

Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP) – Schedule of Modifications

August 2017

This report forms an addendum to the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) of the Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP) Revised Proposed Submission Document.

The European Directive (92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (the Habitats Directive) protects habitats and species of European nature conservation importance. The Habitats Directive establishes a network of internationally important sites designated for their ecological status. These are referred to as Natura 2000 sites or European Sites, and comprise Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

Articles 6 (3) and 6 (4) of the Habitats Directive require Appropriate Assessment (AA) to be undertaken on proposed plans or projects which are not necessary for the management of the site but which are likely to have a significant effect on one or more Natura 2000 sites either individually, or in-combination with other plans and projects. This requirement is set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (as amended) 2010, which require the application of HRA to all land use plans. Government guidance also requires that Ramsar sites (which support internationally important wetland habitats) and are listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention 1971) are included within HRA/AA.

The HRA Screening Report concluded that suggested policies in the SCAAP, in conjunction with the Southend on Sea Core Strategy and related documents, will not have a significant effect on European sites. The policies, it considered, will ensure that European sites are protected and enhanced for the benefit of both the bird populations which frequent that marshes and mudflats, and the residents of Southend and wider population who may use the seafront for recreation and tourism.

The Schedule of Modifications does not propose any changes to planning policies within the SCAAP such that they would have potential to have 'a likely significant effect' on one or more nature conservation sites. As such there is no further statement to make in relation to these sites which is not already raised and concluded in the HRA Screening Report (June 2016).