

Ipswich Borough Council

Cycling Strategy Supplementary Planning Document

Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report (November 2015)

The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires that an 'appropriate assessment' is carried out in relation to any plan or project which is likely to have a significant effect, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, on European sites. Where an appropriate assessment is carried out a plan may only be adopted after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned.

European sites are Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation. Ramsar sites should also be given the same level of protection, as stated within the National Planning Policy Framework. The Stour and Orwell Estuaries Special Protection Area and Ramsar site lies partly within Ipswich Borough. The Appropriate Assessment for Ipswich Borough Council Proposed Submission Core Strategy and Policies (Landscape Partnership, 2009), which relates to the adopted Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document, identified a list of European sites outside the Borough which may also be potentially be affected by development in Ipswich.

The purpose of this statement is to assess the need for appropriate assessment in relation to the Cycling Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The primary purpose of the SPD is to provide detailed guidance for anyone developing a site where cycle provision is required, and it will also act as a basis for identifying off-site enhancements to the wider network either through the planning process or through other mechanisms.

The guidance provided in the SPD will relate to the implementation of policies CS5, DM15, DM16, DM18 and DM19 in the Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document. These policies were subject to assessment under the Habitats Regulations as part of their production. This is contained in the 2009 Appropriate Assessment and the Updated Appropriate Assessment for Ipswich Borough Council Proposed Submission Core Strategy and Policies (Landscape Partnership, 2010).

In relation to policy CS5 (known as CS6 at the time), the 2009 Appropriate Assessment concluded that 'This policy area supports development located and designed to minimise the need to travel, encouraging greater use of walking, cycling and public transport modes. The policy is unlikely to have an impact on the Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA and RAMSAR site.' There was therefore no need for an appropriate assessment to be carried out.

In relation to DM15 (known as DC14 at the time), the 2009 Appropriate Assessment concluded, in terms of likely significant effects, that 'This policy could have a positive impact on the Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA and RAMSAR site, in particular by assessing noise and air quality impacts of development.' There was therefore no need for an appropriate assessment to be carried out.

In relation to DM16 (known as DC15 at the time) the 2009 Appropriate Assessment concluded, in terms of likely significant effects, that 'This policy is unlikely to have an impact on the Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site.' There was therefore no need for an appropriate assessment to be carried out.

In relation to DM17 (known as T1 at the time of screening and DC17 during the appropriate assessment) the 2009 Appropriate Assessment concluded, in terms of likely significant effects, that 'This policy could have an impact on the Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA and RAMSAR site.' There was therefore a need for an appropriate assessment to be carried out.

Following further consideration within the appropriate assessment section of the report, it was concluded that DC17 was not likely to have a significant effect as it has no nature conservation significance and therefore did not need to be further assessed.

As the Cycling Strategy SPD relates to the implementation of these policies it can be concluded that there will be no further effects on European sites and that an appropriate assessment is not required.

Natural England have been consulted on this Screening Assessment and concur with this conclusion.