



Wilby Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036: Regulation 14 Draft

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA): Screening Report – February 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

This report screens to determine whether the Regulation 14 draft Wilby 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 Wilby Neighbourhood Plan

The main purpose of the Plan is to set out and identify the best ways to direct local planning towards community wants and needs, while protecting the natural environment and cultural assets, ensuring a more sustainable future for the community. The Regulation 14 draft Neighbourhood Development Plan will set out planning policies for Wilby 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)

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 Wilby Neighbourhood Plan which is being produced by Wilby Parish Council in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The area covered by the Plan is shown in Appendix 1.

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

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



3. HRA Screening

3.1 Habitat Regulations Assessment of Development Plans

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

This section of this Report aims to:

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

3.2 Court Judgements and their consideration in this Report

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

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

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

3.3 Habitats (European) Sites

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

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

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

3.3.1 Explanation of SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites

Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

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

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

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



Ramsar Sites (Wetlands of International Importance)

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

3.3.2 Habitats Sites to be considered

There are 13 Habitats sites (SPA/SAC/Ramsar) which lie within 20 km of Wilby parish and are shown on the map in Appendix 2. However, the Plan area is not within the Zone of Influence for any of these Habitats sites.

Table 1: Habitats Sites within 20km of the development

SPA	SAC	Ramsar
Minsmere-Walberswick	Minsmere To Walberswick Heaths & Marshes	Minsmere-Walberswick
Deben Estuary	Staverton Park and the Thicks	Deben Estuary
Alde-Ore Estuary	Alde, Ore and Butley Estuaries	Alde-Ore Estuary
Sandlings	Waveney & Little Ouse Valley Fens	Redgrave & South Lopham Fens
	Dew's Ponds	

As the Plan area is not within the Zones of Influence for any of these Habitats sites, none screened in for assessment for any likely significant effects resulting from the Regulation 14 Draft Wilby Neighbourhood Plan.

3.3.3 Conservation Objectives

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

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

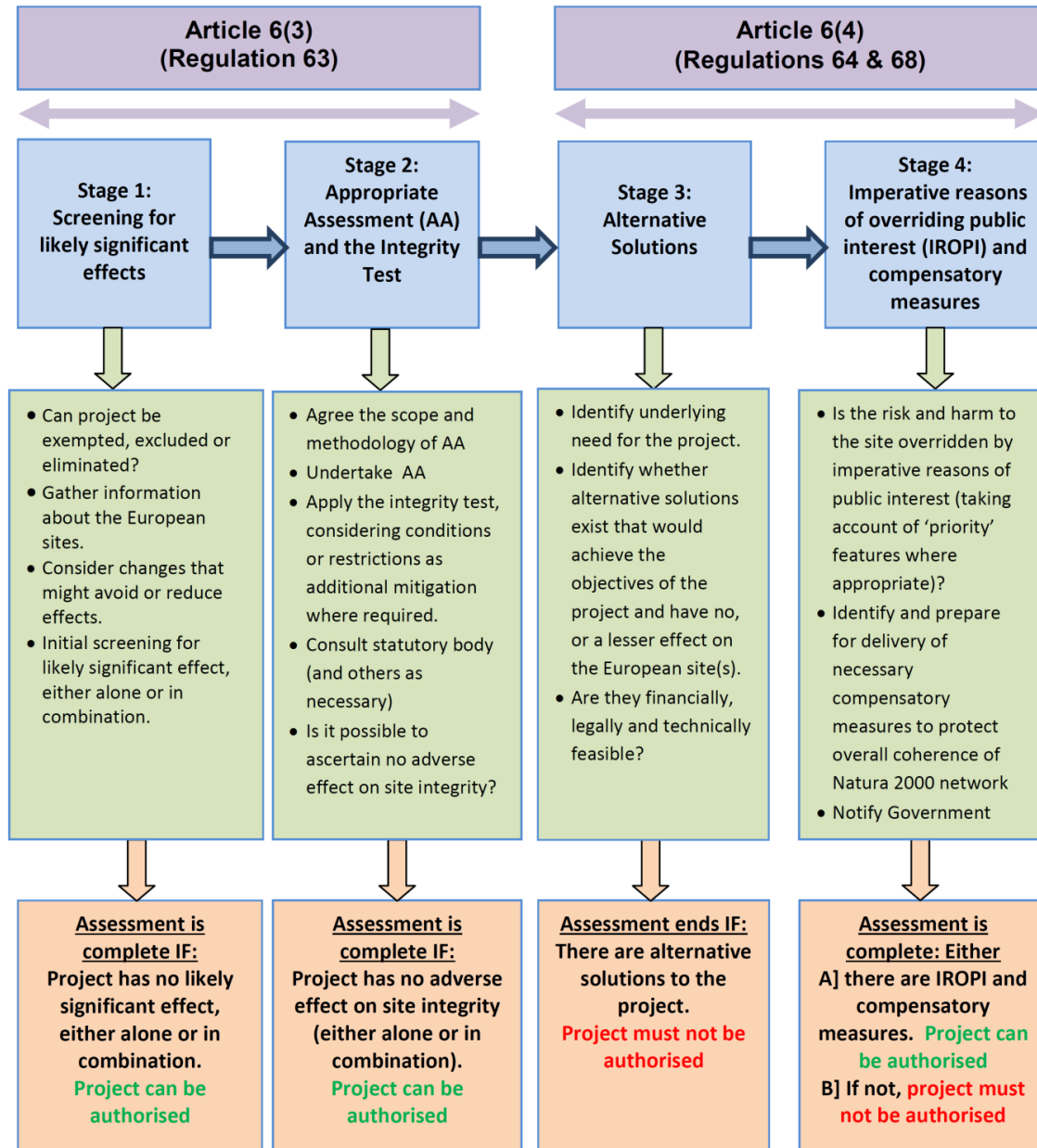


3.4 Method and Approach

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



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



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

Table 2: Screening categorisation

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

3.4.2 Potential impacts of the Wilby 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 Wilby 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 13 Habitats sites within scope of this HRA.	N/A
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	The Plan area does not contain any functionally linked land for use by designated features of the Habitats sites.	N/A
Recreational pressure and disturbance	HRA / AA work undertaken at the Local Plan level indicates that there is no potential pathway for development in the Plan area to impact on the SAC, SPA & Ramsar sites within the scope of the HRA as the Parish lies outside the 13km Zones of Influence of all Habitats sites within the Suffolk Coast RAMS.	N/A
Water quantity and quality	It is considered that there is no pathway for development to result in impacts on water.	N/A
Changes in air & noise pollution levels	It is considered that there is no pathway for development to result in pollution impacts.	N/A



3.5 Results of HRA Screening of Wilby Neighbourhood Plan Policies

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

- **WIL1 Landscape and Natural Features**
- **WIL2 Protection of Important Views**
- **WIL3 Local Green Spaces**
- **WIL4 Renewable Energy and Future Sustainability**
- **WIL5 Future Housing Provision**
- **WIL6 Housing Allocation east of Stradbroke Road**
- **WIL7 Housing Mix**
- **WIL8 Well Designed Development**
- **WIL9 Non-Designated Heritage Assets**
- **WIL10 Community Facilities**

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

Table 4: Summary of findings from the HRA screening

Policy	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effect on a Habitats Site?	Recommendations
<p>WIL 1: Landscape and Natural Features</p> <p>The visual scenic value of the landscape and countryside in the Neighbourhood Area outside the defined settlement boundary will be protected from development that may adversely affect this character. Those parts of the neighbourhood area that include sensitive features typical of the South Norfolk and High Suffolk Plateau Claylands Character Area will be particularly protected.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p>The following Natural Features will be protected from development that would have a significant adverse impact upon their character, appearance and wildlife value:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ancient Hedgerows and associated field boundaries b) Traditional Orchards at Wilby House and Rookery Farm c) Wood Pasture and parkland at Wilby Hall d) Mixed deciduous woodland around Wilby House, along London City Road and at Foals Green e) Lowland Meadows at Wilby Hall and Moat Farm f) Wilby Green <p>Development proposals will be expected to retain existing features of landscape and biodiversity value (including ponds, trees, woodland, hedgerows and verges) and where practical to do so, provide a net gain in biodiversity through, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the creation of new natural habitats. b) the planting of additional trees and hedgerows and restoring and repairing fragmented biodiversity networks. <p>Where loss or damage is unavoidable, the benefits of the development proposals must be demonstrated clearly to outweigh any impacts and the development shall provide for appropriate replacement planting on site together with a method statement for the ongoing care and maintenance of that planting. Where development proposals cause damage to identified natural features, wildlife corridors around the interruption will be constructed.</p>		
<p>WIL 2: Protection of important views</p> <p>The following views and vistas (as shown on Map C and on the Policies Map) are identified as Important Public Local Views.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Views from Worlingworth Road looking east and from Stradbroke Road looking west b) View looking from the east towards Wilby village along London City Road 	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p>c) Views from the south towards Wilby and also looking from Wilby to the south along Brundish Road.</p> <p>Proposals within or that would affect an important view should ensure that they respect and take account of the view concerned. Developments which would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the landscape or character of the view or vista will not be supported.</p>		
<p>WIL 3: Local Green Spaces</p> <p>The following areas are designated as Local Green Space for special protection (as shown on Map D and the Policies Map).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Land surrounding Church of St Mary (including graveyard) b) Playing field associated with Wilby Church of England Primary School <p>Development on designated Local Green Spaces will only be permitted in very special circumstances. Development adjacent to a Local Green Space that would adversely impact upon its special qualities will not be supported.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>WIL 4: Renewable Energy and Future Sustainability</p> <p>Proposals for well designed, small-scale solar energy development including solar arrays will be supported where such proposals do not have an adverse visual impact on the local landscape character or would adversely affect protected natural assets.</p> <p>Proposals that incorporate energy saving measures into new development which help to mitigate or offset climate change and minimise visual impact will be supported</p> <p>Support will be given to proposals that include (but are not limited to) one or more of the following technologies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) passive solar gain; b) grey water recycling and rainwater capture, c) biomass/wood pellet boilers d) air source and ground source heat pumps 	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e) Passive ventilation f) thermal mass g) on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as solar panels h) include a layout and massing that takes account of local climatic conditions, including daylight and sunlight, wind, temperature and frost pockets. 		
<p>WIL 5: Future Housing Provision</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan will accommodate development in Wilby commensurate with its classification in the settlement hierarchy.</p> <p>This plan provides for around 12 dwellings to be developed in the Neighbourhood Plan area between April 2018 and March 2036 of which 11 dwellings are already committed. The housing target will be met through a combination of the existing commitment together with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Allocation of a site for around 5 dwellings (H1), east of Stradbroke Road (B1118) See Map E. 2) Small 'windfall' sites and infill plots within the Settlement Boundary that come forward during the Plan period and are not specifically identified in the Plan; 3) Conversions and new development opportunities outside the Settlement Boundary in accordance with paragraph 79 of the NPPF 2019. 	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>WIL 6: Housing Allocation – Site H1 – East of Stradbroke Road</p> <p>A site as shown on the Policies Map, east of Stradbroke Road is allocated for 5 dwellings. Detailed proposals for this development should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Access from Stradbroke Road; 	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. Appropriate screen planting of a type to be agreed on the northern, southern and eastern boundaries; with a minimum 5m landscape buffer on the northern boundary iii. Dwelling layout to be set back from the road and configured to retain existing views of the church from the north iv. The housing mix e.g. size and type of dwelling provided will be in accordance with Policy WIL7 v. A footway connection to link the site with the rest of the village will be provided which also connects with the adjacent built development. 		
<p>WIL 7: Housing Mix</p> <p>Support will be given to the provision of a wide range of types of housing that meet local needs and enable the creation of a mixed, balanced and inclusive community.</p> <p>In line with the latest evidence of need new developments should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family housing 2-3 bedrooms • Starter homes/homes for first time buyers • Affordable Housing <p>Support will also be given to the following housing construction methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-build or Custom-Built Housing • Sustainable Construction 	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>
<p>WIL 8: Well Designed Development</p> <p>All new housing developments should reflect Wilby's local distinctiveness and character and seek to enhance its quality. Emphasis should be placed on the use of high quality, sustainable materials.</p> <p>New developments should respect the scale and character of existing and surrounding buildings, reinforcing local development patterns, the form, scale, massing and character of adjacent properties where this provides a positive contribution.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p>This can be achieved where development proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) provide for a density compatible with that existing in the immediate locality; b) respect the established building arrangements of residential front gardens, walls, railings or hedges; c) ensure that the proposed heights of buildings are appropriate to the character of the area and do not impact upon the amenity of adjoining residents through overlooking; d) include soft well landscaped boundary edges where adjacent to open countryside or edge of settlement; e) integrate with existing development, in terms of footway connections; f) avoid overdevelopment by ensuring that a residential plot can accommodate the needs of modern dwellings with usable garden space; g) provide sufficient external amenity space for refuse and recycling storage, h) accommodate off street parking for residents; and where garages are proposed ensure that they are off sufficient dimensions to accommodate an average car and open the doors; i) minimise the loss of trees and hedgerows to enable necessary road access and visibility splays j) have regard to the guidance in Secure by Design to minimise the likelihood and fear of crime <p>Proposals for innovative and contemporary design which respects the character of the area and promotes the use of sustainable and high-quality materials will be supported.</p>		
<p>WIL 9: Non-Designated Heritage Assets</p> <p>The following buildings are identified as Non-Designated Heritage Assets due to their locally important character and historic features:</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>



<p>a) Town Farmhouse and Barn</p> <p>b) Willow Farmhouse and Ancient Barn</p>		
<p>WIL 10: Community Facilities</p> <p>Proposals for change of use involving a potential loss of an existing community facility (Village Hall, Church or School), will only be supported where an improved or equivalent facility can be located elsewhere in the parish in an equally convenient, safe and accessible location or where there is no reasonable prospect of continued viable use and this can be sufficiently demonstrated.</p> <p>Support is given by the community for maintaining, developing and improving the services and facilities offered by the Village Hall, the Church and the School. This may include the creation of a new Village Hall, on the existing or an alternative site, should the need arise during the plan period.</p> <p>Any new facility should provide safe and convenient access, sufficient parking and outside amenity green space for community use. Proposals for the redevelopment of the existing site that would provide parking for use in conjunction with the school will be supported.</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>

3.5.1 Recommendations

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

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

3.6 Other Plans & Projects: In-Combination Effects

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

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



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

Statutory Body	Title of HRA or Project	Findings of HRA or Project	Potential for in combination effects
Mid Suffolk District Council	Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment (Appropriate Assessment) October 2007)	The HRA found no likely significant effects from the Plan on the Breckland SAC/SPA and Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC.	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.
St Edmundsbury Borough Council	Core Strategy HRA screening (2010)	The HRA found no potential for in combination effects as no other current plans or projects that are likely to lead to significant effects on the Breckland SAC/SPA or the Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC have been identified, or where impacts have been identified they have been adequately mitigated.	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted
Babergh District Council	Habitat Regulations Assessment of Core Strategy 2011	The Core Strategy aims to minimise impacts on the Orwell and Stour estuaries, a European-designated site which supports species that	It is considered that in combination likely significant effects are not predicted.
Suffolk Coastal District Council	Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan at Final Draft Plan Stage (Dec 2018)	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	<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>



		within 200m of European sites.	
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4. Conclusions

Subject to Natural England's review, this HRA Screening Report concludes that the Regulation 14 draft Wilby 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 Wilby 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

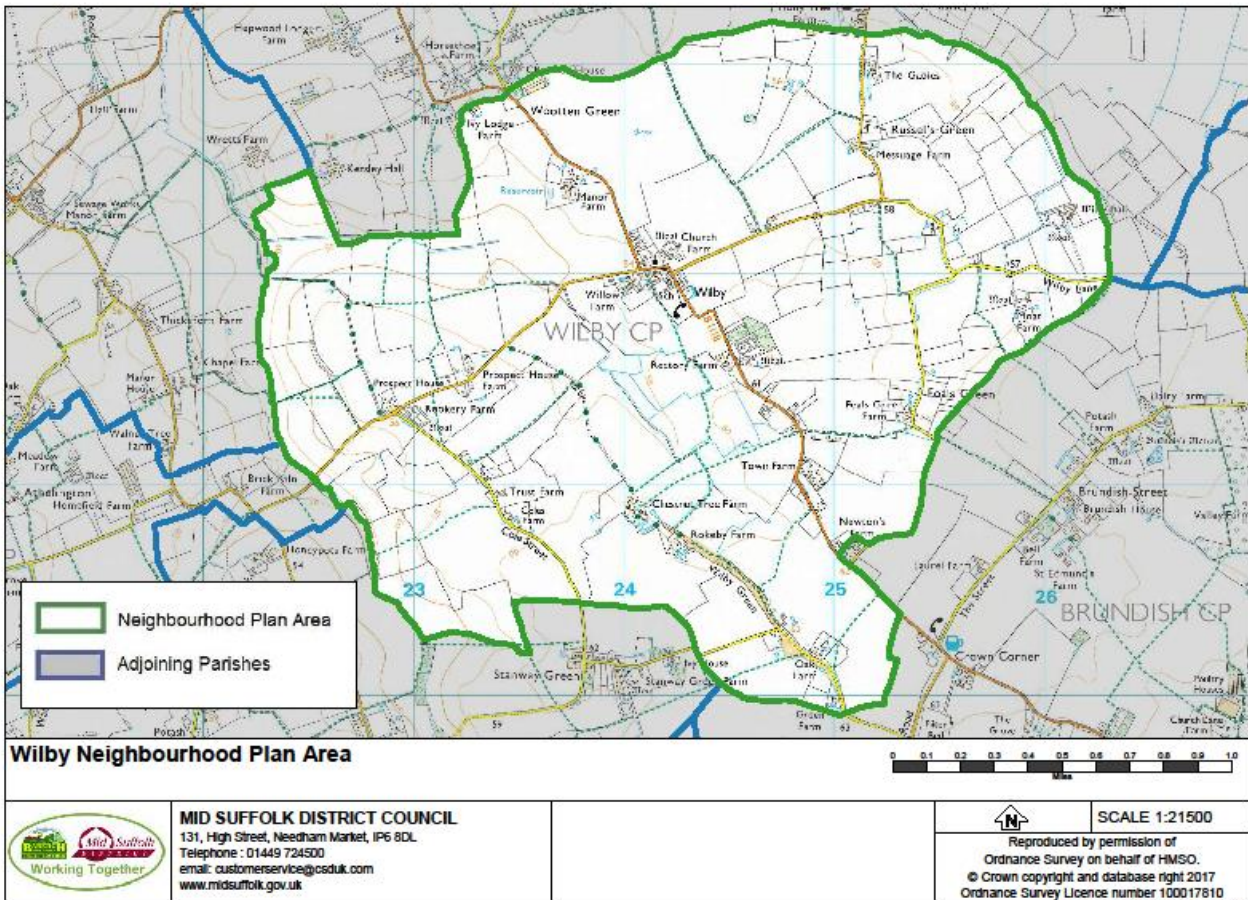
- Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Joint Local Plan (2018)
- Natural England Conservation objectives for European Sites: East of England Website: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/6581547796791296#content>
- Natural England Site Improvement Plans: East of England <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/4873023563759616>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



Appendix I

Wilby Neighbourhood Plan Area

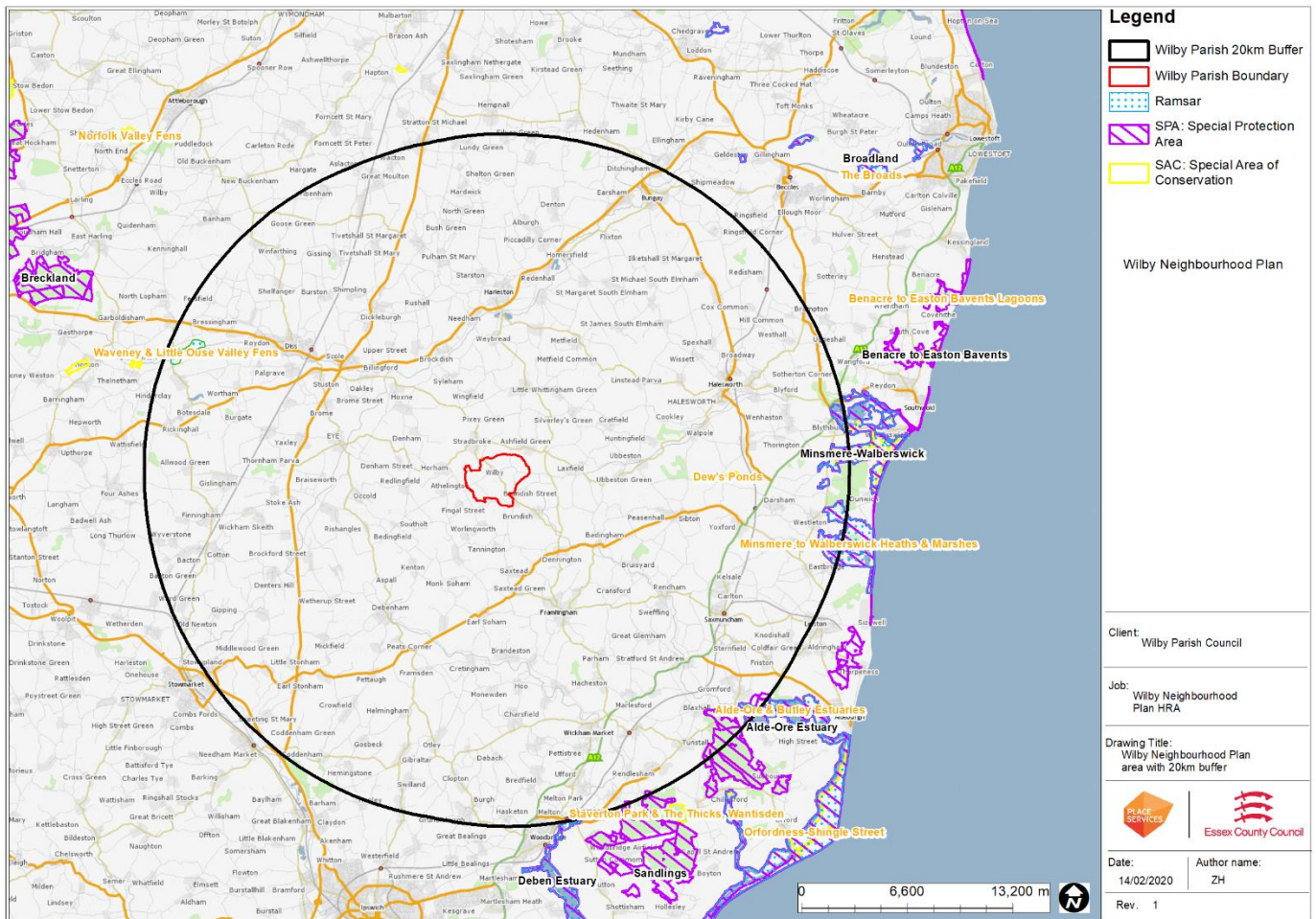
Source: Wilby Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Submission (Mid Suffolk DC, 2017)





Appendix II

Wilby parish and Habitats Sites within 20km



Source: Place Services, 2020



Appendix III

Characteristics of Habitats Sites

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



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
Minsmere-Walberswick				
<p>This composite, Suffolk coastal site contains a complex mosaic of habitats, notably, areas of marsh with dykes, extensive reedbeds, mudflats, lagoons, shingle and drift line, woodland and areas of lowland heath. The site supports the largest continuous stand of reed in England and Wales and demonstrates the nationally rare transition in grazing marsh ditch plants from brackish to fresh water. The combination of habitats creates an exceptional area of scientific interest supporting nationally scarce plants, British Red Data Book invertebrates and nationally important numbers of breeding and wintering birds.</p>				
Minsmere-Walberswick SPA EU Code: UK000910	1265.52	Qualifying Features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A021 <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>; Great bittern (Breeding) A051 <i>Anas strepera</i>; Gadwall (Non-breeding) A051 <i>Anas strepera</i>; Gadwall (Breeding) A052 <i>Anas crecca</i>; Eurasian teal (Breeding) A056 <i>Anas clypeata</i>; Northern shoveler (Breeding) 	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"> ➤ The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features ➤ The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features ➤ The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely ➤ The population of each of the qualifying features, and, 	Coastal Squeeze: 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 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. Public Access/Disturbance: 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 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



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A056 <i>Anas clypeata</i>; Northern shoveler (Non-breeding) A081 <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>; Eurasian marsh harrier (Breeding) A082 <i>Circus cyaneus</i>; Hen harrier (Non-breeding) A132 <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>; Pied avocet (Breeding) A195 <i>Sterna albifrons</i>; Little tern (Breeding) A224 <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>; European nightjar (Breeding) A394 <i>Anser albifrons</i>; Greater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The distribution of the qualifying features within the site. 	<p>assessed the impact of disturbance from unregulated shooting activity adjacent to the SPA/SAC is not fully understood.</p> <p>Changes in species distributions:</p> <p>The downward trend in population numbers of Woodlark, Nightjar, Marsh Harrier and Little Tern presents concerns. Reasons for decline (predation, disturbance, habitat 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>Invasive species:</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>Inappropriate pest control:</p> <p>Corvids and gulls are attracted by feed of nearby outdoor pig farming, predated and disturbing SPA features</p> <p>Pollution- impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition:</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>Water pollution:</p> <p>Inappropriate surface and ground water quality may impact on SAC habitats and the supporting habitats of some SPA birds. The estuary water is nutrient rich with high pollutant levels. Eutrophication is having an influence on reed. Increased flood events</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
		white-fronted goose (Non-breeding)		<p>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>Deer:</p> <p>High numbers of red deer are damaging reedbed (runways and wallows/loss of structure), woodland (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>Fisheries- Commercial marine and estuarine:</p> <p>Many different fishing pressures close to shore that may include bycatch of 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 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.</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
Minsmere-Walberswick Ramsar EU Code: UK11044	2018.9	<p>Ramsar criterion 1 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.</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 2 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:</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"> • Bittern- <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>, • Gadwall- <i>Anas strepera</i>, • Teal- <i>Anas crecca</i>, • Shoveler- <i>Anas clypeata</i>, • Marsh Harrier- <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>, • Avocet- <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>, • Bearded reedling- <i>Panurus biarmicus</i> 		
<p>Dew's Ponds</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>				
Dew's Ponds	6.74	Qualifying species	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site	None identified.



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"> • S1166 Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i> 	contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species ➤ The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species ➤ The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely ➤ The populations of qualifying species, and, ➤ The distribution of qualifying species within the site. 	
<p>The Deben Estuary</p> <p>The Deben Estuary lies within Suffolk Coastal District at the southern border of Suffolk. The estuaries include extensive mudflats, low cliffs, saltmarsh and small areas of vegetated shingle on the lower reaches. The mudflats 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 water birds, 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	978.93	<p>Qualifying species:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A675, Dark-bellied brent goose <i>Branta</i> 	With regard to the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified	<p>Coastal squeeze:</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</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
EU Code: UK9009261		<p><i>bernicla</i> (Non-breeding);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A132 Pied avocet, <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i> (breeding) 	<p>("the Qualifying Features" listed below);</p> <p>Avoid the deterioration of the habitats of the Qualifying Features, and the significant disturbance of the qualifying features, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of The Birds Directive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore; ➤ The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features; ➤ The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features; ➤ The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely; ➤ The populations of the qualifying features; 	<p>as rising sea level. Unless changes are made to the management of the coastline, Habitats supporting qualifying SPA birds will be lost or degraded through coastal squeeze, sedimentation and reduced exposure.</p> <p>Public access/disturbance:</p> <p>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>Changes in species distribution:</p> <p><i>Spartina anglica</i> is encroaching onto estuarine muds. This may reduce bird roosting and feeding areas of saltmarsh and mudflat.</p> <p>Air Pollution- Impacts of atmospheric nitrogen deposition:</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>Water Pollution:</p> <p>Inappropriate water quality may impact on the supporting habitats of SPA birds. Eutrophication may be having an influence on reed growth and saltmarsh composition.</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"> ➤ The distribution of the qualifying features within the site. 	<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>Fisheries: Commercial marine estuarine – 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 EU Code: UK11017	978.93	<p>Ramsar criterion 2</p> <p>Supports a population of the mollusc <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Habitats Directive Annex II (S1014); British Red Data Book Endangered). Martlesham Creek is one of only about fourteen sites in Britain where this species survives</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <p>Dark-bellied brent goose, <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>, 1953 individuals, representing an average of 1.9% of the GB population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p>	None available	<p>Similar to Deben Estuary SPA (See above).</p> <p>A key threat identified by RIS was erosion.</p> <p>Erosion - 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
		<p><u>Species currently occurring at levels of national importance</u></p> <p>Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <p>Black-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>, Iceland/W Europe 307 individuals, representing an average of 1.9% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) Common greenshank, <i>Tringa nebularia</i>, Europe/W Africa 22 individuals, representing an average of 3.6% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <p>Bean goose, <i>Anser fabalis fabalis</i>, NW Europe - Wintering 5 individuals, representing an average of 1.2% of the GB population (Source period not collated)</p>		



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
		<p>Common shelduck, <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, NW Europe 832 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the GB population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p> <p>Pied avocet, Europe/Northwest Africa 167 individuals, representing an average of 4.9% of the GB population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p> <p>Spotted redshank, <i>Tringa erythropus</i>, Europe/W Africa 3 individuals, representing an average of 2.2% of the GB population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p> <p>Common redshank, <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>, 2124 individuals, representing an average of 1.8% of the GB population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p> <p>Nationally important species occurring on the site.</p>		



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
		Invertebrates: <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Nationally Scarce) & <i>Vertigo pusilla</i> (Nationally Scarce)		
Staverton Park and The Thicks				
<p>Staverton Park and The Thicks, Wantisden is representative of old acidophilous oak woods in the eastern part of its range, and its ancient oaks <i>Quercus</i> 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 <i>Haemotomma elatinum</i>, <i>Lecidea cinnabarina</i>, <i>Thelotrema lepadinum</i>, <i>Graphis elegans</i> and <i>Stenocybe septata</i>. Part of the site includes an area of old holly <i>Ilex aquifolium</i> 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 EU code: UK0012741	84.28	Qualifying habitats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H9190 Old acidophilous oak woods with <i>Quercus robur</i> on sandy plains; Dry oak-dominated woodland 	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"> ➤ The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats ➤ The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and 	Air pollution: 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 Climate change: 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.



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"> ➤ The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely 	
<p>Sandlings</p> <p>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 <i>Lullula arborea</i> and Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> 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 EU code: UK9020286	3,391.80	<p>Qualifying species:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A224 Caprimulgus europaeus</i>; European nightjar (Breeding) • <i>A246 Lullula arborea</i>; Woodlark (Breeding) 	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features ➤ The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features 	<p>Recreation pressure:</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 increase in recreational pressure in the Sandlings.</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"> ➤ The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely ➤ The population of each of the qualifying features, and, ➤ The distribution of the qualifying features within the site. 	<p>Air pollution:</p> <p>The structure and function of the habitats which support this SPA feature may be sensitive to changes in air quality. Exceeding critical values for air pollutants may result in changes to the chemical status of its habitat substrate, accelerating or damaging plant growth, altering vegetation structure and composition and thereby affecting the quality and availability of nesting, feeding or roosting habitats</p>
<p>Alde, Ore and Butley Estuaries</p> <p>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 EU Code: UK 0030076	1561.53	<p>Qualifying Habitats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H1130 Estuaries • H1140 Mudflats and sandflats not 	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	<p>Hydrological changes:</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>Public Access/Disturbance:</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
		<p>covered by seawater at low tide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) 	<p>its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats ➤ The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and ➤ The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely 	<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>Coastal squeeze:</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 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>Inappropriate coastal management:</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>Inappropriate pest control:</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>Changes in species distributions:</p> <p>There are negative population trends in bird species using the site. Breeding locations are moving within and away from the designated site, possibly due to habitat change on</p>



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				<p>site, as a reaction to other species and due to draw of other adjacent hinterland habitat. This requires further investigation and possible mitigation.</p> <p>Invasive species:</p> <p><i>Spartina</i> is encroaching on estuarine muds. With <i>Spartina</i> at the front, and reed encroaching at the back, saltmarsh could be squeezed out.</p> <p>Air Pollution- impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Fisheries:</p> <p>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</p>
Alde-Ore Estuary Ramsar site EU code: UK11002	2,547	<p>Ramsar criterion 2</p> <p>The site supports a number of nationally scarce plant species and British Red Data Book invertebrates</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 3</p>	N/A	N/A



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
		<p>The site supports a notable assemblage of breeding and wintering wetland birds.</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 6: Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance:</p> <p><u>Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):</u></p> <p>Species regularly supported during the breeding season:</p> <p>Lesser black-backed gull, <i>Larus fuscus graellsii</i>, W Europe/Mediterranean/W Africa, 5790 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 3.9% of the breeding population (Seabird 2000 Census)</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter: Pied avocet, <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>, Europe/Northwest Africa, 1187 individuals, representing an average of 1.6% of the</p>		



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
		<p>population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p> <p>Common redshank, <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>, 2368 individuals, representing an average of 2% of the GB population (5-year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)</p>		
<p>Waveney & Little Ouse Valley Fens</p> <p>This site occurs in the East Anglian centre of distribution of calcareous fens and contains very extensive great fen-sedge <i>Cladium mariscus</i> beds, including managed examples, as well as stands in contact zones between small sedge mire and species-poor <i>Cladium</i> beds. The habitat type here occurs in a spring-fed valley fen.</p> <p>Purple moor-grass – meadow thistle (<i>Molinia caerulea</i> – <i>Cirsium dissectum</i>) fen-meadows are associated with the spring-fed valley fen systems. The <i>Molinia</i> meadows occur in conjunction with black bog-rush – blunt-flowered rush (<i>Schoenus nigricans</i> – <i>Juncus subnodulosus</i>) mire and calcareous fens with great fen-sedge. Where the fen-meadow is grazed it is more species-rich, with frequent southern marsh-orchid <i>Dactylorhiza praetermissa</i>.</p> <p>A population of Desmoulin's whorl snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> occurs in a valley fen at Weston Fen</p>				
Waveney & Little Ouse Valley Fens SAC	193.18 ha	<p>Qualifying habitats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H6410. <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinia caeruleae</i>); Purple 	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The extent and distribution of qualifying natural 	<p>Inappropriate scrub control:</p> <p>Historically sections of the fen have been allowed to scrub over. These now form wet woodland and scrub with glades containing the remnants of the qualifying features. The aim is to ensure the site includes the same area of <i>Cladium</i> fen (H7210 Calcium-rich fen dominated by great fen sedge (saw sedge)) present at the time of designation.</p> <p>Inappropriate water levels</p>



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
		<p>moor-grass meadows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H7210. Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i>; Calcium-rich fen dominated by great fen sedge (saw sedge) <p>Qualifying species:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> S1016. <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>; Desmoulin's whorl snail 	<p>habitats and habitats of qualifying species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats ➤ The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species ➤ The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely ➤ The populations of qualifying species, and, ➤ The distribution of qualifying species within the site. 	<p>Concerns have been expressed about water levels in the SAC. Some areas such as Redgrave and Lopham Fens have already been worked on. Others (Blo' Norton and Thelnetham Fens) are currently being investigated through the Water Level Management Plan process. Historical evidence suggests that water levels have significantly dropped over time and as a result habitats and features have been damaged. Parts of the fen supported swing moor habitats, and these are a poor representation of their former selves.</p> <p>Air Pollution- impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition: Nitrogen deposition exceeds site relevant critical loads.</p> <p>Water pollution Poor water quality arising from agricultural run-off particularly from nearby outdoor poultry and pig units causes nutrient enrichment and can lead to a reduction in biodiversity.</p>

Redgrave & South Lopham Fens

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



Site name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)	Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity
Redgrave & South Lopham Fens Ramsar	127.09 ha	<p>Ramsar criterion 1 The site is an extensive example of spring-fed lowland base-rich valley, remarkable for its lack of fragmentation.</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 2 The site supports many rare and scarce invertebrates, including a population of the fen raft spider <i>Dolomedes plantarius</i>.</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 3 The site supports many rare and scarce invertebrates, including a population of the fen raft spider <i>Dolomedes plantarius</i>. The diversity of the site is due to the lateral and longitudinal zonation of the vegetation types characteristic of valley mires</p>	N/A	N/A



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