

Habitats Regulations Assessment: Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan: Proposed Main Modifications June 2016

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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 In April 2015, AECOM (formerly URS) undertook HRA for the Bearing Fruits 2031: Swale Borough Local Plan - publication version which was submitted for examination. The 2015 HRA for the Local Plan¹ identified that there would be no likely significant effects upon internationally designated sites (principally the North Kent Marshes Internationally Designated Sites) as a result of increases in recreational pressure, provided that residential development within 6km of the internationally designated sites (and particularly large developments beyond 6km) pay appropriate financial contributions towards delivery of the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) for the Swale SPA and Ramsar site, and Medway Estuary and Marshes SPA and Ramsar site. No impact pathways relating to recreational pressure stem from jobs target numbers. Air quality and water quality impacts were scoped out during the Local Plan HRA process. Proximity impacts do potentially exist, depending on the allocated sites in question, and were fully examined during the Local Plan HRA. The publication version Local Plan provided for 10,800 net new dwellings (including meeting the needs for Gypsies and Travellers) within the lifetime of the Plan (which at the time of submission was from 2011 through to 2031). In addition, the Local Plan provided for a job target of 7,053.
- 1.1.2 In September 2015 AECOM undertook an analysis of the implications of the Swale Housing Scenarios on the North Kent Marshes Internationally Designated Sites². The Housing Scenario document is not a stand-alone document and should be read in conjunction with the April 2015 HRA for the publication version Local Plan. It was not therefore intended to consist of a full HRA report by itself but was rather a specific consideration of the potential implications of several alternative development options on internationally designated sites. The Housing Scenario document analysed potential impacts of three levels of housing provision identified in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Scenarios for Housing Provision and Associated Population Growth within Swale Borough to the End of the Plan Period (2031)

Scenario	Dwellings (dpa)	Projected Population Increase (plan period)	Total Population (end of plan period) ³
A ⁴	637	17,307	158,107
B ⁵	776	25,397	166,197
C ⁶	861	25,491	166,291

- 1.1.3 Ultimately this concluded that under Scenario B/C (the scenarios with providing for the largest increase in population), would probably not increase visitor pressure on the SPA to such an extent that it could not be addressed by the additional SAMMS contributions that would be made by those dwellings. It was noted that the conclusions of the Housing Scenario analysis were theoretical and would require verification through monitoring of the effectiveness of the SAMMS delivery.
- 1.1.4 Since that time, AECOM has been appointed to undertake HRA of Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan: Proposed Main Modifications June 2016 (known as 'the Plan'). Once again, this HRA document is not a stand-alone document but is the latest in a series of updates that track the plan through the stages of development to adoption. Therefore, this report does not reproduce information regarding the background to the European designated sites or potential impact pathways. These were detailed in full within the April 2015 HRA, which is referenced as required.

¹ AECOM (was URS). (April 2015). Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan Part 1: Submission Version. Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening.

² AECOM (September 2015). Supplement to Bearing Fruits 2031 Swale Borough Local Plan Part 1: Submission Version Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Analysis of the Implications of the Swale Housing Scenarios on the North Kent Marshes Internationally Designated Sites

³ Based on a mid-year population estimate for Swale at the start of the plan period (2014) of 140,800 people. Figure supplied by Peter Brett Associates

⁴ Current Local Plan

⁵ PBA 04-14 (preferred OAN)

⁶ ONS /CLG 2012

- 1.1.5 Although one of the main elements of the Proposed Main Modifications concerns an increase to the overall quantum of housing and employment to be delivered across Swale over the Local Plan period, the implications of that increase at the strategic level were discussed in the September 2015 HRA analysis. It is therefore unnecessary to repeat that discussion in this document. Rather, this document focusses upon assessment of the implications for European sites of:
- Changes to allocated development sites, and in particular the allocation of a series of new sites, to meet that overall increased quantum of housing and employment; and
 - Major changes to policy wording.
- 1.1.6 The following chapter contains the screening assessment of these main modifications to policy text in the Proposed Main Modifications document.

2 Assessment of Proposed Main Modifications to Policy Text

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The following sections contain the screening assessment of the main modifications to policy in the Proposed Main Modifications document. As previously stated the following screening assessment only assesses the modifications and not Plan policies in their entirety. Table 2 presents screening assessment of most modifications to policy text, with the exception of Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan development targets, which for clarity is assessed in Table 3.

2.2 Screening Assessment of Policy Text of the Proposed Main Modifications Document

2.2.1 The following table provides the screening of main modifications to policy text only. It does not repeat the full policy text but merely summarises any relevant modifications to policy. For full perspective and detail of the Plan, the Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan: Proposed Main Modifications June 2016 document should be referred to.

2.2.2 Where the 'HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications' column is coloured **green**, this indicates that the modifications to policy will not result in a new impact pathway beyond that previously addressed within the April 2015 (or September 2015) HRAs and the modifications to the policy can be screened out in terms of impact upon the integrity of internationally designated sites. If this column is coloured **orange**, this indicates that there is potential for the modification to policy to result in likely significant effects upon an internationally designated site. Recommendations are also included in the table and are identified by text in **bold**. Provided that these recommendations are included within policy, it is considered that they will enable the modification to policy to be screened out from adversely impacting upon the integrity of an internationally designated site.

2.2.3 For completeness, all policies of the Local Plan are listed within the below table. If modifications are not made to a policy, the policy is not assessed and this is stated. These policies will not be coloured within the 'HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications' column.

2.2.4 In-combination impacts have already been assessed within the April 2015 HRA and the September 2015 Housing Scenario assessment. No modifications to policies result in in-combination effects beyond those discussed within these previous HRA documents in support of the production of the Swale Local Plan.

Table 2: Screening Assessment of Policy Text of the Proposed Main Modifications Document.

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
Policy ST1: Delivering sustainable development in Swale	This policy provides for minor changes to text, including the promotion of ' <i>sustainable design and construction</i> '. There are no new HRA implications identified.
Policy ST 2: Development targets for jobs and homes 2011-2031	This modification provides for 130,000sq.m of B Class Employment floor space rather than a jobs target of 7,053. Impact pathways relating to employment space were screened out within the April 2015 HRA so do not require further consideration. Modifications identify a target for housing provision of 13,192 dwellings to the end of the plan period, up from 10,800, an increase of 2,392 new dwellings from the April 2015 HRA. In practice, the actual provision during the plan period is 14,130 dwellings (831 dwellings per annum). The September 2015 Housing Scenario analysis assessed a hypothetical increase in housing provision in Swale of up to 861 new dwellings per

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
	<p>annum and this determined no likely significant effects provided strategic mitigation is adhered to. As such, this impact modification can be screened out.</p> <p>Other modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.</p>
Policy ST 3: The Swale settlement strategy	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan development targets	<p>All reference to retail and leisure floor space has been removed as has reference to sites for Gypsies and Travellers. Modifications also detail changes in the total amount of dwellings, and industrial floor space development commitments as at 1st April 2014. The total additional quantum of employment space and cumulative additional dwellings were screened out within the April 2015 and September 2015 HRA, so do not require further consideration in this document.</p> <p>Modifications provide for amendments to the quantum of housing and industrial /office floors pace provided within existing site allocations in addition to making new allocations. These allocations are discussed within Table 3 (see site allocation relating to 'Village expansion (north, east and southern areas' – new site allocations SW/117, SW/183 and SW/123). Ultimately, sufficient amendments were made to relevant site-specific policies following the initial iteration of this HRA (particularly that regarding Iwade Expansion) it was possible to screen it out.</p>
Policy ST 5: The Sittingbourne area strategy	<p>The modifications to point 8 remove reference to the protection of internationally designated sites.</p> <p>The modifications to point 9 remove reference to the need for assessments of '<i>noise and other disturbances to enable control of any adverse effects on wintering SPA birds on Milton Creek</i>'. New text to this point states 'In accordance with Policy CP7, minimise and mitigate impacts on internationally designated sites for biodiversity, including from developments within 6km of an SPA, contributions toward the North Kent Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS)', thus providing suitable protection for internationally designated sites.</p> <p>Other modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications</p>
Policy ST 6: The Isle of Sheppey area strategy	<p>Modifications to this policy are either minor text changes or are positive as they provide specific protection to internationally designated sites as follows: '<i>...minimise and mitigate impacts on internationally designated sites for biodiversity, including, from developments within 6km of an SPA, contributions toward the North Kent Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) in accordance with Policy CP7.</i>'</p> <p>Other modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.</p>
Policy ST 7: The Faversham area and Kent Downs Strategy	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy CP1: Building a strong, competitive economy	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy CP 2: Promoting sustainable transport	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy CP 3: Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy CP 4: Requiring good design	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
Policy CP 5: Health and wellbeing	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy CP 6: Community facilities and services to meet local needs	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy CP 7: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment - providing for green infrastructure	<p>Text has been amended for clarity to provide sufficient protection of internationally designated sites as follows: <i>'Ensure that there is no adverse effect on the integrity of a SAC, SPA or Ramsar site, alone or in combination with other plan and projects, as it would not be in accordance with the aims and objectives of this Local Plan'</i> <i>'Require the completion of project specific Habitats Regulations Assessment, in accordance with Policy DM28, to ensure there are no likely significant effects upon any European designated site. For sites within 6km of the North Kent Marshes development must contribute to its Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy'.</i></p> <p>This is the 'hook' policy that provides protection of internationally designated wildlife sites from development as outlined within Swale Plan.</p> <p>This is a positive modification. There are no impact pathways identified by this modification.</p>
Policy CP 8: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy A 1: Existing committed employment locations	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy A 2: Land south of Kemsley Mill	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy A 3: Land at West Minster, Sheerness	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy A 4: Land at Cowstead Corner, Queenborough	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy A 5: Land at Selling Road, Faversham	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy A 6: Land at Graveney Road, east of Faversham	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy A 7: Thistle Hill, Minster, Isle of Sheppey	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy A 8 Stones Farm, Canterbury Road, Sittingbourne	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy A 9: Land at Crown Quay Lane, Sittingbourne	<p>This is a largely amended policy. It provides for an increase in housing provision from 474 dwellings to 650 dwellings. As previously identified this site poses no site-specific HRA implications (beyond the general contribution to recreational pressure associated with all housing within 6km of The Swale SPA/Ramsar site). The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale.</p> <p>Modifications to this policy do not identify any new impact pathways that have not already been screened out.</p>
Policy A 10: Milton Pipes, Mill Way, Sittingbourne	Modifications to this policy provide for an increase in housing provision from 190 dwellings to 240 dwellings. The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration.

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
	The remainder of the modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications
Policy A 11: Land at Plover Road	Modifications provide for a decrease in housing provision from 130 dwellings to 97 dwellings. Other modifications are minor text changes. There are no HRA implications to the modifications.
Policy New AX 1: Land west of Barton Hill Drive, Minster	<p>This is a new policy relating to site allocation SW/165. It provides for 620 dwellings. The site is located 1.1km from the Swale SPA/ Ramsar site with no direct footpath access. The site itself is an arable field located less than 700m from a substantial area of grazing marsh. Its location immediately adjacent to the existing settlement of Halfway renders it less likely to constitute significant high-tide roosting/foraging habitat than more remote fields. There is no indication that it is likely to be of significance for SPA birds and the site is too distant from the SPA to have a site-specific effect on the SPA itself. In addition, the supporting text to the policy makes it clear that any planning application is likely to be supported by a wintering bird survey to confirm its use by bird species associated with SPA.</p> <p>This site does have potential to result in in-combination impacts upon the designated sites as a result of increased recreational pressure from new housing. The modifications include reference to the need to include '<i>financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy</i>' to address this issue. The total increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration here.</p> <p>As such, this policy can be screened out.</p>
Policy New AX 2 Land at Belgrave Road, Halfway	<p>This is a new policy relating to site allocation SW/194. It provides for 140 dwellings. The site is located 800m north of the Swale SPA/ Ramsar site with no direct footpath access.</p> <p>The site is a large complex of arable fields with no substantial development intervening between it and the SPA/Ramsar site. It is possible that it could provide important high tide roosting/foraging habitat for SPA/Ramsar birds such that further investigations into this issue would be required for any planning application. The proximity of the fields immediately adjacent to the existing settlement renders it less likely to constitute significant high-tide roosting/foraging habitat than more remote fields such that this matter does not present a likely impediment to delivery of the site. In addition, the supporting text to the policy makes it clear that any planning application is likely to be supported by a wintering bird survey to confirm its use by bird species associated with SPA.</p> <p>This site does have potential to result in in-combination impacts upon the designated sites as a result of increased recreational pressure from new housing. The modifications include reference to the need to include '<i>financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy</i>' to address this issue. The total increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration here.</p> <p>As such, this policy can be screened out.</p>
Policy A 12: Land at the Western Link, Faversham	<p>Modifications to this policy provides for an increase in housing provision from 240 dwellings to 250 dwellings. The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration.</p> <p>The remainder of the modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications</p>
Policy New AX 3: Land north of Graveney Road, Faversham	This is a new policy relating to site allocation SW/334. It provides for a minimum of 90 dwellings. The site is located just over 1km south of the Swale SPA/ Ramsar site with what appears to be no direct footpath access. MAGIC ⁷ identifies areas of grazing marsh outside the SPA but which could constitute supporting habitat for the SPA located approximately 250m north of the development site, on the opposite side of the railway embankment. The railway embankment will provide screening and as such it is considered unlikely that disturbance of any SPA/Ramsar birds that may be using the grazing marsh would occur during construction on this development site.

⁷ www.MAGIC.gov.uk [accessed 13/04/16]

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
	<p>This site does have potential to result in in-combination impacts upon the designated sites as a result of increased recreational pressure from new housing. The modifications include reference to the need to include <i>'financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy'</i> to address this issue. The total increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration here.</p> <p>As such, this policy can be screened out.</p>
Policy New AX 4: Land at Preston Fields, Faversham	<p>This is a new policy relating to site allocation SW/233. It provides for a minimum of 217 dwellings. The site is located 2km south of the Swale SPA/ Ramsar site. Aerial photography indicates that this is an arable field. However, its location on the far side of Faversham from the SPA/Ramsar sites indicates that it is unlikely to constitute important high tide roosting/foraging habitat for SPA/Ramsar birds.</p> <p>This site does have potential to result in in-combination impacts upon the designated sites as a result of increased recreational pressure from new housing. The modifications include reference to the need to include <i>'financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy'</i> to address this issue. The total increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration here.</p> <p>As such, this policy can be screened out.</p>
Policy New AX 5: Iwade expansion	<p>This is a new policy relating to site allocation SW/117, SW/183 and SW/123. Collectively these provide for 572 dwellings. The site boundary lies immediately adjacent to the SPA/Ramsar site although the most distant parts of the site are located c. 1km away from the SPA/Ramsar site. Although a ditch provides a barrier to direct access into the SPA/Ramsar site from much of the allocation, there appears to be potential for direct access from the north-western end. Potential impacts pathways are: recreational pressure (alone and in-combination), urbanisation, disturbance from construction and operational activities, loss of supporting habitat, water related impact pathways relating to surface runoff, and dust deposition.</p> <p>This policy provides for the following text: <i>'provision shall also include a significant proportion of natural and semi-natural greenspace and green corridors, incorporating existing/new footpath and cycle routes, and attractively designed balancing ponds and wetlands'</i> Whilst this is positive text, the provision of <i>'incorporating existing/new footpath and cycle routes'</i> has potential to lead to an increase in recreational pressure on the designated site dependant on where these routes are. These would therefore require careful designing at the planning application stage.</p> <p>This policy does recognise the potential for recreational impacts on the SPA/Ramsar site above and beyond that which may be addressed by financial contributions to the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy. The policy provides for the following bespoke recreational mitigation solution: <i>'The Masterplan and planning applications will: ...Be informed by an appropriate Habitats Regulations Assessment to include on site mitigation in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) for protected habitats species and off-site contributions for residual impacts further afield, in accordance with Policy CP7 and DM28'</i>. In total the allocation site allows for c. 35ha of greenspace, which would enable an appropriate SANG to be delivered, depending on the precise details. As such, it is considered that no further adjustments are required to policy in order to ensure that adequate safeguards exist to prevent this allocation from having an adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA/Ramsar site via recreational pressure.</p> <p>In the initial iteration of this report the following additional matters were identified that required additions to the policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From reviewing aerial imagery it appears the site consists of a network of arable fields which could constitute supporting habitat to the

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
	<p>SPA/Ramsar site given its proximity adjacent to the site. <u>For the purposes of the planning application it is recommended that wintering bird surveys are conducted to determine if significant populations⁸ of birds for which the Swale SPA/Ramsar site are designated use the site as functionally supporting habitat, and if necessary mitigation be provided. This requirement should be included in the policy. This is not considered to be a fundamental constraint to delivery as it is known from other schemes in the area that arable fields can be located adjacent to the SPA/Ramsar site and yet not be used by significant numbers of SPA/Ramsar birds.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For this site there is also a risk of disturbance of SPA/Ramsar birds at the most sensitive periods (generally October to February for wintering birds, although the most sensitive period for breeding marsh harrier is the spring), or conceivably direct incidental damage to the site or effects on drainage and water quality into the SPA/Ramsar site, if construction work takes place without adequate controls (such as minimising winter construction activity and where it cannot be minimised using close-board fencing, damped piling and other measures set out in British Standards guidance to reduce noise to non-disturbing levels). It is therefore considered necessary that the policy for this site includes specific reference to the need for planning applications to include protocols for avoiding disturbance and other adverse effects on the integrity of the European designated SPA/Ramsar site during the construction process, as has already been included in policies for other existing allocations. <u>It is therefore recommended that wording similar to the following is included in Policy AX6 (or possibly in the preamble, since it is an advisory note for the benefit of the applicant): 'In addition to recreational pressure considerations, the HRA will need to include assessment of impact pathways from disturbance including noise, lighting or visual intrusion on the integrity of the European designated SPA/Ramsar site both during construction and throughout the operation of the site. Planning permissions should ensure that necessary mitigation is provided as necessary to address these issues'.</u> <p>These recommendations have now been incorporated into the policy, and as such it is considered that this policy can be screened out, since it now provides a sufficient mechanism to require and facilitate the delivery of measures and safeguards to protect the European sites.</p>
Policy New AX 6: Land north of High Street, Newington	<p>This is a new policy relating to site allocation SW/407. It provides for a minimum of 115 dwellings. The site is located 2.4km from the Swale SPA/Ramsar site. The site itself is an arable field. There is no indication that it is likely to be of significance for SPA birds and the site is too distant from the SPA or the nearest area of grazing marsh to have a site-specific effect.</p> <p>This site does have potential to result in in-combination impacts upon the designated sites as a result of increased recreational pressure from new housing. The modifications include reference to the need to include '<i>financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy</i>' to address this issue. The total increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration here.</p> <p>As such, this policy can be screened out.</p>
Policy New AX 7: Land East of Station Road, Teynham	<p>This is a new policy relating to site allocation SW/144. It provides for a minimum of 107 dwellings. The site is located 1.8km from the Swale SPA/Ramsar site. The site itself is a parcel of land comprising an orchard and cultivated land, which is unlikely to be used as supporting habitat by SPA birds.</p> <p>This site does have potential to result in in-combination impacts upon the designated sites as a result of increased recreational pressure from new housing. The modifications include reference to the need to include '<i>financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy</i>' to address this issue. The total increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration here.</p> <p>As such, this policy can be screened out.</p>

⁸ Normally defined as regular use by more than 1% of the SPA/Ramsar site population

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications																										
Policy A 13: New allocations on sites within existing settlements	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.																										
Policy A 14: Smaller allocations as extensions to settlements	<p>This policy provides for new residential site allocations and amendments to existing residential site allocations as follows: items crossed through have been removed. Items in bold are new modifications.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="582 316 1836 647"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="582 316 896 379">Location of allocation</th> <th data-bbox="896 316 1209 379"></th> <th data-bbox="1209 316 1523 379">Site area (ha)</th> <th data-bbox="1523 316 1836 379">Minimum no. of dwellings</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="582 379 896 416">Sittingbourne</td> <td data-bbox="896 379 1209 416">2. Manor Farm</td> <td data-bbox="1209 379 1523 416">2.3</td> <td data-bbox="1523 379 1836 416">20 30</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="582 416 896 480" rowspan="2">Minster and Halfway</td> <td data-bbox="896 416 1209 480">3. Jnc. Scocles Road and Elm Lane</td> <td data-bbox="1209 416 1523 480">-</td> <td data-bbox="1523 416 1836 480">50</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="896 480 1209 544">4. Land at Chequers Road</td> <td data-bbox="1209 480 1523 544">-</td> <td data-bbox="1523 480 1836 544">10</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="582 544 896 608">Faversham</td> <td data-bbox="896 544 1209 608">8. West of Brogdale Road</td> <td data-bbox="1209 544 1523 608">-</td> <td data-bbox="1523 544 1836 608">66</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="582 608 896 647"></td> <td data-bbox="896 608 1209 647"></td> <td data-bbox="1209 608 1523 647"></td> <td data-bbox="1523 608 1836 647"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="582 679 1227 703"><u>3. Jnc. Scocles Road and Elm Lane: (site allocation SW/705)</u></p> <p data-bbox="582 703 2123 842">This site is located 2km north of the Swale SPA/Ramsar site, 1.5km from the nearest area of grazing marsh according to MAGIC and 1.2km from the nearest section of coast. Site is located immediately adjacent to existing development and appears to be fallow grassland. There is no indication that it is likely to be of significance for SPA birds and the site is too distant from the SPA or the nearest area of grazing marsh to have a site-specific effect. It is considered that no site-specific recreational pressure effect is expected, except as part of the 'in combination' growth of housing in Swale borough generally.</p> <p data-bbox="582 874 1128 898"><u>4. Land at Chequers Road: (site allocation SW/457)</u></p> <p data-bbox="582 898 2123 1037">This site is located 2.5km north of the Swale SPA/Ramsar site and the nearest significant area of grazing marsh. Site is located close to existing housing development and appears to consist of overgrown grassland and scrub which all render it very unlikely to provide important high tide roosting/foraging habitat for SPA birds and the site is too distant from the SPA or the nearest area of grazing marsh to have a site-specific effect. Coupled with the small number of dwellings proposed it is considered that no site-specific recreational pressure effect is expected, except as part of the 'in combination' growth of housing in Swale borough generally.</p> <p data-bbox="582 1069 1122 1093"><u>8. West of Brogdale Road: (site allocation SW/441)</u></p> <p data-bbox="582 1093 2123 1204">Located 2km south of The Swale SPA/Ramsar site on the opposite side of Faversham. Aerial photography indicates that this is a fallow grassland field. Location on the far side of Faversham indicates it is unlikely to constitute important high tide roosting/foraging habitat for SPA/Ramsar birds. It is sufficiently distant from the SPA/Ramsar site that no site-specific recreational pressure effect is expected, except as part of the 'in combination' growth of housing in Swale borough generally.</p> <p data-bbox="582 1260 1167 1284"><u>16. Land East of Station Road: (site allocation SW/144)</u></p> <p data-bbox="582 1284 1693 1316">See modification 128 (Policy New AX 8: Land East of Station Road, Teynham) for screening assessment</p> <p data-bbox="582 1348 2078 1396">The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration.</p>				Location of allocation		Site area (ha)	Minimum no. of dwellings	Sittingbourne	2. Manor Farm	2.3	20 30	Minster and Halfway	3. Jnc. Scocles Road and Elm Lane	-	50	4. Land at Chequers Road	-	10	Faversham	8. West of Brogdale Road	-	66				
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Sittingbourne	2. Manor Farm	2.3	20 30																								
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	4. Land at Chequers Road	-	10																								
Faversham	8. West of Brogdale Road	-	66																								

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
	Other modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications
Policy MU 1: Land at North-West Sittingbourne	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications
Policy MU 2: Land at North-East Sittingbourne	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy New MUX 1: Land at south-west Sittingbourne	<p>This is a new policy relating to new site allocation SW/703. It provides for 565 new dwellings. The site is located 4km from the Swale SPA/Ramsar site. Aerial photography indicates that this site is a complex of arable fields. Location on the far side of Sittingbourne at a distance of 4km from the SPA indicates that it is unlikely to constitute important high tide roosting/foraging habitat for SPA/Ramsar birds.</p> <p>This site does have potential to result in in-combination impacts upon the designated sites as a result of increased recreational pressure from new housing. The modifications include reference to the need to include '<i>financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy</i>' to address this issue. The total increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration here.</p> <p>This policy can be screened out.</p>
Policy MU 3: Land at Frogna Lane, Teynham	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy MU 4: The Oare gravel workings, Oare Road, Faversham	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy MU 5: Land at Lady Dane Farm, east of Love Lane	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy New MUX 2: Perry Court Farm, Faversham	<p>This is a new policy relating to site allocation SW/413. It provides for a minimum of 370 new dwellings and 3ha of B1a, B1b, B1c class employment use. The site is located 2km south of The Swale SPA/Ramsar site on the opposite side of Faversham. Aerial photography indicates that this is a complex of arable fields. Location on the far side of Faversham indicates it is unlikely to constitute important high tide roosting/foraging habitat for SPA/Ramsar birds. It is sufficiently distant from the SPA/Ramsar site that no site-specific recreational pressure effect is expected, except as part of the 'in combination' growth of housing in Swale borough generally.</p> <p>The modifications include reference to the need to include '<i>financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy</i>' to address this issue. The total increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration here.</p> <p>As such, this policy can be screened out.</p>
Policy Regen 1: Central Sittingbourne regeneration area	<p>This policy wording has not itself changed. However, the main modifications associated with this policy have identified that the quantum of some SHLAA sites already mentioned in association with this policy has increased, while an additional SHLAA site has been referenced (Land at The former Bell Centre, Bell Road: The redevelopment of this site for residential development, offices and community facilities will be able to provide a minimum of 120 dwellings).. As with the other SHLAA sites in this area that have already been identified in the Local Plan, the only potential for impact on European sites from the former Bell Centre is the incombination recreational pressure impact. This has been addressed already in the policy which states 'Ensure that, through both on and off site measures, any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy'. As such, the main modifications associated with this policy can be screened out.</p>
Policy Regen 2: Queenborough and Rushenden Regeneration Area	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
Policy New Regen 3: The Port of Sheerness Regeneration Area	<p>This is a new policy providing for the regeneration of the port area at Sheerness, including the maintenance and enhancement of the port. This has potential to impact upon the Outer Thames Estuary SPA (see paragraph 6.3 of the April 2015 HRA for background/ previous screening). Any port expansion at Sheerness would result in an increase in patterns or levels of shipping and recreational boating. It is not possible to undertake HRA in detail at this level since the details of the regeneration are still be determined. To ensure no likely significant effect result, the initial iteration of this report made the following recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> it is recommended that development proposals for the Port of Sheerness are accompanied by a project specific HRA to ensure that the integrity of the Outer Thames Estuary SPA and other European sites is retained. <p>This recommendation has now been incorporated into the policy, and as such it is considered that this policy can be screened out, since it now provides a sufficient mechanism to require and facilitate the delivery of measures and safeguards to protect the European sites.</p>
Policy New Regen 4: Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne, Regeneration Area	<p>This is a new policy, supporting proposals <i>'that will consolidate and expand its role as a business cluster of regional significance, specialising in technology and knowledge-based businesses'</i>. The site is located 4.8km from the Swale designated sites. This policy has potential to result in reductions in air quality and water quality. Impact pathways relating to employment space were screened out within the April 2015 HRA so do not require further consideration. As previously detailed within the April 2015 HRA, the Plan contains suitable policy to ensure that no likely significant effects result.</p> <p>This policy can be screened out.</p>
Policy NP 1: Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan	<p>This policy is not subject to change. The housing numbers advocated for this area by Policy ST4 have reduced following the recommendations of the Examiner for the Neighbourhood Plan. A reduction in housing numbers does not introduce new likely significant effects.</p>
Policy AS 1: Safeguarded area of search: Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road - The A2 link	<p>This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.</p>
Policy DM 1: Maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres and other areas	<p>Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.</p>
Policy DM 2: Proposals for main town centre uses	<p>Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.</p>
Policy DM 3: The rural economy	<p>This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.</p>
Policy DM 4: New holiday parks or extensions to existing parks	<p>This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.</p>
Policy DM 5: The occupancy of holiday parks	<p>This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.</p>
Policy DM 6: Managing transport demand and impact	<p>Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.</p>
Policy DM 7: Vehicle parking	<p>This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.</p>
Policy DM 8: Affordable housing	<p>Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.</p>
Policy DM 9: Rural exceptions housing	<p>Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.</p>
Policy DM 10: Gypsy and Traveller	<p>Modifications to this policy are small. They provide for increased protection of designated sites via the provision of the following text: 'Cause <i>no</i></p>

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
sites	<p><i>significant harm to the AONB, national/local landscape or biodiversity designations...</i></p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>
Policy DM 11: Extensions to, and replacement of, dwellings in the rural area	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy DM 12: Dwellings for rural workers	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 13: Extending the garden of a dwelling in the rural area	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 14: General development criteria	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 15: New shopfronts, signs and advertisements	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 16: Alterations and extensions	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 17: Open space, sports and recreation provision	<p>The provision of open space, sports and recreation provision is positive, as these sites can be used to divert recreational pressure away from internationally designated sites.</p> <p>In the original iteration of this HRA the following recommendation was made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifications to this policy provide the definition for 'destination sites' used for the provision of open space and recreational purposes. The definition of 'destination sites': '<i>Includes areas recognised for significant importance and biodiversity</i>' The inclusion of this text could provide for increased recreational use of internationally designated sites, with potential to result in likely significant effects upon a designated site. Whilst this modification does not explicitly state internationally designated sites (it states '<i>local nature reserves, woodlands and country parks</i>'), it does not provide sufficient clarity and protection. It is recommended that this policy is re-worded to clearly ensure that the location of new open space and recreational activities do not result in increased levels of recreational pressure in internationally designated sites. <p>This recommendation has now been incorporated into the policy, and as such it is considered that this policy can be screened out, since it now provides a sufficient mechanism to require and facilitate the delivery of measures and safeguards to protect the European sites</p>
Policy DM 18: Local green spaces	Modifications to this policy provide for an additional local greens space: Holmside Recreation Field (0.8ha in size). This site does not provide any impact pathways and can be screened out.
Policy DM 19: Sustainable design and construction	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy DM 20: Renewable and low carbon energy	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy DM 21: Water, flooding and drainage	<p>Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications. Changes are positive: '<i>Protect water quality, including safeguarding ground water source protection zones from pollution, to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency</i>'.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
Policy DM 22: The coast	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 23: Coastal change management	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 24: Conserving and enhancing valued landscapes	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 25: The separation of settlements - Important Local Countryside Gaps	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy DM 26: Rural lanes	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 27: The keeping and grazing of horses	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 28: Biodiversity and geological conservation	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy DM 29: Woodlands, trees and hedges	This policy has been re-written. It relates to woodlands, trees and hedgerows. There are no impact pathways present. This policy can be screened out.
Policy DM 30: Enabling development for landscape and biodiversity enhancement	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy DM 31: Agricultural land	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 32: Development involving listed buildings	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 33: Development affecting a conservation area	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 34: Scheduled Monuments and archaeological sites	Modifications to this policy do not have HRA implications.
Policy DM 35: Historic parks and gardens	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 36: Area of high townscape value	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy Imp 1: Implementation and Delivery Plan	Modifications to this policy do not have HRA implications.

2.3 Screening of Sites Identified in Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan Development Targets

2.3.1 The below table is the screening assessment of modification 49 (Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan Development Targets) as identified in Table 2. Text in **bold** is new text, text ~~crossed through~~ has been deleted. Only sites where there is a modification have been included in this table.

2.3.2 Where the 'HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications' column is coloured **green**, this indicates that the modifications to policy will not result in a new impact pathway beyond that previously addressed within the April 2015 HRA and the modifications to the policy can be screened out from impacting upon the integrity of internationally designated sites. If this column is coloured **orange**, this indicates that there is potential for the modifications to Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan Development Targets to result in likely significant effects upon an internationally designated site alone. Recommendations are included to enable site allocations to be screened out.

2.3.3 In-combination impact have been assessed within the April 2015 HRA and the September 2015 Housing Scenario assessment. No modifications to polices will result in in-combination effects beyond those discussed below.

Table 3: Screening of Sites Identified in Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan Development Targets

Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan development targets			
Settlement/ site of allocation	Dwellings	Industrial/ office floor space (sq. m)	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
<u>Sittingbourne allocations:</u>			
Land at NW Sittingbourne (comprising land north of Quinton Road, land at Pheasant Farm, Bramblefield Lane and land at Great Grovehurst Farm)	1,370 1,450	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Land at SW Sittingbourne	564	0	This is a new site allocation SW/703. Please refer to Table 2 for screening of associated modification 110, Policy New AX 1: Land at south-west Sittingbourne for screening assessment.
Milton Pipes (Cooks Lane)	190 240	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Crown Quay Lane	465 650	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Manor Farm	20 30	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Within the central regeneration area	296 567	38,191 , To be determined within future phases	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Total Sittingbourne</u>	3,585 4,417 (excl. 50)	238,091 153,985	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale.

Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan development targets			
Settlement/ site of allocation	Dwellings	Industrial/ office floor space (sq. m)	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
	beyond plan period)		There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Faversham allocations:</u>			
Land at the Western Link	240 250	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Oare gravel workings, Oare Road	300 330	1,500	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Lady Dane Farm, east of Love Lane (Phase I and II)	200 260	20,000	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Land north of Graveney Road	90	0	This is a new site allocation SW/334. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 120, Policy: New AX 3: Land north of Graveney Road, Faversham for screening assessment
Perry Court Farm, Ashford Road	370	18,525	This is a new site allocation SW/413. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 158, and Policy: New MUX 2: Perry Court Farm, Faversham for screening assessment.
Land west of Brogdale Road	66	0	This is a new site allocation SW/441. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 132, and Policy: A 14: New allocations on sites within existing settlements 8. West of Brogdale Road for screening assessment
Preston Fields, Salters Lane	217	0	This is a new site allocation SW/233. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 122, and Policy: New AX 4: Land at Preston Fields, Faversham) for screening assessment.
<u>Total Faversham (including a reduction in the quantum to be delivered in the Neighbourhood Plan area from 103 to 94)</u>	905 1,739	34,800 53,325	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Minster & Halfway allocations:</u>			
Belgrave Road	140	0	This is a new site allocation SW/194. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 116, and Policy New AX 2: Land at Belgrave Road, Minster for screening assessment.
Land west of Barton Hill drive	620	0	This is a new site allocation SW/165. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 114, and Policy New AX 1: Land west of Barton Hill Drive, Minster for screening assessment
Jnc Scocles Road and Elm Lane	50	0	This is a new site allocation SW/705. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 132, and Policy A 14 New allocations on sites within existing settlements 3. Jnc. Scocles Road and Elm Lane for screening assessment
Land at Chequers Road	10	0	This is a new site allocation SW/457. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 132, and Policy A 14 New allocations on sites within existing settlements 4. Land at Chequers Road for screening assessment.
Plover Road (Thistle Hill)	130 97	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale.

Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan development targets			
Settlement/ site of allocation	Dwellings	Industrial/ office floor space (sq. m)	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
			There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Scocles Road (Thistle Hill)	294 473	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Total Minster and Halfway</u>	619 1,494	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Queenborough & Rushenden allocations:</u>			
Within the regeneration area	1,135 1,180	137,011	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Total Queenborough & Rushenden</u>	1,200 1,245	125,440 142,611	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Iwade allocations:</u>			
Village expansion (north, east and southern areas)	572	0	This is new site allocations SW/117, SW/183 and SW/123. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 124 and Policy New AX 5: Iwade for screening assessment. Due to the proximity of these sites to designated sites, these site allocations are discussed further in Modification 132. Ultimately, changes were made to the Iwade Expansion policy that enabled it to be screened out.
<u>Total Iwade</u>	31 603	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Newington allocations:</u>			
Land north of High Street	115	0	This is new site allocation SW/407. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 126 Policy New AX 6: Land rear of High Street, Newington for screening assessment
<u>Total Newington</u>	14 129	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Teynham Allocations:</u>			
Land east of Station Road	120 107	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified

Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan development targets			
Settlement/ site of allocation	Dwellings	Industrial/ office floor space (sq. m)	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
<u>Total Teynham</u>	423 410	26,840	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>From within broad locations (windfalls):</u>			The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Within the defined built-up area boundaries of Sittingbourne, Faversham, Sheerness, Queenborough, Halfway and Minster.	915 823	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Within the defined built-up area boundaries of villages and in the wider rural area in accordance with national planning policy	430 387	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Total broad locations</u>	1,345 1,210	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Pending losses arising from draft allocations</u>			
To be deducted from provision being made	1	96,950 44,380	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>TOTAL PROVISION BEING MADE</u>	11,314 14,124 (excl. 91-50 dwellings phased beyond the plan period.)	533,490 499,299	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Surplus against planned requirement	932	369,299	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Planned Area totals (committed and allocated dwellings)	Thames Gateway 12,053(85%)		The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
	Faversham and rest of Swale 2,121 (15%)		The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified

3 Conclusion

3.1 Discussion

- 3.1.1 Table 2 and Table 3 undertook the screening assessment of the modifications to policy identified in Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan: Proposed Main Modifications June 2016. Modifications provide for an increase in housing provision within Swale from 10,800 new dwellings previously identified in the publication version - Local Plan, up to 13,192 new dwellings within the Proposed Main Modifications document. As previously stated, proposed modifications identify a target for housing provision of 13,192 dwellings to the end of the plan period, up from 10,800, an increase of 2,392 new dwellings from the April 2015 HRA. In practice, the actual provision during the plan period is 14,130 dwellings (831 dwellings per annum) due to a surplus contingency of dwellings being allocated over and above the housing target. The September 2015 Housing Scenario analysis assessed a hypothetical increase in housing provision in Swale of up to 861 new dwellings per annum. That analysis concluded that no likely significant effects would result, provided that residential development within 6km of the internationally designated sites (and particularly large developments beyond 6km) pay appropriate financial contributions towards delivery of the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) for the Swale SPA and Ramsar site, and Medway Estuary and Marshes SPA and Ramsar site. As previously highlighted, the conclusions of the Housing Scenario analysis were theoretical and would require verification through monitoring of the effectiveness of the SAMMS delivery. The provision of new dwellings in The Swale Borough Local Plan: Proposed Main Modifications June 2016 document is less than the worst case scenario assessed in the September 2015 Housing Scenario analysis, and this overall increase in housing provision of new dwellings identified within the Proposed Main Modifications document can be screened out providing the SAMMS strategy is contributed to appropriately.
- 3.1.2 Modifications also provide for 130,000sq.m of B Class Employment floor space rather than a jobs target of 7,053. Impact pathways relating to employment space were screened out within the April 2015 HRA and as such modifications that resulted in changes to quantum of employment floor space do not require further consideration within this document.
- 3.1.3 In the initial iteration of this HRA report, the screening undertaken in Table 2 identified three policies that potentially contained impact pathways that could result in likely significant effects upon internationally designated sites. Recommendations were made to enable policies to be screened out. Related to the Iwade Expansion policy New AX 5, a single modification (site allocation SW/117, SW183, SW123) was also identified in Table 3. Modifications that required further discussion and recommendations to enable modifications to be screened out are summarised as follows:

Policy New AX 5: Iwade Expansion

- 3.1.4 This is a new policy for a new site allocation that is located immediately adjacent to the Swale SPA/Ramsar site. The site provides for 572 new dwellings. Potential impact pathways include:
- recreational pressure (alone and in-combination),
 - disturbance from construction and operational activities,
 - loss of supporting habitat,
 - impact pathways relating to surface runoff, and
 - dust deposition
- 3.1.5 The following text acknowledges the sensitivity of this site and provides the following protection for internationally designated sites:
- 3.1.6 'The Masterplan and planning applications will: ...Be informed by an appropriate Habitats Regulations Assessment to include on site mitigation in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) for protected habitats species and off-site contributions for residual impacts further afield, in accordance with Policy CP7 and DM28' Modification 163.' This policy also provides for 'existing/new footpath and cycle routes' which have potential to lead to an increase in

recreational pressure on the designated site dependant on where these routes are located. These would therefore require careful designing at the planning application stage.

- 3.1.7 Due to the location of the site within arable land in close proximity to the Swale SPA/Ramsar site, this new policy has potential to act as functionally supportive habitat to SPA bird features. To inform the HRA assessment of this project it is recommended that wintering bird surveys are conducted to determine if significant populations of designated birds use the site as functionally supporting habitat, to enable appropriate avoidance measures to be identified and implemented.
- 3.1.8 Given the proximity to the European sites it is also recommended that that wording similar to the following is included in Policy AX5 (or possibly in the preamble, since it is an advisory note for the benefit of the applicant): 'In addition to recreational pressure considerations, the HRA will need to include assessment of impact pathways from disturbance including noise, lighting or visual intrusion on the integrity of the European designated SPA/Ramsar site both during construction and throughout the operation of the site. Planning permissions should ensure that necessary mitigation is provided as necessary to address these issues'.

Policy New Regen X 1: The Port of Sheerness Regeneration Area

- 3.1.9 This is a new policy providing for the regeneration of the Sheerness port area including the maintenance and enhancement of the port. This has potential to impact upon the Outer Thames Estuary SPA. (see paragraph 6.3 of the April 2015 HRA for background/ previous screening). Any port expansion at Sheerness would result in an increase in patterns or levels of shipping and recreational boating. To ensure no likely significant effect result, it is recommended that development proposals for the Port of Sheerness are accompanied by a project specific HRA to ensure the integrity of the Outer Thames Estuary SPA is retained.

Policy DM 17: Open space, sports and recreation provision

- 3.1.10 The provision of open space, sports and recreation provision is positive. These facilities can be used to divert recreational pressure away from internationally designated sites, reducing/ preventing pressures from recreational activities occurring.
- 3.1.11 Modifications to this policy provide the definition for 'destination sites' used for the provision of open space and recreational purposes. The definition of 'destination sites' is as follows: '*Includes areas recognised for significant importance and biodiversity*'. The inclusion of this text could provide for increased recreational use of internationally designated sites, with potential to result in likely significant effects upon designated sites. Whilst this modification does not explicitly state internationally designated sites (it states '*local nature reserves, woodlands and country parks*'), it does not provide sufficient clarity to prevent internationally import biodiversity sites being used for these types of recreation.
- 3.1.12 It is recommended that this policy is re-worded to clearly ensure that the location of new open space and recreational activities do not result in increased levels of recreational pressure in internationally designated sites.

3.2 Other plans and projects

- 3.2.1 A detailed consideration of other plans and projects was made for the spring 2015 HRA of the submitted Local Plan and no significant additional plans and projects have emerged since that time that would lead to new potential pathways for an in combination effect. The main potential for an in combination effect is that of cumulative recreational pressure in combination with the Local Plans or Core Strategies of other local authorities planning to deliver net additional recreational development within 6km of the Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar site, Medway Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar site and Swale SPA/Ramsar site. This issue has been thoroughly explored in earlier HRAs for the Swale Local Plan and independently as part of the strategic access management and monitoring strategy. The contribution of housing set out in the Swale Local Plan to mitigation of this in combination effect is already set out in Local Plan policy. As such, no new in combination effect arises from these Proposed Main Modifications.

3.3 Conclusion

- 3.3.1 All of these recommendations have now been incorporated into the relevant policies, and as such it is considered that the Proposed Main Modifications can be screened out (i.e. that they will not result in a Likely Significant Effect either alone or in combination), since they now provide a sufficient

mechanism to require and facilitate the delivery of measures and safeguards to protect the European sites.

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