

Ipswich Borough Council Local Plan Review 2018-2036 Habitat Regulations Assessment Adoption Statement

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Planning Policy
Ipswich Borough Council
Grafton House
15-17 Russell Road
Ipswich
IP1 2DE
planningpolicy@ipswich.gov.uk
www.ipswich.gov.uk/localplan
Tel: 01473 432019

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1. The Ipswich Local Plan

- 1.1 Ipswich Borough Council has been preparing its Ipswich Local Plan Review 2018-2036 consisting of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document and Site Allocations and Policies (Incorporating IP-One Area Action Plan) Development Plan Document since 2017.
- 1.2 The Council submitted the Final Draft Ipswich Local Plan Review to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (then the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government) for independent Examination on the 10th June 2020.
- 1.3 Inspectors Karen Baker DipTP MA DipMP MRTPI and Mike Hayden BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI were appointed to hold an independent examination of the Ipswich Borough Council Local Plan Review. The Examination Hearing took place between the 24th November 2020 and 16th December 2020. The Inspectors found that subject to Main Modifications, the Plan was likely to be capable of being found 'sound'.
- 1.4 On the 29th July 2021 the Council consulted on the proposed Main Modifications to the Ipswich Local Plan Review, with representations subsequently passed to the Inspectors for consideration. The Council received 33 representations during the Main Modifications consultation raising 128 issues.
- 1.5 On the 17th February the Planning Inspectorate issued the Inspectors Report to the Council. The Report concluded that the Local Plan, with Main Modifications, is sound. The Ipswich Local Plan has subsequently been recommended for adoption.

2. Habitats Regulation Assessment Summary

- 2.1 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) require local authorities to assess the impact of their Local Plan on the internationally important sites for biodiversity in and around their administrative areas. These sites - Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar sites - are known as European sites. The task is achieved by means of a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).
- 2.2 Footprint Ecology has been assisting the Council with its Assessment of the Local Plan against regulation 105, this support has included the following publications:
 - [Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Ipswich Borough Local Plan at Preferred Options Stage, 15th January 2019](#)

- [Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Ipswich Borough Local Plan Review at Final Draft Plan stage, 13th January 2020](#)
- [Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Ipswich Borough Local Plan Review at Final Draft Plan stage: Air Quality and Flood Risk Addendum, 28th May 2020](#)
- [Habitats Regulations Assessment \(HRA\) of the Ipswich Borough Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document Review, Final Draft: Addendum relating to Proposed Main Modifications, 22nd July 2021](#)
- [Habitats Regulations Assessment \(HRA\) of the Ipswich Borough Local Plan Site Allocations and Policies \(Incorporating IP-One Area Action Plan\) Development Plan Document Review, Final Draft: Addendum relating to Proposed Main Modifications, 29th June 2021](#)

2.3 HRAs of the Plan were undertaken at Preferred Options and Final Draft (Pre-submission) stages, including an Appropriate Assessment (AA), in line with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (Habitats Regulations). The need for an AA was due in particular to the proximity of proposed development sites to the Stour and Orwell Estuary SPA and Ramsar Site, and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, parts of which lay within the Borough boundary.

2.4 The HRA concluded that, subject to the inclusion of recommendations for amended policy wording and site mitigations, (which have subsequently been included in the Plan) would not lead to likely significant effects on any national network site (formerly European site). Natural England, as the statutory consultee, agreed with this conclusion.

2.5 The recommendations of the HRA were incorporated into the pre-submission Plan, including an ISPA-wide Recreational Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) set out in Policy ISPA3.

3. Main Modifications

3.1 Following the Examination into the Ipswich Local Plan Review 2018-2036 the Inspectors recommended a series of Main Modifications to be made to the Plan. These Main Modifications were analysed to ensure that the conclusions of the pre-submission Local Plan HRA remained robust.

3.2 The review concluded that none of the Main Modifications alters the conclusions of the original HRA of the final draft plan. "Natural England was consulted on the HRA update and confirmed their agreement with its conclusions, that adverse effects on

integrity, alone or in-combination are ruled out for all European sites as a result of the Plan with MMs”.

3.3 The Inspector stated in their report (paragraph 51) that “we find that the Plan is legally compliant with respect to the Habitats Regulations”.

3.4 It should be noted that Inspectors have made some further amendments to the detailed wording of the MMs and added consequential modifications where these are necessary for consistency or clarity. However, none of the amendments significantly alters the content of the MMs as published for consultation or undermine the participatory processes nor the HRA that has been undertaken.

4. Conclusions

4.1 In conclusion therefore the Ipswich Local Plan meets its legal requirements in ensuring that no adverse effect on the integrity of any European sites will arise from its adoption, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

4.2 This is reflected in the Inspectors Report in paragraph 51. The Council is therefore proceeding to adopt the Ipswich Local Plan Review 2018-2036.