

Flood Strategy Appendix C

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)
Screening



The purpose of this report

This screening report is an assessment of whether or not the contents of the Essex County Council (ECC) Local Flood Risk Management Strategy requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with Article 6(3) and (4) of the EU Habitats Directive and with Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. A HRA is required when it is deemed that likely adverse significant effects may occur on protected Habitats (European) Sites as a result of the implementation of a plan/project.

The Essex County Council Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (October 2018)

The Flood and Water Management Act states that Essex County Council has to put in place a local flood risk management strategy.

This strategy sets out the County Council's aims and actions to reduce the impact of local flooding to the residents of Essex. 'Local' flooding in Essex means the risk of water from manmade drainage

systems, small watercourses and rainfall off the land. The Strategy ensures that residents are informed about flood risk, that they understand why flooding is a problem for us all and what is being done to manage it.

The Strategy includes nine objectives:

- To provide a clear explanation of everyone's responsibilities.
- To make sure people understand their risk of flooding and think about how we communicate this.
- To explain how we assess flood risk in Essex and then prioritise the work we do.
- To clearly set out our work so that communities and businesses can make decisions about how they manage flood risk too.
- To ensure that planning decisions properly consider flooding and the future impact any development may have.
- To state how we share information and work with other authorities.
- To ensure that emergency plans and responses to flood incidents are effective and that communities are prepared for flooding.
- To encourage innovative new thinking, considering community needs, while working with the existing natural and built environment.
- To highlight where further detailed information and legislation regarding flooding can be found.



In order to ensure that the above objectives are met, the Strategy includes 7 measures that have been implemented by the authority:

1. Investigating floods
2. Mapping local routes for water
3. Looking after our watercourses
4. Planning for future floods
5. Influencing new development and drainage
6. Building flood defences
7. What more can you do? (such as facilitating volunteering events)

Legislative background

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Under the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive and translated into English law by the Habitats Regulations (*The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017*), a competent authority must carry out an assessment of whether a plan or project will significantly affect the integrity of any European Site, in terms of impacting the site's conservation objectives.

HRA is the screening assessment of the impacts of a land use proposal against the conservation objectives of European sites. Specifically, it is to ascertain whether or not a proposal (either alone or in combination with other proposals) would potentially damage the internationally designated features of that site. European sites are also now known as Habitats sites (NPPF 2018).

This HRA Screening Report has been undertaken in order to support the Essex County Council Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (June 2018) in accordance with The Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy may influence frameworks for future development, or become used ancillary to those plans and programmes that do set such a framework, and as such it has been determined that the principle of the Strategy should be screened for the necessary application of the Habitats Regulations.

This report represents HRA screening in regard to the content and influence of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.



HRA Screening

Habitat Regulations Assessment of Development Plans

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

Under the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive and translated into English law by the Habitats Regulations (The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017), a competent authority must carry out an assessment of whether a plan or project will significantly affect the integrity of any European Site, in terms of impacting the site's conservation objectives.

HRA is the screening assessment of the impacts of a land use proposal against the conservation objectives of Habitats (European) sites. Specifically, it is to ascertain whether or not a proposal (either alone or in combination with other proposals) would potentially damage the internationally designated features of that site. European sites are also known as Natura 2000 sites.

This HRA Screening Report has been undertaken in order to support the Essex County Council Local

Flood Risk Management Strategy in accordance with The Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The area covered by the Plan is shown in Appendix 1.

To demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with EU obligations, this includes the need to undertake a HRA screening.

This section of this Report aims to:

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

Habitats (European) Sites

Habitats (European) Sites are the centrepiece of EU wide Natura 2000 network of nature protection areas. The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

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

The Birds Directive requires the establishment of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds. The Habitats Directive similarly requires Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be designated for other species, and for habitats. Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) are also part of the Natura 2000 network. This is because all SPAs and SACs are comprised of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and all Ramsar sites in England are SSSIs. Together, SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites make up the Habitats Sites network in England.

Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

SPAs are areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within EU countries. Example: Abberton Reservoir SPA is one of the most important reservoirs in the country for overwintering waterfowl. *Legislation: EU Birds Directive.*

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

SACs are areas designated to protect habitat types that are in danger of disappearance, have a small natural range, or are highly characteristic of the region; and to protect species that are endangered, vulnerable, rare, or endemic. Example: Essex Estuaries SAC has Atlantic salt meadows, mudflats and sandflats. *Legislation: EU Habitats Directive.*

Ramsar Sites (Wetlands of International Importance)

Ramsar Sites are designated to protect the biological and physical features of wetlands, especially for waterfowl Habitats. For example, Colne Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 2) Ramsar site is important due to the extent and diversity of saltmarsh and the site supports 12 species of nationally scarce plants and at least 38 Red Data Book invertebrate species. Ramsar sites often overlap with SACs and SPAs and UK planning policy determines that they should be accorded the same importance when developments are proposed. *Legislation: Ramsar Convention (1971) – Wetlands of International Importance.*

Habitats Sites to be considered in this assessment

There are 45 Habitats sites which lie within 20 km of Essex county.

Table 1: Habitats Sites within 20km of Essex to be considered in this assessment

SPA	SAC	Ramsar
Stour and Orwell Estuaries	Essex Estuaries	Stour and Orwell Estuaries
Hamford Water	Hamford Water	Hamford Water
Crouch and Roach Estuaries	Devils Dyke	Crouch and Roach Estuaries
Abberton Reservoir	Epping Forest	Abberton Reservoir
Colne Estuary	Eversden and Wimpole Woods	Colne Estuary
Blackwater Estuary	Wormley-Hoddesdonpark Woods	Blackwater Estuary
Dengie	Peters Pit	Dengie
Foulness	North Downs Woodlands	Foulness
Benfleet & Southend Marshes	Queensdown Warren	Benfleet & Southend Marshes
Thames Estuary & Marshes	Margate and Long Sands	Thames Estuary & Marshes
Deben Estuary	Staverton Park & The Thicks	Deben Estuary
Alde-Ore Estuary		Alde-Ore Estuary
Orfordness- Shingle Street		Orfordness- Shingle Street
Medway Estuary & Marshes		Medway Estuary & Marshes
The Swale		The Swale
Tankerton Slopes and Swalecliffe		Tankerton Slopes and Swalecliffe
Lee Valley		Lee Valley

The Zones of Influence of the above 45 Habitats Sites (27 SSSIs), as recently revised by Natural England to consider potential impacts on statutory sites, are shown on MAGIC website www.magic.gov.uk as SSSI Impact Risk Zones. After consideration of these Zones of Influence, it was concluded that the 29 of the above 45 Habitats Sites as listed in Table 4 below should now be assessed for likely significant effect from this Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Table 2: Habitats Sites with Zones of Influence in the Plan area

SPA	SAC	Ramsar
Stour and Orwell Estuaries	Essex Estuaries	Stour and Orwell Estuaries
Hamford Water	Hamford Water	Hamford Water
Crouch and Roach Estuaries	Epping Forest	Crouch and Roach Estuaries
Abberton Reservoir	Eversden and Wimpole Woods	Abberton Reservoir
Colne Estuary	Essex Estuaries	Colne Estuary
Blackwater Estuary		Blackwater Estuary
Dengie		Dengie
Foulness		Foulness
Benfleet & Southend Marshes		Benfleet & Southend Marshes
Outer Thames		Outer Thames
Deben Estuary		Deben Estuary
Lee Valley		Lee Valley

Any projects within the Zones of Influence of any of the Habitats sites listed in Table 4, will trigger further assessment at project level.

Conservation Objectives

Information on the Conservation Objectives for each of the above Habitats sites has been taken from www.magic.gov.uk (2018).

Appendix 2 indicates the reason why each Habitats site is important and has been designated; the relevant SSSI compartments; and the Conservation Objectives and Designation Features for each site. This information has been obtained from the JNCC and Natural England websites.

Table 3: Stages of the Habitats Regulations Assessment screening process

SPA	SAC	Ramsar
Stage 1 HRA Screening (Regulation 63)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the policies or projects. Identify potential effects to a Habitats Site. Assess if any effects on a Habitats Site, either alone or in combination, with other plans or projects are likely to be significant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where significant effects are unlikely, prepare a ‘finding of no significant effect’ report and plan can be adopted. Where significant effects are judged likely, either alone or in combination or there is a lack of information to prove otherwise, go to Stage 2. <p><i>People over Wind CJEU ruling (April 2018) means that it is not possible to consider mitigation measures when screening for impacts.</i></p>
Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (Regulation 63)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider if impacts are likely to affect any qualifying features; those policies and /or projects that are likely to result in adverse effects on the integrity of any Habitats Sites should be assessed. Consider mitigation measures if necessary and re-screen plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If no adverse effect on site integrity either alone or in combination, the plan can be adopted. If it is not possible to ascertain no adverse effect on site integrity, go to Stage 3. <p><i>Holohan CJEU ruling (November 2018) now imposes more detailed requirements on the competent authority at Appropriate Assessment stage.</i></p>
Stage 3 Assessment of alternative solutions (Regulation 64)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify whether alternative solutions exist that would achieve the objectives of the plan and have no or a lesser effect on the integrity of a Habitats Site(s). If effects remain after alternative solutions been considered, consider whether the policies and/or projects should proceed with modification or the policies (and projects) be removed from the plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there are alternative solutions to the plan, it cannot be adopted without modification. If no financially, legally or technically viable alternatives exist, go to Stage 4.
Stage 4 IROPI (Regulation 64)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider if the risk and harm to the Habitats Site is over-ridden by Imperative Reasons of Over-riding Public Interest (IROPI). Identify and prepare delivery of compensatory measures to protect the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network and notify Government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there are IROPI and compensatory measures, the plan can be adopted. If there are no IROPI, the plan cannot be adopted.

Potential impacts of the Essex Local Flood Risk Management Strategy on Habitats Sites

There is a wide range of potential impacts from development which can be summarised as :

- Land take by developments;
- Impact on protected species found within but which travel outside the protected sites may be relevant where development could result in effects on qualifying interest species within the Habitats site, for example through the loss of feeding grounds for an identified species.
- Increased disturbance, for example from recreational use resulting from new housing development and / or improved access due to transport infrastructure projects;
- Changes in water availability, or water quality as a result of development and increased demands for water treatment, and changes in groundwater regimes due to increased impermeable areas;
- Changes in atmospheric pollution levels due to increased traffic, waste management facilities etc. Pollution discharges from developments such as industrial Developments, quarries and waste management facilities.

Each policy in the Essex Local Flood Risk Management Strategy will therefore be assessed against the above criteria in the table below.



Table 4: Assessment of potential impacts

Nature of potential impact	How the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (alone or in combination with other plans and project) could affect a Habitats site?	Why these effects are/not considered to be significant?
Land take by development	Essex county contains land within the boundaries of the Habitats sites within scope of this HRA.	The Strategy does not allocate any land for development purposes or include any content that would lead or contribute to any land take for any Habitats sites.
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	Essex county contains land for functional use by designated features of the Habitats sites.	The Strategy does not allocate any land for development purposes or include any content that would lead or contribute to any likely impacts on protected species outside the Habitats sites.
Disturbance	HRA / AA work undertaken at the Local Plan level indicates that there could be a potential pathway for development in the Plan area to impact on the SPA/SAC/Ramsar sites within the scope of the HRA as Essex lies within the Zones of Influence.	The Strategy does not allocate any land for development purposes or include any content that would lead or contribute to any disturbance.
Water quantity and quality	Previous HRA / AA work undertaken on the Local Flood Risk Management Strategies indicates that there could be potential pathways for projects to impact on the SPA/SAC/Ramsar sites within scope of the HRA as the County lies within the Zones of Influence.	The Strategy does not allocate any land for development purposes or include any content that would lead or contribute to any deterioration of water quality.
Changes in air & noise pollution levels	It is considered that there is no pathway for development to result in pollution impacts.	The Strategy does not allocate any land for development purposes or include any content that would lead or contribute to any deterioration of air quality.

Results of HRA Screening of Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Policies

Each of the Measures in the Essex Local Flood Risk Management Strategy has been screened to identify whether they would have any impact on a Habitats Site.

Category A : No negative effect

Policies or projects that will not be likely to have any negative effect on a Habitats site.

Category B : No Likely Significant Effect

Policies or projects that could have an effect but would not be likely to have a likely significant effect on a Habitats site alone or in combination. This conclusion could only be reached if the effects, even in combination and taking the precautionary principle into account, are considered trivial.

Category C : Likely Significant Effect

Policies or projects which are predicted to have a likely significant effect on a Habitats Site either on its own or in combination with other plans and projects and require revision or further assessment (Appropriate Assessment).

Table 5: Summary of findings

Policy	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effect on a Habitats Site?	Recommendations
<p>Measure 1: Investigating flooding Legislation gives Essex County Council a duty to investigate floods. In Essex, not only do we investigate what happened in a local flood, but who should be involved and what they will do. We are also helping flooded residents to access grants to protect their property. Unfortunately a solution to every case isn't always possible or affordable, but we will work towards this wherever we can. Our flood investigation engineer will aim to contact flooded residents as soon as possible following a flood. Investigations can take a few months to complete while we gather data and speak to all those involved.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
<p>Measure 2: Mapping local routes for water Another of our duties is to keep a record of structures or features that form part of local drainage systems. These can be things such as pipes, bridges or raised banks, which occur on local routes for water. These can have a big impact on local flooding. We record both old or new features and keep details about their ownership and condition. The record must be available for the public to view. For Essex it can be accessed through the online map at www.essex.gov.uk/flooding. There are already 10,000 records on our database, these numbers have been built up through our flood planning work, but we are also asking for communities to help us gather more. We run a project called 'Where Does Water Go?' with Parish Councils and Flood Action Groups. In this project we provide volunteers with the tools for surveying and recording their local drainage. In the process we can assist sharing information about maintenance and responsibility to help make sure local routes for water are clear. We also provide a digital map of the drainage for future reference</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
<p>Measure 3: Looking after our watercourses Small streams and ditches have an important job in draining water across our land. We know these channels as 'ordinary watercourses'. Unfortunately a lot of open channels have now been built over, filled in or piped. If you are planning on starting any work affecting or changing an ordinary watercourse, you may require permission from us before you start the work. We will check that your plans are necessary and won't increase flood risk. We want to keep our ordinary watercourses open, clean and free of obstacles so that when water levels do increase, they are in the best possible working order. For more information on this please go to: www.essex.gov.uk/flooding. If any work has been carried out without our permission, the Council can start a legal process to get things put back how they were.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Table 5: Summary of Findings

Policy	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effect on a Habitats Site?	Recommendations
<p>Measure 4: Planning for future floods Thinking about how we manage a flood that might happen in the future requires some technical help. We have to create computer generated mock-ups of all possible scenarios. Our computer models will include accurate levels from the lay of the land, they map the buildings the soil types and the drainage locations, all to create the best representation of reality. A simulation then acts out very heavy rainfall for different lengths of time onto each location, giving us a look at the worst-case scenario. We use flood models where there is potential for most people to be affected by flooding. Finding out where most people are affected is something an initial study called a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) does. We have to carry the PFRA assessment out every six years. In locations where more than 500 properties could be at risk, we then will carry out a Surface Water Management Plan.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
<p>Measure 5: Influencing new development and Drainage New developments can increase the risk of surface water flooding; as a result we are consulted by Local Planning Authorities to comment on planning applications that are defined as major. We also provide surface water drainage specific advice to the District and Boroughs when they are writing their local plans. In responding to planning applications, we want to ensure that the increased risk of surface water flooding is lessened by promoting sustainable drainage (SuDs) within the development. As well as ensuring that proposal meets the requirements within national and local standards. Sustainable Drainage such as those features set out in the drawing aim to reflect natural drainage. Further information on the design of SuDs features can be found in our SuDs Design Guide at: www.essex.gov.uk/flooding</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
<p>Measure 6: Building flood defences Where our plans and investigations have identified communities to be at risk of flooding, we will consider whether building new flood defences provides a value for money solution. That is, whether the cost of the flood damage avoided equals more than the cost of building the defence. Solutions can range from small things such as flood walls, ditches or bunds. Whereas other schemes require larger attenuation ponds, pipes and flow control devices such as ‘hydro-brakes’. Every year we have to consider potential schemes with our partners and a decision is made whether to implement any plans. The total amount of money available from Essex County Council to invest in these schemes is reviewed on a five year cycle.</p>	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Table 5: Summary of Findings

Policy	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effect on a Habitats Site?	Recommendations
<p>Measure 7: What more can you do?</p> <p><u>Community Flood Improvement Fund</u> We hear from many communities that feel a solution to their flooding problem could be a simple and low-cost one. This grant has been enabling communities to put plans or schemes into action, and reduce flood risk to properties or businesses within their local area. Projects to protect homes are given a priority, but if you have an idea then talk to your local or parish council about supporting your application. We will consider applications from the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town and parish councils • Community groups • District, Borough and City Councils • Landowners and farmers • Charities and voluntary organisations • Conservation bodies • Other Flood Risk Management Authorities in Essex <p><u>Property Level Resilience Grant</u> With our Property Level Resilience (PLR) Grant you can get up to £5000 to protect your property against flooding. Since 2014, our PLR Grants have been made available to Essex residents who have experienced flood water entering their property. Successful applicants have had practical resilience measures installed, such as self-closing air bricks, reinforced flood doors, non-return valves, pumps and flood barriers. We have made sure the process is as simple as possible for those in need of our help and the scheme has received national praise for its success.</p> <p><u>Volunteer with us</u> <u>Community ditch maintenance</u> One way we try and reduce local flood risk is through volunteer ditch clearance events. For the last couple of years, Essex County Council has teamed up with local residents and volunteers to assist landowners maintain streams and ditches in their area. These events are not only a great way to meet our residents, but also enable us to educate them about flood risk and help build community resilience whilst directly protecting properties from flooding</p>	<p>No, Category A</p>	<p>No specific recommendations</p>

Other Plans & Programmes: In-Combination Effects

When considering the combined effects of plans or projects, the combined effect on the ecological functioning of the site interest feature must be considered carefully, as the effect can often be greater than the sum of each individual element. This effect is often referred to as a synergistic effect.

Cumulative effects can result from individually insignificant but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time or concentrated in a location. Cumulative effects are particularly

important in ecological impact assessments as many ecological features are already exposed to background levels of threat or pressure and may be close to critical thresholds where further impact could cause irreversible decline. Effects can also make habitats and species more vulnerable or sensitive to change.

In the context of this HRA, the relevant other plans & projects for consideration are listed in Table 7 below in-combination with the ECC Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Table 7: Other plans or projects considered for in combination effects

Policy	Potential for in combination effects
Essex Local Transport Plan	None
Minerals and Waste Development Plan for Essex	None
Suffolk Local Transport Plan	None
Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan	None
Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan	None

There are five Plans that have been carried out by Essex CC or other organisations that are considered relevant to an in –combination assessment for a potential adverse effect on the integrity of Habitats sites being assessed. However as there are no locations for projects within the Essex LFRMS, it is not possible to identify any projects or particular impacts eg air quality, which should be considered in an in-combination assessment of impacts on any Habitats Site within scope.

The Essex LFRMS does not allocate any sites for projects so it does not require any mitigation measures on its own or for any in combination impacts at this stage. The likely impacts of individual projects will need further assessment at the project level.

Conclusion

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

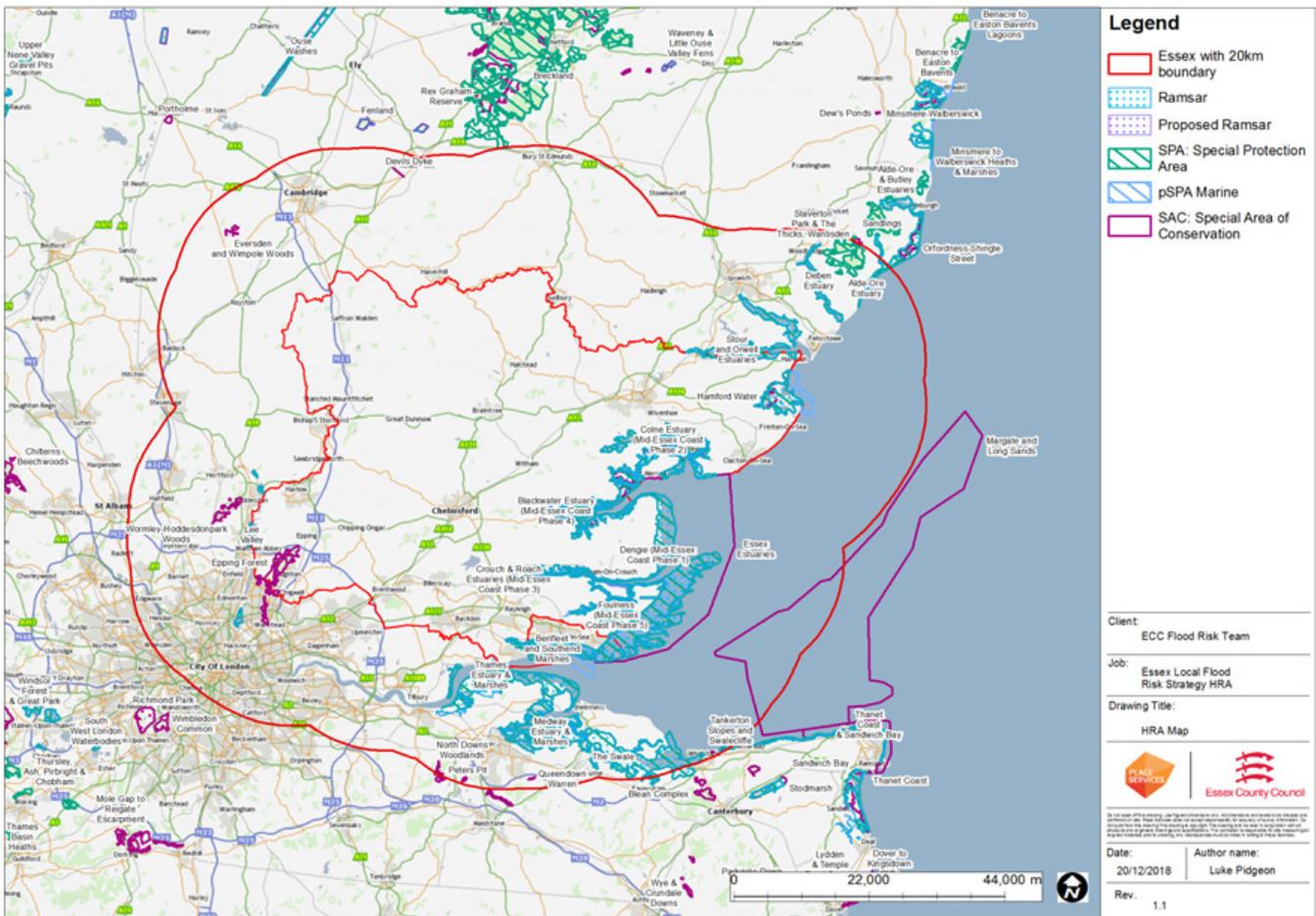
Subject to Natural England's review, this HRA screening report indicates that the Essex Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is not predicted to have likely significant effects on any Habitats site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

The requirement for the Plan to undertake further assessment under the Habitats Regulations 2017 is therefore screened out.



Appendix 1

The Essex LFRMS area and Habitats sites within 20km



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Appendix 2

Characteristics of Habitats sites within scope of this assessment

This appendix contains information about the Habitats sites included which have been scoped in for this HRA as the Zones of Influence for the SSSIs underpinning the European designation include part of the Plan area. Information about each site's area, the site descriptions, qualifying features and pressures and threats are drawn from Natural England's Site Improvement Plans (SIPs) and the Standard Data Forms or Ramsar Information Sheets available from the JNCC website. Site conservation objectives are drawn from Natural England's website and are only available for SACs and SPAs.

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
<p>The Stour and Orwell Estuaries</p> <p>These estuaries straddle the eastern part of the Essex/Suffolk border in eastern England. The estuaries include extensive mud-flats, low cliffs, saltmarsh and small areas of vegetated shingle on the lower reaches. The mud-flats hold <i>Enteromorpha</i>, <i>Zostera</i> and <i>Salicornia</i> spp. The site also includes an area of low-lying grazing marsh at Shotley Marshes on the south side of the Orwell. In summer, the site supports important numbers of breeding Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>, while in winter they hold major concentrations of waterbirds, especially geese, ducks and waders. The geese also feed, and waders roost, in surrounding areas of agricultural land outside the SPA. The site has close ecological links with the Hamford Water and Mid-Essex Coast SPAs, lying to the south on the same coast.</p>	3676.92	<p>Qualifying Features potentially affected:</p> <p>Annex I species:</p> <p>Over winter: Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i></p> <p>This site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species: Over winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> • Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> • Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> • Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> • Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> • Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> • Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> • Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i> 	<p>With regard to the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified ("the Qualifying Features listed below);</p> <p>Avoid the deterioration of the Habitats of the qualifying features, and the significant disturbance of the qualifying features, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of the Birds Directive.</p> <p>Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the Habitats of the qualifying features; • The structure and function of the Habitats of the qualifying features; • The supporting processes on which the Habitats of the qualifying features rely;

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
Stour and Orwell Estuaries Ramsar site EU Code: UK11067	3676.92	<p>The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> • Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> • Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> • Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> • Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> • Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> • Redshank <i>Tringa tetanus</i> • Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> • Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> • Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i> • Dark-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i> • Wigeon <i>Anas Penelope</i> • Goldeneye <i>Bucephala clangula</i> • Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> • Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> • Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i> • Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i> <p>Ramsar criterion 2 Contains seven nationally scarce plants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stiff saltmarsh-grass <i>Puccinellia rupestris</i> • Small cord-grass <i>Spartina maritime</i> • Perennial glasswort <i>Sarcocornia perennis</i> • Lax-flowered sea lavender <i>Limonium humile</i> • Eelgrasses <i>Zostera angustifolia</i>, <i>Z. marina</i> and <i>Z. noltei</i>. <p>Ramsar criterion 5 Assemblages of international importance; species with peak counts in winter; 63,017 waterfowl.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The populations of the qualifying features; • The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.
			None available

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
		<p>Assemblages of international importance; species with peak counts in winter; 63,017 waterfowl.</p> <p><u>Ramsar criterion 6</u> Species/ populations occurring at levels of international importance:</p> <p>Species with peak counts in spring/autumn;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common redshank , <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dark-bellied brent goose, <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i> • Northern pintail, <i>Anas acuta</i> • Grey plover, <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> • Red knot, <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i> • Dunlin, <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> • Black-tailed godwit, <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> • Common redshank, <i>Tringa totanus tetanus</i> 	
<p>The Deben Estuary The Deben Estuary lies within Suffolk Coastal District at the southern border of Suffolk. The estuaries include extensive mud-flats, low cliffs, saltmarsh and small areas of vegetated shingle on the lower reaches. The mud-flats hold <i>Enteromorpha</i>, <i>Zostera</i> and <i>Salicornia</i> spp. In summer, the site supports important numbers of breeding Avocet while in winter they hold major concentrations of waterbirds, especially geese, ducks and waders. The geese also feed, and waders roost, in surrounding areas of agricultural land outside the SPA.</p>			
Deben Estuary, SPA EU Code: UK9009261	978.93	<p>Qualifying Features potentially affected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A046a Dark-bellied brent goose <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i> (Non-breeding); • A132 Pied avocet, <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i> (breeding) 	<p>With regard to the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (“the Qualifying Features listed below);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid the deterioration of the habitats of the Qualifying Features, and the significant disturbance of the qualifying features, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of The Birds Directive.

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
Deben Estuary Ramsar site EU Code: UK11017	978.93	<p>Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation)</p> <p><u>Ramsar criterion 2</u> Supports a population of the mollusc <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Habitats Directive Annex II (S1014); British Red Data Book Endangered). Martlesham Creek is one of only about fourteen sites in Britain where this species survives.</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter: Dark-bellied brent goose, <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>, 1953 individuals, representing an average of 1.9% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p> <p>Species currently occurring at levels of national importance: Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p>	<p>Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features; • 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.
			None available

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
		<p>Black-tailed godwit, <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>, Iceland/W Europe 307 individuals, representing an average of 1.9% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p> <p>Common greenshank, <i>Tringa nebularia</i>, Europe/W Africa 22 individuals, representing an average of 3.6% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <p>Bean goose, <i>Anser fabalis fabalis</i>, NW Europe - Wintering 5 individuals, representing an average of 1.2% of the GB population (Source period not collated)</p> <p>Common shelduck, <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, NW Europe 832 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p> <p>Pied avocet, <i>i</i>, Europe/Northwest Africa 167 individuals, representing an average of 4.9% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)</p> <p>Spotted redshank, <i>Tringa erythropus</i>, Europe/W Africa 3 individuals, representing an average of 2.2% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)</p> <p>Common redshank, <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>, 2124 individuals, representing an average of 1.8% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)</p> <p>Species Information</p> <p>Nationally important species occurring on the site:</p> <p>Invertebrates: Vertigo <i>angustior</i> (Nationally Scarce) & Vertigo <i>pusilla</i> (Nationally Scarce)</p>	

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
Benfleet and Southend Marshes			
Benfleet and Southend Marshes is an estuarine area on the Essex side of the Thames Estuary. The site is comprised of an extensive series of saltmarshes, mudflats, and grassland which support a diverse flora and fauna, including internationally important numbers of wintering waterfowl.			
Benfleet and Southend Marshes, SPA UK9009171	2283.94	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A046a <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>; Dark-bellied Brent goose (Non-breeding) • A137 <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>; Ringed plover (Non-breeding) • A141 <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>; Grey plover (Non-breeding) • A143 <i>Calidris canutus</i>; Red knot (Non-breeding) • A149 <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>; Dunlin (Non-breeding) • Waterbird assemblage <p>Further information can be found via Natural England's Supplementary Advice.</p>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely • The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.
Benfleet and Southend Marshes Ramsar site UK11006	2251.31	<p><u>Ramsar criterion 5</u> Assemblages of international importance; species with peak counts in winter; 32867 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003).</p> <p><u>Ramsar criterion 6</u> Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance: Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>; Dark-bellied brent goose <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>; Ringed plover • <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>; Grey plover <p>Species/populations identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration under criterion 6.</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>; Dunlin 	None available

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
<p>Blackwater Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 4)</p> <p>The Blackwater Estuary is the largest estuary in Essex north of the Thames and, is one of the largest estuarine complexes in East Anglia. Its mudflats, fringed by saltmarsh on the upper shores, support internationally and nationally important numbers of overwintering waterfowl. Shingle and shell banks and offshore islands are also a feature of the tidal flats. The surrounding terrestrial habitats; the sea wall, ancient grazing marsh and its associated fleet and ditch systems, plus semi-improved grassland are also of high conservation interest. This rich mosaic of habitats supports an outstanding assemblage of nationally scarce plants and a nationally important assemblage of rare invertebrates. There are 16 British Red Data Book species and 94 notable and local species.</p>	4395.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A046a <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>; Dark-bellied brent goose (Non-breeding) • A059 <i>Aythya ferina</i>; Common pochard (Breeding) • A082 <i>Circus cyaneus</i>; Hen harrier (Non-breeding) • A137 <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>; Ringed plover (Breeding) • A141 <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>; Grey plover (Non-breeding) • A149 <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>; Dunlin (Non-breeding) • A156 <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>; Black-tailed godwit (Non-breeding) • A195 <i>Sterna albifrons</i>; Little tern (Breeding) • Waterbird assemblage <p>Further information can be found via Natural England's Supplementary Advice.</p>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely; • The population of each of the qualifying features, and • The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.
<p>Blackwater Estuary Ramsar site (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 4)</p> <p>UK11007</p>	4395.15	<p>Ramsar criterion 1</p> <p>Qualifies by virtue of the extent and diversity of saltmarsh habitat present. This site, and the four others in the Mid-Essex Coast complex, includes a total of 3,237 ha that represent 70% of the saltmarsh habitat in Essex and 7% of the total area of saltmarsh in Britain.</p>	<p>None available.</p>

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
		<p><u>Ramsar criterion 2</u> The invertebrate fauna is well represented and includes at least 16 British Red Data Book species. In descending order of rarity these are: Endangered: a water beetle <i>Paracymus aeneus</i>; Vulnerable: a damselfly <i>Lestes dryas</i>, the flies <i>Aedes flavescens</i>, <i>Erioptera bivittata</i>, <i>Hybomitra expollicata</i> and the spiders <i>Heliophanus auratus</i> and <i>Trichopterna cito</i>; Rare: the beetles <i>Baris scolopacea</i>, <i>Philonthus punctus</i>, <i>Graptodytes bilineatus</i> and <i>Malachius vulneratus</i>, the flies <i>Campsicemus magius</i> and <i>Myopites eximia</i>, the moths <i>Idaea ochrata</i> and <i>Malacosoma castrensis</i> and the spider <i>Euophrys</i>.</p> <p><u>Ramsar criterion 3</u> This site supports a full and representative sequences of saltmarsh plant communities covering the range of variation in Britain.</p> <p><u>Ramsar criterion 5</u> Assemblages of international importance; species with peak counts in winter; 105061 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)</p> <p><u>Ramsar criterion 6</u> Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance:</p>	

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
		<p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>; Grey plover • <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>; Dunlin • <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>; Black-tailed godwit <p>Species/populations identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration under criterion 6.</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>; Common shelduck • <i>Pluvialis apricaria apricaria</i>; European golden plover • <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>; Common redshank 	
<p>Crouch & Roach Estuaries (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 3)</p> <p>The Rivers Crouch and Roach are situated in South Essex. The River Crouch occupies a shallow valley between two ridges of London Clay, whilst the River Roach is set predominantly between areas of brick earth and loams with patches of sand and gravel. The intertidal zone along the Rivers Crouch and Roach is 'squeezed' between the sea walls of both banks and the river channel. This leaves a relatively narrow strip of tidal mud unlike other estuaries in the county, which, nonetheless, is used by significant numbers of birds. One species is present in internationally important numbers, and three other species of wader and wildfowl occur in nationally important numbers. Additional interest is provided by the aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates and by an outstanding assemblage of nationally scarce plants</p>			
<p>Crouch & Roach Estuaries, SPA (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 3)</p> <p>UK9009244</p>	<p>1735.58</p>	<p>Qualifying Features potentially affected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A046a Branta bernicla bernicla; Dark-bellied brent goose (Non-breeding); • Waterbird assemblage. 	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely; • The population of each of the qualifying features, and • The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
<p>Crouch & Roach Estuaries Ramsar site (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 3) UK11058</p>	<p>1735.58</p>	<p><u>Ramsar criterion 2</u> Supports an appreciable assemblage of rare, vulnerable or endangered species or subspecies of plant and animal including 13 nationally scarce plant species: slender hare's ear <i>Bupleurum tenuissimum</i>, divided sedge <i>Carex divisa</i>, sea barley <i>Hordeum marinum</i>, golden-samphire <i>Inula crithmoides</i>, lax flowered sea-lavender <i>Limonium humile</i>, curved hard-grass <i>Parapholis incurva</i>, Borrer's saltmarsh grass <i>Puccinellia fasciculata</i>, stiff saltmarsh grass <i>Puccinellia rupestris</i>, spiral tasselweed <i>Ruppia cirrhosa</i>, one-flowered glasswort <i>Salicornia pusilla</i>, small cord-grass <i>Spartina maritima</i>, shrubby seablite <i>Suaeda vera</i> and sea clover <i>Trifolium squamosum</i>. Several important invertebrate species are also present on the site, including scarce emerald damselfly <i>Lestes dryas</i>, the shorefly <i>Parydroptera discoomyzina</i>, the rare soldier fly <i>Stratiomys singularior</i>, the large horsefly <i>Hybomitra expollicata</i>, the beetles <i>Graptodytes bilineatus</i> and <i>Malachius vulneratus</i>, the ground lackey moth <i>Malacosoma castrensis</i> and <i>Eucosoma catoprana</i>.</p> <p><u>Ramsar criterion 5</u> Assemblages of international importance; species with peak counts in winter; 16970 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)</p> <p><u>Ramsar criterion 6</u> Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branta bernicla bernicla; Dark-bellied brent goose 	<p>None available</p>

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
<p>Dengie Dengie is a large and remote area of tidal mudflat and saltmarsh at the eastern end of the Dengie peninsula, between the Blackwater and Crouch Estuaries. The saltmarsh is the largest continuous example of its type in Essex. Foreshore, saltmarsh and beaches support an outstanding assemblage of rare coastal flora. It hosts internationally and nationally important wintering populations of wildfowl and waders, and in summer supports a range of breeding coastal birds including rarities. The formation of cockleshell spits and beaches is of geomorphological interest</p>			
Dengie, SPA (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 1) UK9009242	3127.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>; Dark-bellied brent goose (Non-breeding) • <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>; Grey plover (Non-breeding) • <i>Circus cyaneus</i> Hen harrier (Non-breeding) • <i>Calidris canutus</i>; Knot (Non-breeding) • Waterbird assemblage (Non-breeding) <p>Further information can be found via Natural England's Supplementary Advice.</p>	<p>The objectives are to ensure that, subject to natural change, the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features; • the structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features; • the supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely; • the populations of qualifying features; • the distribution of qualifying features within the site.
Dengie Ramsar Site (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 1) UK9009242	3127.23	<p>Ramsar criterion 1 Qualifies by virtue of the extent and diversity of saltmarsh habitat present. Dengie, and the four other sites in the Mid-Essex Coast Ramsar site complex, includes a total of 3,237 ha, that represent 70% of the saltmarsh habitat in Essex and 7% of the total area of saltmarsh in Britain.</p>	<p>None available</p>

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
		<p><u>Ramsar criterion 2</u> Dengie supports a number of rare plant and animal species. The Dengie has 11 species of nationally scarce plants: sea kale <i>Crambe maritima</i>, sea barley <i>Hordeum marinum</i>, golden samphire <i>Inula crithmoides</i>, lax flowered sea lavender <i>Limonium humile</i>, the glassworts <i>Sarcocornia perennis</i> and <i>Salicornia pusilla</i>, small cord-grass <i>Spartina maritima</i>, shrubby sea-bite <i>Suaeda vera</i>, and the eelgrasses <i>Zostera angustifolia</i>, <i>Z. marina</i> and <i>Z. noltei</i>. The invertebrate fauna includes the following Red Data Book species: a weevil <i>Baris scolopacea</i>, a horsefly <i>Atylotus latistriatus</i> and a jumping spider <i>Euophrys browningi</i>.</p> <p><u>Ramsar criterion 3</u> This site supports a full and representative sequences of saltmarsh plant communities covering the range of variation in Britain.</p> <p><u>Ramsar criterion 5</u> Assemblages of international importance; species with peak counts in winter; 43828 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)</p> <p><u>Ramsar criterion 6</u> Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tringa totanus tetanus</i>; Common redshank <p>Species/populations identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration under criterion 6.</p>	

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
		Species with peak counts in winter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>; Dark-bellied brent goose • <i>Haematopus ostralegus ostralegus</i>; Eurasian oystercatcher • <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>; Grey plover • <i>Limosa lapponica lapponica</i>; Bar-tailed godwit • <i>Calidris canutus</i>; Red knot 	
Essex Estuaries			
The Mid-Essex Coast comprises an extensive complex of estuaries and intertidal sand and silt flats, including several islands, shingle and shell beaches and extensive areas of saltmarsh. The proposed SPA follows the boundaries of five SSSIs: the Colne Estuary, the Blackwater Estuary, Dengie, the River Crouch Marshes and Foulness.			
Essex Estuaries, SAC UK0013690	46109.95	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time; Subtidal sandbanks • H1130 Estuaries • H1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; Intertidal mudflats and sandflats. • H1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand; Glasswort and other annuals colonising mud and sand • H1320 Spartina swards (<i>Spartinion maritimae</i>); Cord-grass swards • H1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) • H1420 Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (<i>Sarcocornetea fruticosi</i>) 	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats; • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
<p>Foulness Foulness is part of an open coast estuarine system comprising grazing marsh, saltmarsh, intertidal mudflats and sandflats which support nationally rare and nationally scarce plants, and nationally and internationally important populations of breeding, migratory and wintering waterfowl</p>			
<p>Foulness, SPA (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 5) UK9009246</p>	<p>10968.9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A046a <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>; Dark-bellied brent goose (Non-breeding) • A082 <i>Circus cyaneus</i>; Hen harrier (Non-breeding) • A130 <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>; Eurasian oystercatcher (Non-breeding) • A132 <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>; Pied avocet (Breeding) • A137 <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>; Ringed plover (Breeding) • A141 <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>; Grey plover (Non-breeding) • A143 <i>Calidris canutus</i>; Red knot (Non-breeding) • A157 <i>Limosa lapponica</i>; Bar-tailed godwit (Non-breeding) • A162 <i>Tringa totanus</i>; Common redshank (Non-breeding) • A191 <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>; <i>Sandwich tern</i> (Breeding) • A193 <i>Sterna hirundo</i>; Common tern (Breeding) • A195 <i>Sterna albifrons</i>; Little tern (Breeding) • Waterbird assemblage <p>Further information can be found via Natural England's Supplementary Advice.</p>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely; • The population of each of the qualifying features, and • The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.
<p>Foulness Ramsar site (Mid Essex Coast Phase 5) UK11026</p>	<p>10968.9</p>	<p><u>Ramsar criterion 2</u> The site supports a number of nationally-rare and nationally-scarce plant species, and British Red Data Book invertebrates.</p> <p><u>Ramsar criterion 3</u> The site contains extensive saltmarsh habitat, with areas supporting full and representative sequences of saltmarsh plant communities covering the range of variation in Britain.</p> <p><u>Ramsar criterion 5</u> Assemblages of international importance; species with peak counts in winter; 82148 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)</p>	<p>None available</p>

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
		<p>Ramsar criterion 6</p> <p>Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance:</p> <p>Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>; Dark-bellied brent goose • <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>; Grey plover • <i>Calidris canutus</i>; Red knot <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Limosa lapponica lapponica</i>; Bar-tailed godwit 	
<p>Outer Thames Estuary</p> <p>The Outer Thames Estuary SPA is located on the east coast of England between the counties of Norfolk (on the north side) and Kent (on the south side) and extends into the North Sea. The site comprises areas of shallow and deeper water, high tidal current streams and a range of mobile mud, sand, silt and gravely sediments extending into the marine environment, incorporating areas of sand banks often exposed at low tide. Intertidal mud and sand flats are found further towards the coast and within creeks and inlets inland down the Blyth estuary and the Crouch and Roach estuaries. The diversity of marine habitats and associated species is reflected in existing statutory protected area designations, some of which overlap or about the SPA.</p>			
<p>Outer Thames Estuary, SPA UK9020309</p>	<p>392451.66</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A001 <i>Gavia stellata</i>; Red-throated diver (Non-breeding) • A193 <i>Sterna hirundo</i>; Common tern (Breeding) • A195 <i>Sterna albifrons</i>; Little tern (Breeding) 	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely; • The population of each of the qualifying features, and • The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
Thames Estuary & Marshes			
A complex of brackish, floodplain grazing marsh ditches, saline lagoons and intertidal saltmarsh and mudflat. These habitats together support internationally important numbers of wintering waterfowl. The saltmarsh and grazing marsh are of international importance for their diverse assemblages of wetland plants and invertebrates.			
Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA UK9012021	4838.94	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A082 <i>Circus cyaneus</i>; Hen harrier (Non-breeding) • A132 <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>; Pied avocet (Non-breeding) • A137 <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>; Ringed plover (Non-breeding) • A141 <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>; Grey plover (Non-breeding) • A143 <i>Calidris canutus</i>; Red knot (Non-breeding) • A149 <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>; Dunlin (Non-breeding) • A156 <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>; Black-tailed godwit (Non-breeding) • A162 <i>Tringa totanus</i>; Common redshank (Non-breeding) • Waterbird assemblage <p>Further information can be found via Natural England's Supplementary Advice.</p>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely; • The population of each of the qualifying features, and • The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.
Thames Estuary & Marshes Ramsar site UK11069	5588.5	<p><u>Ramsar criterion 2</u> The site supports one endangered plant species and at least 14 nationally scarce plants of wetland habitats. The site also supports more than 20 British Red Data Book invertebrates</p> <p><u>Ramsar criterion 5</u> Assemblages of international importance; species with peak counts in winter; 45118 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)</p>	None available

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
		<p>Ramsar criterion 6</p> <p>Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):</p> <p>Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>; Ringed plover • <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>; Black-tailed godwit <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>; Grey plover (Non-breeding) • <i>Calidris canutus</i>; Red knot (Non-breeding) • <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>; Dunlin (Non-breeding) • <i>Tringa totanus tetanus</i>; Common redshank 	
<p>Hamford Water</p> <p>Hamford Water is a large, shallow estuarine basin comprising tidal creeks and islands, intertidal mud and sand flats, and saltmarsh supporting rare plants and internationally important species/populations of migratory waterfowl.</p>			
<p>Hamford Water, SAC</p> <p>UK0030377</p>	<p>2187.21</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S4035 Fisher's estuarine moth <i>Gortyna borellii lunata</i> 	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species; • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species; • The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely; • The populations of qualifying species, and • The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
Hamford Water, SPA	2178.21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A046a <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>; Dark-bellied brent goose (Non-breeding) • A048 <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>; Common shelduck (Non-breeding) • A052 <i>Anas crecca</i>; Eurasian teal (Non-breeding) • A132 <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>; Pied avocet (Non-breeding) • A137 <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>; Ringed plover (Non-breeding) • A141 <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>; Grey plover (Non-breeding) • A156 <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>; Black-tailed godwit (Non-breeding) • A162 <i>Tringa totanus</i>; Common redshank (Non-breeding) • A195 <i>Sternula albifrons</i>; Little tern (Breeding) 	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely; • The population of each of the qualifying features, and • The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.
Hamford Water Ramsar site UK11028	2178.21	<p><u>Ramsar criterion 6</u> Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation): Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>; Ringed plover • <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>; Common redshank <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>; Dark-bellied brent goose • <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>; Black-tailed godwit <p>Species/populations identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration under criterion 6.</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>; Grey plover (Non-breeding) 	None available

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
<p>Abberton Reservoir Abberton Reservoir is a large storage reservoir built in a long shallow valley. It is the largest freshwater body in Essex and is one of the most important reservoirs in Britain for wildfowl. It is less than 8 km from the coast and its primary role is as a roost for the local estuarine wildfowl population.</p>			
Abberton Reservoir, SPA UK9009141	718.31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A005 <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>; Great crested grebe (Non-breeding) • A017 <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>; Great cormorant (Breeding) • A036 <i>Cygnus olor</i>; Mute swan (Non-breeding) • A050 <i>Anas penelope</i>; Eurasian wigeon (Non-breeding) • A051 <i>Anas strepera</i>; Gadwall (Non-breeding) • A052 <i>Anas crecca</i>; Eurasian teal (Non-breeding) • A056 <i>Anas clypeata</i>; Northern shoveler (Non-breeding) • A059 <i>Aythya ferina</i>; Common pochard (Non-breeding) • A061 <i>Aythya fuligula</i>; Tufted duck (Non-breeding) • A067 <i>Bucephala clangula</i>; Common goldeneye (Non-breeding) • A125 <i>Fulica atra</i>; Common coot (Non-breeding) • Waterbird assemblage 	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely; • The population of each of the qualifying features, and • The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.
Abberton Reservoir Ramsar UK11001	718.31	<p>Ramsar criterion 5 Assemblages of international importance; species with peak counts in winter; 23787 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)</p> <p>Ramsar criterion 6 Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation): Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Gadwall</i>, <i>Anas strepera strepera</i> • <i>Northern shoveler</i>, <i>Anas clypeata</i> 	None available

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
		<p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eurasian wigeon, <i>Anas Penelope</i> <p>Species/populations identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration under criterion 6.</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mute swan, <i>Cygnus olor</i>, Common pochard, <i>Aythya ferina</i> 	
<p>Colne Estuary Colne Estuary is a comparatively short and branching estuary, with five tidal arms which flow into the main river channel. The estuary has a narrow intertidal zone predominantly composed of flats of fine silt with mudflat communities typical of south-eastern estuaries. The estuary is of international importance for wintering Brent Geese and Black-tailed Godwit and of national importance for breeding Little Terns and five other species of wintering waders and wildfowl. The variety of habitats which include mudflat, saltmarsh, grazing marsh, sand and shingle spits, disused gravel pits and reedbeds, support outstanding assemblages of invertebrates and plants.</p> <p>Colne Estuary, SPA UK9009243</p>	2701.43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A046a <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>; Dark-bellied brent goose (Non-breeding) A059 <i>Aythya ferina</i>; Common pochard (Breeding) A082 <i>Circus cyaneus</i>; Hen harrier (Non-breeding) A137 <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>; Ringed plover (Breeding) A162 <i>Tringa totanus</i>; Common redshank (Non-breeding) A195 <i>Sterna albifrons</i>; Little tern (Breeding) Waterbird assemblage 	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features; The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features; The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely; The population of each of the qualifying features, and The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
Colne Estuary Ramsar Site UK11015	2701.43	<p><u>Ramsar criterion 1</u> The site is important due to the extent and diversity of saltmarsh present. This site, and the four other sites in the Mid-Essex Coast complex, includes a total of 3,237 ha, that represent 70% of the saltmarsh habitat in Essex and 7% of the total saltmarsh in Britain.</p> <p><u>Ramsar criterion 2</u> The site supports 12 species of nationally scarce plants and at least 38 British Red Data Book invertebrate species.</p> <p><u>Ramsar criterion 3</u> This site supports a full and representative sequences of saltmarsh plant communities covering the range of variation in Britain.</p> <p><u>Ramsar criterion 5</u> Assemblages of international importance; species with peak counts in winter; 32041 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)</p> <p><u>Ramsar criterion 6</u> Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation): Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dark-bellied brent goose, Branta bernicla bernicla,</i> • <i>Common redshank, Tringa totanus totanus,</i> <p>Species/populations identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration under criterion 6.</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Black-tailed godwit, Limosa limosa islandica</i> 	None available

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
<p>Epping Forest Epping Forest is a large ancient wood-pasture with habitats of high nature conservation value including ancient semi-natural woodland, old grassland plains, wet and dry heathland and scattered wetland. The semi-natural woodland is particularly extensive but the Forest plains are also a major feature and contain a variety of unimproved acid grasslands.</p> <p>The semi-natural woodlands of Epping Forest include important beech <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> forests on acid soils, which are important for a range of rare epiphytic species, including the moss <i>Zygodon forsteri</i>. The long history of pollarding, and resultant large number of veteran trees, ensures that the site is also rich in fungi and invertebrates associated with decaying timber. Records of stag beetle <i>Lucanus cervus</i> are widespread and frequent.</p> <p>Areas of acidic grassland transitional with heathland are generally dominated by a mixture of fine-leaved grasses. In marshier areas, purple moor-grass <i>Molinia caerulea</i> frequently becomes dominant. Broad-leaved herbs typical of acidic grassland and heathland are frequent, including heather <i>Calluna vulgaris</i>. The site also contains an example of wet dwarf-shrub heath with both heather and cross-leaved heath <i>Erica tetralix</i>.</p>	<p>1630.74</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H4010. Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>; Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath • H4030. European dry heaths • H9120. Atlantic <i>acidophilous</i> beech forests with Ilex and sometimes also <i>Taxus</i> in the shrublayer (<i>Quercion roboretraeeae</i> or <i>Ilici-Fagenion</i>); Beech forests on acid soils • S1083. <i>Lucanus cervus</i>; Stag beetle 	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species; • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species; • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely; • The populations of qualifying species, and • The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
<p>Eversden and Wimpole Woods The site comprises a mixture of ancient coppice woodland (Eversden Wood) and high forest woods likely to be of more recent origin (Wimpole Woods). A colony of barbastelle bats <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i> is associated with the trees in Wimpole Woods. These trees are used as a summer maternity roost where the female bats gather to give birth and rear their young. Most of the roost sites are within tree crevices. The bats also use the site as a foraging area. Some of the woodland is also used as a flight path when bats forage outside the site.</p>			
Eversden and Wimpole Woods, SAC UK0030331	66.22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S1308. <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>; Barbastelle bat 	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species; • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species; • The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely; • The populations of qualifying species, and • The distribution of qualifying species within the site.
<p>Lee Valley The Lee Valley comprises a series of embanked water supply reservoirs, sewage treatment lagoons and former gravel pits along approximately 24 km of the valley. These water bodies support internationally important numbers of wintering gadwall and shoveler and nationally important numbers of several other bird species. The site also contains a range of wetland and valley bottom habitats, both man-made and semi-natural, which support a diverse range of wetland fauna and flora.</p>			
Lee Valley, SPA UK9012111	447.87	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A021 <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>; Great bittern (Non-breeding) • A051 <i>Anas strepera</i>; Gadwall (Non-breeding) • A056 <i>Anas clypeata</i>; Northern shoveler (Non-breeding) 	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;

Site Name	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features	Conservation objectives (only available for SACs & SPAs)
Lee Valley Ramsar Site UK11034	447.87	<p><u>Ramsar Criterion 2</u> The site supports the nationally scarce plant species whorled water - milfoil <i>Myriophyllum verticillatum</i> and the rare or vulnerable invertebrate <i>Micronecta minutissima</i> (a water-boatman).</p> <p><u>Ramsar criterion</u> Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation): Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern shoveler, <i>Anas clypeata</i> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Gadwall</i>, <i>Anas strepera strepera</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely; The population of each of the qualifying features, and The distribution of the qualifying features within the site. <p>None available</p>

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