shingle spit. It is relatively wide and shallow, with extensive intertidal mudflats on both sides of the channel in its upper reaches and saltmarsh accreting along its fringes. The smaller Butley River has extensive areas of saltmarsh and a reedbed community bordering intertidal mudflats. There is a range of littoral sediment and rock biotopes (the latter on sea defences) that are of high diversity and species richness for estuaries in eastern England. The estuary contains large areas of shallow water over subtidal sediments, and extensive mudflats and saltmarshes exposed at low water. Its diverse and species-rich intertidal sand and mudflat biotopes grade naturally along many lengths of the shore into vegetated or dynamic shingle habitat, saltmarsh, grassland and reedbed.



<p>Alde-Ore and Butley Estuaries SAC</p> <p>EU Code: UK0030076</p>	<p>1561.53</p>	<p><b>Qualifying Habitats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estuaries</li> <li>• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; Intertidal mudflats and sandflats</li> <li>• Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)</li> </ul> <p>Further information can be found via Natural England's Supplementary Advice.</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> <p>The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats</p> <p>The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and</p> <p>The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely</p>	<p><b>Hydrological changes:</b></p> <p>Flood wall breaches in December 2013 (due to tidal surge) have led to flooding of Hazelwood Marshes and Lantern Marshes south (both currently intertidal). This has led to a loss of nesting habitat and saline lagoons.</p> <p><b>Public Access/Disturbance:</b></p> <p>Human disturbance to nesting birds on beaches, notably on Orfordness and Shingle Street, by people accessing the southern end of the ness by boat, plus walkers along beach from Aldeburgh, and recreational beach users at Shingle Street. Human trampling affects vegetated shingle habitat. Military and private aircraft (paramotors, helicopters and planes) regularly fly low over the site leading to disturbance of SPA features, wintering and breeding birds.</p>
<p>Alde-Ore Estuaries SPA</p> <p>EU Code: UK9009112</p>		<p><b>Qualifying species:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avocet, <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i></li> <li>• Lesser black-backed gull, <i>Larus fuscus</i></li> <li>• Little tern, <i>Sterna albifrons</i></li> </ul>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features</li> </ul>	<p><b>Coastal squeeze:</b></p> <p>Seawalls afford little scope for natural adaption of the estuary to sea level rise through roll back of habitat. Saltmarsh is at risk of being</p>





		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marsh Harrier, <i>Circus aeruginosus</i></li> <li>• Redshank, <i>Tringa totanus</i></li> <li>• Ruff, <i>Philomachus pugnax</i></li> <li>• Sandwich tern, <i>Sterna sandvicensi</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features</li> <li>➤ The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely</li> <li>➤ The population of each of the qualifying features, and,</li> <li>➤ The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</li> </ul>	<p>squeezed in the future (although currently the estuary is perceived as in balance) and limited areas of natural habitat transition within the site could be lost. The developing policy of the Alde and Ore Estuary Partnership should consider scope for natural adaption to sea level rise.</p> <p><b>Inappropriate coastal management:</b></p> <p>Maintaining coastal defences at Bawdsey and Slaughden is leading to increased shingle recharge requirements at Slaughden, and loss of shingle beach at southern end of SAC at Bawdsey.</p> <p><b>Inappropriate pest control:</b></p> <p>Fox predation/disturbance is a key issue for breeding birds on Orfordness, particularly Lesser black backed gulls. Foxes can cause gulls and other breeding birds to abandon nesting sites, and predate adult birds and chicks.</p> <p><b>Changes in species distributions:</b></p> <p>There are negative population trends in bird species using the site. Breeding locations are</p>
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moving within and away from the designated site, possibly due to habitat change on site, as a reaction to other species and due to draw of other adjacent hinterland habitat. This requires further investigation and possible mitigation.

**Invasive species:**

*Spartina* is encroaching on estuarine muds. With *Spartina* at the front, and reed encroaching at the back, saltmarsh could be squeezed out.

**Air Pollution- impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition :**

Air pollution impacts on vegetation diversity. Aerial deposits of nitrogen may exceed the site relevant critical load (20 – 30 kg N ha-1 yr-1) above which the diversity of saltmarsh vegetation begins to be altered (possibly to reed) and adversely impacted. Many land use practices contribute to this problem locally including land spreading, outdoor pigs, high nutrient inputs on fields.

**Fisheries:**



				Commercial marine and estuarine – There are many different fishing pressures close to shore that may include bycatch of juvenile fish and disturbance of fish nursery areas that could potentially have an impact on Little tern Stern
Alde-Ore Estuary Ramsar site  EU code: UK11002	2,547	<p><b>Ramsar criterion 2:</b> The site supports a number of nationally-scarce plant species and British Red Data Book invertebrates</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 3:</b> The site supports a notable assemblage of breeding and wintering wetland birds.</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 6:</b> Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance:  Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):</p>	N/A	N/A



		<p>Species regularly supported during the breeding season:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesser black-backed gull , <i>Larus fuscus graellsii</i>,</li> </ul> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pied avocet , <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i></li> <li>• Common redshank , <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i></li> </ul>		
<p><b>Dew's Pond</b></p> <p>Covering an area of 6.74 hectares, the site supports one of the largest known breeding populations of great crested newts in the UK. The site lies in north-east Suffolk in the parish of Bramfield within the South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands National Character Area (NCA).</p> <p>This part of Suffolk has a high density of farm ponds supporting a widespread distribution of great crested newts. There are 12 ponds within the site, ranging from long established farm ponds to more recently dug ones. Rough, semi-improved grassland surrounds the ponds with some scrub and hedgerow habitat. The terrestrial habitats are important to newts for feeding, shelter and hibernation during the non-breeding season.</p>				
<p>Dew's Pond SAC</p> <p>EU Code: UK0030133</p>	6.74	<p><b>Qualifying species:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Crested Newts, <i>Triturus cristatus</i></li> </ul>	<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</p>	



			<p>Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species</li><li>➤ The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species</li><li>➤ The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely</li><li>➤ The populations of qualifying species, and,</li><li>➤ The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</li></ul>	
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## Place Services

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