



Stisted Neighbourhood Plan 2024-2033

Strategic Environmental Assessment
(SEA) & Habitats Regulations
Assessment (HRA) Screening Report
including Appropriate Assessment

November 2024



Essex County Council



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1. Introduction

1.1 The Purpose of this Report

This screening report is an assessment of whether or not the contents of the Stisted Neighbourhood Plan Submission (Regulation 16) Consultation Version (August 2024) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/ EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations. A SEA is required if the Neighbourhood Plan is deemed to have a likely significant effect on the environment.

This report will also screen to determine whether the Neighbourhood Plan requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). An HRA screening report 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 or project.

1.2 The Stisted Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan will set out planning policies for the Stisted Neighbourhood Plan area. Once made, a Neighbourhood Plan carries the same legal weight as Local Development Plans adopted by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), in this case Braintree District Council.

The Neighbourhood Plan includes a Vision, which expresses the community's aspirations for the plan area. This Vision is included within the Plan as follows:

'Our vision of Stisted is one where the quality of life for all residents has been enhanced. Our landscape, environment and heritage has remained protected and has been balanced with sensitive development..'

A number of economic, social and environmental objectives have been devised for the Neighbourhood Plan. These are:

- Design and Character
 - i. Objective 1: Ensure development is of the highest quality and retains the character that represents the best of Stisted.
 - ii. Objective 2: Ensure development reflects the highly sensitive rural environment in which it sits.
- Environment
 - iii. Objective 3: Ensure development is low carbon and enables biodiversity to thrive.
 - iv. Objective 4: Protect spaces of value to the community.
- Countryside Access

- v. Objective 5: Preserve and enhance the heritage of Stisted.
- vi. Objective 6: Preserve and enhance access to the countryside.
- vii. Objective 7: Address the housing needs of Stisted residents.

1.3 The Braintree District Council Local Plan

The Braintree District Local Plan was adopted in 2022, with a plan period that extends to 2033. The content of the Local Plan relevant to Stisted is outlined in the corresponding sub-sections.

1.3.1 Stisted in the Local Plan and Spatial Strategy

The Local Plan identifies Stisted as a “Third Tier” settlement. Third Tier settlements are villages outside of first or second tier settlements which have a development boundary. Third Tier settlements are the smallest villages in the District and lack most of the facilities required to meet day to day needs. They often have very poor public transport links and travel by private vehicle is usually required. The Local Plan states that when considering the tests of sustainable development, these will not normally be met by development within a Third Tier village.

1.3.2 Development Boundaries

The Local Plan includes Policy LPP1 - Development Boundaries, which sets out that within development boundaries, development will be permitted where it satisfies amenity, design, environmental and highway criteria and where it can take place without material adverse detriment to the existing character and historic interest of the settlement. Development outside development boundaries will be confined to uses appropriate to the countryside whilst also protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

The village of Stisted has a defined development boundary drawn around the built up area.

1.3.3 Housing Allocations

There are no housing allocations contained within the settlement boundaries of Stisted.

1.3.4 Other relevant Local Plan policies

The Local Plan’s Policy LPP60 looks to protect existing educational uses from other forms of development. The existing school Stisted Church of England Primary Academy is protected under this policy.

The Local Plan’s Policy LPP53 encourages the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of designated Conservation Areas and their settings. These include the buildings, open

spaces, landscape and historic features and views into, out from and within the constituent parts of designated areas. Policy LPP57 seeks to protect the development of heritage assets and their settings, which includes Listed Buildings and Locally Listed Heritage Assets. Part of the central area of Stisted falls within a Conservation Area that also contains Stisted Hall and Park and there are also a number of listed buildings within the settlement boundaries of Stisted.

2. Legislative Background

2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27th June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment states that,

‘Environmental assessment is an important tool for integrating environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

(10) All plans and programmes which are prepared for a number of sectors and which set a framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment(7), and all plans and programmes which have been determined to require assessment pursuant to Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna(8), are likely to have significant effects on the environment, and should as a rule be made subject to systematic environmental assessment. When they determine the use of small areas at local level or are minor modifications to the above plans or programmes, they should be assessed only where Member States determine that they are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

(11) Other plans and programmes which set the framework for future development consent of projects may not have significant effects on the environment in all cases and should be assessed only where Member States determine that they are likely to have such effects.’

The Stisted Neighbourhood Plan 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 Neighbourhood Plan should be screened for the necessary application of the SEA Directive.

The Report from the Commission to The Council, The European Parliament, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions states, on the application and effectiveness of the Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Directive 2001/42/EC), that ‘the following Plan & Programme (P&P), and modifications to them, are covered when prepared and/or adopted by an authority and required pursuant to legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions:

P&P prepared for certain sectors, and which set the framework for future development consent in respect of projects under the Environmental Impact Assessment-EIA-Directive.

P&P requiring an assessment under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

P&P setting the framework for development consent in respect of projects (not limited to those listed in the EIA Directive; see above) and determined by "screening" as being likely to have significant environmental effects.’

This report represents this screening process in regard to the content and influence of the Stisted Neighbourhood Plan.

2.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations (The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended), a competent authority must carry out an assessment of whether a plan or project will significantly affect the integrity of any European Site (also referred to as Habitats sites in the National Planning Policy Framework), in terms of impacting the site's conservation objectives.

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

This HRA Screening Report has been undertaken in order to accompany the Earls Colne Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

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

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

On 23 June 2016, the United Kingdom (UK) held a referendum and voted to leave the European Union (EU). On 26 June 2018, The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 received Royal Assent and the UK left the EU. The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 made sure that UK laws continue to operate following the UK's exit. Relevant EU Directives have been transposed into UK law and those are unchanged until amended by Parliament. The requirements for HRA under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) remain in place with minor changes being affected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Amendment (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Parliament is however at liberty to introduce future changes to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) since, after 31 December 2020, the UK is no longer bound by the EU Habitats and Wild Birds Directives.

At the present time the position, under section 6(3) EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (as amended), is that the courts in the UK, with the sole exception of the Supreme Court, will continue to be bound by HRA judgements handed down by the CJEU and by domestic courts prior to 31 December 2020 when interpreting the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This is the case as long as the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) remain unmodified by Parliament.

There is currently a legal requirement for HRA screening of Plans prior to being adopted so any additional plans or projects which might reasonably interact with the Stisted Neighbourhood Plan will be considered before post consultation.

3. SEA Screening

3.1 When is SEA Required?

Planning Practice Guidance – Strategic environmental assessment requirements for Neighbourhood Plans (Paragraph: 026 Reference ID: 11-026-20140306) states that,

‘In some limited circumstances, where a Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a strategic environmental assessment. Draft Neighbourhood Plan proposals should be assessed to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. This process is commonly referred to as a “screening” assessment and the requirements are set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

If likely significant environmental effects are identified, an environmental report must be prepared in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of those Regulations.

One of the basic conditions that will be tested by the independent examiner is whether the making of the Neighbourhood Plan is compatible with European Union obligations (including under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive).

To decide whether a draft Neighbourhood Plan might have significant environmental effects, it must be assessed (screened) at an early stage of the plan’s preparation according to the requirements set out in regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. These include a requirement to consult the environmental assessment consultation bodies.

Each consultation body will be able to advise on particular topics relevant to its specific area of expertise and responsibility, and the specific information that it holds.

Where it is determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), a statement of reasons for the determination should be prepared. A copy of the statement must be submitted with the Neighbourhood Plan proposal and made available to the independent examiner.’

Articles 2 and 3 of the SEA Directive set out the circumstances in which a SEA is required. Table 1 sets out the assessment of whether the principle of the Stisted Neighbourhood Plan will require a full SEA.

Table 1: Exploring whether the Principle of the Plan would warrant SEA

Question 1: Is the Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?

Yes - The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to be made through legislative procedure.

Question 2: Is the Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provision? (Typical characteristics of "administrative provisions" are that they are publicly available, prepared in a formal way, probably involving consultation with interested parties. The administrative provision must have sufficient formality such that it counts as a "provision" and it must also use language that plainly requires rather than just encourages a Plan to be prepared.)

Yes - The Neighbourhood Plan would be considered as falling within the category of an 'administrative provision'.

Question 3: Is the Plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive?

Yes to both criteria - The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town and country planning and sets a framework for future development consent.

Question 4: Will the Plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?

The Neighbourhood Plan's likely effect on sites and requirement for an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive is explored in Section 4 of this Report.

Question 5: Does the Plan determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a Plan likely to require assessment under the Habitats Directive?

Yes to one of the criteria - the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan can be considered to determine the use of small areas at local level commensurate with their status in determining local planning applications.

Question 6: Does the Plan set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in the Annexes of the EIA Directive)?

Yes - the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town and country planning and sets a framework for future development consent.

Question 7: Is the Plans sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, or is it a financial or budget Plan, or is it co -financed by structural funds or European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) programmes 2000 to 2006/7?

The Neighbourhood Plan does not serve a purpose related to national defence or civil emergency, a financial or budget Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan is not co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7.

Question 8: Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?

Likely significant effects are explored in more detail in Section 3.3 of this Screening Report. The 'conclusions' section of the Report outlines whether the Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA or not due in regard to its effects on the environment.

The following section looks at the criteria for assessing the effects of the Neighbourhood Plan and the identified effects of the Neighbourhood Plan in line with the criteria. Crucially, it will determine whether there are any likely significant effects on the environment.

3.2 Criteria for Assessing the Effects of the Neighbourhood Plan

Criteria for determining the likely significant effects on the environment, referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC are set out below.

Annex II of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC – Significant Effects

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to

- the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,
- the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy,
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,
- environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,

Annex II of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC – Significant Effects

- the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to

- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,
- the cumulative nature of the effects,
- the transboundary nature of the effects,
- the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),
- the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
 - * special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,
 - * exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,
 - * intensive land-use,
 - * the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

3.3 Likely Significant Effects resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan

The following assessment will consider the likelihood of the Stisted Neighbourhood Plan (at the time of writing) to have significant effects on the environment. The table below will explore the likelihood of effects on the following required themes, as included within Annex I of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC):

- Biodiversity;
- Population;
- Human health;
- Fauna;
- Flora;
- Soil;
- Water;
- Air;
- Climatic factors;
- Material assets;
- Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage;
- Landscape; and
- The interrelationship between the above factors.

Table 2: Assessment of Likely Significant Effects on the Environment

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	The Plan sets out relevant policies which will be used to determine proposals for development within the Neighbourhood Plan area once adopted. A Neighbourhood Plan must demonstrate conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and once brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies only in the Local Plan for that Neighbourhood Plan area. The principle of growth is established for Stisted as a Third Tier settlement and is identified as appropriate within the development boundary. The Neighbourhood Plan in Policy STIS9 additionally sets out the notion of entry level exception sites being acceptable

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	adjacent to the established settlement boundary. It is considered however that this policy is similar in its approach to that of Local Plan Policy LPP 32 - Affordable Housing in Rural Areas in regard to the principle of development outside but adjacent to the development boundary. The adopted Braintree Local Plan identifies housing allocations within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any additional land for development purposes. Irrespective of the Neighbourhood Plan policies' compliance with those of the Local Plan, which will be considered between the Parish Council and the Local Planning Authority in finalising the Neighbourhood Plan and through the independent examination of the Neighbourhood Plan, it is considered that the degree to which the Neighbourhood Plan sets a framework for development is low. This is primarily due to the Neighbourhood Plan not allocating land for development purposes.
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy.	The Neighbourhood Plan, when/if 'made', will have weight in all planning decisions within the plan area. The Neighbourhood Plan provides policies for the Plan area, relevant to a local level only. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land for development purposes. In consideration of the above, the degree to which the Neighbourhood Plan influences other plans or programmes is considered relatively low in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan area. This is primarily related to the Plan's position of not allocating land for development purposes.
The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	Neighbourhood Plans are required to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Neighbourhood Plan policies seek to ensure environmental considerations are taken into account. The Neighbourhood Plan includes policies related (directly / indirectly) to ensuring environmental considerations will be integrated into any forthcoming development within the Plan area. These are: Policy STIS4

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	Policy STIS5 Policy STIS6 Irrespective of the adequacy of the above policies, adopted Local Plan policies apply within the Neighbourhood Plan area, which have been subject to thorough assessment within the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment. This ensures that environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development, will be considered for all development proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
Environmental problems relevant to the plan area	The Neighbourhood Plan reflects a small area and the Plan's policy content seeks to address environmental issues. The policy content of the adopted Local Plan will additionally apply to any proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Local Plan policies have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) within the context of the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan and this Screening Report identify the following potential (direct / indirect) environmental problems or sources of potential problems relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan area: The Stisted Neighbourhood Plan area lies outside the 10km Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Abberton Reservoir SPA and Ramsar site as identified by Natural England. However, the Plan area lies within the recreational Zone of Influence (ZOI) of the Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) which covers 7 additional habitat sites. The coastal habitat sites (Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ramsar site, Colne Estuary SPA and Ramsar and Essex Estuaries SAC) are also vulnerable to recreational pressure. The Belchers and Broadfield Woods which is Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) falls within the Plan boundaries and the majority of the Plan area falls within the Impact Risk Zone. Areas of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland and Ancient Replaced Woodland exist within the Plan area, the most significant of which are associated with Rayne Hatch Wood and Belcher's and Broadfield Woods. There are also areas of the priority habitat of Deciduous Woodland, the most

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	significant of which are associated with Stisted Hall Park. This area also contains the priority habitat of Woodpasture and Parkland. The Parish contains approximately 60 Listed Buildings, including the Grade I listed Parish Church of All Saints and the Grade II* Stisted Hall. There is a designated Conservation Area within the historic core of the village, which contains the majority of the Parishes listed buildings. The River Blackwater, runs west to south-east through the Parish and to the south of the village. There are areas of land within Flood Zones 2 and 3 associated with the river. There are also areas at low to medium risk of Surface Water Flooding. The entirety of the Plan area is within a Source Protection Zone (SPZ) (Zone III - Total Catchment). SPZs are defined around large and public potable groundwater abstraction sites. The purpose of SPZs is to provide additional protection to safeguard drinking water quality through constraining the proximity of an activity that may impact upon a drinking water abstraction. The majority of the Plan area is within a Drinking Water Protected Area (Surface Water), which is currently 'at risk'. The non-developed areas of the Plan area, and those also not in non-agricultural use, are predominantly Grade 2 ('very good') and Grade 3 ('good to moderate') soils. Grade 2 soil represents the best and most versatile soil within the wider District context. The entirety of the Plan area falls within the National Character Area (2014) South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland. Within the Landscape Character Typology for the East of England (2010) the Plan area falls within the Wooded Plateau Farmland and Valley Settled Farmlands. Within the Essex Landscape Character Assessment (2002) the Plan area falls within the Gosfield Wooded Farmland and the Blackwater and Brain Valley. At a district level, the Braintree District Landscape Character Assessment (2006) identifies the Plan area as within the High Garret/Markshall Wooded Farmland, the

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	Blackwater River Valley, the Blackwater River Valley Floor and the Silver End Farmland Plateau. The Stisted Landscape Assessment Study was produced in July 2020 and has identified 13 local landscape character areas across the Plan area.
The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The content of the Neighbourhood Plan is not in conflict with those relevant planning documents within the wider district and county area related to waste management or water protection.
The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects on the following factors:	The following impacts have been identified within this Screening Assessment:
Biodiversity	The Plan includes Policy STIS5 regarding green infrastructure and biodiversity. The policy outlines that new developments will be required to deliver net biodiversity gains and designed to retain trees, shrubs and hedges of arboricultural, habitat and amenity value on site. The policy also stipulates that developments should conserve and enhance connectivity to the wider multifunctional green infrastructure networks. The Stisted Neighbourhood Plan area contains an SSSI and the majority of the Plan area falls within the Impact Risk Zone. Any residential planning applications coming forward within the plan area will require consultation with Natural England should they be of a type that meets specific conditions e.g. for Essex Coast RAMS. Although the Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes that could potentially conflict with any such requirements, Policy STIS9 supports residential development and this requires an amendment to embed mitigation into the Neighbourhood Plan.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	The HRA Appropriate Assessment element of this, due to the content of the Plan, outlines that with mitigation embedded there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Habitats site within scope, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. In consideration of all of the above effects on biodiversity that would require the full application of the SEA Directive (a SEA Environmental Report) can be screened out.
Population	It is considered that there would be no significant effects on population resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan. This is due to the small scale of the plan area.
Health	The Neighbourhood Plan includes Policy STIS6: Local Green Spaces and Policy STIS7: Access into the Countryside, both of which indirectly support the principle of improving health and wellbeing in the plan area. There are therefore no significant effects resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan regarding human health that would warrant a strategic assessment through SEA.
Fauna	There are no direct impacts resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan on fauna that are considered significant at the Plan level. The Plan seeks the protection and enhancement of biodiversity at key sites and does not propose any development that could lead to the direct deterioration of habitats. Possible effects on fauna (outside those associated with Habitats sites) cannot be considered strategically significant to the extent that Strategic Environmental Assessment would be warranted. Such issues are more appropriate to be considered on a case-by-case 'project level' basis at the development management stage and in accordance with relevant development management policies contained within the LPA's adopted Local Plan. Effects on fauna from the content of the Neighbourhood Plan can therefore be screened out.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
Flora	Various areas of Priority habitat exist within the plan area. The Plan actively seeks their protection and enhancement; it should be acknowledged that relevant to such matters, Local Plan policies also apply within the Neighbourhood Plan area. As a result, no effects are expected to result from the Neighbourhood Plan regarding flora.
Soil	The non-developed areas of the Neighbourhood Plan area consist of predominantly Grade 2 and Grade 3 soils. Although no thematic policies are included within the Plan that address soil quality, it should be acknowledged that Local Plan policies apply on the matter and that the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land for development purposes. There are no identified negative implications surrounding soil quality as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan.
Water	Land within Source Protection Zone III makes up the entirety of the Plan area. Source Protection Zones (SPZs) respond to sources such as wells, boreholes and springs used for public drinking water supply. These zones show the risk of contamination from any activities that might cause pollution in the area. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes and as such no uses are considered to give rise to ground water pollutants (e.g. give rise to hazardous substances such as pesticides, oils, petrol and diesel, solvents, arsenic, mercury or chromium VI; or non-hazardous substances such as ammonia or nitrates). The HRA element of this Screening Report confirms that there are no potential pathways for development within the Stisted Neighbourhood Plan area to impact on the Habitats sites within scope of the HRA.
Air	The Plan area contains no areas designated or otherwise identified as having poor air quality. Additionally, the Local Plan does not allocate land for development purposes or include any other

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	commitments that would lead to a deterioration in air quality. There will be significant effects on air quality as a result.
Climatic factors	The Neighbourhood Plan area contains a stretch of the River Blackwater, which runs to the south of the village centre. Areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3 are prevalent along this stretch of river. Some of the area is also subject to surface water flood risk. Policy STIS4: Low Energy and Energy Efficiency Design includes that “development should minimise surface water runoff to prevent off-site flooding through the design of a suitable multifunctional SuDS-based drainage system having regard to the Sustainable Drainage systems Design Guide for Essex, and where possible incorporate mitigation, resilience and maintenance measures for any increases in flood risk may occur due to climate change.” No development allocations are proposed within the Plan, and irrespective of the adequacy of Policy STIS4, adopted Local Plan policies on flood risk and climatic factors will also apply to any off-plan proposals that may come forward within the Plan area. It is therefore considered that SEA would not be required regarding matters of flood risk.
Material assets	The Plan area does not contain land within the County Council's adopted Minerals Local Plan. Nevertheless, the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any land for development proposals or contain any commitments that are considered contrary to preserving the integrity of these deposits. The Plan area does not contain any existing or allocated sites for waste management facilities within the County Council's adopted Waste Local Plan. Regarding other material assets, the content of the Neighbourhood Plan is not considered to have any significant effects due to the extent / size of the Plan area. Such issues are more appropriate to be considered on a case-by-case basis at the development management stage and in accordance with relevant development management policies contained within the LPA's adopted Local

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	Plan.
Cultural heritage	The Plan area contains numerous Listed Buildings and locally listed buildings. The Plan does not allocate land for development purposes that could have any effects on these listings or their settings. The Plan does not include any specific thematic policy regarding designated heritage assets, however, it does include Policy STIS8 which identifies two non-designated heritage assets within Stisted. Policy STIS8 requires that proposals for the re-use of non-designated heritage assets to be supported if they are compatible with the setting of the asset and use appropriate materials and design in any construction work. It also states that where a development proposal would result in the loss of, or harm to a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced judgement will be made as to the acceptability of the proposal having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. Irrespective of the adequacy of the Plan's policy relating to non-designated heritage assets, policy regarding the protection and enhancement of the historic environment also exists at the LPA level which additionally applies in the Plan area. The effects on heritage are, as a result, considered a development management issue in the context of the Plan and its content. There are not considered to be any elements of the Plan that would give rise to significant effects on the historic environment at the strategic level that would require the full application of the SEA Directive.
Landscape	The Parish area wholly lies within National Character Area 86 South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland. The Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes and includes Policy STIS2: Local Landscape Character which seeks positive contributions from development proposals and supporting evidence at the planning application stage. In light of the Plan not allocating land for development purposes and in consideration also of the requirements of development proposals in accordance with the adopted Braintree Local Plan, there are no significant strategic landscape effects identified within this Report that would warrant the requirement for the application

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
	of the SEA Directive and the formulation of a SEA Environmental Report.
The cumulative nature of the effects.	The Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes and therefore any negative cumulative effects can be ruled out.
The trans boundary nature of the effects.	The adopted Braintree Local Plan can be seen to support the protection and improvement of conditions relevant to those sustainability factors listed within the SEA Directive. The Neighbourhood Plan is broadly aligned with the principles of those wider thematic environmental policies. The HRA Screening element of this Report, which explores in-combination effects with other relevant plans and projects, also identifies no in-combination effects regarding Habitats (European) sites.
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).	It is considered that there is no risk to human health or the environment as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan. This is in consideration of the above screening requirements related to sustainability themes. The Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to give rise to any accidents that can be considered to have a significant risk to human health or the environment.
The magnitude spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	The Neighbourhood Plan relates to the local level only. The magnitude and spatial extent of the Plan's content is therefore not considered significant in a wider District context. No effects are highlighted within this SEA screening at either the local or wider geographic area.
The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: special natural characteristics or cultural heritage	As highlighted above in the screening of the Neighbourhood Plan per sustainability theme, the Neighbourhood Plan has not been assessed as having negative effects associated with environmental themes.



Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II SEA Directive)	Likelihood and summary of significant effects
exceeded environmental quality standards intensive land use	
The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	As highlighted above in the screening of the Plan per sustainability theme, the Neighbourhood Plan has not been assessed as having any significant effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.

4. HRA Screening

4.1 Habitats 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 Regulations 2017 (as amended).

This section of this Report aims to:

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

4.2 Court Judgements and their consideration in this Report

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

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

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

4.2.2 CJEU Holohan C- 461/17

This Court judgement now imposes more detailed requirements on the competent authority at Appropriate Assessment stage:

1. [...] an 'Appropriate Assessment' must, on the one hand, catalogue the entirety of habitat types and species for which a site is protected, and, on the other, identify and examine both the implications of the proposed project for the species present on that site, and for which that site has not been listed, and the implications for habitat types and species to be found outside the boundaries of that site, provided that those implications are liable to affect the conservation objectives of the site.
2. [...] the competent authority is permitted to grant to a plan or project consent which leaves the developer free to determine subsequently certain parameters relating to the construction phase, such as the location of the construction compound and haul routes, only if that authority is certain that the development consent granted establishes conditions that are strict enough

to guarantee that those parameters will not adversely affect the integrity of the site.

3. [...] where the competent authority rejects the findings in a scientific expert opinion recommending that additional information be obtained, the 'Appropriate Assessment' must include an explicit and detailed statement of reasons capable of dispelling all reasonable scientific doubt concerning the effects of the work envisaged on the site concerned.

Within this Stage 1 HRA Screening report, the assessment determines the requirement whether or not a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is needed for the Stisted Neighbourhood Plan.

4.3 Habitats (European) sites

Habitats sites is the term used in the (revised) NPPF (2023) to describe any site which would be included within the definition at Regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) for the purpose of those regulations. These now form part of the UK national network of sites for nature protection. The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of UK's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

All Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are designated for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are designated for other species, and for Habitats. Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) are also part of the National Network of sites. This is because all SPAs and SACs are comprised of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and all Ramsar sites in England are SSSIs. Together, SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites make up the Habitats sites in England. The following offers a description and explanation of SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites.

4.3.1 Explanation of SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites

Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

SPAs are areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds. Example: Abberton Reservoir SPA is one of the most important reservoirs in the country for overwintering waterfowl. Legislation: The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

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: 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. Legislation: The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites)

Ramsar sites are designated to protect the biological and physical features of wetlands, especially for waterfowl habitats. For example, Colne Estuary Ramsar 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. Legislation: Ramsar Convention (1971) – Wetlands of International Importance.

Ramsar sites often overlap with SACs and SPAs and UK planning policy requires that they should be accorded the same importance when developments are proposed.

4.3.2 Habitats sites to be considered

There are seven Habitats sites (SPA/SAC/Ramsar) which lie within 20 km of Stisted.

Table 3: Habitats sites within 20km to be considered in this assessment.

SPA
• Abberton Reservoir • Blackwater Estuary (Mid Essex Coast Phase 4) • Colne Estuary (Mid Essex Coast Phase 2)
SAC
• Essex Estuaries
Ramsar
• Abberton Reservoir • Blackwater Estuary (Mid Essex Coast Phase 4) • Colne Estuary (Mid Essex Coast Phase 2)

Consideration was given to potential impact pathways, Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) for the underpinning SSSIs for the Habitats sites listed in Table 3 and confirmed on MAGIC website www.magic.gov.uk.

The Stisted Neighbourhood Plan area lies outside the 10km Impact Risk Zone for Abberton Reservoir SPA and Ramsar site as identified by Natural England. However, the Plan area lies within the recreational Zones of Influence (ZOI) of the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) which covers Hamford Water SPA, SAC & Ramsar, Stour & Orwell SPA and Ramsar, Colne Estuary SPA and Ramsar, Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ramsar, Dengie SPA and Ramsar and Essex Estuaries SAC. Therefore, the additional 7 Habitats sites are within scope of this Plan level HRA screening when considered in combination with other plans and projects.

The coastal Habitats sites (Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ramsar site, Colne Estuary SPA and Ramsar and Essex Estuaries SAC) are vulnerable to recreational pressure. In simple terms, this means that harm to the integrity of such sites could arise because people are using such sites for daily recreational purposes (such as dog walking). Consequently, residential development is predicted to increase the quantity of recreational use of the Habitats sites within the scope of the Essex Coast RAMS, that development is predicted to result in harm without mitigation measures in place. Only residential development has the potential to increase recreational pressure. The potential increase in pressure will depend on the location of the development and quantity of new homes (and hence people) it will deliver.

After consideration of potential impact pathways, on a precautionary principle, it is concluded that should be assessed for any likely significant effects resulting from the Stisted Neighbourhood Plan. The following Habitats sites are therefore included within scope for this HRA screening report:

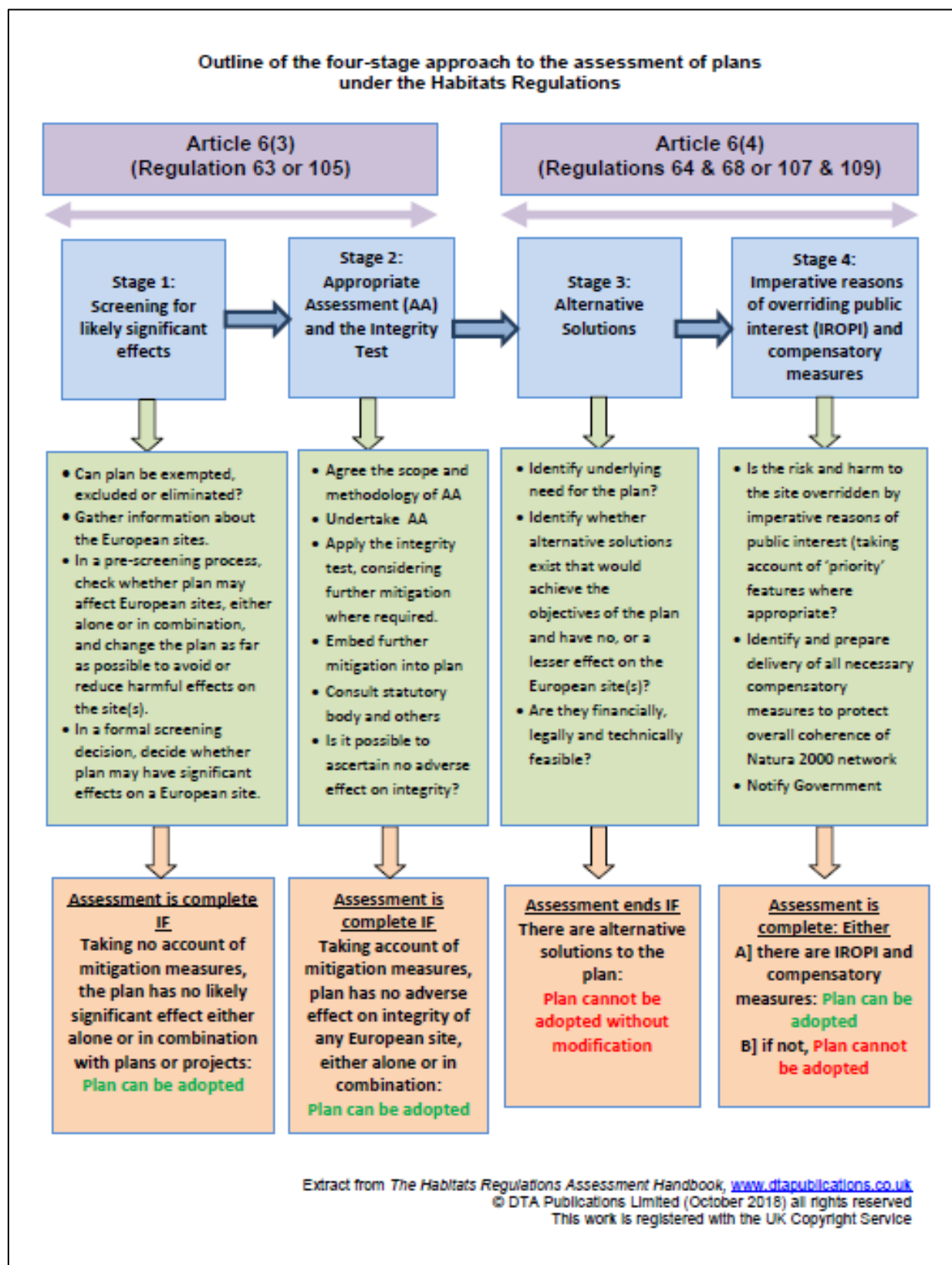
Colne Estuary SPA and Ramsar, Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ramsar, Dengie SPA and Ramsar, Hamford Water SPA, SAC & Ramsar and Stour & Orwell Estuaries SPA and Ramsar and Essex Estuaries SAC.

Any mitigation considered necessary would need to be secured at application stage in line with policies in the adopted Braintree Local Plan as well any project level HRA Appropriate Assessment as the competent authority for planning decisions.

4.4 Method and Approach

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 state that submitted Plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the 'basic conditions' set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the Plan is compatible with UK obligations, which includes the need to undertake a HRA screening report; this is necessary to ensure the making of the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a Habitats (European) site or a Habitats (European) offshore marine site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This document relates only to Stage 1 of the HRA process as set out in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Outline of the Four Stage Approach to the Assessment of Plans under the Habitats Regulations (taken from the DTA handbook).



4.4.1 Stage 1: HRA Screening

The screening stage identifies if any significant effects are likely because any policies or projects will have an impact on a Habitats site. Table 4 identifies the different categories assigned to each policy in the plan: Category A identifies those policies or projects that are considered to have No Negative Effect. Category B identifies those policies or projects that will have No Likely Significant Effect. Category C identifies those policies or projects that might have Likely Significant Effect upon a Habitats site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Section 4.5 considers each policy or projects and the results of the screening exercise recorded.

Each of the policies in the Stisted Neighbourhood Plan has been screened to identify whether they would have any effect on a Habitats site and allocated to a category as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: HRA Screening categorisation

Category A: No negative effect

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

Category B: No Likely Significant Effect

Policies or projects that could have an effect but would not be likely to have a *significant* negative 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 alone or in combination with other plans and projects and require revision or further assessment (Appropriate Assessment).

4.4.2 Potential impacts of Stisted Neighbourhood Plan on Habitats sites

There are a wide range of potential impacts on Habitats sites that could arise from development plans. These can be summarised as -

- Land take by development;
- 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 waste 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 will be assessed against the criteria in the table below.

Table 5: Assessment of potential impacts on Habitats sites

Nature of potential impact	How the Stisted Neighbourhood Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) could affect a Habitats site	Why these effects are not considered significant
Land take by development	The Stisted Neighbourhood Plan area is outside the boundaries of the Habitats sites within scope of this HRA.	No likely significant effects are expected, as no development will be allocated on designated land. It is therefore, considered that impacts from land take by development can be screened out when considered from the Plan alone. As there will be no land take by development, this impact pathway is screened out .
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	The Stisted Neighbourhood Plan area does not contain any land providing functional use by designated features of the Habitats site.	There is no risk of impacts on protected species outside of the Habitats site. It is therefore considered that this impact pathway will not result in likely significant effects upon any Habitats site from the Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore, impacts on protected species outside the Habitats site from the Neighbourhood Plan alone on the Habitats sites from this impact pathway is screened out .
Recreational pressure and disturbance	The Stisted Neighbourhood Plan area lies within the 22km Zone of Influence for the Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ramsar as evidenced within the adopted Essex Coast RAMS.	There is no policy which requires all residential development proposals must meet the requirements of Braintree Local Plan Policy LPP64 (Protected Sites) and SP2 (Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)). Any proposals that have

Nature of potential impact	How the Stisted Neighbourhood Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) could affect a Habitats site	Why these effects are not considered significant
		adverse effects on the integrity of existing habitats either alone or in-combination) will not be supported. Residential developments must contribute to the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy 2018-2038 (RAMS) where they fall within the Zones of Influence of international designations as defined in the RAMS, in accordance with SP2. It is therefore considered that this impact pathway should be screened in for further assessment as, without mitigation, Likely Significant Effects from the Neighbourhood Plan resulting from recreational impacts on Habitats sites cannot be ruled out.
Water quantity and quality	There is no potential pathway for development within the Stisted Neighbourhood Plan area to impact on the Habitats sites within scope of this HRA.	As the Stisted Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land for development and at nearly 20km distance, no likely significant effects are expected given the distance and no impact pathway, so changes in water quantity or quality have been screened out .
Changes in pollution levels	It is considered that there is no pathway for development to result in pollution impacts.	As the Stisted Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate land for development and at nearly 20km distance, no likely significant effects are expected given the distance, so changes in air pollution have been screened out .

4.5 Results from HRA Screening of Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Each of the policies in the Stisted Neighbourhood Plan was screened in turn to identify whether they would have any impact on a Habitats site and the result of this exercise is recorded in Table 5.

Table 6: Assessment of potential impacts from the Plan policies

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
POLICY STIS1: CHARACTER AND DESIGN	A. Development should demonstrate high quality design and layout which respects the local character of Stisted. Development within the specific Character Areas identified in the Stisted Design Guide must demonstrate how it has been informed by this guidance. This includes the development of public buildings. B. In delivering high quality design, development proposals must demonstrate the appropriate use of design, layout, materials and features. The following principles should be considered as part of design proposals: a. Development should integrate with and enhance the form of its existing surroundings. b. A range of densities, house types (where appropriate) and plot layouts should be used. c. Building heights and rooflines should reflect the prevailing height of surrounding buildings unless it can be demonstrated that a taller building	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	could complement or enhance the local character. d. Building materials and details should be used in a sensitive way that respects the local context and should ensure they do not dominate nearby heritage or landscape assets. In all cases, development proposals are expected to be informed by the relevant guidance contained in the Stisted Design Guide. C. All major residential development proposals should include a proportionate statement and illustrations demonstrating how the principles and guidance in the Stisted Design Guide have been addressed.		
POLICY STIS2: LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER	A. Proposals for development should demonstrate how they have been informed by the special qualities and features in the Stisted Landscape Assessment Study 2020 or successor. In areas of high landscape sensitivity as identified in the Stisted Landscape Assessment Study, a landscape and visual impact appraisal will be required for all non-householder applications. This must demonstrate due regard to the particular sensitivities identified in the Landscape Character Assessment and seek ways to effectively mitigate against potential harm. B. In particular, development proposals should demonstrate their location, scale, form, design and	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	materials will protect and where practicable, enhance the following: a. The special qualities and features of the area. b. The visual relationship and environment around Stisted village and its landscape settings. c. Distinctive landscape elements including but not limited to watercourses, commons, woodland trees, hedgerows and field boundaries, and their function as ecological corridors. d. Visually sensitive skylines (significant local views are specifically identified in Policy STIS3). e. The network of green infrastructure supporting health, wellbeing, and social interaction. C. Proposals for development should secure the retention, preservation and appropriate restoration or enhancement of natural, historic, or manmade features across the Neighbourhood Area as identified in the Stisted Landscape Assessment Study and successor landscape evidence. D. Proposals for development should ensure that development is sensitively and effectively integrated into the landscape in order to secure the enhancement of habitat and green corridors, connectivity to the		

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	surrounding green and blue infrastructure and Public Rights of Way network.		
POLICY STIS3: KEY LOCAL VIEWS	A. The scale, form and design of development proposals should protect and, where practicable, enhance key local views as identified on the Policies Map. This process should be informed by the Stisted Landscape Assessment Study 2020. B. Development proposals which would have an unacceptable impact on an identified key local view will not be supported	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
POLICY STIS4: LOW ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENT DESIGN	A. Proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, must demonstrate how the design of buildings and site layouts minimise consumption of energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources in order to provide resilience to the effects of climate change. B. All developments will demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. The following measures shall be incorporated into development: a) Wherever possible, new buildings shall be orientated to maximise the opportunities for both natural heating	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	and ventilation and reducing exposure to wind and other elements; b) Proposals involving both new and existing buildings shall demonstrate how they have been designed to maximise resistance and resilience to climate change for example by including measures such as solar shading, thermal mass, heating and ventilation of the building and appropriately coloured Stisted Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation Version 23 materials in areas exposed to direct sunlight, green and brown roofs, green walls, etc; c) Use of trees and other planting, where appropriate as part of a landscape scheme, to provide shading of amenity areas, buildings and streets and to help to connect habitat, designed with native plants that are carefully selected, managed and adaptable to meet the predicted changed climatic conditions; and d) All development shall minimise surface water runoff to prevent off-site flooding through the design of a suitable SuDS-based drainage system, and where possible incorporate mitigation and resilience measures for any increases in flood risk that may occur due to climate change.		
POLICY STIS5: WILDLIFE-	A. All development proposals are expected to deliver net biodiversity	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
FRIENDLY DEVELOPMENT	gains in addition to protecting existing habitats and species. Proposals to create or enhance existing green wildlife corridors are strongly encouraged. B. In particular, the incorporation of design features into new development that encourages local wildlife to thrive, is strongly encouraged. C. As part of its requirements to demonstrate net biodiversity gain, development should be designed to retain trees, shrubs, and hedgerows of arboricultural, habitat and amenity value on-site and to conserve and enhance connectivity to the wider green infrastructure networks. Where this is accompanied by new planting, this should consist of native species of trees, shrubs and grasses acting as stepping stones for wildlife.		
POLICY STIS6: LOCAL GREEN SPACES	A. The following areas shown on the Policies Map are designated as Local Green Spaces: i. Stisted Village Green ii. Chicken Meadow iii. The Croft Community Playing Fields iv. Stisted allotments and community orchard v. Rolfe's Land B. Proposals for built development on	No, Category A No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	these Local Green Spaces will not be permitted unless the proposal is for an ancillary feature, and it can be clearly demonstrated that it is required to support or enhance the role and function of the identified Local Green Space.		
POLICY STIS7: ACCESS INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE	A. Access to the countryside will be promoted through protection and maintenance of the existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) network (see Figure 6.1), its enhancement where possible (including the links identified in Figure 6.2), provision of bridleways and the safety of users of rural roads and lanes. B. Any developments which leads to the loss or degradation of any PROW will not be permitted in other than very special circumstances. Proposals to divert PROWs or cycleways should provide clear and demonstrable benefits for the wider community. Where possible, development should enhance PROWs by improving existing routes and improving connectivity through the creation of new routes. C. Proposals to create a pedestrian route between Stisted and Braintree and to secure this as a PROW will be strongly encouraged.	No, Category A	No specific recommendations
POLICY STIS8: NON- DESIGNATED	A. The following are identified as non-designated heritage assets: a. China	No, Category A	No specific recommendations

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
HERITAGE ASSETS	Bridge b. The Old School House B. Proposals for the re-use of Non-Designated Heritage Assets will be supported if they are compatible with the setting of the asset and use appropriate materials and designs in any construction work. New uses of a non-designated heritage assets must not cause harm to its physical structure or setting. C. In considering proposals which involve the loss or alteration of a non-designated heritage asset, consideration will be given to: Stisted Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation Version 40 i. Whether the asset is structurally unsound and beyond feasible and viable repair (for reasons other than deliberate damage or neglect); or ii. The extent to which measures to sustain the existing use, or find an alternative use/user, have been investigated. Where a development proposal would result in the loss of, or harm to a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced judgement will be made as to the acceptability of the proposal having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.		

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
POLICY STIS9: AFFORDABLE HOUSING ON RURAL EXCEPTION SITES	A. Proposals for the development of small-scale affordable housing schemes on rural exception sites outside the settlement boundary, where housing would not normally be permitted by other policies, will be supported where there is a proven local need and provided that the housing: a. remains affordable in perpetuity; b. is for people that are in housing need because they are unable to buy or rent properties in Stisted village at open-market prices; c. is offered, in the first instance, to people with a demonstrated local connection, as defined by the Braintree Choice Based Lettings Scheme. Where there is no local connection, a property should then be offered to those with a demonstrated need for affordable housing in neighbouring villages. B. These restrictions should be delivered through a legal agreement attached to the planning consent for the housing. Applications for such development will be considered in relation to the appearance and character of the surrounding area, the potential impact on residential amenity and highway safety. C. To be acceptable, proposals should demonstrate that a local need exists which cannot be met by	Yes, Category C	The birds associated with the Essex coast Habitats sites, in particular the Blackwater Estuary, are sensitive to disturbance from recreation, in particular off-lead dog walking, and the unique attraction of the Estuary presents a strong draw for undertaking such activities. Mitigation of such effects usually requires more than one type of approach; this is typically a combination of 'on-site' informal open space provision and promotion (i.e. in and around the development site) and 'off-site' visitor access management measures (i.e. at the Habitats site). However, measures primarily to mitigate the effects on a Habitats site cannot be considered at HRA screening stage. Further assessment is therefore triggered

Policy Number	Policy Wording	Will Policy have Likely Significant Effects on the Habitats Sites?	Recommendations
	applying normal planning policy for the provision of affordable homes in association with market housing. Any application for affordable housing in respect of this policy should be accompanied by a detailed needs assessment and the accommodation proposed should contribute to meeting this proven need. D. In exceptional circumstances, a small number of market homes will be permitted where demonstrated that these are financially essential to facilitate the delivery of affordable units.		for predicted recreational disturbance impacts from the Plan in combination with other plans and projects. Recommend amended policy text is added for compliance with Braintree Local Plan Policy LPP64 (Protected Sites) to be re-screened at stage 2 HRA Appropriate Assessment. Include a new bullet point: E. Any proposals that have adverse effects on the integrity of existing Habitats sites (either alone or in-combination) will not be supported.

4.5.1 Recommendations and HRA Screening Conclusion

This a single policy in the Neighbourhood Plan which is predicted to result in a Likely Significant Effect when considered in combination with other plans and projects. This is STIS9 Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites.

As Policy STIS9 supports development, without any policy text to avoid impacts and refer to the need for mitigation in-combination with other plans and projects, there is a need for avoidance measures to be secured from recreational disturbance.

This policy therefore needs to be assessed at Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.

Five Habitats sites were scoped in for HRA screening, i.e. Blackwater Estuary (Mid Essex Coast Phase 4) SPA and Ramsar site, Colne Estuary (Mid Essex Coast Phase 2) SPA and Ramsar site and Essex Estuaries SAC.

There is a single potential impact pathway for recreational disturbance which is predicted to result in Likely Significant Effect from the Plan in combination with other plans and projects. As this pathway triggers further assessment, consideration of predicted effects in combination with other plans or projects will be included within Chapter 5.

This HRA screening recommends that Policy STIS9 of this Neighbourhood Plan should be assessed further as it has been assigned to Category C due to predicted recreational impacts from the Plan in combination with other plans and projects.

Further Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is therefore required under the UK Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The Regulation 16 Submission Stisted Neighbourhood Plan may only be made after having ascertained that it will not result in adverse effect on integrity of the Habitats sites within scope of this assessment. This 2nd stage is an iterative process as measures can be incorporated in order to be able to ascertain that there is no adverse effect on the integrity, before re-screening and making a final assessment.

5. Appropriate Assessment and Considering the Integrity Test

5.1 Introduction to Appropriate Assessment

The Regulation 16 Submission Stisted Neighbourhood Plan is, without mitigation, predicted to result in Likely Significant Effect from the Plan in combination with other plans and projects. This is for a single impact pathway: recreational disturbance.

The second stage of HRA is to undertake an 'Appropriate Assessment' of the implications of the Plan (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) and establish whether there may be an Adverse Effect on Integrity (AEOI) of any Habitats sites in view of their Conservation Objectives. The process undertaken for the Appropriate Assessment is set out in this Chapter.

The Appropriate Assessment should be undertaken by the competent authority and should assess all aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan which can by themselves, or in combination with other plans and projects, affect the sites' Conservation Objectives. The assessment must consider the implications for each qualifying feature of each potentially affected Habitats site. Key vulnerabilities and the Site Improvement Plans (SIPs) were used to obtain this information.

Site Improvement Plans have been developed for each Habitats site in England as part of the 'Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 sites (IPENS)'. The Site Improvement Plans provide a high level overview of the issues (both current and predicted) affecting the condition of the designation features of the site(s) and outlines the priority measures required to improve the condition of the features. These can be found at:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/5458594975711232>.

In order to identify potential in combination effects, other plans and projects which may affect the Habitats sites need to be identified.

This should involve an 'Appropriate Assessment' of the implications of the Regulation 16 Submission Stisted Neighbourhood Plan, in relation to predicted recreational disturbance in combination with other plans or projects, in order to establish whether there may be an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of any Habitats sites in view of their Conservation Objectives.

This stage is to undertake objective scientific assessment of the implications of the Neighbourhood Plan on the Qualifying Features of the listed Habitats sites using the best scientific knowledge in the field. It should apply the best available techniques and methods to assess the extent of the effects of the Neighbourhood Plan on the integrity of the Habitats sites. The description of the site's integrity and the impact assessment should be based on the best possible indicators specific to the qualifying features of Habitat sites within scope of this assessment, which can also be useful in monitoring the impact of the Neighbourhood Plan's implementation.

The Appropriate Assessment should assess all aspects of the Plan which can by themselves, or in combination with other plans and projects, affect the Conservation Objectives of one or more Habitats site. The assessment must consider the implications for each qualifying feature of each potentially

affected Habitats site. The focus of the appropriate assessment is therefore on the species and / or the habitats for which the Habitats site is designated.

The best scientific knowledge should be used when carrying out the Appropriate Assessment in order to enable the competent authority to conclude with certainty that there will be no Adverse Effect on the Integrity of any Habitats site.

It is important that the Appropriate Assessment provides a better understanding of potential effects and can therefore assist in the identification of mitigation measures where possible to avoid, reduce or cancel significant effects on Habitats sites which could be applied when undertaking the 'integrity test'. All mitigation measures built into the Plan can be taken into account. The Appropriate Assessment is an iterative process, re-assessing changes and new or different mitigation measures before making its final conclusion. It must be clear which mitigation measures are being relied upon in order to meet the integrity test.

The integrity test must apply the precautionary principle. However, plan assessments are less precise than project assessments, and so it is important for the assessment process to eliminate the prospect of adverse effects integrity insofar as it is possible, given the level of specificity of this Neighbourhood Plan.

Natural England should be formally consulted on this document.

5.2 Approach and Methodology of the Appropriate Assessment

The potential Likely Significant Effects considered at Screening Stage are now carried forward for consideration at Appropriate Assessment. The policies and their potential to have adverse effects on any Habitats site through a variety of impact pathways are now considered in more detail, for example habitat loss or deterioration, disturbance, direct and indirect effects; extent of the effects (habitat area, species numbers or areas of occurrence); importance and magnitude (e.g. considering the affected area or population in relation to the total area and population size).

Key sources of the Habitats sites information were found at:

- JNCC: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/>
- Site Designation features and Conservation Objectives- Designated Sites View: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/>
- Site Improvement Plans, e.g.: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6270737467834368>
- MAGIC (the Multi Agency Geographic Information website): www.magic.gov.uk
- "Managing Natura 2000 sites- The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC"http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/Provisions_Art_.nov_2018_endocx.pdf

Additional information is also provided for each site on the Natural England Designated Sites website and this information has been interrogated.

5.2.1 Use of Mitigation Measures

All mitigation measures built into the Submission Regulation 16 Stisted Neighbourhood Plan can now be taken into account at Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.

At this stage, other policies of the Plan can be considered in order to mitigate some of the predicted Likely Significant Effects which have been identified. This stage is an iterative process as avoidance and reduction measures can be incorporated in order to be able to avoid the potential impacts identified in the Appropriate Assessment or reduce them to a level where they will no longer adversely affect the site's integrity.

Where residual effects are identified, monitoring will be required as part of the Submission Regulation 16 Stisted Neighbourhood Plan.

5.2.2 Applying the Integrity Test

Following the Appropriate Assessment and the consideration of all mitigation measures, the competent authority needs to make a judgement on whether any of the policies will have an Adverse Effect on Integrity on any Habitats site either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. This test incorporates the precautionary principle.

5.2.3 Embedding Mitigation

Braintree District Council, as the competent authority, should consider the manner in which the Submission Regulation 16 Stisted Neighbourhood Plan is to be implemented and any mitigation measures which could be relied upon when deciding whether it would have an Adverse Effect on Integrity, including when and how they can be embedded into the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.2.4 Re-applying the Integrity Test

After considering mitigation, the integrity test should be re-applied to check if the proposed mitigation is now sufficient to avoid adverse effects on integrity of the Habitats sites within scope for the impact pathways identified. Where there may still be adverse effects on the ecological integrity of Habitats sites, in view of the Sites' conservation objectives, additional mitigation measures should be considered.

5.3 Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment for Regulation 16 Submission Stisted Neighbourhood Plan

5.3.1 Consideration of the Plan Alone

There is no impact pathway to consider from the Stisted Neighbourhood Plan alone.

5.3.2 Consideration of the Plan in combination with other Plans & Projects

There is a single impact pathway to consider from the Plan *in combination* with other plans and projects: recreational disturbance.

Although the Plan does not allocate sites for development, it does support development in Policy STIS9: Affordable Housing on Exception Sites.

Considering the potential impacts from the Submission Regulation 16 Stisted Neighbourhood Plan in combination with other plans and project, this impact pathway is considered below with mitigation recommended.

Recreational disturbance from residential development:

At HRA screening stage, the following Habitats sites were listed as having the potential for Likely Significant Effects as a result of recreational disturbance from residential development, when the Plan is considered in combination with other plans and projects:

- Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ramsar site
- Colne Estuary SPA and Ramsar site
- Essex Estuaries SAC

At screening stage, the following Policy was screened in as having the potential for creating Likely Significant Effects as a result of recreational disturbance:

- Policy STIS9: Affordable Housing on Exception Sites

Although the Plan does not allocate land, this HRA considers it necessary, given that the Plan area lies within the Impact Risk Zone of the Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ramsar site, Colne Estuary SPA and Ramsar site and Essex Estuaries SAC, that the policy text should include reference to Braintree Local Plan Policy LPP 64 (Protected Sites). It should also specify the need for any new residential development to avoid adverse effects from the development alone and consider whether mitigation measures can avoid adverse effects on integrity.

The competent authority, in this case Braintree DC, therefore needs to apply the Integrity test to the Plan in combination with other plans and projects and it can now consider mitigation measures for recreational disturbance to assess if the Submission Regulation 16 Stisted Neighbourhood Plan can avoid AEOI on the Habitats sites screened in at Stage 1 HRA. These are Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ramsar site, Colne Estuary SPA and Ramsar site, and Essex Estuaries SAC.

Wetland birds are vulnerable to disturbance, albeit some birds can become habituated to some kinds of disturbance, usually where the source of disturbance occurs in a predictable way. However, it will vary according to the species concerned.

Mitigation measures

The plan area lies within the 22km Zone of Influence for recreational disturbance impacts on Habitats sites in combination with other plans and projects. Policy STIS9 needs to embed the requirements of the Braintree Local Plan Policy LPP 64 (Protected Sites) into the Regulation 16 Submission Neighbourhood Plan to avoid any adverse effect on integrity of Essex coastal Habitats sites listed above, in combination with other plans and projects. . This is supported by the adopted Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS). Monitoring of recreational disturbance of impacts is not currently required but may be requested in the future.

As a precautionary approach is required in order to conclude that the Submission Regulation 16 Stisted Neighbourhood Plan will not lead to AEOI in combination with other plans and projects, mitigation measures are necessary and these need to be embedded in the Submission Regulation 16 Stisted Neighbourhood Plan to avoid impacts from the single impact pathway of recreational disturbance at the Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ramsar site, Colne Estuary SPA and Ramsar site and Essex Estuaries SAC.

The recommendation is for amended policy text to be added for compliance with Braintree Local Plan Policy LPP64 (Protected Sites) to be re-screened at stage 2 HRA Appropriate Assessment.

A new bullet point added to Policy STIS9 is therefore considered appropriate:

E. Any proposals that have adverse effects on the integrity of existing Habitats sites (either alone or in-combination) will not be supported.

As the Neighbourhood Plan Policy STIS9 supports proposals for the development of small-scale affordable housing schemes on rural exception sites outside the settlement boundary, where housing would not normally be permitted by other policies, will be supported where there is a proven local need and provided that the housing met other criteria. These are considered to require mitigation to avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Habitats sites within scope through increased recreational pressure, when considered in combination with other plans and projects.

As shown in Table 7 below, there are five relevant Plans for which HRAs have been carried out by Local Planning Authorities and, with mitigation embedded, these Plans have been found to avoid any adverse effect on the integrity of Habitats sites when being assessed in-combination with other plans and projects.

There is one Project considered to be relevant to this section which is the King Charles III England Coast Path (Maldon to Salcott section).

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

Statutory Body	Title of HRA or Project	Findings of HRA or Project	Potential for in combination effects
Braintree District Council	HRA Report for North Essex Authorities Shared Strategic Section 1 Local Plan – Update Following Proposed Main Modifications (LUC, 2020)	Local Plan – Section 2, and can be successfully implemented, there are no adverse effects on Habitats sites.	It is considered that, with mitigation measures secured, in combination adverse effects on integrity of the Habitats sites within scope are not predicted.
Tendring District Council	HRA Report for North Essex Authorities' Shared Strategic Section 1 Plans (LUC, May 2019)	In conclusion, providing that key recommendations and mitigation requirements are adopted and implemented the Shared Strategic Part 1 for Local Plans will not result in adverse effects on the integrity of European sites either alone or in-combination	It is considered that, with mitigation measures secured, in combination adverse effects on integrity of the Habitats sites within scope are not predicted.
Tendring District Council	HRA of Tendring District Draft Local Plan Part 2 (LUC, May 2017)	In conclusion, providing that key recommendations and mitigation requirements are fully developed and included within the Tendring District Draft Local Plan Part 2, and can be successfully implemented, there will be no adverse effects on the European sites either alone or in combination	It is considered that, with mitigation measures secured, in combination adverse effects on integrity of the Habitats sites within scope are not predicted.
Colchester Borough (now City) Council	Habitats Regulations Assessment Colchester Borough Publication Draft Local Plan – Section 2 (LUC, 2021)	In conclusion, providing that key recommendations and mitigation requirements are fully developed and included within Chapter 5 of the Habitats Regulations Assessment Colchester	It is considered that, with mitigation measures secured, in combination adverse effects on integrity of the Habitats sites within

Statutory Body	Title of HRA or Project	Findings of HRA or Project	Potential for in combination effects
		Borough Publication Draft	scope are not predicted.
Uttlesford District Council	Uttlesford Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment (AECOM, June 2024)	In conclusion, providing that key recommendations and mitigation requirements are fully developed and included within the Uttlesford Local Plan, and can be successfully implemented, there are no adverse effects on Habitats sites.	It is considered that, with mitigation measures secured, in combination adverse effects on integrity of the Habitats sites within scope are not predicted.
Maldon District Council	Maldon District Pre-Submission Local Development Plan 2014-2029 (Maldon District Council, 2014)	In conclusion, providing that key recommendations and mitigation requirements are fully developed and included within the Maldon District Local Development Plan, and can be successfully implemented, there are no adverse effects on Habitats sites.	It is considered that, with mitigation measures secured, in combination adverse effects on integrity of the Habitats sites within scope are not predicted.
Natural England	King Charles III England Coast Path Proposals – Maldon to Salcott stretch: Assessment of Sensitive Features Appraisal (Habitats Regulations Assessment of effects on Maldon to Salcott (Blackwater Estuary) (Natural England 2017)	No possible adverse effects from the access proposal (taking into account any proposed mitigation measures) have been identified for Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ramsar site and Essex Estuaries SAC.	Public access is already established and no significant increase in recreational use is expected as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Stisted Neighbourhood Plan Submission Regulation 16 Draft does not allocate any land for development but does support residential development for affordable housing under Policy STIS9. This triggers the need for mitigation measures to avoid adverse effects on integrity of the Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ramsar site, Colne Estuary SPA and Ramsar site and Essex Estuaries SAC. With mitigation

embedded into the Regulation 16 Submission Stisted Neighbourhood Plan, the predicted in-combination impacts from recreational disturbance and consideration of any plans or projects, will avoid adverse effect on the integrity of the Habitats sites. Delivery of mitigation for residential development will be secured by the LPA requiring a proportionate financial contribution to the Essex Coast RAMS at application stage.

In addition, no adverse effects on the integrity of the Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ramsar site, Colne Estuary SPA and Ramsar site and Essex Estuaries SAC are expected from the proposals included in the King Charles III England Coast Path (Maldon to Salcott section), as the footpath is already in public usage and new signposts will add to public awareness of the impacts from increased recreational pressures.

In this case the potential for adverse effects from the plan or project has been wholly avoided by the incorporated mitigation measures outlined above. It is therefore considered that there are no residual and credible effects likely to arise from this plan which have the potential to act in-combination with those from other proposed plans or projects. It has therefore been excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the Plan can have an adverse effect on site integrity in-combination with the proposed plans or projects listed in Table 7.

In light of this review, there are no identified insignificant and combinable effects that are likely to arise from other plans or projects. In light of the above conclusions, no further in-combination assessment is required.

6. Recommendations

The Habitats sites that have been scoped into this HRA report are:

- Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ramsar site;
- Colne Estuary SPA and Ramsar site;
- Essex Estuaries SAC

No potential impact pathways between the above Habitats sites and the Regulation 16 Submission Stisted Neighbourhood Plan have been identified, considered and assessed for predicted recreational disturbance from the Plan alone.

All residential development within the Plan area is predicted to result in additional recreational impacts from the Plan in combination with other plans and projects, from increased visitor pressure on the Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ramsar site. In 2016, Natural England proposed a strategic approach to LPAs and recommended identifying the scale of the disturbance and implementing measures to mitigate impacts through the preparation of a joint Suffolk Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS). Annex 1 of the Natural England advice to Braintree District Council includes advice on green infrastructure requirements for large residential developments to avoid impacts from the Plan alone. Any large residential development coming forward, will therefore need to meet this advice.

This HRA Appropriate Assessment has recommended amendments to the Regulation 16 Submission Stisted Neighbourhood Plan. These include the following changes:

Policy STIS9 requires that

- all development will not have an adverse impact on the integrity of the Essex coast Habitats sites from the development either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

The recommendations from the Appropriate Assessment are precautionary, to ensure that the Regulation 16 Submission Stisted Neighbourhood Plan identifies clear mitigation needs and protects the Habitats sites from any project level impacts.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town and country planning purposes and sets a framework for future development consent. The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan can be considered to determine the use of small areas at local level commensurate with their status in determining local planning applications.

Planning Practice Guidance on SEA of Neighbourhood Plans indicates that a strategic environmental assessment may be required, for example, where a Neighbourhood Plan allocates sites for development; the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan; or the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

The Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes and seeks to strengthen the protection and enhancement of assets at the local level and in a local context.

In consideration of the findings of this Screening Report, the Stisted Neighbourhood Plan can be **screened out** for its requirement of Strategic Environmental Assessment in line with the requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC.

7.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

This Habitat Regulations Assessment, including Appropriate Assessment, considers the impacts arising from the Regulation 16 Submission Stisted Neighbourhood Plan.

The HRA Screening stage identified that, without mitigation, further consideration was required at the Appropriate Assessment stage to determine whether the Regulation 16 Submission Stisted Neighbourhood Plan either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects, would adversely affect the integrity of Habitats sites as a result of the recreational disturbance potential impact pathway, i.e. this HRA recommended that Policy STIS9 should be re-assessed further as it was assigned to Category C due to predicted recreational impacts from the Plan alone.

In applying the HRA Test 2 –the integrity test at AA stage -, based on the proximity to Habitats sites, and in order to be in accordance with the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS), mitigation needs to be embedded in the Plan in relation to recreational disturbance to avoid impacts from the Neighbourhood Plan in combination with other plans and projects. Therefore, this HRA has recommended that the policy and supporting text is altered for Policy STIS9.

Embedded mitigation measures for projects (planning applications) will need to be considered in project level HRA/AA reports assessed by Braintree District Council and secured by way of a legal agreement attached to any planning consent. Therefore, there will be no need for further assessment for this Neighbourhood Plan.

Subject to the above recommendations being incorporated, and Natural England's review, this HRA Screening Report including Appropriate Assessment concludes that the Regulation 16 Submission Stisted Neighbourhood Plan is not predicted, with the mitigation secured, to result in any Adverse Effect on the Integrity of the Habitats sites in scope, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

8. References

Braintree District Council Local Plan 2013-2033 (2022)

Stisted Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Version (August 2024)

Land Use Consultants (August 2019) HRA report for Braintree District

Local Plan Section 2

Land Use Consultants (May 2017) HRA Report for North Essex Authorities Shared Strategic Part 1 for Local Plans Pre-submission (Regulation 19)

Natural England Conservation objectives for European Sites: East of England Website:

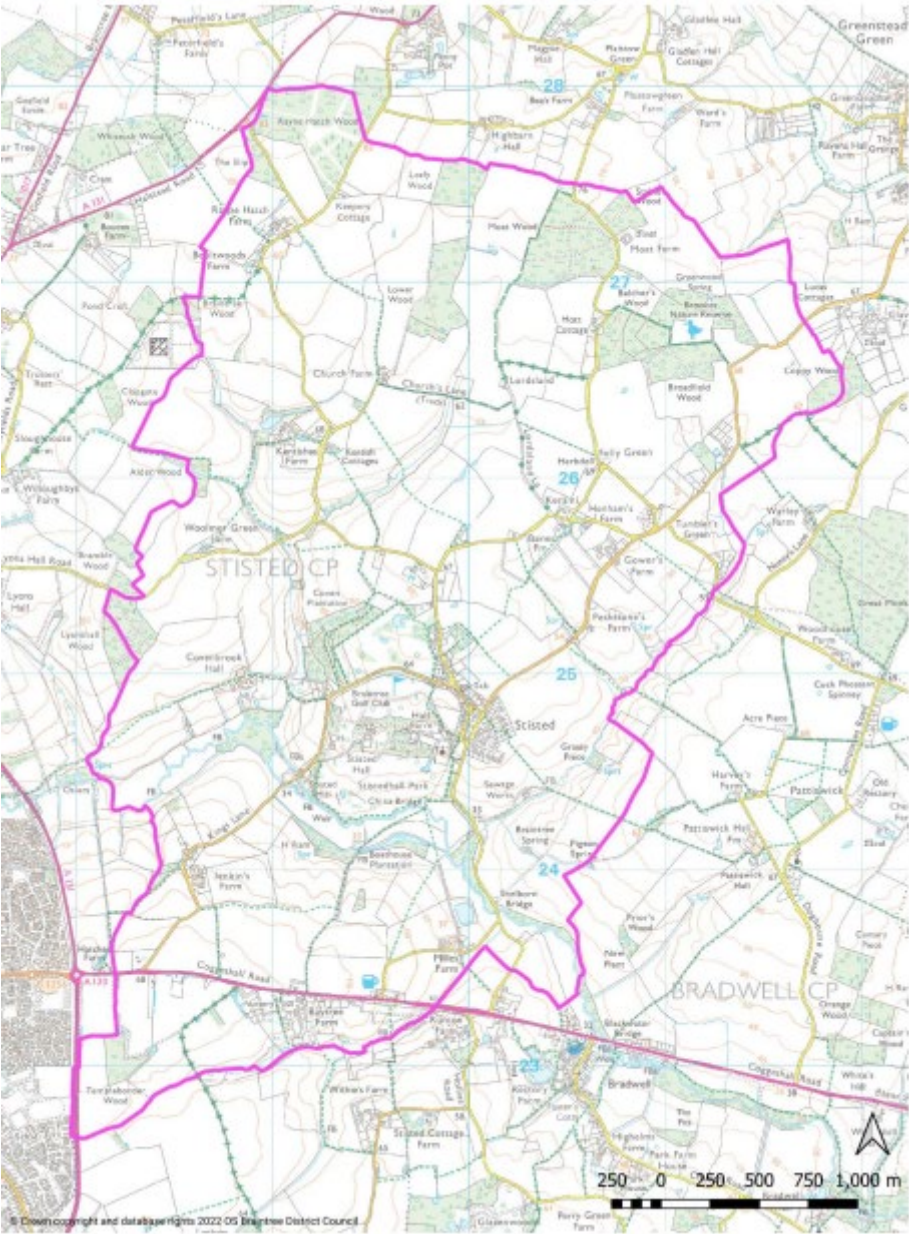
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Natural England (2017) England Coast Path Proposals –Assessment of Sensitive Features Appraisal Maldon to Salcott (Blackwater Estuary) [maldon-salcott-sensitive-features-report.PDF](#)

- Place Services (2018) Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) Available at: [Habitats Regulations Assessment \(HRA\) – Braintree District Council](#)
- Place Services (2020) Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) [Supplementary Planning Document](#) (SPD).
- Tydlesley, D., and Chapman, C., (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, (April 2022) edition UK: DTA Publications Limited (Accessed under licence October 2024)

Appendix 1

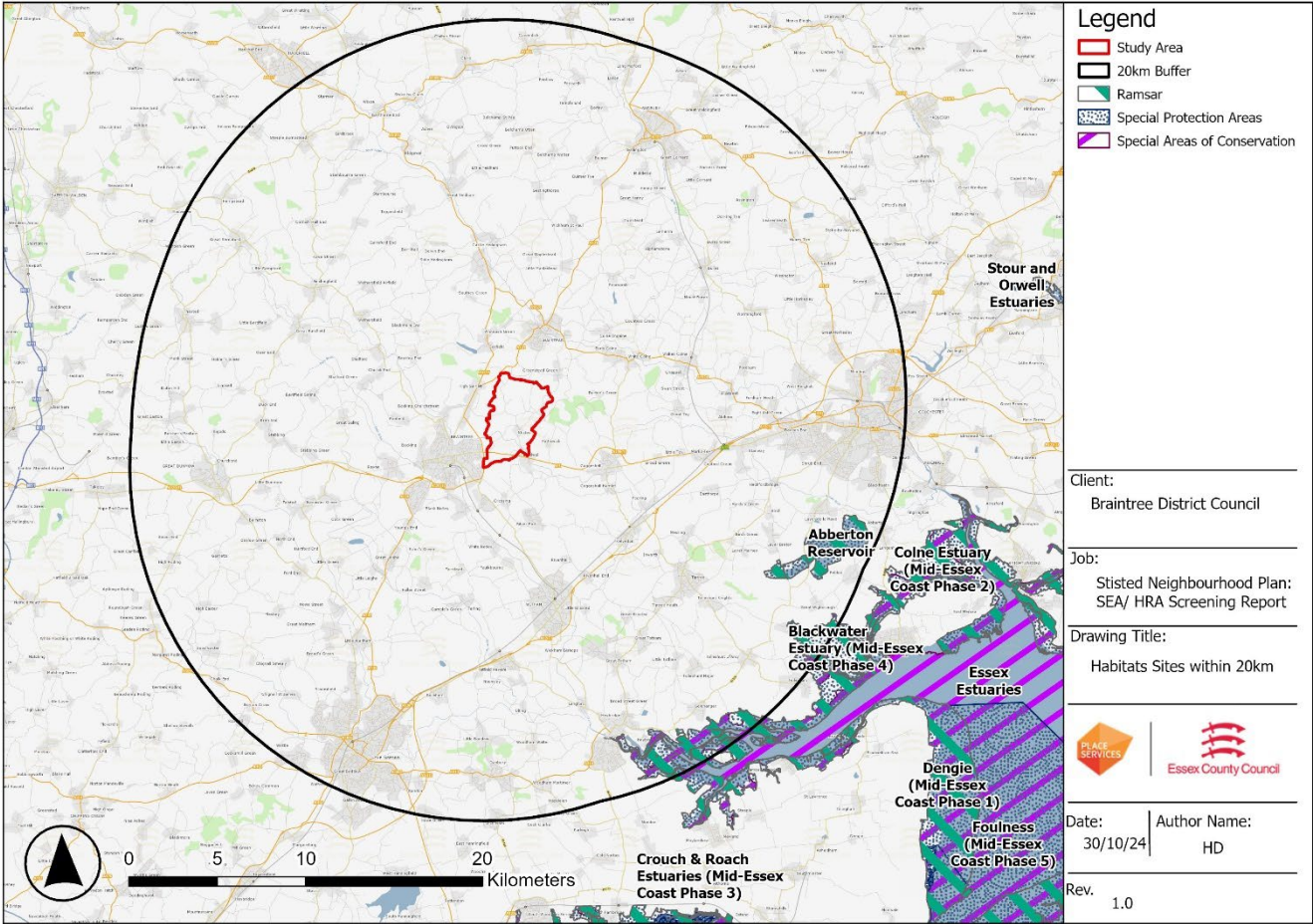
The Stisted Neighbourhood Plan area



Source: Stisted Neighbourhood Plan (2024)

Appendix 2

Stisted Neighbourhood Plan area & Locations of Habitats sites within 20 km



Source: Place Services (2024)



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