

Regulation 19

*New section on Recreational impacts to follow ENV4 version 3 final for PPBHWP -*

**Internationally protected habitats and species, Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation.**

Residential and tourist related development proposed have the potential to result in a significant increase in recreational disturbance at the Norfolk Habitats Sites. Habitats Sites, include Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), European Marine Sites, but also include and Ramsar sites (wetland sites designated to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention) and *candidate* sites. These represent those areas with the highest level of designation for wildlife interest in Europe and ensuring that their protection objectives are not compromised is of paramount importance.

Within North Norfolk, such sites include the North Norfolk Coast SAC/SPA, the Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC and European Marine Site, Overstrand Cliffs SAC, Winterton Horsey Dunes SAC, the Norfolk Valley Fens SAC, the River Wensum SAC (one of the best examples of a chalk river in the country) and the Broads and Broadland SAC and SPA.

All net residential development and tourism accommodation that is likely to affect the integrity of Habitats Sites, will be required to contribute towards mitigation measures identified in the RAMS (or any subsequent Supplementary Planning Document) through the payment of a per dwelling (or equivalent) developer contribution<sup>1</sup> and for larger scale proposals of 50 units plus through the provision of onsite enhanced green infrastructure, EGI, or contributions towards strategic green infrastructure (as identified as strategic opportunity areas in the Rams Strategy or the though the NNDC Green Infrastructure Background paper, or any subsequent update or supplementary planning document ). Such enhanced green infrastructure is in addition to any local open space policy requirements identified in ENV7 and should be at such a proportionate scale and standard, as outlined in the GI/RAM Strategy and be able to divert and deflect visitors from Habitat sites. Such green infrastructure is often referred to as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS). SANGS are usually one area of an alternative attractive semi-natural environment but in the context of the Norfolk GI/RAMS, EGI is proposed as an alternative to a SANG and can incorporate a network of open spaces, permissive routes and natural or semi-natural environments across a given area.

In exceptional circumstances, it may be permissible to identify and implement bespoke mitigation measures in perpetuity to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations. Measures required to mitigate the impacts of recreational disturbance on Habitats Sites will be delivered as detailed in the Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) through a project steering group via the Norfolk Strategic Framework.

The Local Plan is subject to a Habitat Regulation Assessment *and a final Assessment is in preparation.* *The interim HRA* indicates that the proposed housing growth, in North Norfolk and in combination with that planned across the county, will increase the number of recreational visitors to many of the important wildlife sites in the District. If left unmitigated this has the potential to have significant adverse impacts resulting from recreational disturbance. The policy and RAMS strategy is required to enable growth in the District through the implementation of measures to avoid adverse effects on

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<sup>1</sup> Strategy allows for appropriate review of the charge to reflect inflation and any changes in mitigation measures required through the monitoring process.

the integrity of Habitats Sites and comply with the conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017(as amended).

#### **ENV4a Impacts on Internationally protected habitats and species, Recreational Impact Avoidance Mitigation Strategy**

In order to avoid or mitigate the potential adverse impacts on Habitat Sites from recreational pressure, all residential and tourist related development are required to contribute towards mitigation measures identified in the Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS), through the provision of :

1. a tariff based per dwelling contribution (or equivalent);and
2. proposals of 50 dwellings plus are required to:
  - provide onsite Enhanced Green Infrastructure, and or
  - Contribute towards strategic green infrastructure as identified as strategic opportunity areas in the RAMSs Strategy or the though the NNDC Green Infrastructure Background paper (or any subsequent update or supplementary planning document).

Provision should meet Enhanced Green infrastructure quality Standards as set out in the Green Infrastructure Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy and any subsequent SPD

#### **Contained in ENV5 Green Infrastructure**

Policy ENV5

Text and policy to be updated to include supporting wording to the suitable provision of enhanced Green Infrastructure and the quality standards

Text to be added to the GI section text

In line with the Norfolk Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy, RAMS enhanced green infrastructure is to be incorporated into appropriately sized proposals. Development should seek to maximise opportunities for the restoration, enhancement and connection of the District's green infrastructure network throughout the lifetime of the development, both on-site and for the wider community and as identified in the Norfolk GI/RAM Strategy and North Norfolk Green infrastructure Background paper or any subsequent SPD.

Enhanced green infrastructure is in addition to any local open space policy requirements identified in ENV7 and should be at such a proportionate scale and standard, as outlined in the GI/RAM Strategy and be able to divert and deflect visitors from Habitat sites. Such green infrastructure is often referred to as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS). SANGS are usually one area of an alternative attractive semi-natural environment but in the context of the Norfolk GI/RAMS, EGI is proposed as an alternative to a SANG and can incorporate a network of open spaces, permissive routes and natural or semi-natural environments across a given area

Enhanced Green Infrastructure should be incorporated into to existing open spaces and or provided through opportunities for new EGI provision and specific EGI project/target areas, known as strategic

opportunity areas in the GI/RAM study. Collectively this aligns with the wider Local Plan objectives and in particular objective 6.6 where the aim is to provide improved open space provision, access and connectivity across the Districts network of green infrastructure in order to ensure it functions as a strategic multi- functioning network, facilitates increased walking and cycling, improves the accessibility of new homes and contributes to health communities as well as deflecting pressures and avoiding adverse impacts on the existing Habitat Sites from recreational pressure.

In line with the Norfolk Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy proposals of 50 dwellings plus are required to:

- Provide additional Enhanced Green infrastructure as identified in the Norfolk Green Infrastructure & Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy and any subsequent SPD.

### Site allocation policies to include updated text as standard in all allocations

Following consultation with Natural England, a Norfolk-wide GI and Recreational impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) *is being prepared* (~~has been prepared~~) to include all Habitats Sites. The strategy identifies where recreational disturbance is happening and the main recreational uses causing the disturbance. New residential development that is likely to affect the integrity of the European sites will be required to contribute towards the implementation of the mitigation. It is considered that this development allocation will be required to pay for the implementation of mitigation measures identified in the RAMS (or any subsequent Supplementary Planning Document in order to protect the sites. *(Update on finalisation of evidence base and strategy)*)

### Add to all site allocations

Appropriate contributions will be secured towards mitigation measures identified in the Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance & Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)

Note it is also intended where identified to incorporate into the Local Plan site allocations sections / relevant town strategies the identified Strategic Opportunity Areas and relevant Green infrastructure opportunities identified to date in the Green Infrastructure topic paper.

### Developer contributions policy.SD5

Update item 3 in policy covering the RAMS contribution

Developer contributions will be required to secure infrastructure which is necessary to:

Mitigate visitor impact on ~~Europe sites~~ Habitat Sites in line with the Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Avoidance Strategy.

### Add into ENV 4 – Biodiversity and Geology

Where appropriate, contributions from developments will be secured towards mitigation measures as identified in the Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance & Mitigation Strategy (RAMS).