



# The Sizewell C Project

## 9.15 Minsmere Monitoring and Mitigation Plan

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 This monitoring and mitigation plan sets out how monitoring and mitigation with respect to recreational disturbance will be implemented at four European sites<sup>1</sup> to ensure that adverse effect on the integrity (AEol) of the sites does not arise as a consequence of this effect pathway.
- 1.1.2 The four sites within the scope of this monitoring and mitigation plan (referred to collectively in this monitoring and mitigation plan as the “European sites”) are:
- Minsmere to Walberswick Heaths and Marshes Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Minsmere–Walberswick Special Protection Area (SPA), Minsmere–Walberswick Ramsar site (collectively referred to as the “Minsmere–Walberswick European sites” in this monitoring and mitigation plan; see **Figures 1, 2 and 3**); and
  - The northern part of the Sandlings SPA at North Warren and Aldringham Walks are collectively referred to as “Sandlings (North) European site”; see **Figures 1 and 4**).
- 1.1.3 The assessments under the Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for Sizewell C indicate that during the construction of Sizewell C, there could be displacement of recreational users to European sites, and recreational visits from the construction workforce. There is also potential for a much smaller increase in visits to European sites due to Sizewell C during the operational phase. The additional recreational visitors could potentially lead to AEol of specific European sites via effects on certain qualifying features unless suitable monitoring and mitigation measures are implemented. The Shadow HRA Report (Doc Ref. 5.10 [APP-145 to APP-149]) has identified that, with suitable monitoring and mitigation measures in place, AEol due to this effect pathway can be excluded for all European sites.
- 1.1.4 A number of measures have already been proposed through the DCO process to mitigate potential recreational displacement to European sites.

<sup>1</sup> Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and sites that are in the process of designation (proposed SACs, candidate SACs and potential SPAs)). Under planning policy in England, Ramsar sites are treated in the same way as European sites. SACs and SPAs in the UK no longer form part of the EU's Natura 2000 ecological network. The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 have created a national site network on land and at sea, including both the inshore and offshore marine areas in the UK. The national site network includes:

- existing SACs and SPAs.
- new SACs and SPAs designated under the 2019 Regulations.

Any references to Natura 2000 in The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and in guidance now refers to the new national site network.<sup>1</sup> See <https://cieem.net/brexit-changes-to-the-habitats-regulations/>



These include Public Right of Way (PRoW) and access improvement proposals around the main development site, keeping the coast path open at all times except if it is unsafe to do so, and the designation of 27 hectares of Open Access land where dogs will be allowed to be exercised off-lead, a new PRoW and a new car park at Aldhurst Farm (see Appendix A). In 2019 only two people were recorded per hour over a 30 hour survey period at Aldhurst Farm, making use of the three southern fields that are to be dedicated Open Access land where dogs can be exercised off-lead all year, indicating that this site has a good capacity to absorb much more use without disturbing wildlife in other parts of Aldhurst Farm where public access is prohibited to protect habitats and wildlife.

- 1.1.5 However, there would remain the potential for there to be additional users across the Minsmere-Walberswick European site and Sandlings (North) European site, and this plan sets out how the mitigation measures deployed at the commencement of construction (the “**Initial Mitigation Measures**”) and mitigation measures deployed as necessary dependent on potential for disturbance to qualifying habitats and/or species, as determined by monitoring (the “**Additional Mitigation Measures**”) (see **Section 5.2**) would be secured and delivered.

#### Report Structure

- 1.1.6 The structure of this plan is as follows:
- Section 2: Scope: sensitive species and habitats;
  - Section 3: Governance;
  - Section 4: Monitoring; and
  - Section 5: Mitigation Measures.

## 2 SCOPE: SENSITIVE SPECIES AND HABITATS

2.1.1 In the context of the Shadow HRA, in order to mitigate potential effects due to any net additional users or changes to behaviour due to the Sizewell C Project across these European sites, measures to reduce the potential disturbance to certain qualifying interest features are proposed. The species and habitats of concern for the European sites covered by this monitoring and mitigation plan, based on the findings of the Shadow HRA Report (Doc Ref. 5.10 [APP-145 to APP-149]), are:

- Breeding nightjar;
- Breeding woodlark;
- European dry heath;
- Annual vegetation of drift lines; and
- Perennial vegetation of stony banks.

2.1.2 In addition to the breeding birds and habitats listed above, the Shadow HRA Report (Doc Ref. 5.10 [APP-145 to APP-149]) assessed the potential for disturbance due to increases in recreational pressure to affect other breeding populations of qualifying interest features of the Minsmere-Walberswick SPA (avocet, bittern, little tern, marsh harrier, gadwall, shoveler; and teal) and the non-breeding populations of gadwall, shoveler, white-fronted goose and hen harrier. For these species, there is limited potential for a direct disturbance effect as a result of recreational activities due to one or more reasons, including:

- relative inaccessibility of the wetland habitats used by populations of these birds within the core areas of the constituent reserves; and
- the predicted minor changes in visitor numbers and existing visitor management practices.

2.1.3 Notwithstanding the above, these species are included within the scope of this plan in order to test the predictions from the Shadow HRA and show that there will be no adverse effects on these populations as a result of changes in recreational usage.

2.1.4 Although not a species relevant to the scope of the Shadow HRA, stone curlew is a specially protected species which breeds on acid grassland and farmland across the areas covered by this plan and is considered to be

particularly sensitive to disturbance. In addition, a range of heathland bird species, which are not qualifying features of the European sites, are also present and are potentially sensitive to disturbance, including Dartford warbler as well as other more common breeding bird species. Measures to mitigate the potential effects of recreational displacement on nightjar and woodlark are also expected to minimise the potential for effect on the other species found within these habitats that are potentially sensitive to this effect pathway.

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### 3 GOVERNANCE

#### 3.1 S106

3.1.1 The mitigation and monitoring requirements specified in this Plan are secured via the draft Section 106 Agreement [\[PDB-004\]](#) (see paragraph 6 of Schedule 11 (Natural Environment)). The draft Section 106 Agreement makes provision for the following:

- A financial contribution is payable by SZC Co. to East Suffolk Council prior to commencement of construction to fund the Initial Mitigation Measures and the monitoring required at Sandlings SPA (Sandlings (North) European site section), the Minsmere-Walberswick SPA and the Minsmere-Walberswick Heath and Marshes SAC as detailed in this plan;
- **Minsmere and Sandlings (north) Contingency Fund** is a contribution payable by SZC Co. to East Suffolk Council to make funds available in circumstances where Additional Mitigation Measures at Sandlings SPA (Sandlings (North) European site section), the Minsmere-Walberswick SPA and the Minsmere-Walberswick Heath and Marshes SAC are identified as required (in accordance with this plan) to mitigate the impacts of additional recreational disturbance associated with the Project;
- Governance arrangements for the administration of the Minsmere and Sandlings (north) Contingency Fund (set out in further detail in the below sections).

#### 3.2 Ecology Working Group

3.2.1 The Ecology Working Group (constituted in accordance with the Section 106 Agreement [\[PDB-004\]](#)) is responsible for:

- a) reviewing the monitoring and mitigation undertaken in accordance with this plan; and
- b) identifying whether appropriate triggers have been exceeded for any relevant designated site included in the plan, i.e. Sandlings SPA (Sandlings (North) European site section), the Minsmere-Walberswick SPA and the Minsmere-Walberswick Heath and Marshes SAC (or a constituent part thereof) and then whether Additional Mitigation Measures, beyond the Initial Mitigation Measures, are required, having

carried out an assessment of data produced by monitoring to determine any linkage with the construction and operation of Sizewell C in accordance with **Sections 4.3** and **5** of this plan.

3.2.2 If the Ecology Working Group identifies that Additional Mitigation Measures are required in accordance with this plan, the Ecology Working Group shall:

- a) Agree, in consultation with land managers, including but not limited to the RSPB, Natural England, the National Trust and Forestry England, how and when Additional Mitigation Measures shall be implemented;
- b) make written requests to the Environment Review Group to access monies from the Minsmere and Sandlings (north) Contingency Fund to carry out the additional mitigation measures;
- c) provide further information on request to the Environment Review Group, make recommendations to and advise the Environment Review Group on how the Minsmere and Sandlings (north) Contingency Fund should be spent based on its technical expertise and involvement in the monitoring;
- d) report to the Environment Review Group on the approved expenditure from the Minsmere and Sandlings (north) Contingency Fund and the effectiveness of such expenditure; and
- e) any other tasks agreed by the Ecology Working Group.

### 3.3 Environment Review Group

3.3.1 The Environment Review Group (constituted in accordance with the Section 106 Agreement [\[PDB-004\]](#)) will receive reports and recommendations from the Ecology Working Group as to what Additional Mitigation Measure(s) are necessary and appropriate based on the monitoring undertaken in accordance with this plan.

3.3.2 The Environment Review Group shall:

- a) consider the reports and recommendations from the Ecology Working Group and decide whether the recommended Additional Mitigation Measure(s) are necessary and appropriate in all the circumstances; and
- b) in the event that it decides the recommended mitigation is necessary and appropriate, may approve written requests from the Ecology

Working Group for monies to fund the recommended Additional Mitigation Measure(s); or

- c) defer its decision on such requests from the Ecology Working Group until the next meeting of the Environment Review Group, pending the provision of further information by the Ecology Working Group, if requested by the Environment Review Group.

3.3.3 East Suffolk Council shall only make onward payments from the Minsmere and Sandlings (north) Contingency Fund to fund Additional Mitigation Measures following approval by the Environment Review Group of a request received in writing from the Ecology Working Group detailing the amounts requested to be paid to any relevant parties and details of the relevant Additional Mitigation Measures.

3.3.4 In addition, the Environment Review Group shall:

- a) define the triggers in accordance with the principles in **Section 4.3** of this plan and revise them from time to time, if necessary in accordance with this plan to ensure they remain appropriate in light of the monitoring data;
- b) provide guidance to the Ecology Working Group on any issues that are referred to it; and
- c) refer any matter to the Delivery Steering Group (the group constituted in accordance with Schedule 17 of the Section 106 Agreement [\[PDB-004\]](#) which shall provide assistance on matters referred to it by the Environment Review Group) where necessary.



## 4 MONITORING

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The purpose of the monitoring programme would be to determine the scale and nature of use of the European sites before construction (to establish a baseline) and then any net change in use during the construction and operational phases. Additional mitigation measures would be deployed (in addition to proposed initial measures) if monitoring during the construction and operational phases identifies additional users above agreed triggers, and specified changes to visitor behaviour which result in potential consequential changes in disturbance to habitats or bird species at the European sites.
- 4.1.2 The key principle underpinning the monitoring approach is to identify and measure potential changes in recreational use and behaviour arising from the Sizewell C Project as soon as possible so that action can be taken (via additional mitigation) before negative effects on qualifying interest features of European sites arise.
- 4.1.3 Ecological monitoring is proposed in parallel with monitoring of recreational use and behaviour in order that the ecological conditions at the time of implementation (commencement of construction) can be established and the effect of any changes in recreational user numbers and/or behaviour can be detected.
- 4.1.4 Three survey methods will be employed:
- **Observation and questionnaire surveys** to record numbers of people and dogs and their behaviour at selected times of year;
  - **Automatic counters** set up on paths and the access road to Dunwich Heath Coastguard Cottages to record people movements continuously throughout the year; and
  - **Ecological surveys** to monitor change and potential effects of increased disturbance as a consequence of changes in recreational use related to the effect of the Sizewell C Project.
- 4.1.5 These three approaches are described further in **Section 4.2**.

## 4.2 Survey Method

### a) Observation and Questionnaire Surveys

- 4.2.2 Initial visitor surveys (observations and questionnaires) undertaken before commencement of construction will record the specific use in the vicinity of the survey locations illustrated on **Figures 2, 3 and 4** and listed in **Table 4.1** and measure the frequency of use, types of activity and behaviour, and responses to any existing signage, footpaths and facilities. The surveyors will record the types of behaviour that might disturb breeding and non-breeding birds and damage habitats (see **Section 4.4**).
- 4.2.3 In relation to dog walkers, whether a dog is on or off lead will be recorded. In addition, it will be recorded whether a dog is on the path or in the vegetation further than 2m to the side of the path (i.e. beyond the distance it is likely to toilet before returning to the path).
- 4.2.4 Subsequent construction and operational phase observation surveys of recreational user activity will be undertaken at the same locations and same seasons as the initial surveys and provide comparable data over different years. This approach will permit comparisons to be made and assessment of the appropriateness of the proposed trigger levels to inform the implementation of Additional Mitigation Measures.
- 4.2.5 The interaction with recreational users (answering the questionnaire surveys face to face or completing the survey form given to them on site and returning by post, or completing the survey online) will provide the opportunity to promote and direct users to the enhanced access facilities at the less sensitive sites including Kenton Hills and Aldhurst Farm.
- 4.2.6 Methods for data collection will be standardised and designed to be readily repeatable to allow changes and trends to be identified and permit valid comparison from one survey period to the next.

### b) Automatic Counters

- 4.2.7 ‘Automatic counters’ will be used at paths and entry points at the locations shown on **Figures 2, 3 and 4** and listed in **Table 4.1**. These will record use 24 hours a day and 365 days a year, and provide accurate information on levels of use.
- 4.2.8 The survey locations will be subject to minor location refinement on site to ensure most effective locations are used.

**Table 4.1: Visitor Survey Locations**

Survey location	
<b>Survey locations at European Sites – observation and questionnaire surveys, and automatic people counters</b> (blue dots on Figures 2 to 4)	
a	Walberswick Common
b	Walberswick Beach (south)
c	Newdelight Walks
d	Dunwich Beach
e	Westleton Heath
f	Cliff House (Suffolk Coast Path and Sandlings Walk)
g	Dunwich Heath (Suffolk Coast Path and Sandlings Walk)
h	Dunwich Heath National Trust car park
i	North Walks (Sandlings Walk)
j	Minsmere outer (Suffolk Coastal cycle route)
k	Minsmere Sluice footpath (Suffolk Coast Path)
l	Sizewell Beach car park
m	Sizewell Common (Sandlings Walk)
n	Aldringham Walks (Sandlings Walk)
<b>Survey locations at European Sites – automatic people counters only</b> (purple dots on Figures 2 to 4)	
1	Wolsey Bridge
2	East Hill
3	Sandymount Covert
4	Scottshall Coverts
5	Path to Dunwich Beach
6	The Walks
7	Margaret Wood
<b>Survey locations at European Sites – automatic vehicle counter only</b> (red dot on Figure 3)	
50	Access road to Dunwich Heath Coastguard Cottages



### c) Ecological Surveys

- 4.2.9 Habitat monitoring, focussed on the qualifying interest features of the Minsmere-Walberswick European sites, is proposed. This monitoring is summarised in **Table 4.2**.
- 4.2.10 **Table 4.3** summarises the proposed monitoring in relation to qualifying breeding and non-breeding bird species of European sites.
- 4.2.11 The ecological monitoring will be undertaken in any event and is not linked to trigger levels. The proposed locations for habitat monitoring will be discussed with Natural England, RSPB, National Trust and Forestry England (in relation to Sandlings North).
- 4.2.12 The ecological monitoring summarised in **Table 4.2** and **Table 4.3** is in addition to the observational monitoring described above for the Observation and Questionnaire Surveys.

**Table 4.2: Proposed monitoring in relation to qualifying habitat features of European sites**

Qualifying interest feature (habitat type)	Potential impact / pressure	Proposed monitoring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- European dry heath</li> <li>- Annual vegetation of drift lines</li> <li>- Perennial vegetation of stony banks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trampling</li> <li>- Nutrient enrichment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Targeted habitat surveys at selected locations (covering each qualifying habitat) undertaken every 3 years.</li> <li>- Monitoring would follow the JNCC Common Standards Monitoring guidance as appropriate to the habitat type.</li> <li>- Fixed point photography.</li> <li>- Observations recorded by new wardens provided under this plan.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Burnt areas</li> <li>- Path widening</li> <li>- Formation of new routes</li> <li>- Littering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visual monitoring of broad-scale habitat impact, potentially using transect-based approach.</li> <li>- Observations recorded by new wardens provided under this plan.</li> </ul>

**Table 4.3: Proposed monitoring in relation to qualifying bird species of European sites**

Qualifying interest feature (species)	Proposed monitoring	Timing
<b>Minsmere-Walberswick European sites</b>  Breeding waterbirds (abundance and distribution for avocet, gadwall, shoveler and teal; indication of extent of usage for bittern)	<p>The main area of importance for these species where there is potential for an increase in recreational usage is the Minsmere South Levels, due to the presence of the footpath from Eastbridge to the coast (PRoW E-363/020/0). Surveys of breeding abundance and distribution are proposed to be undertaken on the Minsmere South Levels (and also the Sizewell Marshes) as part of the Terrestrial Ecology Monitoring and Mitigation Plan (TEMMP). These surveys will provide the data to inform monitoring of the effects of both recreational displacement and construction activity.</p> <p>Surveys would follow methods used for the collection of baseline data and would be undertaken between April and June in relevant years and are defined in the TEMMP.</p> <p>These project-specific survey data would also be augmented with the latest RSPB population data, subject to agreement with the RSPB, and feedback</p>	Timings specified in the TEMMP



Qualifying interest feature (species)	Proposed monitoring	Timing
	from the designated wardens (e.g. regular observation records).	
<b>Minsmere-Walberswick European sites</b>  Non-breeding waterbirds (abundance and distribution)	<p>The main area of importance for these species, where there is potential for an increase in recreational usage, is the Minsmere South Levels, due to the presence of the nearby footpath from Eastbridge to the coast (PRoW E-363/020/0). Surveys of wintering birds are proposed to be undertaken on the Minsmere South Levels (and also the Sizewell Marshes) as part of the TEMMP. These surveys will provide the data to inform monitoring of the effects of both recreational displacement and construction activity.</p> <p>Surveys would follow methods used for the collection of baseline data and would be undertaken in relevant years between November and March.</p> <p>These project-specific survey data would also be augmented with the latest available Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts and feedback from the designated wardens (e.g. regular observation records).</p>	Timings specified in the TEMMP

Qualifying interest feature (species)	Proposed monitoring	Timing
<b>Minsmere-Walberswick European sites</b>  Breeding nightjar	The RSPB Minsmere Reserve provides the main nesting areas for the species within the SPA, with birds also nesting in the Dunwich Forest parts of the Dingle Marshes Reserve. Data collected by the RSPB and others provide a good understanding of the baseline populations of breeding nightjar and similar data will be used in future to monitor change on an annual basis.	
<b>Sandlings (North) European site</b>  Breeding nightjar and woodlark	Sandlings (North) overlaps substantially with the RSPB's North Warren and Aldringham Walks Reserve, for which data on the abundance of breeding nightjar and woodlark are available from 2010 to 2018. These data provide a good understanding of the baseline populations of breeding nightjar and woodlark and similar data will be used in future to monitor change on an annual basis.	

### 4.3 Use of Trigger Levels

- 4.3.1 Trigger levels will be set by the Environment Review Group (see **Section 3**), in accordance with the following principles.
- 4.3.2 The identification of a trigger level of net increased recreational use at which certain Additional Mitigation Measures will be instigated is considered important because this will be the earliest indication that there is an increased risk of negative effects on qualifying interest features (i.e. changes in recreational user numbers could indicate both the potential for increased disturbance and a change in visitor profile, which could lead to changes in behavioural patterns, such as increased littering). Trigger levels linked to other parameters (e.g. evidence of trampling) will also be defined by the Environmental Review Group informed by the Ecology Working Group which, if occurring, will trigger the deployment of Additional Mitigation Measures.
- 4.3.3 The identification of appropriate trigger levels needs to reflect a combination of factors, comprising:
- whether the net increase or changes in behaviour and pattern of use relates solely to the Sizewell C Project or to one or more other factors based on warden feedback in combination with the observation, questionnaire and habitat surveys;
  - whether the increase in net use or changes in behaviour and pattern of use is likely to be temporary or prolonged and is likely to be or is considered detrimental;
  - the time of year, whether in or outside the breeding season for specific bird species for example;
  - the types of users, e.g. off road/night time cyclists, dogs quartering land where birds are nesting, unauthorised campers, walkers; and
  - whether the increase or changes in behaviour and pattern of use is, or is likely to, negatively affect qualifying interest features of the European sites.
- 4.3.4 Trigger Levels will be defined by the Environment Review Group, in consultation with the relevant land managers, including the RSPB, National Trust, Natural England and Forestry England and defined in the first year of this plan's implementation.

## 4.4 Recording Signs of Human Disturbance

4.4.1 Signs of changes in visitor patterns and behaviours and actual or potential negative effects to relevant qualifying interest features of European sites will be recorded by surveyors led by the SZC Co. funded wardens and by use of ecological survey and photography. Such signs might include, but are not limited to, additional:

- trampling of habitats;
- burnt habitat caused by barbeques, fires, cigarettes, etc;
- widening of paths;
- formation of new routes close to sensitive habitats or species; and
- littering and dog waste.

## 4.5 Survey Programme

4.5.1 The programmes for visitor and ecological surveys at specific years are described below. In addition to these formal surveys the wardens will, once appointed, observe and record visitors and their behaviour, and habitats and species, and any changes, throughout the year for each year of the construction phase and the early years of operation of Sizewell C.

### a) Visitor Surveys Programme

4.5.2 In order to determine if the Sizewell C Project construction activity (or subsequent operational phase) is increasing the risk of negative effects due to net additional visitors or changes to behaviour at the European sites, the following programme is proposed for monitoring:

- Pre-construction initial monitoring of the current situation (2021 and 2022);
- Annual monitoring during early years of construction up to (and including) peak years (construction years 1 to 7);
- Monitoring every two years during construction and after early / peak years (construction years post year 7; and
- Monitoring once during early years of operation (potentially operational years 1 or 2 initially).



- 4.5.3 Visitor surveys will be undertaken three times a year in a monitoring year, in April/May, August and November to reflect peak and non-peak periods. This reflects spring / early summer as birds are actively nesting and breeding and when visitor numbers are likely to be high, August to record summer peak visitor use and November to record winter use.
- 4.5.4 The timing of these surveys is aligned with the periods when a change in visitor activity could result in increased disturbance effects on breeding nightjar and woodlark (and breeding waterbirds) and non-breeding waterbirds. Habitat monitoring does not necessarily need to align with the timing of the visitor surveys; further detail of habitat monitoring is provided in **Section 4.2**.
- 4.5.5 Monitoring during the construction early years will identify any changes in visitor numbers or behavioural patterns so that leading to potential problems (i.e. signs of human disturbance and actual or potential harm to qualifying interest features) are identified at an early stage before they become established in the behaviours of visitors. The monitoring strategy would be adapted over the monitoring period if necessary, as the evidence accrues and to allow for relevant data gathering.
- 4.5.6 Baseline data is available on levels of use and types of users from the 2014 visitor observation and questionnaire surveys at seven locations close to the main development site (Book 6, Volume 2, Chapter 15, Appendix 15A of the Environmental Statement (ES) [\[APP-268\]](#)). In addition to identifying the levels and types of users, the 2014 surveys identified whether people are likely to displace to alternative locations during the construction phase to avoid the construction zone and, if they are, the alternative areas they would be most likely to visit instead. These surveys were undertaken in August and November 2014 and discussed with consultees including the RSPB, National Trust and Natural England, and were used to inform the shadow HRA Recreational Disturbance Assessment (Book 5 Volume 10 Appendix E [\[APP-148\]](#)).
- 4.5.7 The initial monitoring surveys under this plan will be undertaken from late spring/summer 2021 or as soon as the Covid-19 rules allow.
- 4.5.8 The initial pre-construction recreation monitoring will be undertaken using visitor surveys to gather information on how, when and why people use the European sites for recreation. Visitor surveys will use the same method of observation and questionnaire surveys used in 2014 and adapted for these surveys at European sites (e.g. to record more information on behaviour of people and dogs), informed by ongoing stakeholder engagement. The method and report of the 2014 surveys can be seen at Sizewell C

Development Consent Order application document Volume 2 Chapter 15, Appendix 15A of the ES [\[APP-268\]](#).

b) Ecological Surveys Programme

- 4.5.9 With regard to monitoring the potential effect of trampling and nutrient enrichment on habitats, the monitoring proposed in **Table 4.2** would be undertaken according to the following programme:
- Initial pre-construction monitoring (2022);
  - Monitoring during construction year 1; and
  - Construction years 4 and 7.
- 4.5.10 For the other potential impact / pressures referred to in **Table 4.2** (burnt areas, path widening, formation of new routes and littering), the survey programme would align with that identified in **Section 4.5 sub-section a)** for the visitor survey programme.

## 5 MITIGATION MEASURES

### 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The mitigation approach comprises a range of measures which seek to address and mitigate potential effects on European sites. The approach is adaptive and will evolve and react as necessary, throughout the construction and early operational phases, to ensure that appropriate measures are implemented.
- 5.1.2 Mitigation measures will comprise two types:
- **Initial Mitigation Measures** deployed at the commencement of construction on the basis that impacts are likely to occur unless mitigation is implemented (Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment Volume 1: Screening and Appropriate Assessment, Appendix E: Recreational Disturbance Assessment and Annex A: Recreational Disturbance Evidence Base (Doc. Ref. 5.10) [\[APP-149\]](#)); and
  - **Additional Mitigation Measures** which would be deployed as necessary and would be dependent on any triggers that might be reached or evidence of changes in visitor numbers and behaviour which may increase the risk of disturbance to qualifying habitats and/or species, as determined by monitoring. These measures could be extensions to the Initial Measures or entirely new measures to react to particular circumstances.
- 5.1.3 Mitigation measures are identified in **Table 5.1** and **Table 5.2** below, and will be developed in detail and implemented through the governance arrangements described in **Section 3** of this plan.
- 5.1.4 Mitigation measures required directly as a result of Sizewell C impacts will be additional to those currently used and maintained by the landowners and managers, or that arise from causes other than Sizewell C.
- 5.1.5 The need for Additional Mitigation Measures will be monitored through the observation and questionnaire surveys, automatic people and vehicle counters and ecological surveys, and through on-the-ground wardening (described further in **Section 5.3**). The survey results will be reviewed by the Ecology Working Group and the arrangements defined for delivering Additional Mitigation Measures would be followed as defined in **Section 3**.
- 5.1.6 Wardening, to observe and record potential disturbance and impacts, to communicate with and educate visitors on, inter alia, ecological sensitivities,

appropriate behaviours, and alternative locations for recreation which would avoid sensitive areas at European sites, is an integral part of the mitigation strategy (see **Table 5.1**), and is designed to ensure that issues are identified and reacted to quickly and to minimise the risk of negative effects on qualifying interest features. Given that it will be difficult to separate impacts which might be attributable to recreational disturbance arising from the Sizewell C Project from impacts arising from other causes, the gathering of warden feedback in combination with the observation, questionnaire and habitat surveys will form part of the monitoring (e.g. through regular observation records) (as noted in **Table 4.2** and **Table 4.3**).

- 5.1.7 Trigger levels of net increased usage or obvious signs of changes in visitor numbers or behaviour causing disturbance to habitats or species will be used by the Ecology Working Group and approved by the Environment Review Group to activate the immediate instigation of groups of appropriate Additional Mitigation Measures at specific locations.
- 5.1.8 Mitigation approaches are aligned with relevant measures in Section 8 of the Habitats Regulations Assessment Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy for Ipswich Borough, Babergh District, Mid Suffolk District and East Suffolk Councils (Reference 1) (referred to as the Suffolk Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)) but adapted to the specific site requirements of the European sites and potential for disturbance due to Sizewell C. The Suffolk Coast RAMS identifies the importance of a mix of measures to give certainty, stating “*A suite of mitigation measures should function together to have confidence that adverse effects arising from recreation have been prevented. Each measure taken alone is unlikely to give that certainty. A combination of measures, developed and targeted after analysis of available and gathered information has the potential to give the necessary certainty because of the combination of measures working together, reducing risk and building in contingency.*” (Paragraph 8.2.) This monitoring and mitigation plan follows the same principle.
- 5.1.9 SZC Co. will seek to align mitigation measures within this plan with the site access measures already in use by RSPB, National Trust, Natural England and other landowners and managers of the relevant European sites.
- 5.1.10 Mitigation measures have been proposed by Natural England, the RSPB and the National Trust and, where appropriate, incorporated into the mitigation measures described in **Section 5.2**.

## 5.2 Mitigation Measures

5.2.1 **Table 5.1** and **Table 5.2** set out the Initial Mitigation Measures and Additional Mitigation Measures respectively, and the locations which they apply to within the Minsmere-Walberswick and Sandlings (North) European sites. These are in addition to other mitigation that will be secured through the DCO or other means including other S106 funds as detailed below, which will combine to reduce the potential for additional recreational visits to European sites due to the Sizewell C Project. For example:

- Open Access provision for off-lead dog walking at Aldhurst Farm.
- Improvements to Kenton Hills car park (see Work No.1A(cc) of the draft DCO) [\[AS-143\]](#).
- Other improvements within the main development site including a new off-road bridleway from Sizewell Gap in the south to Eastbridge Road in the north, a new PRoW (footpath) linking existing PRoW and the B1122 south of the green rail route, and a new connection between Aldhurst Farm and Kenton Hills permissive footpath network (see DCO Articles 14 -16 (Rights of Way) Requirement 2 (PW: CoCP) Requirement 6A (MDS: Rights of Way Strategy).
- There will be a S106 financial contribution to the Suffolk Coast RAMS to mitigate potential recreational impacts from construction workers, targeted towards an agreed suite of measures from the Suffolk Coast RAMS mitigation package specific to the potential Sizewell C development impacts (see Schedule 11 (Natural Environment) of the draft Section 106 Agreement);
- A suite of improvements to PRoW is being agreed with Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council which will be funded through a S106 financial contribution within the Rights of Way fund that are also relevant to this monitoring and mitigation plan. These include improvements to the Eastbridge to Minsmere sluice footpath (PRoW E-363/020/0) to improve the surface and avoid flooding, to keep people to the right of way and prevent people diverting from the path where they may affect habitats or species (see Schedule 10 (Leisure, Public Rights of Way and Amenity) of the draft Section 106 Agreement).

5.2.2 Initial Mitigation Measures set out in **Table 5.1**, that are identified as being required in response to additional recreational disturbance arising from the Sizewell C Project will be implemented at the commencement of



construction. These measures would be funded by a financial contribution in the Section 106 Agreement [\[PDB-004\]](#).

**Table 5.1 Initial Mitigation Measures**

Initial Mitigation Measure	Location	How funded / secured
<b>Wardening, signage, interpretation and awareness training</b>		
<p>New wardening resource (see <b>Section 5.3</b>) to educate visitors about desired behaviours, impacts of disturbance, impacts of dogs off leads, give out dog waste bags, suitability of routes for different uses and location of sensitive areas, and promote alternative locations to visitors.</p> <p>Engagement with dog walkers on the use of leads (of max 2m length) or on the paths at sensitive times and places, along with suggesting alternative, accessible and attractive routes and areas that can better accommodate off-lead exercise.</p> <p>Also new signage on desired behaviours, impacts of disturbance, impacts of dogs off leads, suitability of routes for different uses and location of sensitive areas,</p>	All areas	Financial contribution in s106
Signage to educate visitors re importance of vegetated shingle and beach nesting birds and requesting avoidance	Minsmere beach, Dingle frontage	Financial contribution in s106
Signage to educate visitors re fire risk and request no BBQs/fires, care with cigarettes etc.	Westleton Heath, the outer areas of RSPB Minsmere, Dunwich Heath, Aldringham	Financial contribution in s106

Initial Mitigation Measure	Location	How funded / secured
	Walks and North Warren	
Signage to educate visitors and request that waste is taken home as appropriate to the protocol in place at the given site. For example, some locations have bins suitable for bagged dog waste where signs to take dog waste home would not be appropriate.	Westleton Heath, the outer areas of RSPB Minsmere, Dunwich Heath, Aldringham Walks and North Warren	Financial contribution in s106
Where there is no right of access, access restrictions (e.g. locked gates, mesh on gates to restrict dog access), signage to reduce access onto sensitive habitats. Provision of information on where to go instead.	Westleton Heath, the outer areas of RSPB Minsmere, Dunwich Heath, Aldringham Walks and North Warren	Financial contribution in s106
Information pack provided to Sizewell C campus and LEEIE caravan park residents. Make aware of wildlife friendly locations that are especially suitable for walking and cycling outside European sites. Inform and educate about sensitive species and habitats, threats and appropriate behaviours.	All areas	Sizewell C CoCP <a href="#">[AS-273]</a>
Code of conduct information included in induction materials for all Sizewell C construction workers (not just those at campus and LEEIE caravan park). Inform and educate about sensitive species and habitats, threats and appropriate behaviours.	All areas	Sizewell C CoCP <a href="#">[AS-273]</a>

Initial Mitigation Measure	Location	How funded / secured
Leaflets on sites and at public buildings	All areas	Financial contribution in s106
Website and social media posts	All areas	Financial contribution in s106
Sizewell C interpretation signage	Dunwich Heath Coastguard Cottages, Sizewell beach car park	Financial contribution in s106
Free compostable dog waste bags, overprinted with key information or (e.g. behaviour messages, alternative locations to walk dogs)	Various popular visitor locations at European sites to be defined. Local vets, pet shops, dog groomers, dog training clubs.	Financial contribution in s106
<b>Parking</b>		
Review and definition of informal parking areas at Westleton Heath and the periphery of RSPB Minsmere marked O and N on Figure 3 and at Aldringham Walks and North Warren marked S, T and X on Figure 4. Proactive management of informal parking to focus parking in desired areas.	Westleton Heath, the outer areas of RSPB Minsmere, Aldringham Walks and North Warren	Financial contribution in s106
Subsidise parking at Sizewell beach car park during the construction phase so that it is free or reduced cost to the public, to increase its	Sizewell beach, potentially	Financial contribution in s106

Initial Mitigation Measure	Location	How funded / secured
attractiveness as a recreational location away from European Sites.	benefiting all areas	
<b>Measures to paths and access</b>		
Adaption of access routes to guide appropriate uses (surfacing, barriers, signage)	All areas	Financial contribution in s106

- 5.2.3 The Ecology Working Group will review the monitoring undertaken in accordance with **Section 4** of this plan and assess whether the Sizewell C Project is creating additional recreational disturbance which requires further mitigation. The Ecology Working Group may recommend to the Environment Review Group that any one or more of the measures identified in **Table 5.2** should be implemented to mitigate additional recreational disturbance arising from the Sizewell C Project. The Environment Review Group will consider the recommendations from the Ecology Working Group and determine what measures should be implemented. These additional measures would be funded by accessing funding from the Minsmere and Sandlings (north) Contingency Fund in the Section 106 Agreement [\[PDB-004\]](#) following approval from the Environment Review Group in accordance with **Section 3** of this plan.

**Table 5.2 Additional Mitigation Measures**

Additional Mitigation Measure	Location
<b>Wardening, signage, interpretation and awareness training (implemented at relevant trigger level)</b>	
Additional warden resource	All areas
Additional signage to educate visitors about specific issues which arise and alternative locations for wanted activities	All areas
Additional signage to inform and educate visitors re importance of vegetated shingle nesting birds and requesting avoidance	Minsmere beach, Dingle frontage, Dunwich Heath beach
Dog walking champions to model positive behaviour, engage with other dog walkers, give out dog waste bags (printed with desired messages), advise on the use of	All areas

Additional Mitigation Measure	Location
leads (of max 2m length) or on the paths at sensitive times and places, along with suggesting alternative, accessible and attractive routes and areas that can better accommodate off-lead exercise.	
<b>Measures to paths and access</b>	
Additional exclosures around vegetated shingle patches and/or nests	Minsmere beach, Dingle frontage, Dunwich Heath beach
Additional path improvements or provision of new routes to encourage people to keep to specific routes, focussing access away from sensitive locations	All areas
Eastbridge to Minsmere sluice footpath re-routing and barriers to physical access (e.g. locked gates, mesh on gates to restrict dog access) to reduce access onto sensitive habitats. Maintain the route of the definitive PRoW.	Eastbridge to Minsmere sluice footpath PRoW E-363/020/0
Creation/maintenance of firebreaks	Westleton Heath, the outer areas of RSPB Minsmere, Dunwich Heath, Aldringham Walks and North Warren
Provision of dual use bins to accept both general litter and bagged dog waste (including regular emptying)	Westleton Heath, the outer areas of RSPB Minsmere, Dunwich Heath, Aldringham Walks and North Warren
<b>Parking</b>	
Additional proactive management of informal parking to focus parking in desired areas. Closing off new informal parking areas if they develop.	Westleton Heath, the outer areas of RSPB Minsmere, Dunwich Heath, Aldringham Walks and North Warren
<b>Additional bespoke measures</b>	
Additional bespoke mitigation measures which are identified at any time, which may be necessary but cannot be identified now.	All areas

- 5.2.4 The visitor surveys conducted at the start of the breeding season in April/May will ensure that measures can be instigated during the same breeding season to secure an immediate effect. Whether a measure would need to be in place on a temporary or permanent basis will be assessed by the Ecology Working Group and confirmed by the Environment Review Group at intervals to be agreed by the Environment Review Group. The Environment Review Group will review the appropriateness of the trigger levels from time to time and adjust them as necessary in accordance with advice received from the Ecology Working Group based on its assessment of the monitoring data.

### 5.3 Staff Resources

- 5.3.1 SZC Co. will provide funding for the new wardening resource specified in **Table 5.1** via a financial contribution in the Section 106 Agreement [\[PDB-004\]](#) which is due prior to commencement of construction. Two new wardens whose key purpose will be to ensure the protection of sensitive habitats and species from potential negative effects arising from the Sizewell C Project will be funded specifically to carry out monitoring and mitigation work and public engagement in accordance with this plan. The financial contribution secured via the Section 106 Agreement [\[PDB-004\]](#) will fund one full time lead warden and one field warden, who will work closely with existing site managers, wardens and volunteers. The wardens will be responsible for or involved in a number of tasks including:

- Leading survey and monitoring work;
- Attendance at Environment Review Group meetings – Lead Warden;
- Liaising with RSPB, National Trust and Natural England's site managers, wardens and rangers to ensure work is co-ordinated with existing site objectives and practices, to gather information on issues, need for mitigation and success of mitigation;
- Regular reports to the Ecology Working Group on the findings of survey and monitoring work, whether changes in visitors is, or is at immediate risk of, causing disturbance to habitats or species and whether this is due to the Sizewell C Project or other reasons – Lead Warden;
- Recommendations and advice on when, where and how mitigation to prevent any disturbance caused by the Sizewell C Project should be implemented – Lead Warden;
- Overseeing implementation of mitigation;



- Observing success of mitigation and the need for further mitigation; and
- Engaging with the public to encourage recreational use that does not harm species or habitats at European sites.

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## REFERENCES

1. Department of Energy and Climate Change (July 2011). National Policy Statement for Nuclear Power Generation (EN-6).
2. Hoskin, R., Liley, D. & Panter, C. (2019). Habitats Regulations Assessment Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy for Ipswich Borough, Babergh District, Mid Suffolk District and East Suffolk Councils – Technical Report. Footprint Ecology.  
[<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/developer-contributions/rams/>. Accessed 12/3/21]

## FIGURES

Figure 1: Location Plan

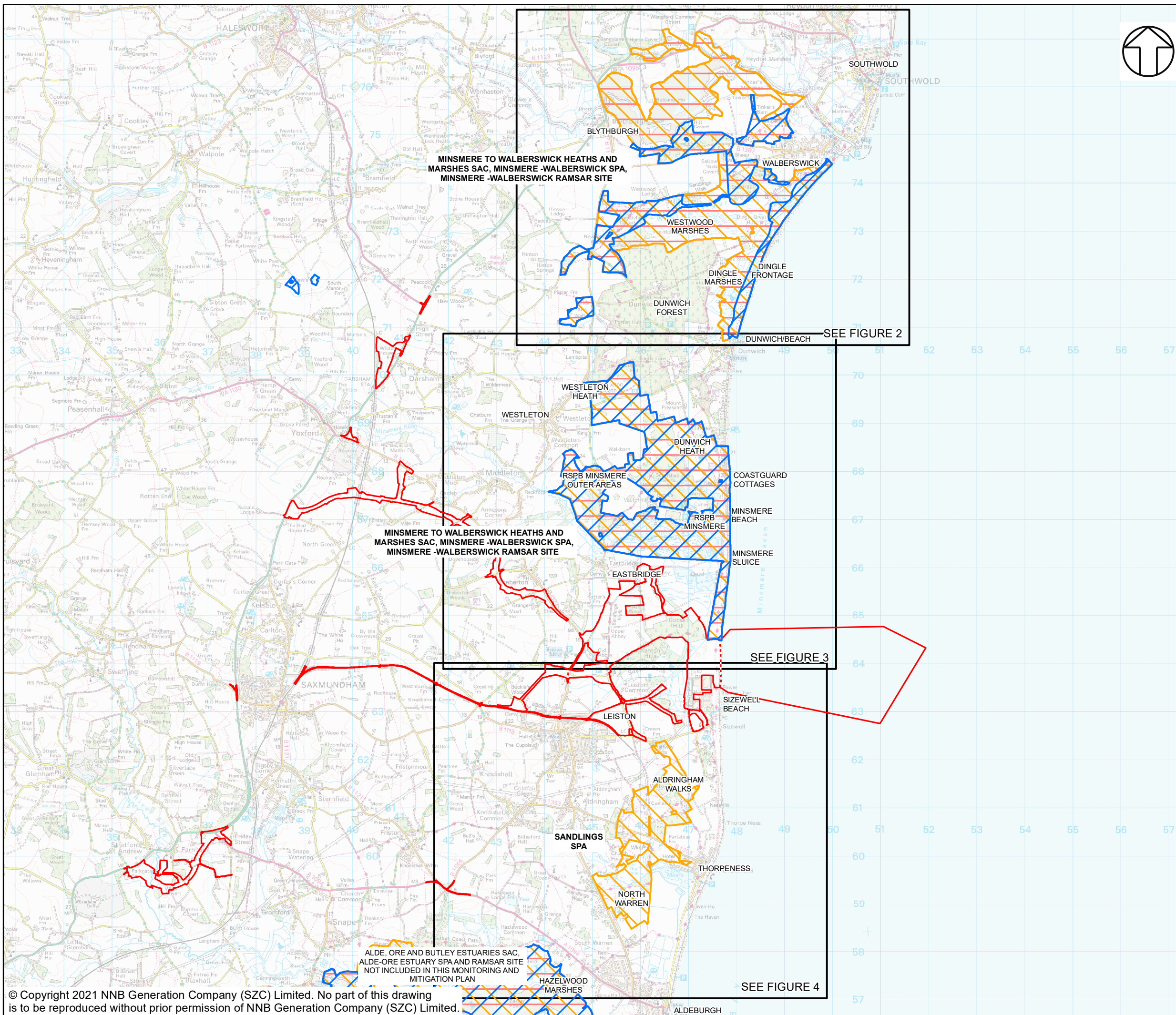
Figure 2: Proposed Survey Locations Minsmere-Walberswick European Sites (North)

Figure 3: Proposed Survey Locations Minsmere-Walberswick European Sites (South)

Figure 4: Proposed Survey Locations Sandlings (North) European Site

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## NOTES

PROPOSED SURVEY AND AUTOMATIC COUNTER LOCATIONS ARE PROVISIONAL AND WILL BE REFINED FOLLOWING DETAILED SITE WORK TO ENSURE THAT THE MOST EFFECTIVE LOCATIONS ARE USED

## KEY

- SIZEWELL C AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT SITE BOUNDARIES
- DEMARCATION LINE
- SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION (SAC)
- SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA)
- RAMSAR

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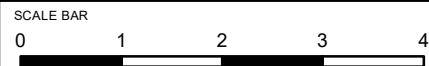


DOCUMENT:  
SIZEWELL C  
MONITORING AND MITIGATION PLAN FOR  
MINSMERE - WALBERSWICK EUROPEAN SITES  
AND SANDLINGS (NORTH) EUROPEAN SITE

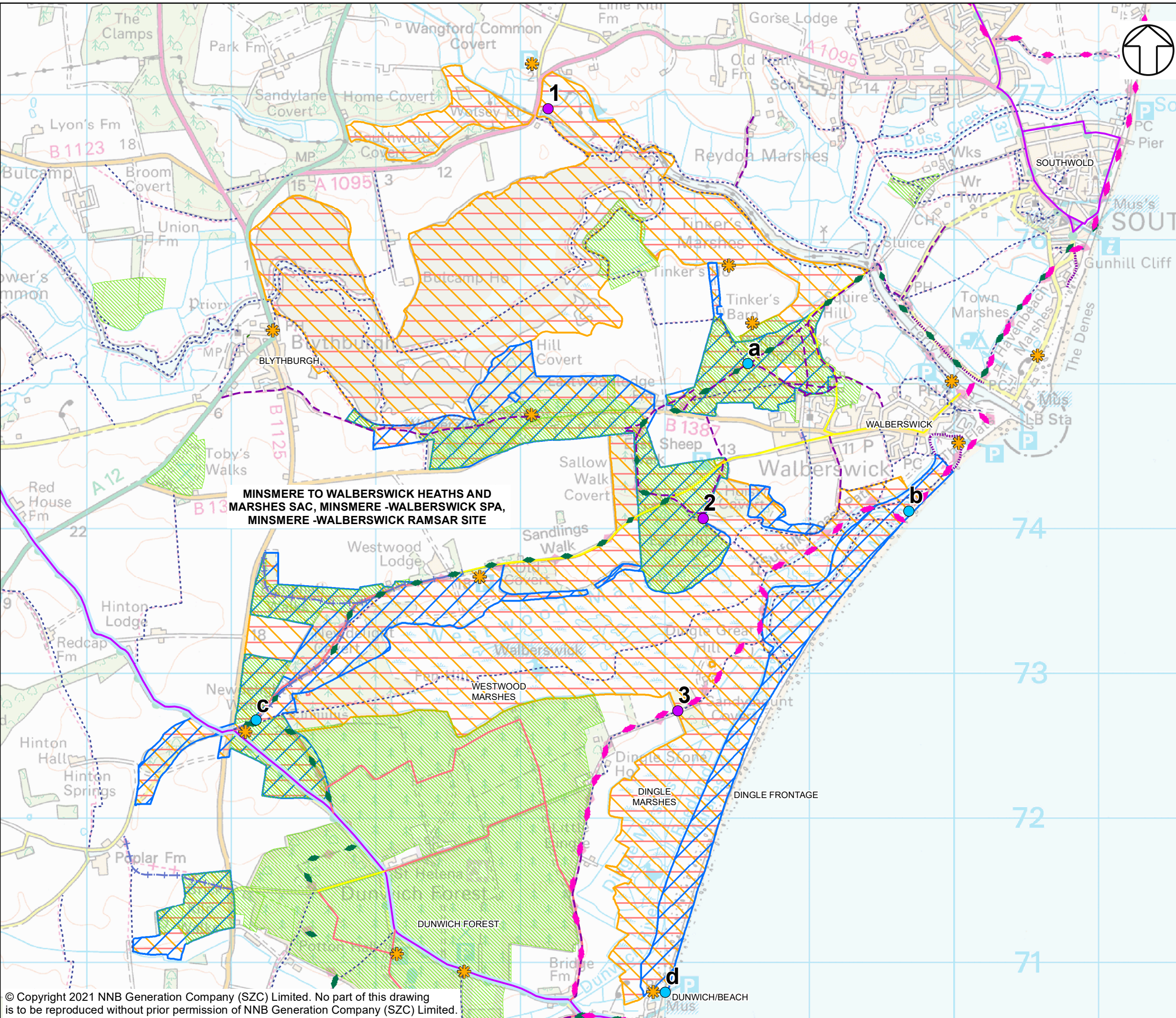
DRAWING TITLE:  
FIGURE 1:  
LOCATION PLAN

DRAWING NO:  
6839\_SK\_116

DATE: APR 2021 DRAWN: V.W. SCALE: 1:75,000 @A3 REV: 02







NOTES

PROPOSED SURVEY AND AUTOMATIC COUNTER LOCATIONS ARE PROVISIONAL AND WILL BE REFINED FOLLOWING DETAILED SITE WORK TO ENSURE THAT THE MOST EFFECTIVE LOCATIONS ARE USED

KEY

- SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION (SAC)
- SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA)
- RAMSAR

CAR PARK ACCESS SITE LOCATIONS AT EUROPEAN SITES

PROPOSED OBSERVATION AND QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY AND AUTOMATIC PEOPLE COUNTER LOCATIONS

PROPOSED AUTOMATIC PEOPLE COUNTERS

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND PUBLIC ACCESS

- RECREATIONAL ROUTE: SANDLINGS WALK (LONG DISTANCE WALKING ROUTE)
- RECREATIONAL ROUTE: SUFFOLK COAST PATH (LONG DISTANCE WALKING ROUTE)
- FOOTPATH
- BRIDLEWAY
- BYWAY
- RESTRICTED BYWAY
- SUSTRANS REGIONAL CYCLE ROUTE (RCR) (42)
- SUFFOLK COASTAL CYCLE ROUTE
- ALTERNATIVE CYCLE ROUTES/SHORT CUTS/DETOURS ON ROAD
- OFF ROAD CYCLE ROUTES
- REGISTERED COMMON LAND
- OPEN ACCESS LAND

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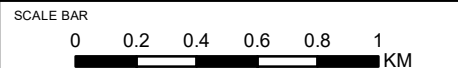


DOCUMENT:  
SIZEWELL C  
MONITORING AND MITIGATION PLAN FOR  
MINSMERE - WALBERSWICK EUROPEAN SITES  
AND SANDLINGS (NORTH) EUROPEAN SITE

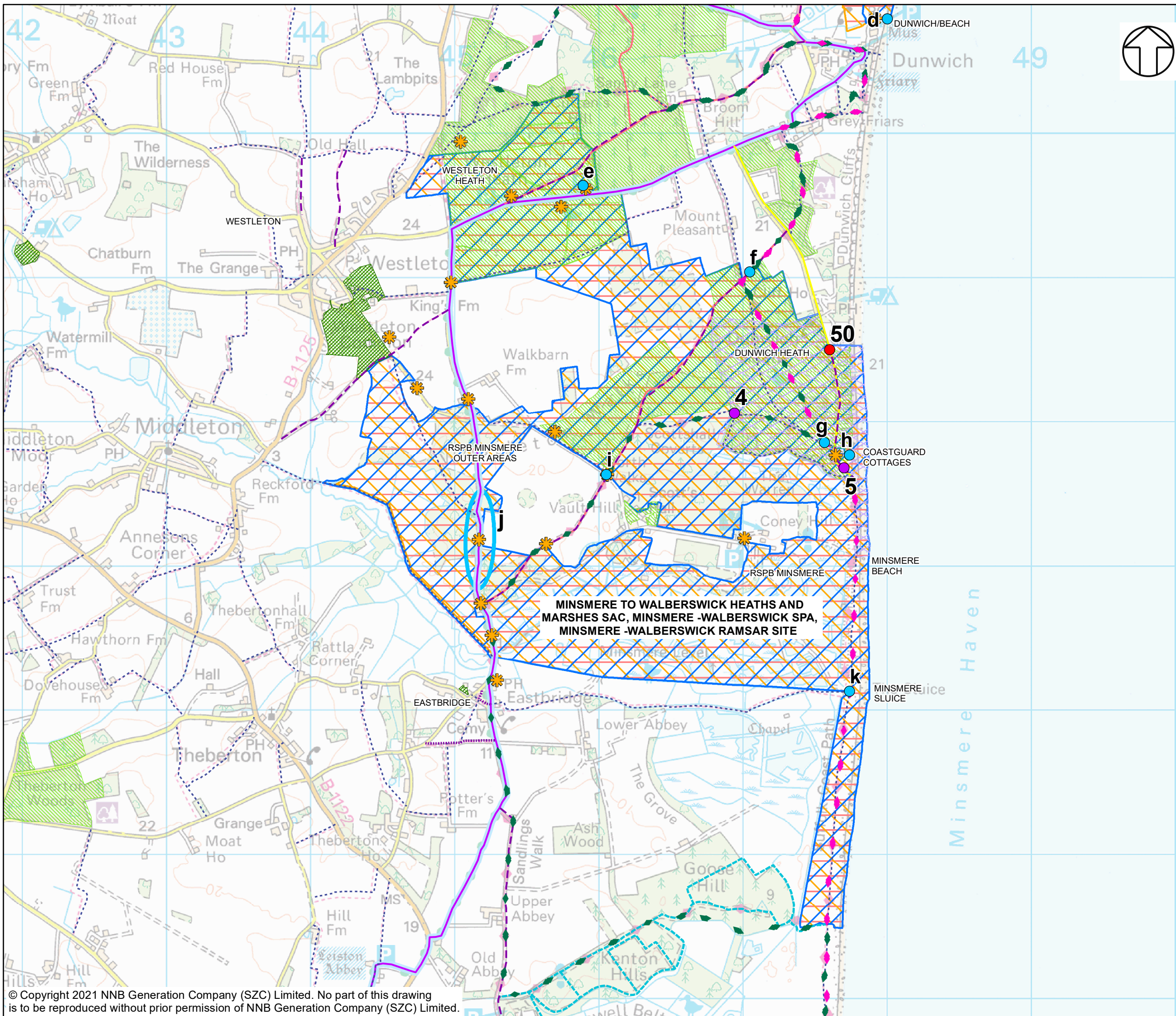
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FIGURE 2:  
PROPOSED SURVEY LOCATIONS  
MINSMERE-WALBERSWICK EUROPEAN SITES  
(NORTH)

DRAWING NO:  
6839\_SK\_108

DATE: APR 2021 DRAWN: V.W. SCALE: 1:25,000 @A3 REV: 02







#### NOTES

PROPOSED SURVEY AND AUTOMATIC COUNTER LOCATIONS ARE PROVISIONAL AND WILL BE REFINED FOLLOWING DETAILED SITE WORK TO ENSURE THAT THE MOST EFFECTIVE LOCATIONS ARE USED

#### KEY

- SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION (SAC)
- SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA)
- RAMSAR

- CAR PARK ACCESS SITE LOCATIONS AT EUROPEAN SITES

- PROPOSED OBSERVATION AND QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY AND AUTOMATIC PEOPLE COUNTER LOCATIONS
- PROPOSED AUTOMATIC PEOPLE COUNTERS
- PROPOSED AUTOMATIC VEHICLE COUNTER

#### PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND PUBLIC ACCESS

- RECREATIONAL ROUTE: SANDLINGS WALK (LONG DISTANCE WALKING ROUTE)
- RECREATIONAL ROUTE: SUFFOLK COAST PATH (LONG DISTANCE WALKING ROUTE)
- FOOTPATH
- BRIDLEWAY
- RESTRICTED BYWAY
- PERMISSIVE PATHS IN EDF ENERGY ESTATE (ADAS)
- SUSTRANS REGIONAL CYCLE ROUTE (RCR) (42)
- SUFFOLK COASTAL CYCLE ROUTE
- ALTERNATIVE CYCLE ROUTES/SHORT CUTS/DETOURS ON ROAD
- OFF ROAD CYCLE ROUTES
- REGISTERED COMMON LAND
- OPEN ACCESS LAND
- NATIONAL TRUST OPEN ACCESS 24HRS

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MONITORING AND MITIGATION PLAN FOR  
MINSMERE - WALBERSWICK EUROPEAN SITES  
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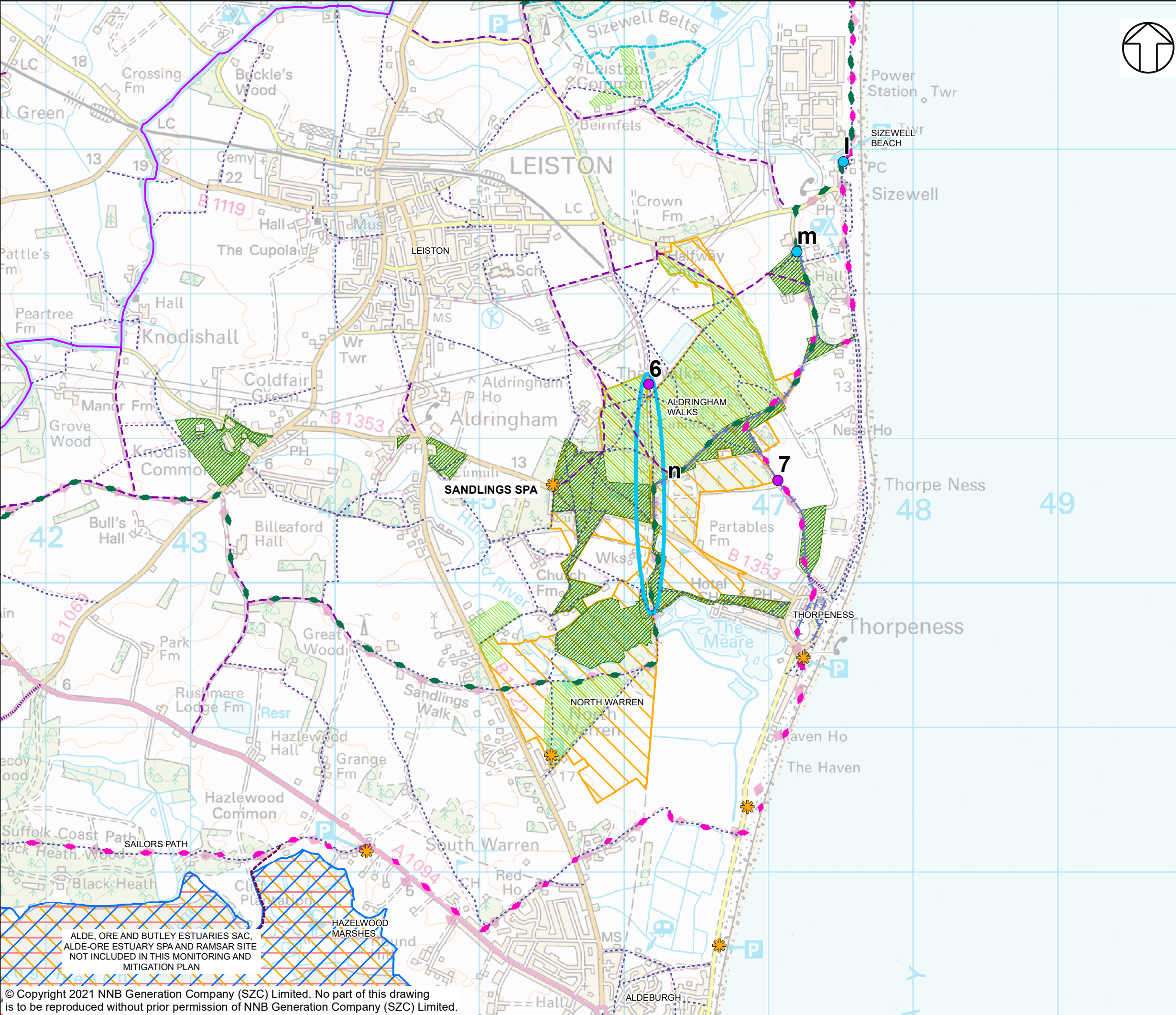
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FIGURE 3:  
PROPOSED SURVEY LOCATIONS  
MINSMERE-WALBERSWICK EUROPEAN SITES  
(SOUTH)

DRAWING NO:  
6839\_SK\_109

DATE: APR 2021 DRAWN: V.W. SCALE: 1:25,000 @A3 REV: 02

SCALE BAR  
0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1 KM





NOTES

PROPOSED SURVEY AND AUTOMATIC COUNTER LOCATIONS ARE PROVISIONAL AND WILL BE REFINED FOLLOWING DETAILED SITE WORK TO ENSURE THAT THE MOST EFFECTIVE LOCATIONS ARE USED

KEY

- SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION (SAC)
- SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA)
- RAMSAR

- CAR PARK ACCESS SITE LOCATIONS AT EUROPEAN SITES

- PROPOSED OBSERVATION AND QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY AND AUTOMATIC PEOPLE COUNTER LOCATIONS
- PROPOSED AUTOMATIC PEOPLE COUNTERS

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND PUBLIC ACCESS

- RECREATIONAL ROUTE: SANDLINGS WALK (LONG DISTANCE WALKING ROUTE)
- RECREATIONAL ROUTE: SUFFOLK COAST PATH (LONG DISTANCE WALKING ROUTE)
- FOOTPATH
- BRIDLEWAY
- BYWAY
- RESTRICTED BYWAY
- PERMISSIVE PATHS IN EDF ENERGY ESTATE (ADAS)
- SUSTRANS REGIONAL CYCLE ROUTE (RCR) (42)
- SUFFOLK COASTAL CYCLE ROUTE
- REGISTERED COMMON LAND
- OPEN ACCESS LAND
- TRAIL TO BIRD HIDE

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SIZEWELL C  
MONITORING AND MITIGATION PLAN FOR  
MINSMERE - WALBERSWICK EUROPEAN SITES  
AND SANDLINGS (NORTH) EUROPEAN SITE

DRAWING TITLE:  
FIGURE 4:  
PROPOSED SURVEY LOCATIONS  
SANDLINGS (NORTH) EUROPEAN SITE

DRAWING NO:  
6839\_SK\_110

DATE: APR 2021 DRAWN: V.W. SCALE: 1:25,000 @A3 REV: 02

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## APPENDIX A: ALDHURST FARM ACCESS PROVISION

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INTERNAL BUSINESS COLLABORATOR REFERENCE  
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**KEY**

**PROPOSED**

- CAR PARKING SPACES
- PEDESTRIAN ACCESS POINT
- SURFACED PATH
- MOWN PATH
- FENCE

**EXISTING**

- LOWLAND HEATH MOSAIC
- INDICATIVE SCRUB, BROADLEAF AND CONIFEROUS WOODLAND PLANTING
- OPEN WATER
- HABITAT CREATION (WET REEDBED)
- HABITAT CREATION (DRY REEDBED)
- WATERCOURSE
- EXISTING TREES AND HEDGES
- PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY
- FENCE

**DOCUMENT:**

ALDHURST FARM HABITAT CREATION SCHEME

**DRAWING TITLE:**

ACCESS AND RECREATION PROPOSAL - CONDITION 25

**DRAWING NO:** 6839\_10005A

**DATE:** NOV 2020 **DRAWN:** MM **SCALE:** 1:3,500 @A3

**SCALE BAR**

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