



North Norfolk District Council

# Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report

Corpusty & Saxthorpe Neighbourhood Plan – Submission version

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 Schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012<sup>1</sup> refers to the Habitats Directive. The Regulations require Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening to be undertaken (by the qualifying Body) to identify if a neighbourhood plan would have a significant impact on nature conservation sites that are of European importance, also referred to as Natura 2000 sites. Article 6 (3) of the EU Habitats Directive<sup>2</sup> and Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017<sup>3</sup> (as amended) requires that an Appropriate Assessment is carried out on any plan or project likely to have a significant effect on a European Site.

1.2 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 for the submission body (the neighbourhood plan Group/Parish Council) to demonstrate how the neighbourhood plan is compatible with EU obligations, which include the need to undertake a Habitat Regulations Assessment screening.

1.3 North Norfolk District Council is a competent authority under the EU 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC. The *Habitats Directive* is transposed into UK legislation by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (referred to as the *Habitats Regulations*). Under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive the Council must consider if the project i.e. the development proposal (Neighbourhood Plan), is likely to have a significant effect on the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 site or adversely affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 site alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This process is generally referred to as a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

1.4 The HRA process is not defined in legislation but is used to address Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, as transposed by Regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations. In completing this HRA reference has been made to the information contained in the EC guidance document Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provision of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (European Communities, 2000), the Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook by DTA Publications as well as relevant case law.

1.5 Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive states that:

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/pdfs/ukxi\\_20120637\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/pdfs/ukxi_20120637_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/guidance\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/guidance_en.htm)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents/made>

*Any plan or project not directly connected with, or necessary to, the management of the [European] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.*

1.6 Natura 2000/European designated sites are defined in regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2017, and consist of **Special Areas of Conservation, SAC, Sites of Community Importance and Special Protection Areas, SPA**. These are also reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework, NPPF, which also refers to Ramsar sites, which are listed in accordance with the international Ramsar Convention. The NPPF requires decision makers to apply the same protection and process to Ramsar sites as that set out in legislation for European sites.<sup>4</sup>

1.7 Details of the designated sites need to be assessed to see if there is the potential for the implementation of the neighbourhood plan to have an impact on the sites.

## **2. European Sites**

2.1 This section seeks to answer the following questions:

- a. What are the Natura 2000 site/s affected by the development and why has it been designated?
- b. Are there any nationally designated sites (SSSI) or Ramsar sites that may be affected by the development?
- c. What are the qualifying features of the Natura 2000 Site/s and/or the special interest features of any associated SSSI/Ramsar;
- d. What are the Conservation Objectives for the Natura 2000 Site/s

2.2 There are no European sites in the Neighbourhood Plan Area, however within a 10 mile radius of Corpusty and Saxthorpe, the following Natura 2000 sites occur:

- Norfolk Valley Fens SAC, incorporating four individual sites of:
  - Holt Lowes (7.2km)
  - Booton Common (7km)
  - Buxton Heath (10km)
  - Sheringham and Beeston Regis Common (12.5km)

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<sup>4</sup> NPPF para 118

- North Norfolk Coast (13.8km), incorporating the following sites:
  - North Norfolk Coast SAC
  - The Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC
  - North Norfolk Coast SPA
  - North Norfolk Coast Ramsar
- River Wensum SAC (13km)

### 2.3 Norfolk Valley Fens

Norfolk Valley Fens SAC is one of two sites selected in East Anglia where the main concentration of lowland Alkaline fens occurs. The SAC comprises a series of individual and geographically separated sites scattered throughout the County. Of the fifteen separate sites found within Norfolk, four sites are within 10 miles of Corpusty and Saxthorpe, these are Holt Lowes and Sheringham and Beeston Regis Common, and Booton Common and Buxton Heath (both of which are within the Broadland District Council area). The Norfolk Valley Fens SAC comprises a series of valley-head spring-fed fens. Such spring-fed flush fens are very rare in the lowlands. The spring-heads are dominated by the small sedge fen type, mainly referable to black-bog-rush – blunt-flowered rush mire, but there are transitions to reed swamp and other fen and wet grassland types. The individual fens vary in their structure according to the intensity of management and provide a wide range of variation. There is a rich flora associated with these fens, including species such as grass-of-Parnassus, common butterworth, marsh helleborine and narrow-leaved marsh-orchid. The Norfolk Valley Fens support important populations and strongholds of Annex II species, the narrow-mouthed whorl snail *Vertigo angustior* and Desmoulin's whorl snail *Vertigo moulinsiana*. The four sites are predominantly in unfavourable recovering condition, with the exception of part of the Holt Lowes site which is in favourable condition. Issues affecting the SAC include inappropriate water levels, inappropriate and changes to management (scrub control, mowing and grazing), hydrological changes, water pollution, invasive species and air pollution.

These alkaline fens are generally small in area and surrounded by intensively-farmed land. They are very vulnerable to reductions on the water table and a decrease in the volume of spring flows arising from groundwater abstraction (water resources).

The Conservation Objectives for this site are, subject to natural change, to ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and to ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features.

## 2.4 North Norfolk Coast

The North Norfolk coast provides the only classic British example of a barrier beach system. Extensive areas of saltmarsh with characteristic creek patterns have developed behind sand and shingle bars. This creates one of the most important wetland complexes in Britain for waterfowl. The mosaic of coastal, terrestrial and freshwater habitats supports a rich invertebrate fauna which in turn supports internationally important bird assemblages throughout the year (e.g. breeding terns, wintering waders and wildfowl). The area is important for breeding and moulting of common seal, supporting 90% of the English population.

The North Norfolk Coast comprises multiple overlapping designations including an SPA, two SACs, Ramsar site and multiple SSSI units. The majority are in favourable condition.

The North Norfolk Coast SAC has an area of 3,207.37 ha and is located to the east of The Wash embayment on the East coast of England. The Annex I habitats that are marine features of the site include coastal lagoons and Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrub, both of which are listed as primary reasons for selection of the site. Otter is the only Annex II species listed as a qualifying feature of the site.

Coastal lagoons are a priority habitat and are relatively uncommon in the UK. They can increase biodiversity and provide important habitats for breeding and overwintering birds; for this reason much of the coastal lagoon resource within the UK has been included in the SAC series.

This site is particularly important for Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs, as it is the only area where all the typical plant species for this habitat occur. The scrubby, salt-tolerant vegetation often develops in the uppermost levels of the saltmarsh, where there is saltmarsh to dune transition and also where dunes overlay shingle. Vegetation here is generally dominated by scattered shrubby bushes with patchy herbaceous plants and bryophytes.

The SAC is also important for otters. These animals became extinct in Norfolk in the 1980's but after a re-introduction, sightings of coastal otters have increased with them most likely using the inland areas for freshwater and using the coastline for hunting.

The Wash and North Norfolk SAC encompasses the largest embayment in the UK, as well as extensive intertidal sand and mudflats, subtidal sandbanks, biogenic and geogenic reef, saltmarsh and a barrier beach system unique in the UK.

Subtidal sandbanks and reefs are widespread throughout The Wash and North Norfolk coast. Commercially important fish species use sandbanks as nursery grounds and reefs are associated with elevated biodiversity and species abundance. The site has an outstanding example of the habitat *Sabellaria spinulosa* reef, which is of European

significance. It is one of only five SACs in the UK where this habitat is the primary reason for the sites designation and contains a significant proportion of the *S. spinulosa* reef located on the eastern coast of the UK.

The large areas of intertidal sand and mudflats form important habitat for polychaete worms, bivalves and crustaceans and foraging ground for wading bird species. Mussel and cockle beds found on the intertidal flats also support important fisheries in the area.

Further inland, saltmarsh and saline reedbeds cover 7,642ha of the site. *Salicornia* and saltmarsh communities colonise the sand and mudflats. Atlantic salt meadows form one of the most diverse and extensive examples of this habitat in the UK. The high diversity of these salt meadows is partly due to the variety of specialist species associated with the different habitats present in the site.

The Conservation Objectives for the North Norfolk Coast SAC and the Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC are, subject to natural change, to ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and to ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features.

The North Norfolk SPA covers 7886.79 ha and extends 40km from Holme to Weybourne and includes a great variety of coastal habitats; intertidal mudflats and sandflats, coastal waters, saltmarshes, shingle, sand dunes, freshwater grazing marshes and reedbeds.

The site is important within Europe as one of the largest areas of undeveloped coastal habitat of its type. It is the fourth most important wetland site for waterfowl in Britain. The site is particularly important for saltmarsh containing some of the best examples of this habitat type in Europe.

The North Norfolk SPA was designated for populations of avocet, wigeon, pink-footed geese, dark bellied brent geese and knot that use the site over winter. It also has breeding populations of bittern, marsh harrier, avocet, little tern, common tern and sandwich tern. The area also supports an assemblage of 91,536 waterfowl over winter. The Conservation Objectives for the North Norfolk Coast SPA are to ensure that, subject to natural change, the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:

- 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 qualifying features, and



- the distribution of qualifying features within the site.

The Ramsar site meets the following criteria:

- Ramsar criterion 1- The site is one of the largest expanses of undeveloped coastal habitat of its type in Europe. It is a particularly good example of a marshland coast with intertidal sand and mud, saltmarshes, shingle banks and sand dunes. There are a series of brackish-water lagoons and extensive areas of freshwater grazing marsh and reed beds.
- Ramsar criterion 2- Supports at least three British Red Data Book and nine nationally scarce vascular plants, one British Red Data Book lichen and 38 British Red Data Book invertebrates.
- Ramsar criterion 5- Waterfowl assemblage of international importance: 98462 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003).
- Ramsar criterion 6- Various named bird species occurring at levels of international importance.

The site is vulnerable to natural sea level rise, storm surges and changes in erosion patterns which are increasingly likely to affect the freshwater grazing marsh and reedbed habitats. Increasing interest in abstraction of groundwater for irrigation of arable land may affect freshwater spring flows onto grazing marshes (water resources).

The North Norfolk coast is a very popular area for recreational activity and visitor numbers are likely to grow, for example as a result of the English Coastal Path and housing development. The range of recreational activities that may have adverse impacts on the sites include boating, motor boating, water skiing, jet skis, commercial and non-commercial wildlife tours, commercial shipping, kites (including surfers, boarders and buggy boarders), moorings, access to moorings, motorised vehicles, bikes, hovercraft, bird/wildlife watching, (dog) walking, Samphire collection, shellfish collection, bait digging, reed cutting, beachcombing, sea lavender gathering, beach barbecues, littering, wildfowling. Conflicts with the management of fragile habitats and species which can be easily disturbed by recreational activity will need to be carefully managed. To overcome these challenges further collaboration between stakeholders and local people may be needed with the aim of more holistic management of the area.

## 2.5 River Wensum SAC

The River Wensum is a water course of plain to montane levels with floating vegetation often dominated by water-crowfoot. The river supports a rich and abundant invertebrate fauna, diverse mollusc fauna and a diverse fish community, including native freshwater crayfish, Desmoulin's whorl snail, bullhead and brook lamprey. The River Wensum has been selected as a whole river SSSI as one of a national series of rivers of special interest as an example of an enriched, calcareous lowland river. With a total of over 100 species of plants, a rich invertebrate fauna and a relatively natural

corridor, it is probably the best whole river of its type in nature conservation terms, although short stretches of other similar rivers may show a slightly greater diversity of species.

The features of special interest of the River Wensum SSSI are currently regraded as being in an 'unfavourable condition' (River Wensum Restoration Strategy, 2009).

The Conservation Objectives for the North Norfolk Coast SAC and the Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC are, subject to natural change, to ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and to ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features.

### 3 Context of this study

Assessment of the NNDC Core Strategy and the North Norfolk Site Allocations DPD:

- 3.1 The Appropriate Assessment of the North Norfolk Local Development Framework Core Strategy (incorporating development control policies, 2007) concluded that no policies, including Housing Allocation (SS3) or local policies would have an adverse effect on the integrity of any international sites. However a number of policies were dependent on re-wording of policies specifying that development plans should demonstrate no significant adverse impacts on designated nature conservation interests.
- 3.2 The Appropriate Assessment of the North Norfolk Site Specific Proposals (2010) made the following conclusions specific to the Corpusty and Saxthorpe sites:

<b>Maximum number of houses, and other developments:</b> 26 dwellings
<b>Site codes:</b> COR01, COR02, COR03
<b>Designated sites potentially affected:</b> Norfolk Valley Fens SAC, North Norfolk Coast SAC/ SPA/ Ramsar and the Overstrand Cliffs SAC.
<p><b>Disturbance:</b> Corpusty and Saxthorpe are approximately 7.5km from the Norfolk Valley Fens SAC, 14km from the North Norfolk Coast SAC/SPA/Ramsar and 16.5km from the Overstrand Cliffs SAC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the Norfolk Valley Fens SAC site closest to Corpusty and Saxthorpe there are no interest features which will be affected by an increase in visitor numbers. Due to the nature of site and the limited visitation that it site receives it can be concluded that any disturbance will be minimal.</li> <li>• At the North Norfolk Coast designated sites there is potential for disturbance of otter, bird populations (breeding, overwintering, migrant, and wetland assemblage) perennial</li> </ul>

vegetation, and petalwort, including by trampling. The amount of disturbance is dependent on the exact location of interest features, and whilst development could lead to increased visitation, access to these features is difficult.

- Overstrand Cliffs are designated for their earth heritage and supralittoral rock and as such is not susceptible to disturbance.

An adverse effect from disturbance at the North Norfolk Coast sites cannot be ruled out.

Water quality: Water from Corpusty and Saxthorpe discharges to the Corpusty STW which goes into a tributary of the River Bure at TG 1179 2977. The River Bure is currently of good water quality and meets the favourable condition targets to ensure that the Broadlands/ Broads designated sites interest features are maintained. More details on the River Bure can be found in Section 4.3.7. Any changes to water treatment regimes affecting the River Bure will be subject to further assessment (through for instance Periodic Review).

Therefore we conclude that there is no adverse effect from water quality impacts on the integrity of any sites.

Water resources: Corpusty and Saxthorpe receive their water from Metton, including Matlaske bores. Weybourne, Aldborough, Cromer, Holt, Roughton, Southrepps and Overstrand also receive water from Metton.

Although the increase in dwellings will have some effect on water demand, statements from the Environment Agency and Anglian Water (see Section 4.2) support the view that sufficient water is available to meet this demand without negatively affecting any international sites. Therefore we conclude that there is no adverse effect from changing water availability on the integrity of any sites.

Preventative measures/ Mitigation: It is not considered that an adverse effect on the integrity of the site's interest features is likely as a result of these proposals. However, in light of the uncertain behaviour of future residents we recommend a programme of monitoring be initiated to assess impacts of development on the North Norfolk Coast site. This is described in more detail in Section 8, and will enable targeted and appropriate management responses to be developed and implemented quickly if likely adverse impacts of visitation are identified. This will require discussion between North Norfolk District Council and Natural England, potentially with further advice from other organisations.

Conclusion: Providing that appropriate mitigation means described above are implemented, we conclude that the proposed development in Corpusty and Saxthorpe will have no adverse effect on the integrity of any Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites.

Comments/ Additional notes: There are no distinctions between the development sites.

Of the above sites, only COR01 (land between Norwich Road and Adams Lane) made it through to inclusion in the final Site Allocations DPD.

As noted in the table above, the HRA for the Site Allocations concluded that an adverse effect from disturbance at the North Norfolk Coast Natura 2000 sites could not be ruled out and that in light of the uncertain behaviour of future residents a programme of monitoring, and if necessary mitigation, should be initiated to assess the impacts of the development on the North Norfolk Coast. These measures were to be secured through a requirement of the site allocation policies, which state:

“prior approval of a scheme of mitigation to minimise potential impacts on the North Norfolk Coast SAC/SPA and Ramsar sites arising as a result of increased visitor pressure, and on-going monitoring of such measures”.

North Norfolk District Council have agreed, in consultation with Natural England, to implement the required measures with a developer contribution of £50 per dwelling, to be secured through Section 106 agreements as part of any planning permission granted for each allocated site. The current allocated site at Corpusty (COR01) is subject to this policy requirement and a developer contribution.

### 3.3 Summery Visitor Surveys at European protected sites across Norfolk during 2015 – 2016.

As part of the evidence base for the Norfolk Strategic Framework, Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership commissioned a series of visitor surveys to be undertaken by Footprint Ecology Limited at European protected sites across Norfolk in 2015 and 2016. This culminated in a report detailing the trends and patterns of visitors at various protected sites, including an assessment of how far people travelled to visit a particular site (or group of sites) and how often.

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of current and projected visitor patterns to European protected sites across Norfolk. The report is novel in that it combines data from multiple local authorities to predict changes in recreation use as a result of new housing planned across Norfolk. The work was carried out during 2015 and 2016 at 35 agreed sites including Norfolk Valley Fens and the North Norfolk Coast.

Through analysis of visitor surveys it provides a strategic overview to aid the understanding of the relationship between population growth (including new housing growth and tourist growth) and the potential for impacts on internationally designated wildlife sites throughout Norfolk. The Study provides updated evidence to inform the preparation of Local Plans.

It is principally concerned with:

- establishing the number and behaviour of visitors at the designated sites;
- predicting increases in access by Norfolk residents;
- drawing analysis around routes on sites, and distance travelled and frequency of use.

All of which will help to make the links between new housing development and recreation use and provide evidence to inform Local Plan preparation including the development of appropriate monitoring and mitigation measures for these designated sites.

On average, based on the predictions of planned housing growth of 16% across Norfolk there is a predicted increase of access to European sites of 14%, (without mitigation).

For North Norfolk there is an estimated 9% increase in access (without mitigation) but this is from a range of districts, including growth in Greater Norwich, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk. However there are variations with the most marked increase in the Brecks at 30%. This is due to a combination of high levels of growth and short distance travelled to access the sites. By contrast access to European sites over the remaining broad locations is reported as: Valley Fens 28%, Roydon and Dersingham, 15%, The Broads, 14%, East Coast 11% and the Wash, 6%.




The report generally concludes that increased housing from allocations (as opposed to windfall) is unlikely to have a marked effect on access to European sites at distances beyond 10 km. The North Norfolk Coast is however the exception with it drawing from across Norfolk and from significant tourism.

#### **4 Screening Assessment – Test of Likely Significant Effect**

The Project is a Neighbourhood Development Plan and such is a material consideration once adopted in the determination of planning applications. The plan covers the parished area of Corpusty and Saxthorpe for the period 2017 – 2036. Its focus is on protecting the distinctiveness of the two villages for future generations. The neighbourhood plan does not allocate sites but encourages development within a newly proposed settlement boundary and in particular on a number of priority infill sites.

#### 4.1 Assessment Matrix

The following key is used to assess the likely effects of the proposed policy on a sites qualifying features in table 1.

-  No likely significant effect (NLSE) on the site's qualifying features
-  Likely significant effect (LSE) on the site's qualifying features (with or without mitigation)
-  Uncertain likely significant effect

**Table 1 Assessment Matrix.**

Neighbourhood Plan policy	Policy feature	Potential impacts/effects of the development on the Natura 2000 site and why?		
		Likely Effect Valley Fens	Likely effect <i>North Norfolk Coast</i> (combined sites)	Likely Effect River Wensum
Policy 1 Framing provisions	Encourages development inside the defined Settlement Boundary & seeks to identify priority areas for infill.	NLSE	ULSE	NLSE
Policy 2 LGS	Identifies two sites as Local Green Space.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
Policy 3 Residential Density	Sets residential density of 25dph(net). Allowing a potential net increase of approx. 40 dwellings on the 2 priority sites identified.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
H1 Scale & Location of new Residential Development	Descriptive policy covering aspects of character, design and existing Core strategy policies.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
H2 Housing & Planning Obligations	Sets an affordable housing lower threshold and evokes a percentage requirement for optional Technical housing standards covering accessible and adaptable dwellings.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
H3 Mix & Type of Housing	Sets criteria for type of housing on schemes of 4 or more.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
H4 Further smaller infill housing within the settlement	Sets further requirements on the principle of development within the settlement boundary with regard smaller infill housing.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
E1 Agricultural	Seeks to set a requirement for the	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Land	assessment of agricultural land classification			
E2 The River Bure & Valley	Seeks to set a requirement for ecological assessments to accompany proposals that may impact on the River Bure and valley. (note some sections are classified as County wildlife sites).	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
E3 Protection & Enhancement of Local Biodiversity	Policy seeks to protect Hedgerows and sets a requirement for ecological assessments.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
E4 Renewable Energy	Seeks to set requirements for "Landscape Visual Impact Assessments, Ecology assessments and noise assessment to accompany proposals.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
E5 Encourage Schemes for Low carbon Development	Descriptive policy following national and local policy supporting low carbon development.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
HE1 Archaeology	Seeks to set requirements covering archaeological matters over and above existing core strategy policy EN8 requirements +in the determination of proposals.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
HE2 Views of the Church	Seeks to set a requirement to avoid adverse visual impacts from development on views and setting of the Churches.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
DC1 overall Character	Policy seeking compliance with existing NNDC design guidance and cover aspects of Character and density requirements similar to other policies in the emerging NP (eg	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE



	policy 3 &H1).			
DC2 Open space	Descriptive policy in line with national and local policies.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
DC3 Safety	Policy seeking the installation of sprinklers in all new development	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
B1 small Businesses & Light Industry	Directs development for small businesses & light industry to identified priority site subject to adherence to criteria based policy requirements.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
B2 Heavy Goods vehicles	Policy seeking the requirement of a transport statement to accompany proposals that are likely to have significant impacts on the village.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
ED1 The Primary School & Education Facilities	Aspirational policy seeking support for educational facilities.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
ED2 Mobile Library	Policy encouraging proposals to support the mobile library and other sources of information.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
W&F1 St Andrews Church	Seeking to support appropriate developed of the Church for cultural and spiritual activities.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
W&F2 Footpaths &Public Rights of Way	Policy seeking support for establishment of an undefined circular footpath around the villages.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
W&F 3 Allotments	Policy seeking alternative provision of allotment land.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE
T1 traffic	Aspirational policy seeking contributions	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

Calming	from development general traffic calming measures (off site).			
T2 Public Transport	Policy requiring all development inside the settlement boundary to provide improved bus stop facilities.	NLSE	NLSE	NLSE

**Is the project directly connected with or necessary for the management of the Natura 2000 site?**

No

**What are the mitigation measures (if any)?**

Existing mitigation measures are a requirement of site allocation policy COR01 in the adopted North Norfolk Local Development Framework, Site Allocations DPD. These require Prior approval of a scheme of mitigation to minimise potential impacts on the North Norfolk Coast SAC/SPA and Ramsar sites arising as a result of increased visitor pressure, and on-going monitoring of such measures. No such measures have been proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan.

**Is there any likely significant effect on the qualifying features of the Natura 2000 Site from the development alone?**

No

**Are there any other plans or projects that may affect the qualifying features of the Natura 2000 site?**

The District Council is producing an emerging Local Plan which will include further site allocations across the District as well as strategic policies and revised development management policies. A Draft Scoping report for the Habitat Regulation Assessment has been written and consultants commissioned to undertake the full HRA and Appropriate Assessment for this separate project, the conclusions of which have yet to be reached. However, the emerging Local Plan does not seek to allocate additional residential growth to Corpusty and Saxthorpe.

**Is there any likely significant effect on the qualifying features of the Natura 2000 Site from the development in combination with other plans or projects (taking into consideration the *Waddenzee* decision)?**

No

## **4.2 Conclusion**

The *Visitor Pressure* study by Footprint Ecology generally concluded that increased housing from allocations (as opposed to windfall) is unlikely to have a marked effect on access to European sites at distances beyond 10 km. The North Norfolk Coast is however the exception, with the site drawing from across Norfolk and from significant tourism. Visitor access was predicted to increase by 28% for the Valley Fens.

Much of identified development identified in the Visitor Pressure study is already included in existing plans and therefore development has already been subject to plan-level Habitats

Regulations Assessment and mitigation has been established as necessary through the existing Development Plan. The policies contained in the emerging Corpusty and Saxthorpe neighbourhood plan are focused on identified local issues and although some additional growth (to the adopted Core Strategy) is anticipated through the neighbourhood plan policy 3, much of this growth has already been assessed in the Appropriate Assessment for the Site Allocations DPD, where it was concluded that an adverse effect on the integrity of the European site's interest features was not considered likely as a result of the then site specific proposals, subject to the identified mitigation.

Given the windfall nature of planned growth, the existing allocation which accounts for approx. 50% of potential growth and the small size of the sites – approx. 0.74 ha (area1) and 0.9 ha (area 2) it can be generally concluded that the limited growth envisaged through the neighbourhood plan and the nature of the Valley Fens any disturbance will be minimal.

It remains reasonable to conclude that the levels of growth proposed in the neighbourhood plan remain minimal and in light of the more recent Visitor Survey evidence undertaken by the District Council it is appropriate to conclude that the policies in the neighbourhood plan add minimal recreational pressures on the identified European sites based on the premise that the mitigation measures outlined in the existing development plan and detailed below (and included in the assessment as required) are incorporated into the neighbourhood plan for residential development in the identified priority sites.

Based on this, the emerging submitted version of the neighbourhood plan and the incorporation of the identified mitigation measures, a full Habitat Regulations Assessment is not required.

Mitigation wording required (priority sites)

Prior approval of a scheme of mitigation to minimise potential impacts on the North Norfolk Coast SAC/SPA and Ramsar sites arising as a result of increased visitor pressure, and on-going monitoring of such measures. Any financial contribution proposed should be at a scale likely to mitigate the potential impacts.

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