

Norfolk Coast National Landscape Management Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment Adoption Statement

Final report

Prepared by LUC

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The Norfolk Coast Partnership (NCP) adopted the Norfolk Coast National Landscape (NCNL) Management Plan 2025-30 on 12 June 2026.

1.2 NCP was required by law to carry out Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Management Plan as it developed. The method and findings of the SEA process are described in the SEA Report which was published on the NCP website during the development of the Management Plan.

1.3 Regulation 26 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012) requires NCP to make the final SEA Report available alongside the adopted Plan.

1.4 Prior to the adoption of the Management Plan, the following SEA documents were produced:

- An SEA Scoping Report was published for consultation in December 2025.
- An SEA Report that accompanied the draft Management Plan was published for consultation in March 2026.
- A final SEA Report was published in April 2026.

Requirement for the Adoption Statement

1.5 In addition to the requirement in Regulation 26 of the Town and Country Planning (England) Regulations (2012) for the final SEA report to be published alongside the adopted Plan, the SEA Regulations also require a number of steps to be taken upon adoption of a plan (in this case the NCNL Management Plan 2025-30). Specifically, SEA Regulation 16 sets out the post-adoption procedures and requirements for SEA. The planning authority must, as soon as is reasonably practicable after the adoption of a plan for which an SEA has been carried out, make a copy of the plan publicly available alongside a copy of the SEA report and a statement explaining the following:

- How environmental (and sustainability) considerations have been integrated into the Plan.
- How the Environmental Report has been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan.

- How the opinions expressed by the public and consultation bodies during consultation on the plan and the Environmental Report have been taken into account.
- The reasons for choosing the plan as adopted, in light of the other reasonable alternatives considered.
- The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental and sustainability effects of the implementation of the plan.

1.6 NCP must also inform the public, Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency about the availability of these documents.

1.7 The remainder of this Adoption Statement is structured according to the SEA Regulations' requirements listed above, as follows:

- **Chapter 2** summarises how environmental and sustainability considerations have been integrated into the Management Plan, including by explaining who carried out the SEA and what assessment framework was used.
- **Chapter 3** summarises how the Environmental Report has been taken into account, considering the links between the plan-making and SEA process.
- **Chapter 4** summarises the consultation opinions provided on the Environmental Report at each stage and describes how the representations were taken into account.
- **Chapter 5** describes why the adopted Management Plan was chosen by NCP, in light of the reasonable alternatives considered.
- **Chapter 6** describes how the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Management Plan will be monitored.

Chapter 2

How environmental and sustainability considerations have been integrated into NCNL's Management Plan 2025-30

2.1 The purpose of the SEA was to assist NCP in preparing the Management Plan by identifying the environmental baseline conditions in the NCNL and key sustainability issues that face the National Landscape, to predict what the likely effects of the Management Plan on the environment and these issues would be, and to put forward recommendations to mitigate and monitor any significant adverse effects identified. The aim was to help ensure that the Management Plan had as many positive sustainability effects as possible and that any negative effects were avoided or mitigated as far as reasonably possible.

2.2 The SEA process began in November 2025 with the production of a Scoping Report for the NCNL Management Plan 2025-30. The Scoping Report was prepared by LUC on behalf of NCP and was published in December 2025 for a six-week consultation period with statutory consultees (Natural England, The Environment Agency and Historic England). The comments received during the consultation were then reviewed and addressed as appropriate.

2.3 The SEA was undertaken iteratively, such that during the preparation of the Management Plan, the sustainability of the options for the Plan were assessed. The SEA documents produced at each stage are listed in Chapter 1. Information on the options considered in the plan-making process and assessed through the SEA process is set out in Chapter 2 of the April 2026 SEA Report. In this way, environmental and sustainability considerations could be integrated into the Management Plan as it was developed.

2.4 Chapter 3 of this Adoption Statement expands on how the findings of the SEA process were taken into account by NCP through the plan-making process.

2.5 The way in which the environmental and sustainability effects of the Management Plan were consistently described, analysed and compared was through the use of a set of SEA objectives referred to as the 'SEA framework'. The SEA framework used to appraise the Management Plan was developed and consulted upon during the Scoping stage of the SEA process (see above). The SEA objectives were informed by a review of other relevant plans and programmes, baseline analysis and identification of sustainability issues.

2.6 The SEA framework is presented below in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1 SEA Framework for the NCNL Management Plan

SEA objective	Assessment criteria – will the NCNL Management Plan...	SEA Topic(s)
SEA Objective 1: Conserve and enhance the quality, character and distinctiveness of the Norfolk Coast National Landscape.	■ Maintain and enhance the quality, character and distinctiveness of the NCNL? ■ Safeguard the character of National Character Areas? ■ Protect key characteristics of the landscape such as openness, rural character, dark skies, tranquillity, and the sense of remoteness? ■ Support sustainable land management that enhances landscape character? ■ Respect, maintain and strengthen local character, identity and distinctiveness?	■ Landscape
SEA Objective 2: Maintain and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity resources, including protected habitats and species; enhance ecosystem resilience, green infrastructure provision and habitat connectivity.	■ Help to maintain or enhance the condition of SSSIs, including geological SSSIs? ■ Provide opportunities to enhance new and existing wildlife and geological sites? ■ Reduce fragmentation of protected sites by promoting green links and natural corridors? ■ Restore and enhance nature, including appropriate mitigation against impacts on the natural environment? ■ Avoid damage to or destruction of designated wildlife sites, areas of woodland, habitats, species and protected geological features? ■ Help to maintain or enhance the condition and function of coastal habitats, including coastal sand dunes and saltmarsh?	■ Biodiversity, flora, fauna
SEA Objective 3: Protect and enhance the historic and cultural environment and assets (architectural, archaeological, social).	■ Conserve and enhance the historic environment, including heritage assets (designated assets and locally listed assets) and their setting? ■ Safeguard the North Norfolk Heritage Coast? ■ Promote appropriate management of heritage assets, based on local circumstances and individual characteristics, to ensure they remain in appropriate use? ■ Support opportunities to bring heritage assets back into active and appropriate use?	■ Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage
SEA Objective 4: Ensure land is used sustainably by protecting Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land and carbon rich soil.	■ Protect important soil resources, including BMV agricultural land? ■ Protect peatland across the NCNL from degradation and loss? ■ Support the conservation and restoration of peatland?	■ Material assets ■ Soils
SEA Objective 5: Protect and enhance the quality of inland and coastal water environments, and the	■ Protect groundwater quality and water quality within the plan area's watercourses and waterbodies? ■ Ensure compliance with the Water Framework Directive?	■ Water ■ Climatic factors

SEA objective	Assessment criteria – will the NCNL Management Plan...	SEA Topic(s)
quantity and quality of water resources.		- Material assets - Human Health
SEA Objective 6: Reduce emissions and concentrations of harmful atmospheric pollutants and reduce exposure to poor air quality.	Improve air quality within the NCNL area?	- Air - Climatic factors - Human health
SEA Objective 7: Conserve and where possible enhance tranquillity.	- Protect and enhance areas of high tranquillity, particularly areas of dark skies? - Avoid increases in noise and light pollution relating to new development and increased land-use? - Limit disturbance from visitor pressure particularly in relation to sensitive areas? - Avoid noise and light pollution impacts on wildlife, and local communities? - Reduce traffic-related disturbances on tranquillity?	- Landscape - Climatic factors
SEA Objective 8: Reduce vulnerability of the environment and build resilience to the effects of climate change.	- Ensure that communities, existing and new developments and infrastructure systems are resilient to the effects of climate change across the NCNL area? - Support initiatives that manage existing flood risk to ensure that communities in those areas are resilient to flood risk? - Strengthen the natural environment, including protecting and enhancing existing green infrastructure and introducing new natural spaces and green features?	- Climatic factors - Water
SEA Objective 9: Create, maintain and enhance social and physical environments that encourage and support health, well-being and community safety.	- Support healthier lifestyles and support improvements in determinants of health? - Increase access to services including healthcare, open space and suitable recreation opportunities? - Promote access to natural environment and green space, including Public Rights of Way?	- Population - Human health
SEA Objective 10: Diversify and strengthen Norfolk Coast National Landscape's economy and increase the number of employment opportunities.	Support the diversification of the local economy?	- Human health - Material assets
SEA Objective 11: Encourage an inclusive society by tackling social exclusion, promote equality of opportunity, reduce socio-economic disadvantage and promote cohesive and resilient communities.	- Provide equal access to the National Landscape through the delivery of a variety of routes i.e. wider paths, bumper strips to help people living with dementia or those with visual impairments? - Provide resting spots and viewing platforms? - Maintain and enhance the number of community events delivered?	- Population - Human Health

SEA objective	Assessment criteria – will the NCNL Management Plan...	SEA Topic(s)
SEA Objective 12: Reduce the need to travel through the inclusion of active travel infrastructure and its location close to active travel and public transport networks.	■ Improve the active travel network throughout the National Landscape? ■ Improve access to public transport options?	■ Population ■ Material assets ■ Climatic factors ■ Air ■ Human health

Habitats Regulations Assessment

2.7 LUC was also commissioned by NCP to carry out a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the NCNL Management Plan 2025-30. The HRA Screening Report was prepared in March 2026 and published for consultation on NCP's website. The HRA Screening Report concluded that the Plan is a high-level Plan and is a material consideration for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) when considering development proposals, and when developing Local Plans, however the Plan does not propose specific actions or policies with regards to development, growth, or tourism. Therefore, given the nature of the goals and targets, which aim to inform and support partners such as public bodies, LPAs, and eNGOs in delivering their objectives, there are no likely significant effects as a result of the Plan.

2.8 As there is no likely significant effect upon any Habitats Sites arising from this Plan alone, there is no risk that the Plan could contribute to 'in combination' effects with other plans or projects.

2.9 On the basis of the information above, it is determined that the Plan individually and/or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on the Habitats Sites and as a result there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of any Habitats Sites.

2.10 In accordance with the Habitats Directive and transposing legislation, given the information contained in this Screening Report and the conclusion that the Plan will not have a significant effect on the Habitats Sites, the Plan does not need to be subject to Appropriate Assessment.

Chapter 3

How the SEA Report has been taken into account

3.1 The Goals and Targets within the Management Plan were subject to SEA throughout their development. Each goal and target was assessed against the environmental, social and economic objectives in the SEA Framework in order to establish the likely positive and negative effects. It should be noted that the key driver for the Plan is to protect and conserve nature and the landscape. The Plan includes goals and targets to restore, create, and manage habitats and protected sites, encourage sustainability and nature-based solutions, and engage with local communities and stakeholders. As such, the Management Plan has the potential to generate significant positive effects across the full range of SEA objectives in the SEA framework and is not considered to generate any adverse effects as it does not propose any development and its main aim is to protect and enhance the NCNL.

3.2 The preparation of the SEA Reports and how the SEA was taken into account during the plan-making process, is set out below.

SEA Scoping (2025)

3.3 The scoping stage of the SEA involves collating information about the environmental baseline for the Management Plan area and the key environmental issues facing it, as well as information about the policy context for the preparation of the Management Plan. The SEA framework was then developed, setting out the SEA objectives against which the draft Management Plan was appraised. The SEA Scoping Report was published for consultation in December 2025.

SEA Report (2026)

3.4 Following the scoping stage, the draft Management Plan was subject to SEA. The SEA report underwent consultation in March 2026 for three weeks. The following recommendations were made in relation to the draft version of the Management Plan:

- An additional Target could be included under Goal 7: Support people and places to adapt to climate change and build sustainable, resilient communities, which specifically relates to the risk of coastal erosion. Coastal

erosion was highlighted as a key environmental issue in Chapter 3, due to the erodible nature of the North Norfolk Coast.

- An additional Target could be included under Goal 9: Reduce the impacts of developments on landscape character and heritage features within the 'Planning' section, to encourage Local Planning Authorities to promote a retrofit first approach. This approach prioritises adapting existing buildings to improve energy efficiency, sustainability, and functionality over demolition and rebuilding. This aims to reduce embodied carbon and greenhouse gas emissions and can protect local landscape character by reducing the number of new builds.
- A further Target could be included under Goal 9 to encourage Local Planning Authorities and developers to achieve nutrient neutrality in all new developments. Water quality was also highlighted as a key environmental issue in the NCNL, with the majority of rivers and waterbodies classified as Moderate or Poor ecological status and historically failing chemical standards.

3.5 After considering these recommendations, NCP's reasons for not incorporating them are as follows:

- *The Norfolk Coast Partnership does not hold a statutory responsibility for managing coastal erosion. This responsibility lies with the relevant Coastal Authorities, who are equipped with the appropriate powers, funding and mechanisms to deliver shoreline management, risk mitigation and community support. Introducing a specific target on coastal erosion within the Partnership's framework could risk duplicating existing responsibilities, creating confusion among communities and potentially undermining established roles. Feedback from partners also indicates that such overlap would not be well received. Instead, the Partnership will play a complementary role by supporting coordination and communication. This will include signposting communities to existing support, resources and guidance provided by Coastal Authorities and other relevant organisations, as well as helping to raise awareness of adaptation options and resilience planning.*
- *The Norfolk Coast Partnership is not a statutory planning consultee, and decision-making in relation to planning policy and development management sits within the remit of Local Planning Authorities through their Local Plans and associated planning frameworks. While the Partnership is often consulted on emerging plans and significant applications, and provides responses where appropriate, it does not have direct control or influence over the adoption or implementation of specific planning*

policies such as a 'retrofit first' approach. Including a specific target of this nature within the Partnership's framework could therefore risk setting expectations beyond its remit. Instead, the Partnership will continue to engage constructively in Local Plan consultations and planning processes, advocating for high-quality, sustainable development that respects landscape character and heritage, and supporting principles such as reuse and adaptation where opportunities arise.

- *The Norfolk Coast Partnership is not a statutory planning consultee, and matters relating to nutrient neutrality fall primarily within the remit of Local Planning Authorities, statutory bodies and national regulatory frameworks. These organisations are responsible for setting and implementing planning policy, as well as ensuring compliance with environmental regulations and legal requirements. While the Partnership is consulted on relevant plans and applications and can provide comments where appropriate, it does not have direct control over planning policy or the delivery of nutrient neutrality measures. Introducing a specific target in this area could therefore risk duplicating existing responsibilities and creating expectations beyond the Partnership's remit. Instead, the Partnership will continue to engage constructively through Local Plan consultations and partnership working, supporting improvements in water quality and advocating for sustainable development practices where opportunities arise. This includes signposting to relevant guidance, initiatives, and best practice relating to nutrient neutrality and water management. In addition, Goal 2 Target 8 (support the restoration and enhancement of chalk-fed rivers, streams and their floodplains) and Target 10 (which includes the restoration of freshwater wetland habitats) address the issue more generally (from a nature recovery perspective) and the flexibility of these targets better reflect the partnerships remit.*

NCNL Management Plan 2025-30 (2026)

3.6 This Adoption Statement summarises the SEA process and how this has influenced the preparation of the Management Plan.

Chapter 4

How opinions of consultation bodies and the public have been taken into account

4.1 During the development of the Management Plan, an SEA Scoping and SEA Report has been published for consultation with the public and consultation bodies specifically referred to in the SEA Regulations (Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England). The SEA Regulations require that the SEA Adoption Statement provides an account of how any opinions expressed by the public and the consultation bodies have been taken into account.

4.2 The stages and outputs of the SEA that have been consulted upon and responses received relating to the SEA documents are summarised below.

SEA Scoping Report (2025)

4.3 The SEA Scoping Report for the NCNL Management Plan was published in December 2025 for a six-week consultation period with the statutory consultees (Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England).

4.4 This provided an opportunity for the statutory consultees to comment on the proposed scope and level of detail of the SEA, including whether the objectives in the SEA framework provided a reasonable framework for assessing the likely significant effects of the Management Plan and whether the review of relevant plans, policies and programmes (the 'PPP' review) and baseline information were appropriate and complete.

4.5 Comments received were generally supportive of the approach to the SEA proposed but some suggestions were made regarding additional baseline information, plans or programmes to review and key sustainability issues. These were addressed during the preparation of the SEA report. Full details on how each response was addressed are set out in Appendix A of the April 2026 SEA Report.

SEA Report (2026)

4.6 The draft Management Plan comprised the full draft Plan, that NCP intended to adopt. The consultation on the draft Management Plan and SEA report took place in December 2025 and March 2026 respectively. No comments were received on the SEA report.

Chapter 5

Why the Management Plan was chosen in light of the reasonable alternatives

5.1 The SEA Regulations require that the alternative policies or sites considered for inclusion in a plan that must be subject to SEA are 'reasonable', therefore alternatives that are not reasonable do not need to be subject to appraisal. Examples of unreasonable alternatives could include options that do not meet the objectives of the plan or national landscape policy/legislation, in addition to the NPPF.

5.2 NCP considered whether 'without the Management Plan 2025-30' would be a reasonable alternative option but it has been concluded that it is not. The adopted AONB Management Plan (2019–24) expired in 2025 and although NCP could seek approval to extend the end date of Management Plan 2019-24, there have been significant changes to the policy context since it was written in 2019. Specifically, there have been changes to NCP's objectives, national policy and sub-national policy. Without an up-to-date Management Plan, there is a risk that decisions would not be guided by the latest policy and guidance, which could lead to projects that are not policy compliant and investment that is not prioritised against up-to-date objectives. Future changes would also not be incorporated.

5.3 NCP also reviewed nine National Landscape Management Plans to identify common structure and recurring themes. This exercise highlighted several shared challenges and focus areas, including climate adaptation and mitigation, nature recovery and sustainable tourism. Further to this, stakeholder engagement through workshops, targeted discussions and formal meetings provided detailed insight into local priorities, delivery capacity and shared challenges. Three themed workshops – focused on nature recovery, climate adaptation and mitigation and sustainable tourism – provided an opportunity to review the proposed Priority Areas and identify where NCP could most effectively contribute through its facilitative and collaborative role. The outputs from these workshops informed the formulation of the draft Goals and Targets and led to the evolution of Sustainable Tourism into Sustainable Development and the addition of a fourth Priority Area, Local Communities. The NCNL team subsequently refined the Vision, Mission, Goals and Targets to ensure they clearly aligned with the statutory purposes of National Landscapes, reflected local environmental and community

priorities, and were realistic in terms of NCP's role in supporting delivery through partnership working.

Chapter 6

How will the environmental and sustainability effects of the Management Plan be monitored?

6.1 The SEA Regulations require that “The responsible authority shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of each plan or programme with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action” (Regulation 17), and that the Environmental Report should provide information on “a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring” (Schedule 2).

6.2 Monitoring should be focused on the significant environmental effects that may give rise to irreversible damage (with a view to identifying trends before such damage is caused) and the significant effects where there is uncertainty in the SEA and where monitoring would enable preventative or mitigation measures to be taken. Given that no adverse effects (minor or significant) have been identified for the Management Plan, it is not necessary to establish a monitoring framework within this SEA specifically for monitoring environmental effects of the Management Plan.

6.3 The potential for any adverse effects that might arise from development proposed within the Local Plans within the Norfolk Coast National Landscape will be adequately monitored through the Norfolk Coast National Landscape State of Reports, which is reviewed every five years, the latest being in September 2025, in addition to the monitoring of the Local Plans and any specific monitoring of the Management Plan that is proposed. Furthermore, NCP are developing a monitoring framework to support the delivery of the Management Plan, which will monitor progress against the Plan's Goals and Targets through a series of indicators embedded within the Action Plans.

6.4 The data used for monitoring in many cases will be provided by outside bodies. Information collected by other organisations (e.g. Natural England) can also be used as a source of indicators. It is therefore recommended that NCP continues the dialogue with statutory environmental consultees and other stakeholders that has already been commenced and works with them to agree the relevant environmental effects to be monitored and to obtain information that is appropriate, up to date and reliable.

LUC

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