

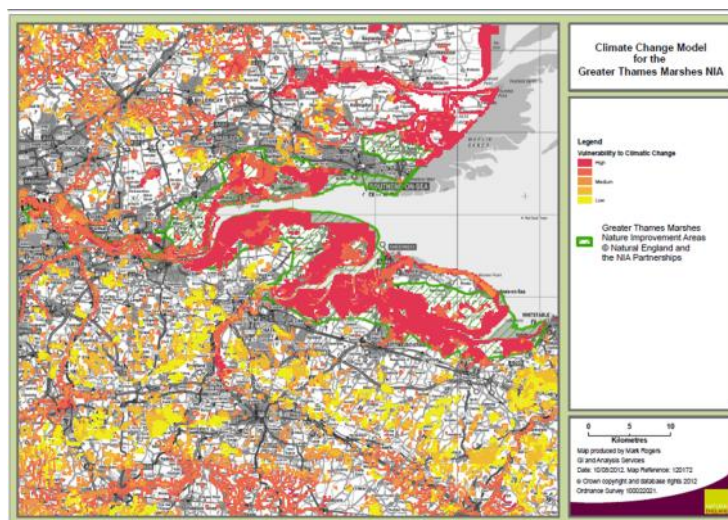
# NATURE IMPROVEMENT AREA GREATER THAMES MARSHES

## PROGRESS SUMMARY—Year 2:

### 1. **Facing up to Change** using evidence to support our decisions

We have invested a significant amount of time and effort in obtaining and presenting GIS data sets covering the Greater Thames Marshes area. These have now been captured in an interactive PDF document where users are able to select and compare datasets.

Datasets, including NE's Climate Change Vulnerability Model have been presented to facilitate discussion among stakeholders regarding how best to respond to the findings. A sample map from the above dataset is shown below, and demonstrates that the habitats of the Greater Thames Marshes NIA are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.



Building on GIS data collected, we are now in the process of developing an ecological network map in accordance with the findings of the Lawton Review, with particular focus on coherence and resilience. This map will support the development of future projects to ensure we are targeting investment appropriately and assist in communicating our objectives, i.e. what does success look like?

### 2. **Delivery on the Ground** practical action through new projects for habitat creation, restoration and management

The Greater Thames Marshes NIA is focused on delivering more, bigger, better and connected habitats. Funding provided from Government in this round of NIAs is supporting delivery of these objectives on two priority habitat types: open mosaic habitat on previously developed land and coastal grazing marsh.

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## Thames Terrace Invertebrates

During the past year we have published our project masterplan—this is available from our website: [www.greaterthamesmarshes.com/tti](http://www.greaterthamesmarshes.com/tti). This document outlines the practical measures we are taking across 8 sites (totalling just under 100ha) to create and manage habitat for our flagship species: Shrill Carder Bee, Brown-banded Carder Bee and Red-tailed Carder Bee. During Yr 2 this work has got underway, supported by our NIA delivery partners Buglife and University of East London.

### Wetting the Marshes

Yr 2 of the project has been a busy one at Higham Marshes. This site is situated between two existing nature reserves (RSPB Shorne Marshes and RSPB Cliffe Pools), so restoration of habitat will create a functional link across the landscape for breeding waders.

In partnership with the landowner and the grazier we have agreed a new management regime for the site. This year has seen the delivery of capital works on site to improve site hydrology to create a wetland habitat, with the remaining half of the site due for completion in Yr 3. The picture below illustrates how well the site is retaining water in the areas where works have been undertaken:



### 3. Partnership Working adding value to existing initiatives and harnesses the skills of others

For this NIA to succeed, we need to use innovative mechanisms to ensure development doesn't come at the cost of the natural environment and build new partnerships to deliver improvements on sites where conservation is not the primary objective. Key highlights this year include:

- Publishing a Planning Policy Advice Note to support Local Authorities developing their Local Plans to recognise the NIA (in accordance with 114 and 117 of the National Planning Policy Framework) which has been used by Castlepoint Borough Council.
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- Identifying and agreeing a criteria for NIA engagement in new and proposed developments
- Providing advice through farm visits, publications and events to approximately 100 farmers
- Establishing a working relationship with the Environment Agency's flood defence TE2100 project team

#### 4. **Communications and Access** delivering for people, as well as wildlife

Building on progress made in Yr1 to establish contacts with key stakeholders and identify targets, we have undergone a proactive year of engagement to raise local awareness of the importance of the NIA and wildlife in the wider landscape of the Greater Thames. This has included:

- Launching the Big Picture: Photography Competition—more details available online <http://www.rspb.org.uk/futurescapes/greaterthames/photo-competition.aspx>
- A programme of talks, events and activities to engage with over 15,000 members of the local community
- Regular (quarterly) Advisory Groups for stakeholders to share and discuss progress of the NIA

#### 5. **Sustainability and Legacy** ensuring we can continue beyond 2015

We have remained resolutely committed to ensuring NIA delivery can go on beyond the initial period of funding. Supported by an appointed consultant from Sheils Flynn to assist delivery of this objective we have made strong progress. The content and targeted funding streams for four external funding bids have been identified, with two projects earmarked for submission in 2014.

**For more information about the NIA or to get in touch with us, visit our website:**  
[www.greaterthamesmarshes.com](http://www.greaterthamesmarshes.com)

*This project has been supported by Defra, DCLG, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and Natural England.*

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giving  
nature  
a home

