

Suffolk Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS')

2024/25 Progress Report and 2025/26 Delivery Plan Budget

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report aims to provide a concise update to both contributors of the RAMS tariff and the public on the progress and successes of the Suffolk Coast RAMS project from the 2024/25 Financial Year (1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025), and a brief outline of the 2025/26 Delivery Plan Budget.
- 1.2. The first full annual report on project progress towards implementation of the mitigation measures is to be published in the months following the end of the 25/26 financial year, with subsequent new editions to be published annually.
- 1.3. The following report **must** be read in conjunction with the [Suffolk Coast Recreation Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy \('RAMS'\)](#). The strategy's content and information about its package of avoidance and mitigation measures is not recreated here.

2. 2024/25 Progress Report

- 2.1. The 24/25 financial year was a year of significant milestones for the Suffolk Coast RAMS project.
- 2.2. The following mitigation measures were either approved or delivered in 2024/25. Regarding external projects funded by the Suffolk Coast RAMS, whilst approval was given during 2024/25, delivery or the funds may have been spent after the end of April 25. Where this is the case, it has been clearly stated in the text below.
- 2.3. Financial reporting for 2024/25 will be provided in the local authorities 2024/25 Infrastructure Funding Statement.
- 2.4. **Staff resources**
 - 2.4.1. The Strategy considers dedicated staff to implement the strategy critical to timely and coordinated delivery, with the staff themselves a key aspect

of the mitigation package. Detailed information on staff resources as recommended avoidance and mitigation measures is available on pages 81-84 of the Strategy document.

- 2.4.2. The **Suffolk Coast RAMS Delivery Manager** was advertised in November 2023, with the Delivery Manager starting in post in March 2024. The Delivery Managers role is a dedicated full-time post required to initiate the mitigation measures of the Strategy, manage the initial delivery of the mitigation and ensure the necessary procedures, reporting and monitoring is in place.
- 2.4.3. The **Suffolk Coast RAMS Strategic Adviser** started in post in April 2024. The Strategic Adviser was a temporary post (to August 2025) recruited to support the progress of the Suffolk Coast RAMS project, particularly with the development of the branding, communications, governance and other key aspects of the project. The post was initially full-time before moving to part-time part way through the year.
- 2.4.4. Recruitment of **three Wildlife and Visitor Rangers**. The recruitment process of the Rangers started around December 2024. Two Rangers started in April 2025 and the other at the start of May 2025. The strategy required a small, mobile team of three wardens/rangers to provide an on-site [European site] presence, engaging with visitors about how to reduce recreational disturbance and damage, showing people birds and wildlife to encourage interest, as well as helping with the delivery of other key elements of the Strategy and undertaking monitoring.

2.5. Branding and communications

- 2.5.1. Development and launch of Wildlife Wise, our public facing brand and communications assets happened between May and July 2024, with the launch event happening in July. This work included a new name for the project (Wildlife Wise), logo, website and social media channels (Instagram and Facebook). [Wildlife Wise | Cherishing, respecting and protecting the wildlife and habitats of the Suffolk Coast](#).
- 2.5.2. Wildlife Wise featured in a variety of news articles by the East Anglian Daily Times and BBC.

2.6. Wildlife Wise Project Fund

- 2.6.1. The [Wildlife Wise Project Grant Fund](#) was launched in January 2025.
- 2.6.2. The Wildlife Wise Project Grant Fund is to be used to support stakeholders, partnership organisations, and voluntary and community groups to directly deliver projects that will reduce or prevent recreational disturbance and damage to European sites.

- 2.6.3. The Fund is looking to fund projects which support the Suffolk Coast RAMS priorities indicated within the current RAMS strategy. The allocation to specific projects is made as a small grant of up to £5,000.
- 2.6.4. In March 2025, we approved the funding of an RSPB project for the extension of little tern fencing at Kessingland beach. The fencing was installed in April 2025.
- 2.6.5. The Fund is currently open for applications with no current end date; however, this is subject to change, and the Wildlife Wise website should be consulted for more information.

2.7. Other projects funded

- 2.7.1. In March 2025, we funded a new dogs-off-leads area at the Orwell Country Park to provide an alternative location for off leads dogs to the shore at the Orwell Country Park, which causes regular disturbance to wading birds on the Orwell Estuary. The off-lead area was constructed in April 2025.

2.8. Updated Suffolk Coast RAMS Strategy

- 2.8.1. Work on updating the Suffolk Coast RAMS Strategy is underway in accordance with the current Strategy. Additionally, this was advised by Natural England to ensure that the strategy remains best practice.
- 2.8.2. To inform this, visitor surveys took place across the Suffolk Coast's European sites during Autumn/Winter 2024. The survey report was finalised in January 2025.
- 2.8.3. A series of related stakeholder meetings took place during January to March 2025 to inform the Strategy update.

2.9. Signage, interpretation, access and car parking

- 2.9.1. Developed a range of signage and interpretation (larger informative signs) templates ready for roll out across European sites. This includes colour coded 'traffic light' signs to give guidance to dog owners on whether they need to keep their dogs on leads or not to protect the wildlife of the European sites.
- 2.9.2. The project team also started the signage, interpretation, access and car parking audit across the European sites on the Suffolk Coast.

2.10. Key recreational disturbance issues, stakeholder priorities, priority projects and ranger locations

- 2.10.1. We carried out a wide range stakeholder meetings to identify stakeholder priorities and recreational disturbance issues across the Suffolk Coast.
- 2.10.2. We identified around 80 priority projects across the European sites which are earmarked for delivery, of which 23 of those have been taken forward to start and/or conclude in the 25-26 financial year.
- 2.10.3. We identified 36 priority ranger locations for site visits, to ensure we have maximum impact by engaging with visitors and residents about how to reduce recreational disturbance.

2.11. Dog Project

- 2.11.1. We agreed to join up with a pre-existing brand called Coast and Country Canines for our dog project.

2.12. Education programme: Environmental Heroes

- 2.12.1. In July 2024, we began working on an education programme in collaboration with Natural England called [Environmental Heroes](#), which is delivering Wildlife Wise classes across Suffolk and Norfolk. Delivery in Suffolk began when soon after the Rangers started in post, with the first classes delivered in July 2025. Delivery of Wildlife Wise classes in Norfolk is by Norfolk County Council. The first Wildlife Wise class was in January 2025. Please note that the Norfolk classes are not funded by the Suffolk Coast RAMS, but by Norfolk County Council themselves.
- 2.12.2. Whilst the current Strategy does not require an educational programme, it has been developed as an example of best practice from other similar mitigation schemes. An education programme is considered by the RAMS partnership to be an important measure to ensure long term behaviour change that safeguards our European sites from recreational damage and disturbance. The programme will be included as part of the updated Strategy.

2.13. Governance and finance monitoring

- 2.13.1. The project team, Steering Group and Executive Group agreed new and improved governance and finance monitoring structures.

3. 2025/26 Delivery Plan Budget

3.1. The following is the simplified approved budget for Suffolk Coast RAMS spending for 2025/26. Delivery of items in Table 1 focuses on the immediate project priorities for strategy implementation and some short to medium term measures. The actual expenditure is subject to vary from that proposed below and may also be varied (with approval of the Executive Group) following the adoption of the Suffolk Coast RAMS Strategy Update.

Table 1: Programme delivery items and budget estimate for the Suffolk Coast RAMS project 2025/26.

Suffolk Coast RAMS Delivery Plan 2025/26	Description	Budget 2025/26 (£)
Staff Resources & Recruitment	Includes Management and Rangers salaries & on costs; Provision for Dog Officer recruitment; Employee Insurance; Mileage & Subsistence; Uniform & Equipment; Training; Vehicle lease	259,478
Signage & interpretation	New signage and interpretation board installation at priority sites (ongoing)	16,000
Marketing & Promotion	Includes promotional campaigns, social media, video production, promotional equipment and display materials for events	13,750
Website development & Maintenance	Content development support, hosting and maintenance services	5,520
Monitoring & Evaluation	Carry forward 24/25 Strategy review costs	25,220
	Car Park review; Monitoring strategy	5,000
Infrastructure and site projects	Carry forward 24/25 projects (Kessingland Beach & Orwell Country Park)	12,374
	Grant funding allocation & Direct Delivery project funding	60,000
Contingency		5,000
Total Budget 2025/26		402,342