

APPENDIX 2

Draft Conclusions from Colchester's Section 1 and Section Local Plan Appropriate Assessments. (April 2017)

The Section 1 and Section 2 HRA Screening Reports, identified the loss of offsite habitat, recreational impacts and water quality that either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, have the potential to result in likely significant effects on Abberton Reservoir SPA/Ramsar, Essex Estuaries SAC, Blackwater Estuary SPA/Ramsar, Hamford Water SAC, Hamford Water SPA/Ramsar, Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA/Ramsar, and Colne Estuaries SPA and Ramsar.

The Appropriate Assessments (AA) completed for Section 1 and Section 2 of Colchester's Local Plan then assessed whether the identified likely significant effects, when considered in light of proposed mitigation and avoidance measures, would result in adverse effects on the integrity of the European site's either alone or in combination.

The loss of off-site functional habitat was only identified as an issue in the Section 1 Appropriate Assessment, which recommended a number of mitigation measures to address the issue. This included completing wintering bird surveys for individual level projects, a commitment to phasing development based on bird survey results and habitat creation and management either on-site or through the provision of strategic sites for bird species elsewhere. The AA suggested the adoption of a similar approach to Section 2 of Colchester's Local Plan for projects where data gaps existed or where there were uncertainties about impacts on birds, particularly Golden Plover and Lapwing, as these species use land well away from coastal sites (up to 15km).

The Appropriate Assessments also concluded that recreational impacts from the growth proposed in Sections 1 and 2 of Colchester's Local Plan, in combination with other plans and projects would lead to an increase in visitor numbers at the some of the above European Sites (The Stour and Orwell SPA/Ramsar, Colne and Blackwater SPA/Ramsar, Essex Estuaries SAC) and increased recreational disturbance both on land and water. The Appropriate Assessments have identified the need to prepare a Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) for the Stour and Orwell SPA/Ramsar and a separate RAMS for the Colne Estuary SPA/Ramsar, Blackwater Estuary SPA/Ramsar and Essex Estuaries SAC. The RAMS must be prepared and signed off prior to adoption of the Local Pan. The RAMS will be prepared jointly by Colchester, Tendring and Braintree Local Planning Authorities in collaboration with Natural England, the RSPB, Essex Wildlife Trust, neighbouring Suffolk Authorities and stakeholders with an interest in the estuaries.

The Appropriate Assessment for Section 2 of Colchester's Local Plan identified 2 measures needed in Langham to mitigate against any further deterioration in the water quality of the receiving water bodies feeding into The Stour. These are commitments to ensure that the phasing of development in the village would not exceed waste water and sewage infrastructure capacities and that any necessary infrastructure upgrades would be implemented prior to development coming forward. A Position Statement is being prepared between The Local Planning Authority, Anglian Water and the Environment Agency to ensure that the appropriate measures are put in place to

ensure that any future development in Langham satisfies 2010 Habitats Regulations requirements.

Policy ENV1 in Section 2 of Colchester's Local Plan has also been amended to clarify that any plans and projects coming forward that have not been assessed through the Section 1 or Section 2 Appropriate Assessment will be required to complete their own HRA Screening and if necessary, an Appropriate Assessment.

The inclusion of the above recommendations and mitigation requirements into the relevant policies of Sections and 1 and 2 of Colchester's Local Plans will ensure that proposals in the plan will not result in adverse effects on the integrity of any of European sites listed above., either alone or in-combination and hence comply with 2010 Habitats Regulations requirements .

The Appropriate Assessments are currently in draft form and will require sign off by Natural England following further scrutiny. Officers have met Natural England on several occasions and will continue to liaise.