Habitat Regulations Assessment of the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism in the Broads 2016-2020

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Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism in the Broads 2016-2020

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Summary

A Habitats Regulations Assessment is required in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, as amended, in order to ensure that plans and projects do not adversely affect any European wildlife sites. A plan being produced by a public body is the subject of Habitats Regulations Assessment, and it is the responsibility of the public body to undertake the assessment in accordance with the legislation, to inform any necessary changes to the plan, prior to its adoption. This report provides the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Broads Tourism Strategy, and is prepared by Footprint Ecology on behalf of the Broads Authority.

A screening of the full plan has been undertaken, to check for likely significant effects. The screening stage of Habitats Regulations Assessment comprises of a check of each aspect of the plan to determine whether there are any risks to European sites as a result of the proposals and policies within the plan. A screening for likely significant effects was first made on the draft plan, which resulted in a number of recommendations to modify text to remove the potential for risks to European sites. Risks were identified in relation to the recommendations within the plan for a 5% growth in annual tourism spending, increased boating and consequently increased moorings, increased walking and cycling provision, increased visitor experience of the waterside, more canoe and non-motorised craft using the water, wildlife specific tours and activities and creating changes to visitor spread (in terms of across the whole year rather than summer, and in terms of more visits to underused locations). Text modifications were recommended to avoid effects and make clear where evidence will need to inform the implementation of the plan.

The plan has now been finalised in light of consultation and having regard for the recommendations made by this report. The final plan has therefore been re-screened to check that potential risks to European sites have been adequately avoided by the changes made to the plan. This report is now able to conclude that likely significant effects, i.e. the possibility of risks to the European sites, has been avoided by the changes made and the plan can be adopted with this report providing a record of its conformity with the legislation.

The strategic nature of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy is such that actions are high level and do not specify locations, extent or types of projects. Subsequent lower tier plans and projects will emerge in response to the high level Sustainable Tourism Strategy, and some of these may need to be the subject of a Habitats Regulations Assessment in more detail. Early evidence gathering for projects will be essential to inform project locations and design.

The suite of plans and strategies for the Broads would benefit from better baseline information to inform future assessments, and consideration should be given to how this can be established.
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1. **Introduction**

**Context**

1.1 This document is a Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Broads Tourism Strategy; ‘Sustainable Tourism in the Broads 2016-2020,’ currently being prepared by the Broads Authority. It is one of three concurrent emerging strategic documents being produced by the Authority, with the Broads Management Plan and the Broads Local Plan also being prepared.

1.2 The Broads Authority is a Special Statutory Authority established under the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988 with very similar responsibilities to those of the English National Park Authorities. It is the local planning authority for the area and a harbour and navigation authority. The Broads is over 300 square kilometres in area, dominated by scenic and wildlife rich wetlands, with a strong culture and heritage associated with historic use of the lakes and waterways. The Broads became a member of the National Park family in 1988 and the Broads Authority was established the following year by the Broads Act 1989. The Authority has a duty to manage the Broads for the following three purposes, none of which takes precedence:

- Conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Broads;
- Promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Broads by the public; and
- Protecting the interests of navigation.

1.3 The Broads Authority therefore produces a range of plans and strategies to guide and drive their work and meet their legislative and national policy duties. As a public body, and therefore a competent authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, as amended (the Habitats Regulations), the preparation of plans and strategies for the Broads by the Authority must have regard for European wildlife sites.

1.4 The Broads Authority is currently preparing the three plans referred to above, all of which will require Habitats Regulations Assessment; the process by which implications of plans and projects for European wildlife sites are assessed. The plans are all key documents for the Authority’s range of work, covering planning, national park management and tourism. The Broads Authority has commissioned Footprint Ecology to undertake the Habitats Regulations Assessments. As competent authority under the Habitats Regulations, the Broads Authority must retain ownership and responsibility for the assessments, and Footprint Ecology will therefore work closely and collaboratively with the Authority as the plans and their respective assessments are progressed.

1.5 Once complete, the Broads Authority will adopt the assessments to meet their duties. This report provides a record of Habitats Regulations assessment, with reference to supporting evidence, informing the development of the Broads Sustainable Tourism Strategy through an iterative process of assessment and plan updates. This report now
provides an assessment of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy in its final form, ready for publication.

1.6 It is of fundamental importance that the Broads Authority is fully agreeable to any measures recommended by the Habitats Regulations Assessments of the three plans, which seek to protect the European sites, as the measures recommended are to be assimilated into the plans and be capable of implementation and, if necessary, enforcement, by the Authority. For this Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy, the Broads Authority has accepted the recommendations made by this report at the earlier draft plan stage, and this report now finalises the assessment with a check that those measures to protect European sites have been fully incorporated. A full screening of the final plan is therefore made and documented in Appendix 3, where earlier recommendations can also be identified.

The Habitats Regulations

1.7 A ‘Habitats Regulations Assessment’ is the step by step process of ensuring that a plan or project being undertaken by, or permitted by a public body, identified within the legislation as a competent authority, will not adversely affect the ecological integrity of a European wildlife site. Ecological integrity refers to ‘the coherence of a site’s ecological structure and function across its whole area that enables it to sustain the habitats, complex of habitats and/or the levels of the populations of species for which the [European] site was classified/designated.’

1.8 Where it is deemed that adverse effects cannot be ruled out, a plan or project must not proceed, unless exceptional tests are met. This is because European legislation, which is transposed into domestic legislation and policy, affords European sites the highest levels of protection in the hierarchy of sites designated to protect important features of the natural environment.

1.9 The relevant European legislation is the Habitats Directive 1992 and the Wild Birds Directive 2009, which are transposed into domestic legislation through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, as amended. These Regulations are normally abbreviated to the ‘Habitats Regulations’ and are referred to as such throughout this report and subsequent assessment work for the three plans.

1.10 The legislation sets out a clear step by step approach for competent authorities making decisions relating to any proposed plan or project. In England, those duties are also supplemented by national planning policy. Within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) there is a requirement for Ramsar sites, which are listed in accordance with the international Ramsar Convention, for competent authorities to apply the same protection and process to Ramsar sites as that set out in legislation for

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1 Defra 2012: Core guidance on HRA for developers, regulators and land/marine managers. DRAFT ONLY.
European sites. Formally proposed European sites, and those providing formal compensation for losses to European sites, are also given the same protection.

1.11 The duties set out within the Habitats Regulations apply to any public body or individual holding public office with a statutory remit and function, under the collective term of ‘competent authorities’. The requirements are applicable in situations where the competent authority is undertaking or implementing a plan or project, or authorising others to do so.

1.12 The Habitats Regulations require the competent authority to demonstrate that adverse effects on European site integrity have been ruled out, and that requirement relies on the use of information and evidence to demonstrate that such effects have been prevented, ‘beyond reasonable scientific doubt.’ Where there isn’t enough information to demonstrate that adverse effects have been prevented, the competent authority must assume that such effects will occur. This approach is commonly referred to as the ‘precautionary principle’ and should be applied at all stages in the Habitats Regulations Assessment process.

1.13 A more detailed guide to the step by step process of Habitats Regulations Assessment is provided in this report at Appendix 1.

The Broads Sustainable Tourism Plan – an overview

1.14 The Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Destination Management Plan for the Broads is entitled ‘Sustainable Tourism in the Broads 2016-2020’, and is a four year plan that will be periodically reviewed. It is not a statutory requirement, but makes a significant contribution to the suite of plans and strategies that steer the management of the Broads, by providing a strategic direction for sustainable tourism in the Broads that recognises the invaluable resource of the Broads and the careful balance between protecting and enabling everyone to enjoy the beauty of the park. The Destination Management Plan will replace the current Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Broads, which was also adopted in 2011.

1.15 Tourism drives much of the economy of the Broads, and provides the livelihood of many people. The Broads Authority must continue to understand the current tourism, including visitor behaviour and volume, to ensure the long term sustainability of the park.

1.16 The plan focuses on both visitor numbers and the type of tourism that will be most beneficial for the park and the Habitats Regulations Assessment therefore played an early and informative role in the development of the strategic approach to tourism, ensuring that the direction being promoted by the new plan is complementary to the maintenance and where necessary the restoration of European site interest. As a non-statutory plan, the Broads Authority did not undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment of the previous strategy, and this new assessment does not therefore make

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4 In accordance with EU case law – Case C-127/02 ‘Waddenzee case.’
reference to previous work. As a plan being produced by the Broads Authority and drives their work as a public body, the tourism plan should be the subject of Habitats Regulations assessment irrespective of its non-statutory nature. This assessment undertaken for the new plan has secured clear and integrated protection mechanisms for the European sites that will be implemented alongside sustainable tourism growth and improvements in the Broads.

The other plans being produced

1.17 The additional two strategic planning documents being produced by the Broads Authority are closely linked to the Sustainable Tourism in the Broads 2016-2020 plan, all of which collectively inform the functions of the Broads Authority. These plans will also be the subject of Habitats Regulations Assessment, and the assessment findings will be relevant to each, and to some extent interlinked. Where previous versions of the three plans have been the subject of an assessment, that historic assessment work can provide useful information for the new assessment being progressed.

The Broads Management Plan – the Broads Plan

1.18 The Broads Plan is the key strategic management plan for the Broads. It sets out a long-term vision and guiding action for the area, and integrates a wide range of strategies, plans and policies relevant to the Broads with the purposes and duties in the Broads Acts. The current plan was adopted in 2011 and reflects the uniqueness of the Broads, its cultural heritage that frames its landscape and biodiversity, its value to people, both local and visitors, and how the area can sustain itself into the long term, having regard for natural and human induced changes. As a water-dominated landscape, the management plan also incorporates consideration of sustainable use of the waterways, the rights to that use and effective management of the navigation areas. The new plan will similarly focus on these key elements, drawing on up to date information to inform its content and direction.

1.19 The Broads Plan provides the framework for securing and delivering the legislative duties required by the legislation under which the Broads Authority operates, primarily the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988.

1.20 The Broads Authority must manage for these three purposes, whilst having regard for:

- National importance of the Broads as an area of natural beauty and one which affords opportunities for open-air recreation;
- The desirability of protecting the natural resources of the Broads from damage; and
- The needs of agriculture and forestry and the economic and social interests of those who live or work in the Broads.

1.21 The management of the Broads to meet these duties is set out within the Broads Plan, with the current version of the plan having been published in 2011. The plan is reviewed every five years, and preparation for a new plan is now underway in order to meet this timetable. The Broads plan is a strategic management plan, with its direction
for park management being high-level guiding principles and priority setting, with more detailed action being included in ‘mechanisms for delivery’ documents. It includes a long term vision for the Broads, informed by public consultation, and consideration of how that vision can be met whilst continuing to protect the special qualities of the area.

1.22 The plan currently sets out strategic objectives under topic headings, and it is here that the new plan has opportunities to incorporate recommendations from the Habitats Regulations assessment in terms of high level objectives for European site protection, and also for identifying key restoration needs. It is here that water management becomes particularly relevant, and the Broads Plan can provide strategic direction for further work. A review of progress on rectifying any previously identified issues will be made, drawing on the work of a range of current strategies in place in relation to water resources in the Broads, such as sediment management, catchment flood management and Anglian Water’s resource plans. It is the implementation of plans and strategies below the overarching Broads Plan that the previous Habitats Regulations Assessment work highlighted as a potential threat to European site interest, and it will therefore be important to check the effectiveness of measures to protect European sites that have been put in place for those lower tier documents.

The Broads Development Plan – the Broads Local Plan

1.23 The Broads Local Plan is a statutory planning policy document, which sets the direction, quantum and nature of sustainable development for the area, through a plan period up to 2036. Planning documents set the agenda for growth over a number of years, but during that time are regularly reviewed and updated. Currently, planning policy is contained within the Broads Local Development Framework, which consists of a number of plan documents that were adopted between 2007 and 2014, and also the minerals and waste planning documents prepared by Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils. Neighbourhood Plans will also become an important aspect of local planning, with Strumpshaw and Ade Neighbourhood Plans already adopted and others in development.

1.24 The Local Plan is being prepared to replace the existing Local Development Framework. The Local Development Framework includes a Core Strategy document, a Development Management Policies document and a Site Specific Policies Document, all of which were the subject of Habitats Regulations Assessment.

1.25 Inevitably, recreation pressure, water resources and water quality have been the key considerations in previous assessment work, and these themes are likely to continue to be the main areas of concern for the new Local Plan. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Local Plan will therefore need to involve discussions with the Environment Agency and Anglian Water, as the water utility company for the area. Both are competent authorities under the Habitats Regulations and their own plans and strategies will therefore be the subject of Habitats Regulations Assessment. The issue of water quality and resources will be considered alongside current site condition and sensitivities, and checks will be made for what measures are currently in place to rectify existing issues and restore site condition.
1.26 A number of mitigation measures were incorporated into current planning policy in response to the previous Habitats Regulations Assessment work. Those measures will be revisited to check progress and their continued suitability for the emerging Local Plan.

1.27 Recreation pressure was primarily considered in terms of disturbance to SPA birds and previous Habitats Regulations Assessment work relied heavily on a general protective policy for wildlife and the need for project level Habitats Regulations Assessment. It will be necessary to discuss this approach with Natural England and obtain any relevant survey information, along with a check on project level assessment outcomes, in order to establish whether this approach has been effective to date. New recommendations may need to be made in light of those checks and discussions.

Other local planning documents

1.28 It is important to note that the administrative area covered by the Broads Authority encompasses areas that adjoin six local planning authority areas, and that each has their own local planning documents. These are Waveney, South Norfolk, Broadland, Great Yarmouth, Norwich and North Norfolk. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the three plans, and the Local Plan in particular, will need to have regard for the proposals within the neighbouring local plans, in terms of the growth proposed and the measures that each authority is putting in place to protect the European sites within the Broads.

1.29 Each of the local planning authorities is at different stages of plan preparation, and the levels of detail in their Habitats Regulations Assessment will therefore vary. A Joint Core Strategy is in place for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk, which sets coordinated objectives for development within the three districts to deliver growth requirements for the wider area covered by the three administrations. As with the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Broads Local Development Framework documents, the adjoining areas have particularly focussed on water resources and water quality as threats to European sites. Water utility company plans and strategies are therefore key documents for securing adequate measures to prevent harm.

1.30 Each of the neighbouring local plans will be checked and any implications assessed. Importantly, a number of issues relating to the European site features relate to impacts from outside the Broads, particularly in relation to water quality. Checks will therefore need to be made on the mitigation measures being employed by neighbouring authorities, and their effectiveness to date. If there is a need to consider effects that may become significant in-combination with neighbouring proposals this will also be included in the Habitats Regulations Assessments.

A positive approach to assessing the plans and informing their progression

1.31 The three plans being prepared by the Broads Authority are the subject of public consultations and are being updated during various draft stages in light of those consultations.
1.32 This Habitats Regulations Assessment initially covered the content of the draft plan, allowing it to make meaningful recommendations that have subsequently been acted upon in the preparation of the final plan by the Broads authority, to strengthen the protection afforded to European sites and ensure that the plan fully meets the requirements of the legislation prior to adoption by the Authority.

1.33 A Habitats Regulations Assessment is an intrinsic part of plan making, in the same way that all other evidence gathering undertaken by the Authority will inform plan progression. It identifies potential risks to European sites posed by an emerging policy approach, and it should also seek to find solutions that enable sustainable development, sustainable tourism and sustainable management of the national park, to enable the park to meet its multiple needs and purposes whilst protecting European sites. The Habitats Regulations Assessment should therefore be mindful of the objectives of the plans being assessed, and should wherever possible seek to recommend measures to allow those objectives to be met whilst avoiding or minimising risk. Whatever recommendations are made, it is for the Broads Authority to own and implement those recommendations. Where solutions are not available or evidence to support a solution is not robust, it will then be necessary to consider a different policy approach. This final report demonstrates that the necessary measures to protect European sites have been assimilated into the Broads Sustainable Tourism Strategy and the objectives for developing sustainable tourism are being met whilst securing adequate long term protection of European sites.

1.34 The Broads Authority is responsible for the production of the Habitats Regulations Assessment. Many competent authorities commission technical specialist consultancies to assist with the preparation of Habitats Regulations Assessments. Footprint Ecology has been commissioned to undertake the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the three plans, and is the author of this report.

Information and Evidence

1.35 As described above Habitats Regulations Assessment should be evidence based. The key information sources relevant to this Habitats Regulations Assessment are summarised below. This is not an exhaustive list but rather the main pieces of evidence are identified.

1.36 Potential impacts are assessed in detail in subsequent sections of this report. Given the European sites relevant to this assessment, and the interest features and sensitivities described in the following section. It is clear that there are potential impact pathways (i.e. links between impact and receptor) relating to recreation pressure and water quality and resources, and these are the key areas of concern, for which it is important to gather a range of information and evidence.

Water related studies, strategies and management plans

1.37 The Broads authority and partner organisations have undertaken or commissioned a broad range of documents relating to water quality and water resources. The Broadland Rivers Catchment Plan is produced by the Broadland Catchment Partnership,
seeking to improve the water environment of the Broads through a suite of measures including land management, flood risk management and waste water management. This partnership includes all the main bodies involved in water management and regulating use of water, including water utilities, Natural England, the National Farmers Union, Norfolk County Council and the RSPB. This partnership is an important source of information for the assessment and any on-going monitoring, and also an ideal partnership to support the delivery of measures that may be necessary to protect European site interest.

- Other relevant studies, plans and strategies include:
  - Water Cycle Studies undertaken to support the preparation of local planning documents
  - Water utility company resource plans
  - Environment Agency strategies relating to flood management
  - Environment Agency consents for water abstraction, and associated assessments

### Biodiversity strategies

1.38 The Broads Authority, in conjunction with other partners such as Natural England, research institutions and the Local Nature Partnership, has produced an extensive range of biodiversity delivery documents that support the progression of biodiversity action within the Broads, to protect, restore and expand the biodiversity resource of the national park. These are supported by extensive audits that highlight the nature conservation importance of the Broads (Dolman, Panter & Mossman 2012). Key documents that provide background information for this Habitats Regulations Assessment include:

- The Broads Biodiversity and Water Strategy
- The Lake Restoration Review
- Biodiversity audit and sensitivity mapping
- Species of conservation concern restricted to the Broads
- Wetland conservation reports
- The Broads Biodiversity Action Plan

### Visitor survey work

1.39 The Broads is a nationally renowned tourism destination and maintaining a comprehensive level of up to date information on tourism is a fundamental part of delivering national park duties and maintaining a sustainable tourism economy. The Broads Authority has undertaken and commissioned a range of research on the use of the area by visitors. This Habitats Regulations Assessments includes consideration of visitors to the Broads, both day-trippers and staying visitors. Evidence relating to visitor numbers, visit types, key locations, required accommodation and infrastructure and the times of year is all relevant to this assessment, and will continue to be important to monitor once the plan is in place.

1.40 The most up to date visitor information includes surveys undertaken by Insight Track (Terry & Davey 2014; Insight Track 2015). These provide a range of data including information on site choice, visit types and spend.
On-going work by Footprint Ecology includes visitor surveys from European sites across Norfolk and surveys have been running through 2015 and into 2016. Surveys have been targeted to a sample of locations with access and where sensitive wildlife occurs. The data will inform the relative balance of recreation pressure from local residents and tourists and provide information to inform long-term management.
2. **Relevant European sites**

2.1 In undertaking a Habitats Regulations Assessment it is necessary to gather information on the European sites that could be potentially affected by the plan or project. This section and the accompanying detailed site information within Appendix 2 of this report, identifies those sites that could potentially be affected by the policies and proposals within the Broads Tourism Strategy. Appendix 2 sets out the site interest features, sensitivities and any current conservation issues, drawing on available information and the expertise and local knowledge of the assessment team preparing this report.

2.2 In assessing the implications of any plan or project for European sites, it is essential to fully understand the ecology and sensitivity of the sites, in order to identify how they may be affected. Central to Habitats Regulations Assessment is the consideration of how a plan or project may affect the achievement of conservation objectives. This section of the report and Appendix 2 together provides the necessary information that informs the assessment of the Broads Tourism Strategy.

2.3 Every European site has a set of ‘interest features,’ which are the ecological features for which the site is designated or classified, and the features for which Member States should ensure the site is maintained or, where necessary restored. Each European site has a set of ‘conservation objectives’ that set out the objectives for the site interest, i.e. what the site should be achieving in terms of restoring or maintaining the special ecological interest of European importance.

2.4 The site conservation objectives are relevant to any Habitats Regulations Assessment, because they identify what should be achieved for the site, and a Habitats Regulations Assessment may therefore consider whether any plan or project may compromise the achievement of those objectives. European site conservation objectives are discussed in more detail towards the end of this section of the report.

2.5 European sites are at risk if there are possible means by which any aspect of a plan can, when being taking forward for implementation, pose a potential threat to the wildlife interest of the sites. This is often referred to as the ‘impact pathway’ as it is an identifiable means by which the plan or project could potentially affect the European site.

2.6 The boundary of the Broads Authority Executive Area is shown in Map 1. There are several European sites in or relatively close to the Broads; Maps 2-4 show the locations of SPAs, SACs and Ramsar sites respectively. Of these sites, it is considered that there is the potential for a number of European sites to be at risk; these are listed in Table 1. Note that, where there is more than one type of designation in the same location, the boundaries of the three types of designated site may not follow exactly the same line.

2.7 The detailed information on each European site, interest features, ecological functioning, sensitivities and current issues can be found in Appendix 2.
Table 1: European Sites within or close to the Broads Authority Executive Area. Paler shading reflects those sites within the area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPA</th>
<th>SAC</th>
<th>Ramsar</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broadland</td>
<td>The Broads</td>
<td>Broadland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breydon Water</td>
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<td>Breydon Water</td>
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<tr>
<td>Great Yarmouth North Denes</td>
<td>Winterton-Horsey Dunes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer Thames Estuary</td>
<td></td>
<td>Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton candidate marine SAC</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Map 1: Broads National Park Boundary and relevant authorities

Contains Ordnance Survey Data. © Crown Copyright and Database Right 2014.
Map 4: Selected Ramsar Sites
European site conservation objectives

2.8 Conservation Objectives are the objectives to be achieved by European member states for their sites that ultimately then contribute to the Natural 2000 network and favourable conservation status of habitats and species for which the sites are designated or classified.

2.9 As required by the Directives, Conservation Objectives have been established by Natural England, which should define the required ecologically robust state for each European site interest feature. All sites should be meeting their conservation objectives. When being fully met, each site will be adequately contributing to the overall favourable conservation status of the species or habitat interest feature across its natural range. Where Conservation Objectives are not being met at a site level, and the interest feature is therefore not contributing to overall favourable conservation status of the species or habitat, plans should be in place for adequate restoration.

2.10 Natural England has embarked on a project to renew all European site Conservation Objectives, in order to ensure that they are up to date, comprehensive and easier for developers and consultants to use to inform project level Habitats Regulations Assessments in a consistent way. In 2012, Natural England issued now a set of generic European site Conservation Objectives, which should be applied to each interest feature of each European site. These generic objectives are the first stage in the project to renew conservation objectives, and it is anticipated that the second stage, which is to provide more detailed and site specific information for each site to support the generic objectives, will follow shortly.

2.11 The new list of generic Conservation Objectives for each European site include an overarching objective, followed by a list of attributes that are essential for the achievement of the overarching objective. Whilst the generic objectives currently issued are standardised, they are to be applied to each interest feature of each European site, and the application and achievement of those objectives will therefore be site specific and dependant on the nature and characteristics of the site. The second stage, provision of the more supplementary information to underpin these generic objectives, will provide much more site specific information, and this detail will play a fundamental role in informing Habitats Regulations Assessments, and importantly will give greater clarity to what might constitute an adverse effect on a site interest feature.

2.12 In the interim, Natural England advises that Habitats Regulations Assessments should use the generic objectives and apply them to the site specific situation. This should be supported by comprehensive and up to date background information relating to the site.

2.13 For SPAs the overarching objective is to:

2.14 ‘Avoid the deterioration of the habitats of 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.’
2.15 This is achieved by, subject to natural change, maintaining and 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 the qualifying features.
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

2.16 For SACs the overarching objective is to:

‘Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features.’

2.17 This is achieved by, subject to natural change, maintaining and restoring:
- The extent and distribution of the qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species.
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species.
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely.
- The populations of qualifying species.
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

2.18 Marine objectives are applied to the Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton candidate marine SAC, with objectives for the site being the maintenance and restoration of:
- Extent of the habitat (and elevation and patchiness for reef)
- Diversity of the habitat
- Community structure of the habitat (e.g. population structure of individual species and their contribution to the functioning of the habitat)
- Natural environmental quality (e.g. water quality, suspended sediment levels, etc.)

2.19 Conservation objectives inform any Habitats Regulations Assessment of a plan or project, by identifying what the interest features for the site should be achieving, and what impacts may be significant for the site in terms of undermining the site’s ability to meet its conservation objectives. Whilst the site specific supplementary information remains unavailable, the generic objectives must underpin the assessment of impacts by focusing considerations on the structure and function of supporting habitats and supporting processes as well as the site interest features themselves.
European site condition and sensitivities

2.20 The information provided in Appendix 2 relates to the European sites and their vulnerabilities. The current status of each of the European sites, mechanisms in place to maintain their interest in order to meet conservation objectives, and progress on any restoration needs has been considered as part of this assessment, and should be continually reviewed as the Broads Authority carries out its statutory and non-statutory functions and implements its suite of plans and strategies. This assessment is informed by discussions with Natural England as the statutory nature conservation body, a review of information available on condition assessment undertaken and plans in place to maintain or restore site condition and enhance day to day management of the European sites.
3. Screening for likely significant effects

3.1 As noted in the previous introductory section of this report and further detailed in Appendix 1, Habitats Regulations Assessment is a step by step process, with the competent authority required to make initial screening decisions with regard to the potential for European sites to be affected, that then inform whether a detailed appropriate assessment of the plan or project is required.

3.2 When a Habitats Regulations Assessment is being undertaken on a plan or project that is initiated by the competent authority themselves, there is greater opportunity to identify potential issues arising from the plan or project in the initial stages of design or preparation. Where a competent authority is authorising a proposal being made by another party, the application for permission is usually made when the proposal has already been designed and all details finalised, thus the opportunity to identify issues early on is more limited unless an applicant chooses to hold early discussions with the competent authority.

3.3 For the Sustainable Tourism Strategy, the Broads Authority is both the plan proposer and the competent authority, thus allowing the Habitats Regulations Assessment to influence the plan as it is drafted. The initial screening undertaken has informed plan progression and amendments to plan text, and at this final stage the screening is re-run to ensure that all previous recommendations are incorporated, and the screening reflects the final version of the plan. The Broads Authority has commissioned ‘The Tourism Company’ to prepare the plan itself. The Authority is working closely with both The Tourism Company and Footprint Ecology, to ensure that this Habitats Regulations Assessment influences the development of the plan to prevent risk of harm to European sites.

3.4 With a conclusion drawn for the first test within the Habitats Regulations that the plan is not being prepared for the sole purpose of beneficial management of the European site, the screening for likely significant effects on European sites is the next stage, which is an screening check to identify risks and recommend any obvious modifications to the plan that can completely avoid those risks. Any modification that can avoid risk then consequently removes the need for further detailed assessment at appropriate assessment stage. If the risk has been avoided, there is no need for further detailed analysis.

3.5 The screening table at Appendix 3 records the screening undertaken on the January 2016 draft of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and then the re-screening of the final plan in May 2016, prior to its publication. Appendix 3 records a check of the entire plan at both stages; it presents the conclusions drawn and recommendations for each aspect of the plan at the initial screening, and then how those recommendations have been incorporated in the final version. The screening table at appendix 3 advises where parts of the plan are not likely to lead to significant effects, and importantly it highlights where there were potential risks to European sites, and therefore where text changes or additions within the plan needed to be made to still allow a conclusion of no likely
significant effect, i.e. modifications that seek to ‘avoid’ a likely significant effect by their inclusion in the plan.

3.6 Text changes were recommended where there is a clear opportunity to avoid impacts on European sites through policy strengthening. The risk is not such that further assessment of impacts is required, but rather that the impacts can be simply avoided with changes to the plan. The table at Appendix 3 is now finalised for the final plan.

3.7 Where there are uncertainties that require more detailed assessment the screening of a plan or project should flag those aspects of the plan or project that pose a risk, i.e. where risks to European sites are identified but further scrutiny of information, further evidence gathering or assessment of the nature and extent of impacts is required at the more detailed ‘Appropriate Assessment’ stage in order to quantify the nature, extent and duration of those risks and what implications they may have.

3.8 At the draft stage of the Broads Sustainable Tourism Strategy, the screening for likely significant effects highlighted a number of risks to European sites, but concluded that modifications to the plan can be made in order to eliminate those risks. It is therefore concluded that an appropriate assessment is not necessary, subject to the recommendations made in the screening table. These conclusions have been revisited for the final plan, prior to its publication, to ensure that modifications have been fully made and that there are no further risks as a result of the final proposed plan.

3.9 The risks initially identified by the screening table were categorised under a small number of key themes. These risks were flagged because there was a potential ‘pathway’ between the proposal in the draft plan, and one or more interest features of the European sites. In other words, there was an identifiable process by which the interest features of the sites could suffer harm.

3.10 However for those risks identified, it is apparent that the policies and objectives can be implemented in a range of ways, and the plan does not specify locations or a quantum of development or activity. A plan that is assessed under the Habitats Regulations, but informs a lower tier of plans or projects that will also be the subject of Habitats Regulations Assessment, can be adopted with protective measures in place within the plan, providing that it is clear that the plan can be implemented without causing adverse effects.

3.11 In light of this, modifications to the plan were recommended; alongside a check that the policies and objectives can be implemented in full in ways that will not cause harm, i.e. the modifications do not restrict implementation of policy, and the policy does not prevent full protection of European site interest.

3.12 It is concluded that the following identified risks can be avoided, and have now been prevented by the modifications made to the final plan. Notes relating to the final screening and how the recommendations have been incorporated are provided in the final column of the screening table at Appendix 3.
5% annual growth in tourism spending

3.13 The Broads Sustainable Tourism Strategy identifies that Visit-England’s target of 5% annual growth in tourism spending should be at least matched in the Broads with the proviso that it must follow the principles of sustainable development, taking full account of impact on the global and local environment, heritage and local communities.

3.14 Increased tourism spend could come about through a range of ways, for example as a result of an increase in the amount of money each visitor spends or an overall increase in the number of visitors without any increase in average spend. The target could therefore relate to an overall increase in visitor numbers, and this may result in increased pressure to European sites. It is not possible to set a specific threshold for the area or particular sites/habitats as any visitor use of an area produces some environmental change and impacts tend to be along a continuum (see Newsome, Moore & Dowling 2002 for discussion).

3.15 As such an increase of 5% in spending could be associated with increased pressures on European sites. The strategic nature of the plan means that the recommendation is vague and it is difficult to assess or consider in more depth at this plan assessment level. Any specific steps to achieve the growth should take into account potential concerns raised here. More specific projects or targeted plans should be the subject of Habitats Regulations Assessment, and adequate evidence would need to be gathered in terms of the nature of the growth and predicted impacts on European sites.

3.16 Recommendations were been made in the screening table at Appendix 3, particularly to add text under the ‘Shaping Principles’ at 2.3 of the plan and also add some general text to 2.4 and 2.5 of the plan to ensure that it is clear that implementation will require further consideration of impacts. The screening of the final plan found that recommendations had been fully embedded in the final text.

Increased boating, including increased moorings

3.17 Boating can have particular impacts (for general reviews see Liddle & Scorgie 1980 and Mosisch & Arthington 1998) that include disturbance to birds (e.g. Keller 1989; Galicia & Baldassarre 1997; Burger 1998; Knapton, Petrie & Herring 2000; Bright et al. 2003), disturbance to fish (Graham & Cooke 2008), impacts from waves/wash on aquatic life (Bishop 2004, 2007; Kucera-Hirzinger et al. 2008), bankside erosion from wash (Nanson et al. 1994) damage to bankside and aquatic vegetation (Coops et al. 1996), damage to aquatic vegetation (Murphy & Eaton 1983; Asplund & Cook 1997), increased turbidity (Moss 1977; Garrad & Hey 1987) and contamination/nutrient enrichment. Increased boating may also result in more activity on the shore/banks, which may result in impacts relating to terrestrial habitats and species.

3.18 Increased boating therefore has a risk of having an impact on the Broads SAC, Broadlands SPA and Breydon Water SPA. The extent to which such impacts occur will relate to the scale of any increase, types of activity and the locations where the increase takes place. Changing the number and distribution of moorings has the potential to redistribute boating access and therefore also could have impacts.Marked increases in
boat traffic in otherwise undisturbed or less visited areas are likely to have the most impact.

3.19 Much has already been done in the Broads relating to impacts from boating including reducing discharges from boats into the water, managing speeds, promoting low-wash hulls, developing a network of charging points to allow electric boats to become more common and a green boat accreditation (The Green Boat Mark). The Broads Tourism Strategy makes a number of references to both increasing and improving boating related facilities, particularly moorings. This objective is however neither quantified nor given any locations in the plan. Any specific measures to increase boating would constitute a project under the Habitats Regulations (whether undertaken by the Broads Authority or permitted by the Authority or another competent authority) and the Habitats Regulations Assessments should consider the location, likely level of increase and any measures that can be targeted to ensure no further impacts on European sites.

3.20 Recommendations were made in the screening table at Appendix 3. Importantly, it was identified that text relating to action area 2.1 in the actions table within the plan should be modified to ensure that any proposals for increased moorings or further promotion of underused moorings is firstly supported by survey work and evidence relating to wildlife sensitivities, and which locations can and cannot support this use. Project level Habitats Regulations Assessment for these types of projects will be necessary. The final screening of the plan has checked that these recommendations have been added, and all are now fully embedded in plan text.

**Increased walking and cycling (including 3 Rivers Way cycle route)**

3.21 The Broads Sustainable Tourism Strategy recognises the importance of improving the opportunities for sustainable travel; e.g. walking and cycling. Increased walking and cycling may bring risks of impacts relating to recreation, for example disturbance to birds (Hill et al. 1997; Kirby et al. 2004; Lowen et al. 2008; Liley et al. 2010), damage from trampling (Cole 1995; Liley et al. 2010) and nutrient enrichment, for example from dog fouling (Taylor et al. 2005). Different activities will have different impacts, for example bicycles have a particular impact in terms of the pressure exerted by the wheels (Cessford 1995; Liddle 1997) while dogs off leads will have particular impacts relating to disturbance and fouling.

3.22 In general most areas of important wildlife habitat are not easily accessible by bicycle or on foot, and many of the best locations for walking are nature reserves where screening, hides, marked routes, warden presence etc. contain any impacts. The Three Rivers Cycle Way is specifically referred to within the Broads Sustainable tourism Strategy, but is largely away from the European sites apart from the section between Ludham and Potter Heigham. Plans for this section of the route are still at very early stages and it is therefore not possible to assess impacts at this plan level. The project will need to be the subject of Habitats Regulations Assessment.

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55 Details can be found on the [Broads Authority website](http://www.broadstrust.org.uk)
3.23 Recommendations were made in the screening table at Appendix 3 to highlight the need for evidence on impacts to inform specific projects. A number of projects are mentioned, which will be the subject of their own Habitats Regulations Assessment. There isn’t enough information to assess at the plan level, but it is apparent that the projects can incorporate mitigation measures and the lower level of assessment is the correct place to investigate this detail. In light of these points and recommendations, various modifications have been made to the final plan, and at various points throughout the plan, appropriate references to HRA and impact assessments have been added.

**Increased access to the waterside, fen and marshland and improved bankside facilities**

3.24 Waterside, fen and marshland habitats are vulnerable to recreation impacts through damage from trampling (Cole 1995; Liley *et al.* 2010) and nutrient enrichment, for example from dog fouling (Taylor *et al.* 2005). The Broads Sustainable Tourism Strategy includes objectives relating to improving the terrestrial visitor experience and their access to the waterside. Access to such areas also has the potential for disturbance to breeding or wintering birds (Hill *et al.* 1997; Kirby *et al.* 2004; Lowen *et al.* 2008; Liley *et al.* 2010). Bankside facilities could include a range of features and infrastructure and as the plan is currently very general in its recommendations it is difficult to envisage potential future impacts.

3.25 Individual projects will require careful screening and design to ensure any impacts are avoided or mitigation is in place. It is strongly advised that consideration will need to be given to wildlife impacts at the early stages of project design and locations should remain flexible until impact assessments are made. Some locations may not be suitable for increased access, due to their high sensitivity. Where mitigation is possible, boardwalks, fencing and similar infrastructure can contain and avoid trampling damage, while dog fouling impacts can be limited through the provision of bins, low fencing, requirements to keep dogs on leads etc. Screening, use of hides, fencing and carefully planned routes can help minimise any disturbance.

3.26 Recommendations were made in the screening table at Appendix 3. Whilst actions under this topic remain general in nature, there are a number of references within the actions table and it was therefore recommended that the table refers to preventing damage and seeking the right locations to improve bankside access. The final check of the plan notes that text additions have been made, as per recommendations.

**More canoe and non-motorised craft using the water**

3.27 The Broads Sustainable Tourism Strategy identifies the need to further develop the provision of canoe and other non-motorised craft. Canoes and other non-motorised craft can reach areas of water inaccessible to other craft, due to their streamlined shape, low profile in the water and because users can relatively easily transport them over land if necessary. Many canoeists are likely to actively seek out areas away from other users, particularly avoiding motorised craft. As such an increase in canoes or other non-motorised craft may result in visitors accessing otherwise quiet and
undisturbed areas. Hire companies can provide pick-up/drop off to allow users to get into remoter areas.

3.28 Studies demonstrate disturbance impacts of canoes to fish (Graham & Cooke 2008), disturbance to birds (Knight & Knight 1984; Liley & Fearnley 2012), disturbance to seals (Lewis & Mathews 2000; Saunders et al. 2000; Westcott & Stringell 2003) and impacts relating to the spread of non-native species (Dickens, Gerhardt & Collinge 2005). As such there are clear pathways by which likely significant effects could be triggered. Impacts are relevant to the Broads SAC, Broadlands SPA and perhaps Breydon Water SPA. With an increase in the use of canoes and a change in distribution in that use, these impacts may occur more widely or at a greater intensity.

3.29 Options to resolve any impacts could include codes of conduct (CanoeEngland do already provide some guidance), work with hire companies and promoters to ensure best practice, retention of quiet areas with limited canoe access, signage at sensitive locations, portage points and launch points and direct work with local canoe clubs/organisations.

3.30 Recommendations were made in the screening table at Appendix 3, with a particular need to modify text in the action table under Objective 2. Assessments should be made of the impact of increased canoe use, in light of the risks highlighted above, before projects are initiated. The final screening of the plan has checked that these specific text additions have been made, and reference to assessing impacts is now incorporated.

Visitor spread – more visitors in spring, autumn and winter, more visitors in underused locations

3.31 Where visitor numbers are concentrated in time and space then it is likely that visitors enjoyment is affected (by high prices and more crowding) and it is possible that availability (parking, boat hire etc.) limits the number of visitors. Local visitors may visit different areas in order to avoid crowding and tourist hotspots. Spreading visitor numbers in time and space may be positive for some visitors, and also allows businesses to better meet visitor demands. It may also be beneficial if recreation pressure at sensitive sites is reduced and spread to more robust areas, for example away from key sites for nature conservation. The Broads sustainable Tourism Strategy is seeking to move to better visitor spread through a number of actions.

3.32 Potential challenges with spreading visitors are that it can become harder and more costly to interact, engage with and manage access effectively. Wardening, interpretation provision and other access infrastructure has to be provided and targeted for the additional locations and times of year. Underused locations may not have the necessary infrastructure in place to accommodate increased access, for example on-going visitor survey work in the Broads (Footprint Ecology, in prep)

6 you, your canoe and the environment guidance
recorded high levels of access at January at Horsey Mill, such that the car-park was full and visitors were complaining about the limited parking, toilet facilities and lack of staff.

3.33 Furthermore some interest features of the European sites are likely to be more vulnerable to recreation impacts outside the peak holiday periods (end July and August). For example birds are likely to be more vulnerable to disturbance when breeding (e.g. Liley & Sutherland 2007) or during the winter when cold weather and depletion of food resources may have particular consequences (Clark et al. 1993; Goss-Custard et al. 2006).

3.34 In general, in areas with high levels of pressure, visitor use is likely to be best concentrated in small areas in order to limit disturbance to birds (Beale & Monaghan 2005). Spreading visitors in space and time could therefore be beneficial and positive in terms of the European sites or, potentially there could be implications for European sites.

3.35 Recommendations were made in the screening table at Appendix 3 to highlight consideration of more visitors at sensitive times of year and locations. Whilst this point was not specifically added to the final plan, the various text additions adequately cover this point.

Additional wildlife specific tours and activities
3.36 The Broads Sustainable Tourism Strategy recognises the value of the natural environment asset that the Broads provides. Consequently, the plan seeks to make better use of this resource. Promotion of wildlife experiences may be positive, increasing awareness among visitors of key species and ensuring appropriate management of access at key wildlife sites. Some wildlife experiences may also not necessarily relate to European sites/interest features and therefore may not be relevant to this assessment. However, there are also some very rare, vulnerable species and habitats in the Broads that could be attractive to visitors and where specific tours and activities could be damaging. The Plan is clear that, in making more of the wildlife experiences available in the Broads, only a small range of opportunities will be identified; these will be reviewed to ensure potential impacts on species and habitats are addressed and wildlife and conservation organisations would be closely involved.

3.37 Such considerations will be important, nonetheless there is the risk that by promoting particular wildlife experiences visitors will be more aware of the species/spectacles and seek out opportunities to view them such that over time visitor pressure may increase. Visitors may actively seek out alternative opportunities to view some species away from the crowds or where they can get better views or photographs. Opening up particular sites to access as a one off may mean those locations become more widely known and visitors may try to return at other times. Particularly vulnerable features include raptor roosts, aggregations of wintering waterfowl, sites with breeding birds such as cranes, raptors or bitterns and locations of fen orchid.

3.38 It is necessary to highlight the importance of ensuring any additional wildlife specific tours and activities are carefully selected. Recommendations were made in the
screening table at Appendix 3 for additional text in a number of locations within the plan where this objective is mentioned, to flag the need for early survey work and assessment to inform projects that may come forward. The screening of the final plan found that such references had been added at numerous points in the plan and therefore adequately incorporate this recommendation.
4. Conclusions

4.1 In light of the screening assessment made of the Broads Sustainable Tourism Strategy in its draft stage, as described in the previous section and in the screening table at Appendix 3, a number of risks to European site wildlife interest as a result of the proposals within the plan were identified. However, it is recognised that the proposals within the plan are high level actions that do not include geographical locations and most do not provide any quantifiable details such as the scale or extent of action. It was therefore concluded that the actions necessary to achieve the objectives set out within the plan could still be fully implemented with the additional measures and restrictions recommended in relation to plan text additions. For a number of proposals within the plan, it was concluded that the high level objectives can still be fully achieved without harm to European sites, subject to project level Habitats Regulations Assessment to steer the detailed mitigation necessary, it was possible to screen the plan out of further detailed assessment at this strategic plan level, subject to the addition of text to make this point clear.

4.2 It is critical that project level assessment has full regard for the recommendations made by this high level assessment, and that all projects taken forward by the Broads authority or other public bodies are checked for the need for Habitats Regulations Assessment. Initiatives being undertaken by a public body may not be readily recognised as ‘projects’ under the Habitats Regulations and parent European Directives, but it should be noted that European case law and guidance indicates that the definition of a project should be taken in its widest sense and the deciding factor is the potential for impacts, rather than the nature of the activity.\(^7\)

4.3 The assessment undertaken on the draft plan then informed the preparation of the final Broads Sustainable Tourism Strategy, and a further screening was undertaken to check that final plan had taken on board the previous recommendations. The entire plan has now been re-screened, to provide a full record of Habitats Regulations Assessment prior to its adoption. The last column of the screening table at Appendix 3 records the final check made on each part of the plan.

4.4 All issues raised by the assessment have been resolved and plan changes recommended have been incorporated. The European sites and their protection are now a thread that runs throughout the plan, and their relevance within planning for sustainable tourism is now clear. A map showing the wildlife sites may be a helpful addition to the plan.

4.5 This report provides a final Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Broads Authority, and concludes that the Broads Sustainable Tourism Strategy is fully compliant with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations and European Habitats and Birds Directives,

\(^7\) For example see ECJ case C-473/14 where Greece requested a ruling from the Court on a domestic case and the resultant Judgement confirms the extent of plans and projects.
having ensured that the plan contains the necessary measures to avoid likely significant
effects on European sites.

4.6 In assessing the plan, it was evident that whilst there is a comprehensive data set for
the ecological value of the Broads, there is little information on the potential current
impacts of recreation on species and habitats. It would therefore be beneficial for the
Broads Authority to consider how baseline information could be established, and
monitoring undertaken, in order to enable the Authority to integrate the issue of
managing recreation and European sites into its functions and future strategic planning.
On-going visitor work will provide some information on visitor behaviour, attitudes and
awareness, but this will need to be linked to ecological work relating to impacts of
access in order to fully understand the scale of impact and possible solutions.
5. References


6. **Appendix 1 – The Habitats Regulations Assessment Process**

6.1 The designation, protection and restoration of European wildlife sites is embedded in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, as amended, which are commonly referred to as the ‘Habitats Regulations.’ Recent amendments to the Habitats Regulations were made in 2012. The recent amendments do not substantially affect the principles of European site assessment as defined by the 2010 Regulations, the focus of this report or the previous Habitats Regulations Assessment work undertaken by the Broads Authority, upon which some of this Habitats Regulations Assessment relies.

6.2 The Habitats Regulations are in place to transpose European legislation set out within the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC), which affords protection to plants, animals and habitats that are rare or vulnerable in a European context, and the Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC), which originally came into force in 1979, and which protects rare and vulnerable birds and their habitats. These key pieces of European legislation seek to protect, conserve and restore habitats and species that are of utmost conservation importance and concern across Europe. Although the Habitats Regulations transpose the European legislation into domestic legislation, the European legislation still directly applies, and in some instances it is better to look to the parent Directives to clarify particular duties and re-affirm the overarching purpose of the legislation.

6.3 European sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) classified under the Birds Directive. The suite of European sites includes those in the marine environment as well as terrestrial, freshwater and coastal sites. European sites have the benefit of the highest level of legislative protection for biodiversity. Member states have specific duties in terms of avoiding deterioration of habitats and species for which sites are designated or classified, and stringent tests have to be met before plans and projects can be permitted, with a precautionary approach embedded in the legislation, i.e. it is necessary to demonstrate that impacts will not occur, rather than they will. The overarching objective is to maintain sites and their interest features in an ecologically robust and viable state, able to sustain and thrive into the long term, with adequate resilience against natural influences. Where sites are not achieving their potential, the focus should be on restoration.

6.4 The UK is also a contracting party to the Ramsar Convention, which is a global convention to protect wetlands of international importance, especially those wetlands utilised as waterfowl habitat. In order to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Convention, the UK Government expects all competent authorities to treat listed Ramsar sites as if they are part of the suite of designated European sites, as a matter of government policy, as set out in Section 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Most Ramsar sites are also a SPA or SAC, but the Ramsar features and boundary lines may vary from those for which the site is designated as a SPA or SAC.
6.5 It should be noted that in addition to Ramsar sites, the National Planning Policy Framework also requires the legislation to be applied to potential SPAs and possible SACs, and areas identified or required for compensatory measures where previous plans or projects have not been able to rule out adverse effects on site integrity, yet their implementation needs meet the exceptional tests of Regulation 62 of the Habitats Regulations, as described below.

6.6 The step by step process of Habitats Regulations Assessment is illustrated in the flow chart below. Within the Habitats Regulations, local planning authorities, as public bodies, are given specific duties as ‘competent authorities’ with regard to the protection of sites designated or classified for their species and habitats of European importance. Competent authorities are any public body individual holding public office with a statutory remit and function, and the requirements of the legislation apply where the competent authority is undertaking or implementing a plan or project, or authorising others to do so. Regulation 61 of the Habitats Regulations sets out the Habitats Regulations Assessment process for plans and projects, which includes development proposals for which planning permission is sought. Additionally Regulation 102 specifically sets out the process for assessing emerging land use plans.

6.7 The step by step approach to Habitats Regulations Assessment is the process by which a competent authority considers any potential impacts on European sites that may arise from a plan or project that they are either undertaking themselves, or permitting an applicant to undertake. The step by step process of assessment can be broken down into the following stages, which should be undertaken in sequence:

- Check that the plan or project is not directly connected with or necessary for the management of the European site
- Check whether the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on any European site, from the plan or project alone
- Check whether the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on any European site, from the plan or project in-combination with other plans or projects
- Carry out an Appropriate Assessment
- Ascertain whether an adverse effect on site integrity can be ruled out

6.8 Throughout all stages, there is a continual consideration of the options available to avoid and mitigate any identified potential impacts. For projects, the project proposer may identify potential issues and incorporate particular avoidance measures to the project, which then enables the competent authority to rule out the likelihood of significant effects. A competent authority may however consider that there is a need to undertake further levels of evidence gathering and assessment in order to have certainty, and this is the Appropriate Assessment stage. At this point the competent authority may identify the need to add to or modify the project in order to adequately protect the European site, and these mitigation measures may be added through the imposition of particular restrictions and conditions.
For plans, the stages of Habitats Regulations Assessment are often quite fluid, with the plan normally being prepared by the competent authority itself. This gives the competent authority the opportunity to repeatedly explore options to prevent impacts, refine the plan and rescreen it to demonstrate that all potential risks to European sites have been successfully dealt with.

When preparing a plan, a competent authority may therefore go through a continued assessment as the plan develops, enabling the assessment to inform the development of the plan. For example, a competent authority may choose to pursue an amended or different option where impacts can be avoided, rather than continue to assess an option that has the potential to significantly affect European site interest features.

After completing an assessment, a competent authority should only approve a project or give effect to a plan where it can be ascertained that there will not be an adverse effect on the integrity of the European site(s) in question. In order to reach this conclusion, the competent authority may have made changes to the plan, or modified the project with restrictions or conditions, in light of their Appropriate Assessment findings.

Where adverse effects cannot be ruled out, there are further exceptional tests set out in Regulation 62 for plans and projects and in Regulation 103 specifically for land use plans. Exceptionally, a plan or project could be taken forward for imperative reasons of overriding public interest where adverse effects cannot be ruled out and there are no alternative solutions. It should be noted that meeting these tests is a rare occurrence and ordinarily, competent authorities seek to ensure that a plan or project is fully mitigated for, or it does not proceed.

In such circumstances where a competent authority considers that a plan or project should proceed under Regulations 62 or 103, they must notify the relevant Secretary of State. Normally, planning decisions and competent authority duties are then transferred, becoming the responsibility of the Secretary of State, unless on considering the information, the planning authority is directed by the Secretary of State to make their own decision on the plan or project at the local level. The decision maker, whether the Secretary of State or the planning authority, should give full consideration to any proposed ‘overriding reasons’ for which a plan or project should proceed despite being unable to rule out adverse effects on European site interest features, and ensure that those reasons are in the public interest and are such that they override the potential harm. The decision maker will also need to secure any necessary compensatory measures, to ensure the continued overall coherence of the European site network if such a plan or project is allowed to proceed.
Figure 1: Outline of the assessment of plans under the Habitat Regulations
7. Appendix 2 – Ecology and Sensitivity of the Relevant European Sites

The Broads

Description

7.1 The Broads is one of the finest marshland complexes in the UK. A diversity of aquatic and terrestrial wetland habitats developed after medieval peat diggings in fenland within the floodplains of five main river systems flooded. The wetlands were subject to patchy and diverse management, for example for reed, sedge and marsh hay. This, together with variations in hydrology and substrate, resulted in a complex and interlinked mosaic of different aquatic and terrestrial wetland habitats. The Broads retains some of the original fenland flora and contains one of the richest assemblages of rare and local aquatic species in the UK.

7.2 The areas of floating woodland and wet woodland found in the Broads are the largest in Britain, and possibly in western Europe, and form part of a complete successional sequence from open water through reedswamp to woodland.

7.3 The Broads also contains large example of calcareous fens, which form a mosaic with other fen types and Purple Moor-grass fen meadows, and there are small areas of transition mire, which have developed on cut peat.

7.4 The dykes that criss-cross the fens and drained marshes are particularly important, supporting plant communities that have been lost from many of the broads themselves and also two internationally rare snails. The Broads is the richest area for stoneworts in Britain.

7.5 The area is of international importance for a variety of wintering and breeding raptors and waterbirds associated with extensive lowland marshes.

7.6 Twenty-eight Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified in the Broads have been included within the European Directives as the Broads SPA and SAC as being of international importance for their habitats and/or bird populations or other species.

Pressures, threats and actions

7.7 A significant pressure for the Broads continues to be the levels of growth emanating in neighbouring local authority areas. This continues to add to the recreation, water quality/resource and urbanisation impacts. Natural succession as a consequence of management neglect has affected the Broads, and is being addressed through conservation measures by various bodies. Drainage has reduced the value of reclaimed wetlands; Water Level Management plans and agri-environment agreements are raising water levels and encouraging appropriate habitat management.

http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6190476679970816
7.8 Water quality continues to be an issue in The Broads, with none of the Broads and only one of 27 rivers reaches monitored for Water Framework Directive purposes reaching ‘good’ overall ecological status/potential (Conti & Long 2011). Clear water now only occurs in around five of the 63 Broads. The naturally nutrient-rich water bodies have become hyper-eutrophic as a result of nutrient inputs entering the waterbodies through discharged sewage and agricultural run-off. Some point sources of pollution have been addressed through sewage works stripping phosphorus, and mud-pumping has been carried out in some broads to remove enriched sediment. A water-quality partnership, involving the Environment Agency, Natural England and other stakeholders is working to address the issues.

7.9 The Broads is a centre for recreation and tourism, which has been impacting on the site; the Broads Authority have been addressing this through the Broads Plan.

7.10 Climate change and sea-level rise present major challenges. Reduced summer water flow due to abstraction and sea-level rise are resulting in saline incursion and increased summer dryness. In addition, increased impacts from alien species and erosion are expected as a consequence of climate change, and the area of freshwater habitats is likely to decrease (Natural England 2008). There is a climate change adaption plan for the Norfolk Broads.

11 See http://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/looking-after/climate-change
Table 2. Summary of designated features of The Broads SAC and Broadland SPA, which are also features of the Ramsar site. *indicates Annex I habitat that are present but not a primary reason for designation. Issues are based on Site Improvement Plans and SPA citations. Colour indicates BTO alert status (high, medium, no alert).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Reason for designation, trends in key species (where known)</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Broads SAC</td>
<td>• Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with Charophytes</td>
<td>• Diffuse pollution</td>
<td>Issues are addressed in the Broads Plan(^{12}), the Anglian District river basin management plan(^{13}) and the Broadland Rivers catchment plan(^{14}).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Natural eutrophic lakes with <em>Magnapotamium</em> or <em>Hydrocharition</em> type vegetation</td>
<td>• Continuing pollution from further point sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Transition mires and quaking bogs</td>
<td>• Saline incursion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Calcareous fens with <em>Cladium mariscus</em> and species of the <em>Caracion daravallianae</em></td>
<td>• Invasive species</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Alkaline fens</td>
<td>• Siltation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Alluvial forests with <em>Alnus glutinuous</em> and <em>Fraxinus excelsior</em></td>
<td>• Water levels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>Molinia</em> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils*</td>
<td>• Adaptation to climate change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Desmoulin’s Whorl Snail <em>Vertigo moulinsiana</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Otter <em>Lutra lutra</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fen Orchid <em>Liparis loeselii</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadlands SPA</td>
<td>• Bittern (no trends available)</td>
<td>• Management neglect and succession</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Marsh harrier (no trends available)</td>
<td>• Water abstraction, drainage, sea level rise and saline incursions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hen Harrier (no trends available)</td>
<td>• Sewage discharges and agricultural runoff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>Bewick’s Swan</em> <em>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</em></td>
<td>• Tourism and recreation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>Whooper Swan</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Wigeon <em>Anas Penelope</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Shoveler <em>Anas clypeata</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Gadwall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>Ruff Philomachus pugnax</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Breydon Water

Description

7.11 Breydon Water is an inland tidal estuary at the mouth of the River Yare and its confluence with the Rivers Bure and Waveney, adjoining The Broads. Its extensive areas of mud-flat are exposed at low tide, although shallow tidal water persists along the river channel. The mud-flats are fringed in places by small areas of saltmarsh and surrounded by floodplain grassland.

7.12 Breydon Water is internationally important for wintering waterbirds, some of which also feed in The Broads and/or on the grazing marshes on the landward side of the seawall (and therefore outside of the Breydon Water marine SPA).

7.13 The mudflats are used for feeding by wintering Avocet, Ruff and Lapwing, and are used as a high tide roost by Golden Plover and Ruff. The saltmarsh also provides important high tide roost sites for wintering Avocet and Lapwing. However, Lapwing mainly use the mudflats and saltmarshes during periods of harsh weather, otherwise spending much of their time feeding and roosting on the adjacent grazing marshes within and outwith Breydon Water SPA (where they also breed, although only the wintering populations are of international importance).

7.14 Shallow tidal waters also provide key feeding and roosting habitat for many of the Annex I species. In the past, wintering populations of Bewick’s Swan regularly used the estuary as a night time roost and a day roost if they were disturbed from nearby farmland, but have roosted here less frequently since the establishment of the nearby Berney Marshes reserve (English Nature 2001). The shallow tidal waters and river channel are also used by breeding Common Tern catching small fish, particularly sand eels and sprats.

7.15 In addition to supporting internationally important populations of the above wintering and breeding species, Breydon water also qualifies as an SPA for its assemblage of wintering waterfowl. In addition to the Annex I species Bewick’s Swan, Avocet, Golden Plover and Lapwing, this includes nationally important species such as Cormorant Phalacrocorax carbo, European white-fronted goose Anser albifrons albifrons, Wigeon, Shoveler and Black-tailed godwit Limosa limosa islandica.

7.16 The Ramsar citation for Breydon Water includes a suite of noteworthy plants found on coastal embankments, open areas of dry or seasonally inundated brackish mud. The mudflats are also notable for Eel Grass Zostera beds.

Pressures, threats and actions

7.17 Efficient drainage, recent droughts and poor water management systems have adversely affected the grazing marshes; these issues have been addressed through a Water Level Management Plan. Agri-environment schemes have helped to raise water levels and encourage sensitive management, particularly of grazing marsh ditches. The Site Improvement Plan suggests that improvements in the SPA over the last two decades in terms of bird numbers (but see BTO alert status for designated species) may
be due to the implementation of agri-environment schemes, and notes that the expiry of existing schemes, and potential change of land-use from grassland to arable, is a risk. However, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations would apply where grassland has been without physical or chemical intervention for more than 15 years. Alterations to water levels in the ditches (both within and out-with the SPA boundary) could affect aquatic plants and invertebrates that are important food sources for the notified birds of Breydon Water.

7.18 The high tide roost at the northern end of Breydon Water is considered a particularly sensitive feature. Recreation is highlighted as an issue within the Site Improvement Plan for Breydon water. It is suggested that more evidence is needed on the possible impact of recreational activities on designated features. The dependence on designated birds on the land surrounding Breydon Water also needs exploring, as some of this land is being used to entice wildfowl for shooting, which may impact on the SPA. The Broads Authority is developing a Breydon Water Space Management Plan.

7.19 Any commercial fishing activities categorised as green or amber under Defra’s revised approach to European Marine Sites will require assessment and if appropriate, management. Interactions between surface-feeding birds and netting/bait digging are known to occur in Breydon Water. The Inshore Fishers and Conservation Authority (IFCA) is currently working on a mono-filament nets database and a bait digging investigation in order to quantify the extent of these activities and inform any further regulatory notices applied to manage them in the future.

Table 3. Designated features of Breydon Water SPA (Ramsar designated features overlap with those of the SPA). Issues are based on Site Improvement Plans and SPA citations. Colour indicates BTO alert status (high, medium, no alert).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Reason for designation, trends in key species (where known)</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breydon Water SPA</td>
<td>• Bewick’s swan</td>
<td>• Shooting and scaring of wildfowl</td>
<td>Several of these species use grazing marsh, improved grassland and arable crops out with the site boundary for feeding. It is suggested that a reduction in the frequency with which European white-fronted geese use the estuary is connected with the loss through natural erosion of Scroby Island, a sand bar just off the coast of Great Yarmouth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Avocet Recurvirostra avosetta</td>
<td>• Changes in land management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Golden plover Pluvialis apricaria</td>
<td>• Public access/disturbance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ruff (no trends available)</td>
<td>• Hydrological changes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Common tern Sterna hirundo (no trends available)</td>
<td>• Commercial marine and estuarine fisheries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lapwing Vanellus vanellus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Great Yarmouth-Winterton-Horsey

Description of Great Yarmouth-Winterton-Horsey

7.20 Winterton-Horsey Dunes SAC is the only significant area of dune heath on the east coast of England. In contrast to the nearby calcareous, species-rich dune systems of north Norfolk, it is acidic. The vegetation is influenced by its eastern location and low rainfall, including species such as the rare Grey Hair-grass *Corynephorus canescens*. The site includes embryo and mobile dunes, and acidic fixed dunes characterised by Heather *Calluna vulgaris*, lichen heath and acid grassland. Humid dune slacks are present and support acidic swamp and mire communities in addition to more typical Creeping Willow *Salix repens* dominated slacks. Small pools support Natterjack Toad *Bufo calamita*. The site also includes areas of grazing marsh and Downy Birch-Oak woodland, although these are not qualifying features.

7.21 Winterton-Horsey Dunes SAC has an actively accreting ‘ness’, and shows a full successional sequence of vegetation running inland from the shore from foredune to dune heath and woodland. The dune heath and acid dune slacks represent an extreme of the variation in dune vegetation found in the UK.

7.22 Great Yarmouth-North Dene SPA includes two sites, one of which falls within the Winterton-Horsey SAC and occupies the beach and foredune ridge. The other, North Dene, is about 5 miles to the south between Caistor and Great Yarmouth and occupies an actively accreting low dune system and beach. The two areas are linked due to the high mobility of the terns and the dynamic nature of the beaches, which influences their suitability for breeding. The SPA includes land covered continuously or intermittently by tidal waters, which is a European Marine Site, in addition to land not subject to tidal influence.

7.23 The SPA is designated for the presence of Little Tern, for which it is one of the most important breeding colonies in the UK. The species is present from mid-April to mid-September. It requires sparsely vegetated sand and shingle for nesting, and so is dependent on mobile sediment which prevents vegetation from becoming established. However, it is also highly sensitive to the removal of sediment; the creation of artificial reefs for coastal protection purposes have disrupted the sediment transport system in the area. Little Terns feed on small fish, mainly in shallow coastal waters.

7.24 A colony of Grey Seal *Halichoerus grypus* is present at Horsey Gap. Although an Annex II species, it is not a designated feature of the site as it is due to its relatively recent development. The colony is substantial (with 550 adults counted in November 2015\(^\text{15}\)) and is a significant tourist attraction.

Pressures, threats and actions

7.25 The presence of the sea wall north of Beach Road at Winterton is compromising the natural coastal processes and preventing dynamism within the dune features. The

Kelling to Lowestoft Ness Shoreline Management Plan promotes ‘investigating the potential for change whilst still defending, with a view to longer term set-back of the defences, as and when it is confirmed that it is no longer sustainable to defend’. This is due to the considerable social and biodiversity impacts flooding would have for the Broads. The Site Improvement Plan (SIP) for Great Yarmouth-Winterton-Horsey recognises, therefore, that short-term adaptive measures will be needed.

7.26 Coastal squeeze is threatening parts of the SAC - erosion combined with changing sediment transportation and the presence of a fixed sea wall mean that designated features will be lost. This will need to be addressed in the next Eccles to Winterton coastal strategy. It is suggested in the SIP that development should be controlled in the coastal zone to optimise future potential to roll back/ adapt.

7.27 Recreation has an impact on the site both in terms of disturbance to breeding Little Tern and damage to dune vegetation communities. Breeding terns are highly sensitive to disturbance and avoid highly disturbed beaches (Ratcliffe et al. 2008) Direct disturbance is currently leading to reduced breeding success and trampling of nests16. Dune habitats are particularly vulnerable to trampling damage and eutrophication (e.g. from dog waste) (Lowen et al. 2008). The degree of anthropogenic erosion is considered to be at the limit of acceptable levels on the dune heath and fixed dune grassland and is also an issue on the other dune habitats17. A better understanding of levels of recreational use, patterns and impacts is required. A long-term recreation management strategy and measures to reduce impacts in the coastal access route, including specific actions for Little Tern is recommended in the Site Improvement Plan18. Appropriate mitigation as a consequence of development in East Norfolk/Suffolk and the Greater Norwich area is also recommended. Other measures in the Site Improvement Plan include control of invasive species and development of a predator management strategy.

7.28 The quality of water in the dune slacks at Winterton is thought to be deteriorating, which has impacted on the Natterjack Toad population, although artificial pools have been created. Species diversity may have declined; for example, Round-leaved Wintergreen Pyrola rotundifolia, present at the time of SSSI designation, has not been seen for several years. Scrub encroachment, particularly Rhododendron and the control of non-native invasive species, is an on-going issue, and the level of grazing is considered inadequate to maintain dwarf-shrub heath in the north of the site. Action is needed to control, reduce and ameliorate the impacts of atmospheric nitrogen.

7.29 Disturbance, particularly from dogs, is an issue for Grey Seal at Horsey Gap. Since 2012 The Friends of Horsey Seals has been working to increase knowledge and enjoyment of and reduce disturbance to the seals, and has a wardenin scheme in place.

18 http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6708502814785536
Table 4. Designated features of Winterton-Horsey SAC and Great Yarmouth-North Denes SPA. Issues are based on Site Improvement Plans and SPA citations. Colour indicates BTO alert status (high, medium, no alert). *Habitat present but not a primary qualifying feature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Reason for designation, trends in key species (where known)</th>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winterton-Horsey Dunes SAC</td>
<td>• H2110 Embryonic shifting dunes*</td>
<td>• Inappropriate coastal management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• H2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <em>Ammophila arenaria</em> (<em>white dunes</em>)*</td>
<td>• Coastal squeeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• H2150 Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (Calluno-Ulicetea)</td>
<td>• Public access/disturbance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• H2190 Humid dune slacks</td>
<td>• Water quality (dune slacks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inappropriate coastal management</td>
<td>• Inappropriate scrub control (fixed dunes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Coastal squeeze</td>
<td>• Invasive species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Public access/disturbance</td>
<td>• Under-grazing (fixed dunes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Water quality (dune slacks)</td>
<td>• Air pollution: impact of atmospheric Nitrogen deposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inappropriate scrub control (fixed dunes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Yarmouth-North Denes SPA</td>
<td>• Breeding Little Tern <em>Sterna albifrons</em></td>
<td>• Inappropriate pest control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Public access/disturbance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outer Thames Estuary

Description
7.30 This is the largest marine SPA in the UK and extends from Margate in Kent as far north as Caistor-on-sea. Its landward boundary directly abuts several inshore SPAs with marine component, which cover the estuaries and parts of the coast. The site is designated for the presence of the Annex I species Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*, which is present in numbers of European importance in the winter. The site is split into three areas. The two northern sections are adjacent to the coast from near Felixstowe in Suffolk to Caistor and further offshore parallel with Caistor in the north and Beccles in the south respectively. These areas include areas of shallower and deeper water with a range of mobile sediments (mud, sand, silt and gravelly sediments) and several sandbanks.

Pressures, vulnerability and actions
7.31 These are discussed fully in a departmental brief on the site produced by NE and JNCC\(^\text{19}\). Most issues are related to the particular sensitivity of Red-throated Diver to disturbance at sea.

7.32 The SPA supports several fish species of commercial importance, including Herring *Clupea harengus* and Sprat *Sprattus sprattus*, which are among the most commonly recorded prey species of Red-throated Diver. Around 180 commercial fishing vessels operate within the site. The exposure of Red-throated Diver to prey depletion is currently considered to be low in the Natura 2000 data form for the site.

\(^{19}\) http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/3233957
7.33 There is extensive shipping activity within the site, although this is of a much greater scale around the large ports in the south of the site. However, new port capacity at Great Yarmouth has recently been developed. Great Yarmouth is the main port supporting energy industry in the southern North Sea and also accommodates container traffic. However, dredging and shipping activities are confined to shipping channels, which are already avoided by divers. Red-throated Divers are also vulnerable to oil pollution when they moult flight feathers during September and October, and there is potential for catastrophic spills from ship-to-ship transfers that take place off Southwold or normal shipping traffic.

7.34 Scroby Sands Wind Array, comprising 30 turbines, has been operational since 2004. The southern end of the wind farm is within the SPA off the Norfolk Coast. Disturbance to Red-throated Divers associated with wind farms (visual and from related shipping) is significant - research suggests 80-100% displacement of Red-throated Divers from wind farm footprints.

7.35 Aggregate extraction occurs off-shore from Great Yarmouth. Activities tend to be localised.

Table 5. Designated features of the Outer Thames Estuary SPA and Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton candidate marine SAC. Issues are based on the SPA citation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Reason for designation, trends in key species (where known)</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Outer Thames Estuary SPA | • Wintering Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata* | • Prey depletion (low exposure)  
• Disturbance from shipping traffic, wind farms and fishing activities  
• Potential for catastrophic oil spills | Fishing licence arrangements and by-law restrictions overseen by the Marine Management Organisation and/or local Inshore Fishery and Conservation Authority  
Great Yarmouth oil spill contingency plan in place; transfers overseen by Maritime and Coastguard Agency |
| Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton candidate marine SAC | • 1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time  
• 1170 Reefs | • Physical loss by removal (aggregate dredging) and obstruction (oil, gas and windfarm infrastructure) (moderate threat to sandbank; high threat to reef)  
• Physical damage by surface and shallow abrasion (demersal fishing, aggregate dredging) (moderate threat to sandbank, high threat to reef) | Demersal fishing is not subject to prior authorisation or licensing; this pressure is currently considered to pose a high risk of damage to the sandbank and reef habitats  
Competent Authorities are advised to assess and, if necessary, consider management actions that might need to be taken to reduce the risk of damag. |
Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton candidate marine SAC

Description

7.36 Lying just of the north-east corner of Norfolk this marine site comprises a series of distinct sand banks. The main sandbank consist of ridges that have developed over the past 5,000 to years and were originally associated with coastal alignment during the Holocene marine transgressions (when global sea levels rose as a consequence of the retreat and shrinking of ice sheets and glaciers). Along the outer boundary, the ridges are older, dating from around 7,000 BP, while the sands in the south west corner are more recent, dating from around the fifth Century (current era). The sand banks are permanently covered with shallow seawater.

7.37 Arising from the coarse sandy seabeds are reefs formed of consolidated structures of sand tubes of a marine polychaete, Ross Worm *Sabellaria spinulosa*. The reefs rich a height of 5-10cm, and cover between 30 and 100% of the seafloor where present. Some parts appear to acts as sediment traps, meaning the exposed tube height is reduced.

7.38 The sand around the crests of the sandbanks is highly mobile due to the strong tidal currents within the site. The crests are characterised by species which can rapidly re-bury themselves, and support a polychaete-amphipod community of low diversity.

7.39 The flanks are more stable and formed of gravelly muddy sands. The infaunal and epifaunal diversity is correspondingly greater, with the most stable areas supporting attached bryozoans, hydroids and sea anemones. Sand Mason Worms *Lanice conchilega* and Keel Worms *Pomatoceros* sp. along with bivalves and crustaceans are also present.

Pressures, vulnerability and actions

7.40 There is a lack of detailed information on levels of exposure to human activities and their ecological impact on the designated feature at this site, although some anthropogenic damage has been observed. The sandbanks and reefs are currently considered vulnerable to physical loss and damage. Loss may occur by removal through aggregate dredging and obstruction from oil, gas and windfarm infrastructure. Damage through surface and shallow abrasion may be caused by demersal fishing and aggregate dredging. Demersal fishing in particular is currently considered to pose a high risk to the interest features.

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20 publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6165031
### 8. Appendix 3 - Likely Significant Effects Screening Table

This table provides the outputs of the screening for likely significant effects of each aspect of the plan. Recommendations for modifications to remove the potential for significant effects on European site interest were made at the draft plan stage. The final column provides a check of the final version of the plan prior to adoption.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific part of the Tourism Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Initial LSE screening</th>
<th>Enhancement opportunities</th>
<th>Relevant European Sites</th>
<th>Recommendations for modifications to plan text to remove LSE</th>
<th>Final LSE screening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 1 – Situation analysis – explanation of the current situation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context, delivery structures, tourism performance (1.1 – 1.4)</td>
<td>These sections provide a portrait of the Broads, the current tourism performance and the organisations and facilities present</td>
<td>No LSE - These introductory parts of the plan simply set context. No proposals for changes.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>This section is strengthened with a clear narrative that the European wildlife assets are critical to tourism prosperity, and that sound planning and management of tourism is required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues, challenges and opportunities (1.5)</td>
<td>The evidence gathered, including surveys, gives an insight into public opinion etc. &amp; generates a list of issues and opportunities for the plan to resolve.</td>
<td>LSE – needs recognition of the potential impact of meeting the plan’s objectives</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Text at 1.5 should refer to the issues of internationally important sites and protection. Text should highlight importance of evidence on natural environment to assess impacts, as well as tourism evidence. Reference added to point on wildlife sites to note the need for evidence for the list of issues and opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonality of visits – strengthening out of season tourism</td>
<td>Seasonality of visits – strengthening out of season tourism</td>
<td>LSE</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Broadlands SPA/Ramsar, Broads SAC, Breydon Water SPA/Ramsar, Winterton-Horsey Dunes SAC, Great</td>
<td>Resolve with general reference at start of 1.5, as above, and specific text modifications for the action planning framework (below)</td>
<td>As above and additions to action planning framework below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific part of the Tourism Strategy</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Initial LSE screening</td>
<td>Enhancement opportunities</td>
<td>Relevant European Sites</td>
<td>Recommendations for modifications to plan text to remove LSE</td>
<td>Final LSE screening</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web and digital presence – greater online publicity required</td>
<td>LSE</td>
<td>See below re section 3 assessment</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Yarmouth North Denes SPA</td>
<td>Resolve with general reference at start of 1.5, as above, and specific text modifications for the action planning framework (below)</td>
<td>As above and additions to action planning framework below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branding of the National Park – make more of the national park status with branding</td>
<td>No LSE</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation of the Broads – positive links between tourism and conserving the Broads</td>
<td>LSE</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Broadlands SPA/Ramsar, Broads SAC, Breydon Water SPA/Ramsar, Winterton-Horsey Dunes SAC, Great Yarmouth North Denes SPA</td>
<td>Resolve with general reference at start of 1.5, as above, and specific text modifications for the action planning framework (below)</td>
<td>As above and additions to action planning framework below</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife tourism – boosting the appeal of the Broads with its wildlife</td>
<td>LSE</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Broadlands SPA/Ramsar, Broads SAC, Breydon Water SPA/Ramsar, Winterton-Horsey Dunes SAC, Great Yarmouth North Denes SPA</td>
<td>Resolve with general reference at start of 1.5, as above, and specific text modifications for the action planning framework (below)</td>
<td>As above and additions to action planning framework below</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental impact and promotion of green tourism</td>
<td>LSE</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Resolve with general reference at start of 1.5, as above, and specific text modifications for the action planning framework (below)</td>
<td>As above and additions to action planning framework below</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water based facilities – improved and expanded mooring facilities</td>
<td>LSE</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Broadlands SPA/Ramsar,</td>
<td>Resolve with general reference at start of 1.5, as above, and specific text modifications for the action planning framework (below)</td>
<td>As above and additions to action planning framework below</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land based experience of the water – improved access to the water and waterside</td>
<td>LSE</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Broads SAC, Breydon Water SPA/Ramsar</td>
<td>text modifications for the action planning framework (below)</td>
<td>framework below</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking and cycling – underdeveloped opportunities for walking and cycling, potential needs exploiting more</td>
<td>LSE</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Broads SPA/Ramsar, Broads SAC, Breydon Water SPA/Ramsar</td>
<td>Resolve with general reference at start of 1.5, as above, and specific text modifications for the action planning framework (below)</td>
<td>As above and additions to action planning framework below</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food offer – improve the food offer at outlets such as pubs</td>
<td>No LSE</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information at point of need – better information facilities and assistance to tourism providers to improve their information provision</td>
<td>No LSE</td>
<td>See below re section 3 assessment</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadband/mobile phone coverage – improvements required</td>
<td>NO LSE – no detail</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Specific projects for infrastructure may need HRA</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport access – better public transport required</td>
<td>No LSE – no impact pathway</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New and younger markets – active and special interest markets need exploiting</td>
<td>LSE</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Resolve with general reference at start of 1.5, as above, and specific text modifications for the action planning framework (below)</td>
<td>As above and additions to action planning framework below</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business investment – labour</td>
<td>No LSE – high level issue,</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>supply, advice and training for businesses</td>
<td>no detail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closer coordination – between businesses and tourism bodies</td>
<td>No LSE – high level issue, no detail</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding – lack of public sector funding for infrastructure and services</td>
<td>No LSE – high level issue, no detail</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Influences, SWOT analysis (1.6 and 1.7) | No LSE - This part of the plan sets wider policy context. No proposals for changes. | N/A | All | N/A | No |

### Section 2 – Strategic direction for tourism in the Broads – aims and vision for tourism

#### Policy context (2.1) – European and national

This section provides a summary of European and national policy that is relevant to sustainable tourism – high level and general

- No LSE - This part of the plan sets wider policy context. No proposals for changes.
- This section would benefit from reference to the wildlife designations, applicable at European, national and local.

#### Policy context (2.1) – local

New Anglia Strategic Economic Plan 2014

- No LSE. No in-combination issues identified. Should have own HRA
- Could refer to opportunities for strengthening N2K site awareness, protection and enhancement through closer working with the LEP

#### Local Development Strategies

LSE - Should have own HRA, but continued potential for in-combination issues to arise from LDS

- Emerging LDS should identify restoration, maintenance and enhancement of N2K
- Make reference in plan text to the importance of collaborative working on assessing impacts on wildlife, with all public body plans being the subject of HRA.

| Reference to wildlife designations and HRAs added to section 2.1 | Reference to wildlife designations and HRAs added to section 2.1 | Reference to wildlife designations and HRAs added to section 2.1 |
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<th>Final LSE screening</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Character Area Profile for the Broads</td>
<td>No LSE – a positive plan for the protection and maintenance of the natural environment</td>
<td>Already set out within the NCA profiles</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Broads Plan – Management Plan</td>
<td>LSE - Should have own HRA, but continued potential for in-combination issues to arise from management</td>
<td>Emerging management plan should identify restoration, maintenance and enhancement of N2K</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Ensure cross reference between the three Broads plans and their HRAs</td>
<td>Reference to wildlife designations and HRAs added to section 2.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Broads Local Plan – planning policy plan</td>
<td>LSE - Should have own HRA, but continued potential for in-combination issues to arise from development</td>
<td>Emerging LDS should identify restoration, maintenance and enhancement of N2K</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Ensure cross reference between the three Broads plans and their HRAs</td>
<td>Reference to wildlife designations and HRAs added to section 2.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims and vision for sustainable tourism in the Broads (2.2)</td>
<td>Introductory text for the Vision, previous aims identified in the preceding tourism strategy are still considered relevant – to develop, manage and promote the Broads as a high quality sustainable tourism destination in keeping with its status as an internationally renowned environment. Fulfilling visitor experience, prosperous tourism industry, enhanced quality of life for communities, increased appreciation and understanding, minimising negative impacts on the environment</td>
<td>No LSE – high level context for the vision. LSE – minimising negative impacts on the environment. This does not set an aim of preventing, just minimising, which is not quantified and therefore could still be significant</td>
<td>The aims should be amended to include reference to opportunities to restore and enhance natural assets. Remove reference to minimising negative impacts.</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Change text to ‘preventing negative impacts of tourism on the environment’</td>
<td>Text changed as per recommendation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision ‘Working together effectively to provide a brilliant visitor experience of a unique</td>
<td>No LSE – does not promote additional tourism growth, specific</td>
<td>Already stated</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes:
- LSE screening:
  - No LSE – high level context for the vision.
  - LSE – certain opportunities and impacts.
- Recommendations for modifications to plan text to remove LSE:
  - Reference to wildlife designations and HRAs added to section 2.1.
  - Text changed as per recommendation.
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<tr>
<td>National Park, delivering year round benefits to the local economy – through engaging and supporting local businesses and protecting, enhancing and celebrating the special natural and cultural heritage of the Broads’ activities or locations. Wording ensures that protecting natural environment is an integral part.</td>
<td>LSE – Risk to European site interest from an increase in tourism. See more detail in HRA section 3.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>The plan should add additional caveats to this aspiration. Text relating to following the principles of sustainable development should be amended to refer to preventing impacts rather than taking account of, and the need for evidence gathering to support this objective without causing harm.</td>
<td>Text amended to refer to preventing impacts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursuing sustainable growth – At least a 5% growth in annual tourism spending, in accordance with Visit England target</td>
<td>LSE – differing times of the year bring differing risks to sensitive interest features</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Make reference to the need for evidence to take actions forward without impacts on the natural environment</td>
<td>No additional text added but point adequately covered by text added to other paragraphs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More year round visitor spending – more visitors in Spring, Autumn and Winter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritising conservation and management – recognising contribution tourism should make</td>
<td>No LSE</td>
<td>Should be sought for all initiatives under this principle</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting the National Park status – location branding</td>
<td>No LSE</td>
<td>Opportunities here to highlight sensitivity of the natural environment as part of the branding</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Text added to refer to sensitivity of environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spreading tourism benefits to all parts of the Broads – reducing use of overused areas and encouraging use of underused areas</td>
<td>LSE – underused locations may be those more sensitive to impacts</td>
<td>Opportunities to target areas of high visitor use in sensitive locations and move to Broadlands SPA/Ramsar, Broads SAC, Breydon Water</td>
<td>Make reference to the need for evidence to take actions forward without impacts on the natural environment</td>
<td>Text added to refer to environmental limits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing a national park for all – ensuring facilities are inclusive for all</td>
<td>No LSE – no specific projects and modifications should not lead to additional impacts</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in partnership – greater collaboration between tourism stakeholders</td>
<td>No LSE – qualitative recommendation</td>
<td>Collaboration between partners on measures to protect N2K sites can reduce resources and improve effectiveness</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No additional text added but point adequately covered by text added to other paragraphs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority markets (2.4) – target markets for tourism</td>
<td>Domestic short breaks/holidays - couples post family</td>
<td>LSE – this tourist group does not have particular risks, but adds to general impacts</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Make reference in introductory text at 2.4 to the fact that particular visitors and their activities can have differing impacts on the natural environment and initiatives should assess and prevent impacts.</td>
<td>Text added to introductory text for this part, as per recommendation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domestic short breaks/holidays - families</td>
<td>LSE – this tourist group does not have particular risks, but adds to general impacts. May undertake boating activities and may bring dogs on holiday.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>As above re 2.4 introductory text</td>
<td>Text added to introductory text for this part, as per recommendation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Day visitors</td>
<td>LSE – this tourist group does not have particular risks, but adds to general</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>As above re 2.4 introductory text</td>
<td>Text added to introductory text for this part, as per</td>
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<td></td>
<td>LSE – this tourist group does not have particular risks, but adds to general impacts. May be more likely to take part in adventure related activities</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>As above re 2.4 introductory text</td>
<td>Text added to introductory text for this part, as per recommendation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young independent travellers</td>
<td>LSE – this tourist group does not have particular risks, but adds to general impacts. May be more likely to target well known honeypot locations</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>LSE – this tourist group does not have particular risks, but adds to general impacts. May be more focussed on boating</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>As above re 2.4 introductory text</td>
<td>Text added to introductory text for this part, as per recommendation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with disabilities</td>
<td>LSE – this tourist group does not have particular risks, but adds to general impacts</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>As above re 2.4 introductory text</td>
<td>Text added to introductory text for this part, as per recommendation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special interest – bird watching, angling and sailing</td>
<td>LSE – targeting locations of increased sensitivity</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Add text under special interest to refer to the particular risk of special interest use and need for measures to prevent impacts</td>
<td>Specific text added at this paragraph, as per recommendation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas visitors</td>
<td>LSE – this tourist group does not have particular risks, but adds to general impacts. May be more likely to target less known locations with greater local knowledge. May be accompanied by dogs.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Strategic Creative promotion - To raise

Proposes a new level of

Some potential as

All

The objectives are strategic,

Text added to
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<tr>
<td>Objectives (2.5) Objective 1: Creative promotion</td>
<td>awareness of the Broads as a unique National Park based on its waterways, heritage, landscapes and wildlife</td>
<td>awareness and interest – destination marketing</td>
<td>actions are developed in detail</td>
<td></td>
<td>therefore difficult to add protective text, but the objectives do pose risks in their interpretation and implementation. It is recommended that reference is made within 2.5 to the need for objectives to be delivered in the context of adequate information and measures to protect the natural environment.</td>
<td>introdutory text for this part, as per recommendation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 2: Captivating products</td>
<td>To strengthen the variety, distinctiveness and quality of the Broads tourism offer, capable of generating visits throughout the year</td>
<td>Development of the national park brand – specific products to encourage year round visits</td>
<td>Some potential as actions are developed in detail</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>As above re 2.5 text additions</td>
<td>Text added to introductory text for this part, as per recommendation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 3: Supportive management</td>
<td>To stimulate and manage the flow of visitors around the Broads with consequent benefits for communities and the environment</td>
<td>Positive relationship between tourism and the environment through sound visitor management</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>As above re 2.5 text additions</td>
<td>Text added to introductory text for this part, as per recommendation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section 3 – Action planning framework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions under Objective 1</th>
<th>Maintain a high quality up-to-date destination website Maintain a strong digital/social media presence and PR activity</th>
<th>LSE – risks additional visitors that may add to pressure on European sites.</th>
<th>The destination website and social media offers a very positive opportunity to promote the sensitivity of the Broads and appropriate enjoyment of the natural assets</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Add bullet re boosting information on the protection of the unique wildlife resource</th>
<th>Bullet point added, as per recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work with others on linked</td>
<td>LSE – risks additional</td>
<td>As above, any form of</td>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Suggest no additional text as</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<td>marketing campaigns</td>
<td>visitors that may add to pressure on European sites.</td>
<td>promotion offers opportunities to convey messages re sensitivity and appropriate use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>recommendations above will cover this point</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spread visibility of the Broads National Park brand identity</td>
<td>No LSE – no identifiable impacts as a consequence of improved branding</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that the Broads continues to provide the UK’s leading boating holiday offer</td>
<td>LSE – references to moorings and bankside use poses risks. See more detail in HRA section 3.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Broadlands SPA/Ramsar, Broads SAC, Breydon Water SPA/Ramsar</td>
<td>Bullets re new moorings and alternative mooring options need to be changed. Suggested new text – “Gather evidence on potential locations for new moorings and underused alternative moorings to inform their promotion where the natural environment will not be affected.” “Improve bankside facilities where damage to the natural environment can be prevented.”</td>
<td>Text modified as per recommendation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote and improve opportunities for land-based visitors to experience the Broads’ special wetland environment</td>
<td>LSE – references to bankside use and promotion of canoe use poses risks. See more detail in HRA section 3.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Broadlands SPA/Ramsar, Broads SAC, Breydon Water SPA/Ramsar</td>
<td>Bullet relating to waterside access to be changed to include reference to appropriate locations where sensitive wildlife will not be affected. Bullet relating to canoe provision to be changed to “Further research into the potential opportunities to develop provision of canoe and other non-powered craft in light of evidence relating to impacts.”</td>
<td>Text modified as per recommendation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and package high profile wildlife experiences</td>
<td>LSE – references to high profile wildlife</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>The Broads</td>
<td>Text already included to refer to reviewing impacts on wildlife</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>experiences poses risks. See more detail in HRA section 3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>text already incorporated prevents LSE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extend and diversify the walking and cycling offer</td>
<td>LSE – references to increasing walking and cycling poses risks. See more detail in HRA section 3.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>The Broads</td>
<td>Add to bullet point relating to spatial study to refer to assessing impacts on the natural environment. Specific projects will be the subject of project level HRA, including 3 Rivers Way</td>
<td>Text modified as per recommendation – reference to HRAs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen access to, and interpretation of, cultural heritage themes</td>
<td>No LSE – promotion of cultural heritage should not lead to increased impacts on European sites features</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the quality and distinctiveness of places to stay, eat and drink</td>
<td>No LSE – promotion of quality and distinctiveness rather than additional development, therefore should not lead to increased impacts on European sites features</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen availability of human resources and skills required by tourism-related businesses and activities</td>
<td>No LSE – improving skills should not lead to increased impacts on European sites features</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliver and coordinate a year-round programme of events</td>
<td>LSE – specific events may pose a risk to European sites</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Add to text to refer to assessing impacts.</td>
<td>Text modified as per recommendation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions under Objective 3</td>
<td>Deliver effective visitor information through a range of services and media</td>
<td>No LSE but opportunities for positive communication</td>
<td>Opportunity to highlight need for visitor impacts/wildlife</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Text modified as per recommendation – reference to information provision on wildlife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific part of the Tourism Strategy</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Initial LSE screening</td>
<td>Enhancement opportunities</td>
<td>Relevant European Sites</td>
<td>Recommendations for modifications to plan text to remove LSE</td>
<td>Final LSE screening</td>
</tr>
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<td>sensitivity information as part of the communication package</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen the greening of the tourism offer in the Broads</td>
<td>No LSE – environmentally positive actions</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support the conservation of natural and cultural heritage through tourism</td>
<td>No LSE – environmentally positive actions</td>
<td>Could note the importance of assessing impacts early in project development</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Text modified as per recommendation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage and facilitate use of public transport services by visitors</td>
<td>No LSE – use of public transport should not affect European sites</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve broadband and mobile phone coverage</td>
<td>No LSE</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Project specific HRA may be required for some infrastructure</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve access and the public realm at key sites and locations</td>
<td>LSE – potential impacts at Breydon Water</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Breydon Water SPA/Ramsar,</td>
<td>Project locations checked and all no LSE apart from improving amenity at Great Yarmouth. Change bullet to “Assess amenity around rail and yacht stations in Great Yarmouth, to take forward improvements where impacts to the natural environment will not occur.”</td>
<td>Text added regarding the need to assess impacts for each project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide and promote access for visitors with a range of needs</td>
<td>No LSE – no specific access locations, general commitment to improving for specific user needs</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top priorities for actions (3.2)</td>
<td>Text setting out the priorities from the actions table</td>
<td>LSE – some of the priorities include actions where risks have been</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Add text to reflect the modifications recommended in relation to walking and cycling and</td>
<td>Text added to note that priorities are subject to assessment of impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific part of the Tourism Strategy</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>flagged</td>
<td></td>
<td>high profile wildlife experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td>on wildlife and the natural environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section 4 - Delivering and Monitoring the Strategy and Action Plan**

**Delivery Structures, relationships and communication (4.1)**
- Broads Tourism is the body nominated to oversee delivery and monitoring. Roles of Broads Tourism and the Broads Authority clarified
  - LSE – risk that ownership of lower tier plan and project level HRA is not clear and could therefore be missed
  - N/A
  - All
  - A competent authority undertaking a plan or project is required to adhere to the Habitats Regulations and this would sit with the Broads Authority, even if another body is undertaking the project on their behalf. Add text to 4.1 to clarify HRA need and ownership.
  - Text added as per recommendation – bullet point expanded re role of Broads Authority for HRA

**Funding (4.2)**
- Funding sources for plan delivery explained
  - No LSE
  - N/A
  - All
  - N/A
  - No

**Monitoring and review (4.3)**
- Key indicators being used for monitoring the plan
  - LSE – currently no reference to HRA
  - N/A
  - All
  - Add reference to HRA under ‘environmental impact.’ Add reference to ecological monitoring under ‘monitoring.’
  - Text added as per recommendation

**Annexes**
- Information and statistics
  - No LSE – current information only
  - N/A
  - All
  - N/A
  - No