

CABINET

26 JUNE 2026

REFERENCE FROM THE PLANNING POLICY & LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE

A.1 ADOPTION OF THE REVISED ESSEX COAST RECREATIONAL DISTURBANCE AVOIDANCE AND MITIGATION STRATEGY (RAMS)

(Report prepared by Ian Ford, Democratic Services Manager)

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To enable the Cabinet to consider the recommendations made to it by the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee in relation to the adoption of the revised Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee (“the Committee”), at its meeting held on 8 June 2026 (Minute 8 refers), had considered a detailed report of the Corporate Director (Planning and Community) (A.3) which had sought the Committee’s agreement to the adoption of the revised Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (Essex Coast RAMS) and associated tariff, and which had set out the changes from the original 2018 RAMS strategy. The report had also sought the Committee’s agreement to the updated governance framework supporting Essex Coast RAMS, including the withdrawal of the existing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and its replacement with a Technical Advice Note (TAN).

Following such approval by the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee the revised Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (Essex Coast RAMS) and associated tariff, as attached in Appendix 1, (replacing the existing 2018–2038 Strategy), was required to be submitted to Cabinet for formal adoption

At its aforementioned meeting, the Committee had been reminded that the Essex Coast RAMS set out how the Council, working in partnership with other Essex authorities, would protect the unique wildlife of the Essex coastline whilst enabling new homes and development to come forward. It provided a co-ordinated, partnership-led approach to mitigating the recreational impacts of new residential development on protected coastal habitats and bird populations, ensuring that planned housing growth across Essex could take place in a lawful and sustainable way, whilst safeguarding sensitive species and habitats protected by international nature conservation designations.

The strategy established a strategic framework to address the in-combination effects of residential development on internationally designated coastal habitats and enabled the Council, in its role as Competent Authority, to meet its statutory duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017(as amended).

It had been reported to the Committee that RAMS funding had already delivered tangible mitigation measures along the Tendring coastline, including the Coastal Ranger Service, targeted visitor engagement and behaviour change initiatives, and partnership projects such as Share Our Shores to protect beach-nesting birds. Those interventions, supported by ongoing monitoring, had demonstrably improved ecological outcomes and were particularly important in managing peak seasonal visitor pressures.

The updated Strategy was supported by a refreshed evidence base, including a new visitor survey, and introduced significant changes to the scale and duration of mitigation required. Most notably, it ensured mitigation was secured for the full lifetime of development and reflected a substantial increase in planned housing growth across the Zone of Influence (ZOI) arising from the Government's revised mandatory housing targets. As a result, the RAMS tariff was proposed to increase to £476 per dwelling (or qualifying unit), ensuring that the full cost of mitigation was applied in a fair and proportionate manner.

The report to the Committee had also sought approval to withdraw the existing RAMS Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and replace it with a Technical Advice Note (TAN), ensuring the guidance remained up to date and consistent across the Essex Coast RAMS partnership.

The Committee's decision at its meeting held on 8 June 2026 was as follows:-

“RESOLVED that the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee –

- a) *notes the revised and updated Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (Essex Coast RAMS) associated RAMS tariff, and proposed changes to the governance arrangements, as set out in this report (A.3); and*
- b) *recommends to the Council's Cabinet that it:*
 - i. *adopts the revised Essex Coast RAMS and associated tariff, as set out at Appendix 1 to report A.3, superseding the original Essex Coast RAMS (2018-2038) Strategy;*
 - ii. *approves the implementation of a revised RAMS tariff of £476 per net additional dwelling (or equivalent qualifying development), to take effect from 1 August 2026;*
 - iii. *withdraws the adopted Essex Coast RAMS Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), noting that its content is no longer fully aligned with the revised Strategy, evidence base and tariff;*
 - iv. *agrees to replace the SPD with an Essex Coast RAMS Technical Advice Note (TAN); and*
 - v. *authorises the Corporate Director (Planning and Community), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, to finalise and publish the TAN for use alongside the updated RAMS Strategy.”*

Housing & Planning Portfolio Holder's Comments

I attended the meeting of the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee at which this matter was considered, and I would like to thank the Committee for its careful consideration of the revised Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy and for recommending its adoption by Cabinet. I support the Strategy, which provides a clear and robust framework for addressing the impacts of new residential development on internationally important coastal habitats.

The revised Strategy is also a very positive example of joint working across Essex, with

partner authorities coming together to establish a consistent and evidence-led approach to mitigation. Importantly, adopting the revised Essex Coast RAMS will help to ensure that the Council continues to meet its legal obligations under the Habitats Regulations, while supporting sustainable growth in a lawful, co-ordinated and responsible way.

RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet formally –

- (a) adopts the revised Essex Coast RAMS and associated tariff, as set out at Appendix 1 to this report (A.1), superseding the original Essex Coast RAMS (2018-2038) Strategy;**
- (b) approves the implementation of a revised RAMS tariff of £476 per net additional dwelling (or equivalent qualifying development), to take effect from 1 August 2026;**
- (c) withdraws the adopted Essex Coast RAMS Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), noting that its content is no longer fully aligned with the revised Strategy, evidence base and tariff;**
- (d) agrees to replace the SPD with an Essex Coast RAMS Technical Advice Note (TAN); and**
- (e) authorises the Corporate Director (Planning and Community), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, to finalise and publish the TAN for use alongside the updated RAMS Strategy.**

CURRENT POSITION

Cabinet is now requested to consider the recommendation submitted to it by the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee.

The revised Essex Coast RAMS as recommended by the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee, is set out in Appendix 1 to this report together with the Corporate Director (Planning and Community)'s report which was considered by the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee at its meeting held on 8 June 2026 is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Published Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee held on 8 June 2026.

APPENDICES

A1 Appendix 1 – Revised Essex Coast RAMS (as recommended by the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee) together with the report of the Corporate Director (Planning and Community) (item A.3) to the meeting of the Planning Policy and Local Plan

Committee held on 8 June 2026.