

Ipswich Borough Council

Draft Public Open Space Supplementary Planning Document

Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report (January 2016)

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 Open Space Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The primary purpose of the SPD is to provide detailed guidance on the provision of open space as part of new development but the principles relating to design of open space may equally apply in relation to sites allocated solely for open space. In this respect the SPD will contain guidance relating to calculating and administering requirements for open space, including future maintenance requirements. The SPD will also contain detailed guidance on design including character and connectivity, the provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems, safety and security, community cohesion and nuisance, access (including design of spaces to meet a range of needs), maintenance, wildlife and trees.

The guidance provided in the SPD will relate to the implementation of policies CS16 and DM29 in the Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document. Policies CS16 and DM29 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 DM29 (known as DC29 at the time), the 2009 Appropriate Assessment concluded, in terms of likely significant effects, that 'This policy is likely to have a positive impact on the Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site, as it will ensure there is sufficient provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities, which could in turn reduce pressure on the recreational use of the SPA and Ramsar site'. There was therefore no need for an appropriate assessment to be carried out.

In relation to CS16 (known as CS19 at the time) the 2009 Appropriate Assessment concluded, in terms of likely significant effects, that 'This policy seeks to protect, enhance and extend the network of green corridors, open spaces, sport and recreation facilities for the benefit of biodiversity and people. A subsequent amendment to the submission draft supports the green rim around the town. This policy is likely to have a positive impact on the Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site.' There was therefore no need for an appropriate assessment to be carried out.

As the Open Space 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.