

Beacon Park Local Development Order (LDO)

Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening

October 2021



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1. Introduction

Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) process

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the implications of the Beacon Park Local Development Order (LDO) on National Site Network Habitat Sites (Habitat Sites), in terms of any possible harm to the habitats and species that form an interest feature of the Habitat Sites. The LDO has therefore been screened for 'likely significant effects' on Habitat Sites. This will be undertaken in accordance with 'The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017' (as amended).
- 1.2 This screening report has been informed by the HRAs prepared for the Local Plan Core Strategy and the Local Plan Part 2. The Local Plan safeguarded and allocated Beacon Park for high-tech employment uses, particularly those that support the offshore energy industry.

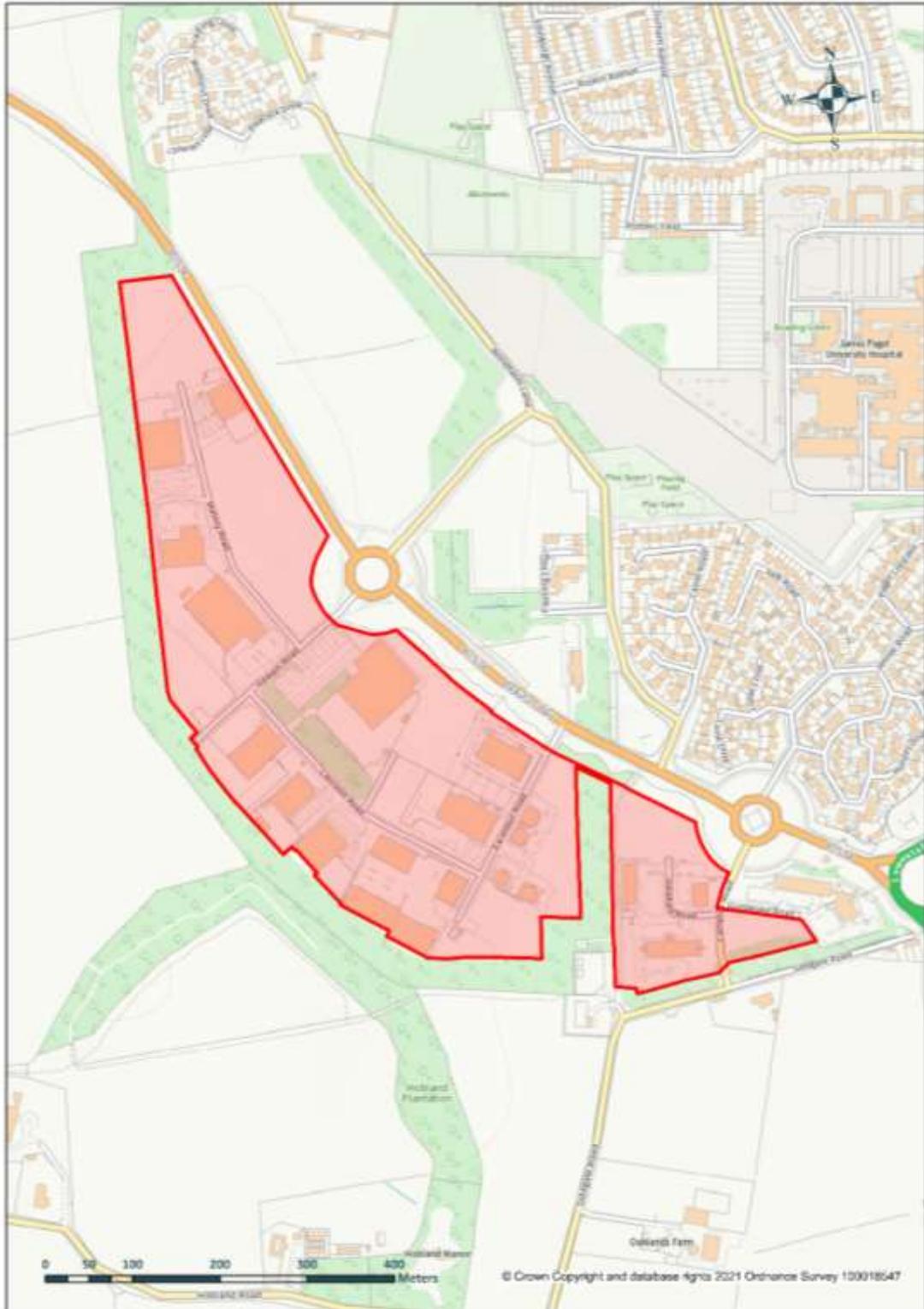
Local Development Orders (LDOs)

- 1.3 A Local Development Order is one of a number of mechanisms that simplify and speed up the planning process. An LDO is a locally focused tool that grants planning permission for specific types of development within a defined geographical area, and by doing so, removes the need for a planning application to be made. Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have powers to create LDOs.
- 1.4 The procedures for making a Local Development Order are set out in [sections 61A to 61D](#) and [Schedule 4A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#), as amended, and [articles 38 and 41 of the Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\) \(England\) Order 2015](#).

2. Beacon Park Local Development Order

Site Location

- 2.1 The LDO for Beacon Park comprises 16.7 hectares of land occupied by business units and undeveloped land bounded by landscaping (see Appendix 1). Approximately 5.7 hectares remain undeveloped and available. The area is designated as one of the Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft Enterprise Zone sites. The site area itself has been slightly extended (from that of the area identified in 2012) in the south-east corner to include all of the employment uses.
- 2.2 The site is located to the south west of Gorleston-on-Sea on Norfolk's east coast. Gorleston-on-Sea is a suburb of Great Yarmouth, an internationally renowned centre for the offshore energy industry which also has a high-tech electronics sector. Great Yarmouth's 24-hour port handles a range of cargoes, offering an effective gateway to Northern Europe.



2.3

Figure 1 - Beacon Park Local Development Order

2.4 Beacon Park lies adjacent to the A47 corridor between Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, which provides excellent access to both of these settlements. While a larger area comprising a new residential development is also referred to as 'Beacon Park', for the purpose of this LDO, Beacon Park refers only to the existing business park south of Beaufort Way. The majority of the site is now developed following the success of the 2012 LDO. The development to date has been well-designed set within high quality landscaping.

Development description

- 2.5 Great Yarmouth Borough Council (GYBC) has created this LDO to help enable the further development of Beacon Park. The intention is to allow greater permitted development rights for new business-related development within Beacon Park. The aim is to foster economic growth and provide the opportunity for service, high-tech/research and development sector businesses, particularly those associated with the off-shore energy industry to prosper and grow, through a simplified planning process created by the LDO. The LDO was originally adopted in March 2012 for this site, of which this updated LDO will replace. It has been very successful in encouraging inward investment and development on the site with the majority of the site now developed.
- 2.6 The retention of an LDO for the site will continue to reduce the number of planning applications required for business related development on the site, thereby providing the opportunity to speed up the planning process whilst ensuring a suitable measure of quality control. This will continue to be a major benefit to businesses wishing to locate to the area and will provide a degree of certainty as to the type of development which will be acceptable, thereby saving prospective occupiers time and money.
- 2.7 As part of the work associated with the creation of the original LDO adopted in March 2012, a detailed design code specific to Beacon Park was produced. In producing the design code, the existing character of the area was carefully assessed together with the Council's aspirations for the area, thereby providing a clear understanding of the general types of development which would be considered acceptable. The March 2012 LDO has resulted in the creation of a high quality business environment. Therefore, this new LDO retains and updates the detailed design code to ensure future development meets this standard.
- 2.8 The updated LDO provides an opportunity to review and amend the type of development permitted and accordingly revise the design code. Generally, the permitted use within the order has remained unchanged, the main change being an added restriction to prevent change of permitted use from office use to other Class E uses, following changes to the national use classes order. The design code has been updated to reflect and follow the headings of the recently published [National Model Design Code](#).
- 2.9 The LDO grants planning permission for the following classes of development:
- Class 1: Site Investigation
 - Class 2: Offices and Light Industrial
 - Class 3: Electronic Communications
- 2.10 The permissions are subject to conditions and limitations contained within the LDO. Development under Class 2 and Class 3 must be in accordance with the requirements of the accompanying Design Code. Of particular relevance to this SEA screening report, permission will not apply to Schedule 1 or 2 (where significant effects have been identified through a screening assessment) EIA development. There are also other limitations relating to highway

works and mineral and waste matters. The design code itself sets out the parameters which detailed plans must meet for LDO consent to be formally granted.



Figure 2 – Aerial Photograph of Beacon Park Local Development Order

3. Habitat Sites

- 3.1 Using a precautionary principle, this screening report has assessed impacts on Habitat Sites at a 20km radius of the LDO site at Beacon Park. This buffer is used as it is deemed precautionary enough to capture most potential impact pathways (i.e. the means by which a Habitat Site may be affected). Habitat Sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special

Protection Areas (SPAs). However, as national planning policy gives Ramsar sites the same protection as SACs and SPAs, these have also been included. . Habitat Sites can be terrestrial or marine.

3.2 The following sites are within 20km of the proposed LDO area.

Terrestrial Habitat Sites		
Special Protection Areas	Special Area of Conservation	Ramsar Site
Breydon Water	The Broads	Breydon Water
Broadland	Winterton-Horsey Dunes	Broadland
North Denes	Benacre to Easton Barents	
Benacre to Easton Barents		
Marine Habitat Sites		
Special Protection Areas	Special Area of Conservation	Ramsar Site
Outer Thames Estuary	Southern North Sea	
Greater Wash	Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton	

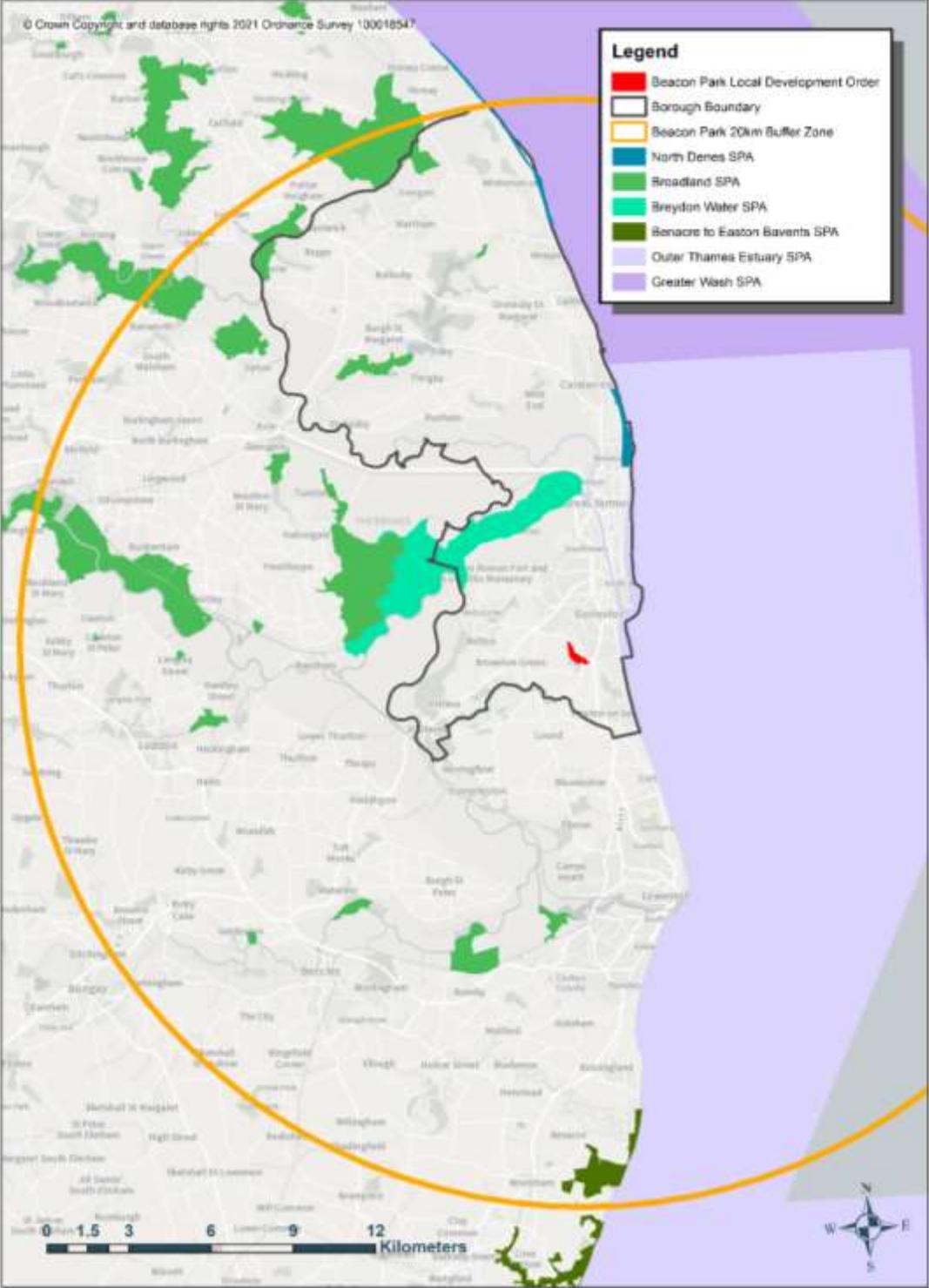


Figure 3 - Special Protection Areas within 20km of the Beacon Park Local Development Order

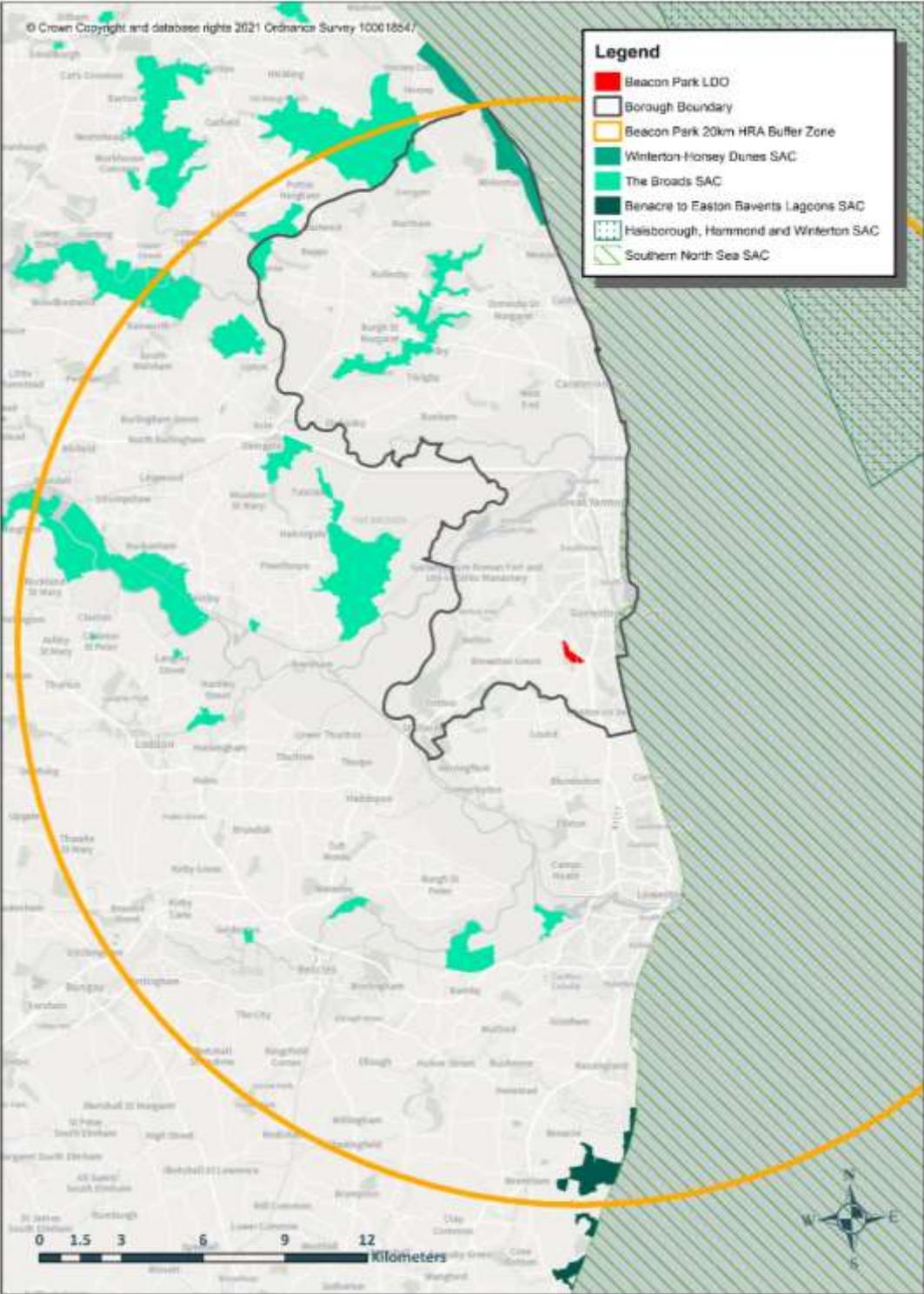


Figure 4 - Special Areas of Conservation within 20km of Beacon Park Local Development Order

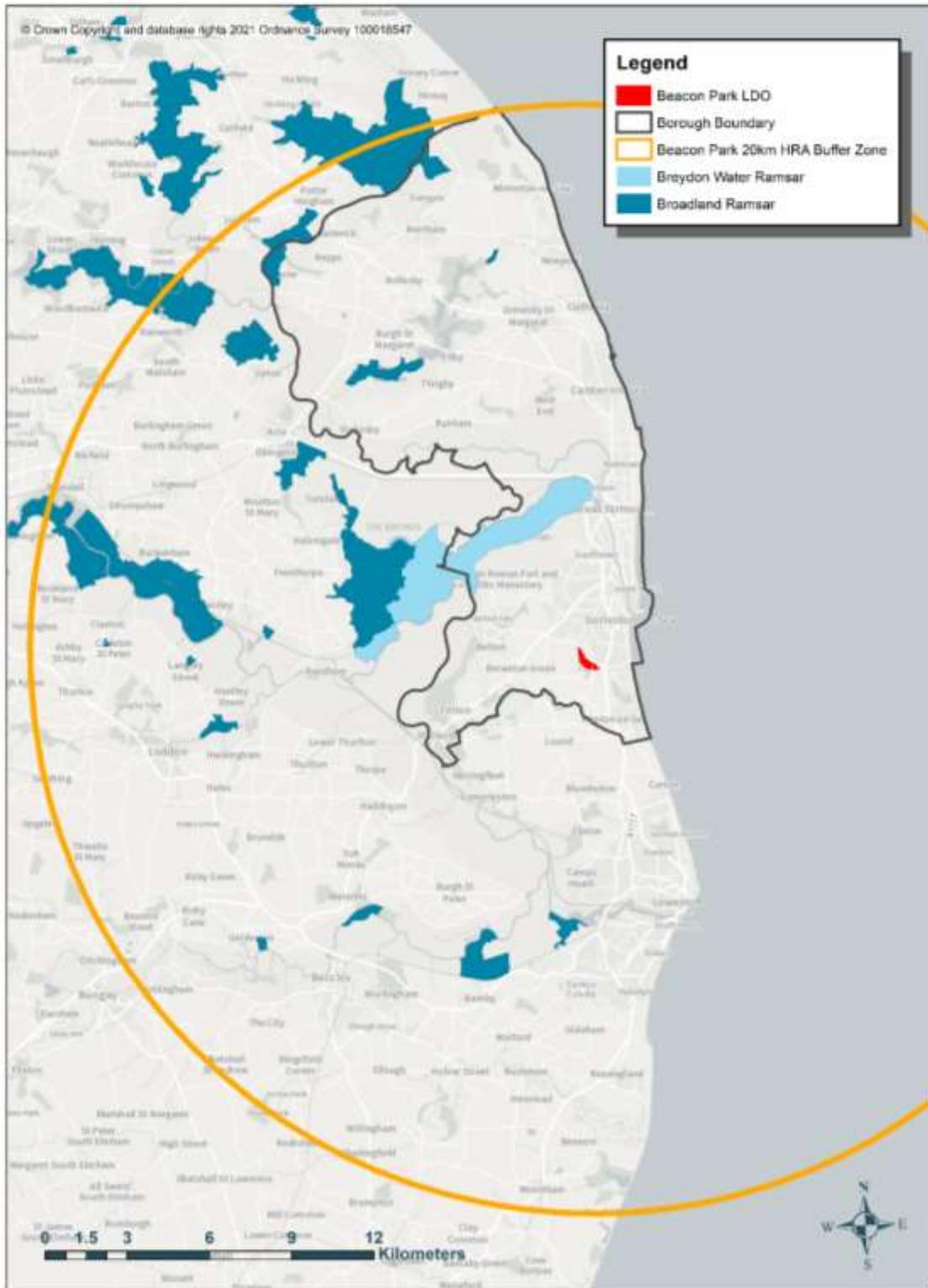


Figure 5 - Ramsar sites within 20km of the Beacon Park Local Development Order

4. Establishing Impact Pathways

- 4.1 Impact pathways are identifiable means by which the plan or project could potentially affect a Habitat Site. The HRAs prepared for the Local Plan Core Strategy and the Local Plan Part 2 identified impacts from recreation such as disturbance, trampling, increased fire risk and enrichment such as through dog fouling. These impacts are mainly associated with North

Denes, Winterton-Horsey Dunes and to a lesser extent within the Borough, the Broads network of sites. It is, however, considered unlikely that a limited range of employment-related uses on a business park will add to existing recreational pressures.

- 4.2 There is the potential for water issues related to water quality and water quantity (i.e. water availability). Run-off, outflow from sewage treatments and overflow from septic tanks can result in increased nutrient loads and contamination of water courses. This should, however, be considered in the context of the LDO site at Beacon Park which is located 4.2km south of the closest terrestrial sites, Breydon Water, and 1.2km from the coastline where the closest marine site, the Outer Thames Estuary is. The LDO permits light industrial uses, where waste products, drainage or construction may have the potential to drain into the ground. However, there are limited hydrological links to these habitats from the site and for large water bodies such as those directly connected to the North Sea, it is likely that any pollutants (which would be minimal given the distance required to travel) could easily be dispersed and would not have an impact.
- 4.3 In terms of air quality, Great Yarmouth Borough does not have any specific identified air quality concerns and does not hold any air quality management areas (AQMAs). Whilst these relate to human health, they highlight a potential air quality concern that may also be relevant for sensitive habitats. It is also anticipated that traffic congestion within Great Yarmouth will be improved with the new river crossing under construction. The impact of air quality must be considered more in cumulative terms associated with Beacon Park, as any net increase will be fractional by comparison to existing impacts. Even in this context, the remaining vacant space on the business park is limited and therefore the potential for significant impacts is reduced. The HRAs prepared for the Local Plan Core Strategy and the Local Plan Part 2 concluded that the Borough is not a focus for intensive growth and that air quality impacts can be ruled out.
- 4.4 Abstraction and land management can influence water flow and quantity, resulting in reduced water availability at certain periods or changes in the flow. Such impacts particularly relate to aquatic and wetland habitats. The LPP2 HRA was able to conclude in consultation with the Environment Agency and Natural England that while there were issues with local water supply, the Water Cycle Strategy Scoping Study, published jointly with the neighbouring Waveney District Council in 2009, demand through planned growth (including Beacon Park) could be met with adequate protection for Habitat Sites.
- 4.5 On the basis of the above considerations and the distance between the LDO site and Habitat Sites, impacts to the following Habitat Sites can be ruled out:
- North Denes SPA
 - Winterton-Horsey Dunes SAC
 - Outer Thames Estuary SPA
 - Greater Wash SPA
 - Southern North Sea SAC
 - Benacre to Easton Bavents SAC/SPA
- 4.6 The remaining Habitat Sites: Breydon Water SPA/Ramsar, Broadland SPA/Ramsar, and The Broads SAC, must be considered further for potential impacts, 'likely significant effects', associated with water quality.

5. Screening for likely significant effects

- 5.1 The potential risk identified from the above impact pathways, is that activities permitted through the LDO may have the potential to impact upon the water quality of some nearby Habitat Sites. However, Beacon Park is over 4km south-east of the closest terrestrial site, this being Breydon Water, which is not hydrologically connected to the site. Any drainage from Beacon Park is likely to flow south towards Lound Lakes and Fritton Lake, providing more opportunity for any pollutant to disperse and dissipate. There are no watercourses that would connect the site seawards to the marine Habitat Sites, particularly given the extent of built up area in between. Therefore, the actual risk associated with the potential for water pollution is therefore **not considered to be a 'likely significant effect'**.
- 5.2 The LDO does not propose specific uses, however, all individual schemes will be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) thresholds (under schedules 1 and 2) and LDO consent will not be granted should it be determined that any development has environment impacts. It is also important to acknowledge that Beacon Park is a business park is largely built out and therefore the additionality from vacant plots or change of use of existing plots is limited.

In-combination/Cumulative Effects

- 5.3 The Beacon Park site has also been subject to HRA of the Local Plan Part 2 which considered the allocation of the business park and the in-combination effects with other policies of the plan. The in-combination effects identified in that HRA were associated with recreational impacts from residential and tourist development; the employment activities permitted through the LDO will not impact upon recreation disturbance. Therefore, this screening assessment confirms that there is no **'likely significant effect'** in-combination.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 This HRA Screening Assessment has been prepared to consider whether there are 'likely significant effects' on nearby Habitat Sites associated with the LDO at Beacon Park.
- 6.2 The conclusion of **'no likely significant effects'** alone and in-combination has been determined having considered the limited scope of development activities, the distance to Habitat Sites, and consequently the limited potential of impacts on those Habitat Sites. Accordingly, no Appropriate Assessment is required as there will be no adverse effects on Habitat Sites integrity. This decision is made in accordance with Regulation 80 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)