

# REPORT

## **East Lindsey District Council Local Plan**

Stage 1 Habitats Regulation Assessment Addendum

Client: East Lindsey District Council

Reference: I&B9X2286/100R002F01

Revision: 01/Final

Date: 27 July 2017

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Document title: East Lindsey District Council Local Plan

Document short title: East Lindsey Local Plan HRA Addendum

Reference: I&B9X2286/100R002F01

Revision: 01/Final

Date: 27 July 2017

Project name: East Lindsey Local Plan HRA

Project number: 9X2286/100

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Date / initials: F1 27/7/17

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Date / initials: F1 27/7/17

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Classification

Project related



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## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Settlement Proposals</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>3</b>

## 1 Introduction

1.1 An initial screening assessment of the East Lindsey District Council (ELDC) Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation document, was undertaken in August 2012 (9X2286/R001/303653/PBor). In consultation with Natural England it was agreed that eight internationally designated sites<sup>1</sup> were pertinent to the assessment, and should be considered. These sites were:

- Humber Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites;
- Gibraltar Point SPA;
- The Wash SPA and Ramsar sites;
- Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes and Gibraltar Point SAC; and
- The Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC.

1.2 That first stage of a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) considered whether there is any likelihood of the Plan resulting in a significant effect on international sites. Since that assessment in 2012, further revisions have been made to the policies and a draft Core Strategy document was produced for public consultation. A technical note (9X2286/N00002/303653/PBor, 28 November 2013) was prepared which provided an updated assessment of the policies contained in the consultation draft plan.

1.3 Final conclusions of a Stage 1 Habitats Regulations Assessment were reported in 2016 (I&B9X2286/100R002F01). This addendum to that HRA report sets out the assessment behind conclusions that the Settlement Proposals within the Plan will have no impact on the protected sites listed above. It summarises, and does not expand upon, a technical report provided to ELDC in June 2016.

## 2 Settlement Proposals

2.1 Strategic Policy 2 (formerly 1A) is similar to previous “Option 2 for growth” assessed in 2012 and updated. District wide housing targets increase from 7,545 to 7,815, but the quantum of development in the Coastal Flood Hazard area decreases from 1,605 to 1,281.

2.2 When examining the locations of the allocations, many sites are over 7km away from the nearest international site, heavily limiting the potential for effect. Where allocated sites are closer there are other constraints that would minimise any likelihood of an increase in visitor pressure. These include a lack of circular Public Rights of Way (PRoW) from settlements to the site, busy roads creating an effective barrier to resident recreational use in the direction of the site, and lack of direct vehicular access from allocated sites to the sites.

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<sup>1</sup> Special Areas of Conservation (SAC, or candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC)), designated under the Habitats Directive, and Special Protection Areas (SPA) designated under the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC), form part of the EU-wide Natura 2000 network. ‘Ramsar sites’, designated under the Ramsar Convention (The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat) are subject to the same provisions. The term international sites is used throughout this report when referring to these areas.

2.3 The allocations are given below together with their distance from the nearest of the international sites listed above (with any distances of less than 4km emboldened and described in further detail below):

- Binbrook – >15km
- Burgh-le-Marsh - >7km
- Coningsby & Tattershall - >22km
- **Friskney - >3km**
- **Grainthorpe – 3.3km**
- Grimoldby and Manby - >7km
- Hogsthorpe - >9km
- Holton le-Clay – >4.6km
- Horncastle – >26km
- Huttoft – >10km
- Legbourne - >11.5km
- Louth – >12km
- Mareham-le-Fen – >20km
- **Marshchapel – >2.5km**
- North Thoresby - >6.4km
- Partney – >15km
- Sibsey – >8km
- Spilsby – >15km
- Stickney – >12km
- Tetford – >20km
- **Tetney – >3.3km**
- **Wainfleet – >3km**
- Woodhall Spa – >27km
- Wragby - >30km

2.4 Of those allocations less than 4km away from the nearest international site(s), **Marshchapel**, **Grainthorpe**, and **Tetney** are located along the A1031 inland of the Saltfleetby–Theddlethorpe Dunes & Gibraltar Point SAC, and Humber Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar site. The Saltfleetby – Theddlethorpe Dunes & Gibraltar Point SAC are located between 7.8km to 18.5km from these settlements, so the main site of interest is the Humber Estuary SAC, SPA, and Ramsar. The settlements are generally less than 3.5km from the site boundary.

2.5 The settlement at **Tetney** has no direct route to the sea via PRow. There are direct PRow from the other two settlements to the coast and site boundary, though as with other closer settlements to the south-east and north, the numbers of individuals that may additionally visit the European sites from these settlements would be very low given the proposed scale of development, and the distances (a minimum of >5km return, which is considered significant for an ‘everyday’ walk). Potential increases in cumulative disturbance to birds from people and associated activity are not likely to be measurable.

- 2.6 Notwithstanding the above an additional point of note is that at **Tetney** there are circular PRow that avoid going near to the coast (and avoid roads) and are more likely to be used than the routes toward the coast that run alongside roads.
- 2.7 **Friskney** and **Wainfleet** are located on the northern (landward) side of the A52, parallel to the Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC, and the Wash SPA and Ramsar site. The A52 largely inhibits non-vehicular access (i.e. walkers, cyclists) from the settlements to the coast, thereby minimising the likely disturbance effects associated with an increased number of people. PRow access along the coast between **Friskney** and **Wainfleet** is limited to sections inland (1km or more) of the site boundary. Potential increases in cumulative disturbance to birds from people and associated activity are not likely to be measurable.
- 2.8 In conclusion, all elements relating to sites and impacts on the international sites can be ruled out for distance, or for site-specific access constraints; in the case of **Marshchapel** it is the combination of distance with limited PRow access that mean it is not likely that any measurable effect would be incurred at the international site.
- 2.9 As in earlier assessments (2012 and 2013) the settlement proposals can be concluded as having no Likely Significant Effect.

### 3 Summary

- 3.1 Policies within the Core Strategy which relate to the natural environment ensure that any potential impacts on international sites are suitably assessed and mitigated.
- 3.2 The conclusion can be drawn that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the identified internationally-designated sites as a result of the implementation of the Plan.