

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Submission
Habitats Regulations Assessment

Screening Report

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South Cambridgeshire District Council

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Executive Summary

This report records a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening of the development of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Submission version.

This report follows on from a HRA Screening Report of the Submission Draft Local Plan which was issued for consultation alongside the Submission Draft Local Plan undertaken in May 2013, and a subsequent rescreening of proposed changes in February 2014.

HRA is required under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) for any proposed plan or project which may have a significant effect on one or more European sites and which is not necessary for the management of those sites. The purpose of HRA is to determine whether or not significant effects on European sites are likely and to suggest ways in which they could be avoided.

European sites consist of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). National planning policy also recommends that Ramsar sites should be afforded the same level of consideration as SPAs and SACs. HRA relates specifically to the reasons why sites have been designated as European sites (its 'qualifying interests'). European sites are formed of one or more component Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which are sites of national importance for nature conservation.

The May 2013 screening concluded that there are no likely significant effects from the Local Plan either alone or in combination with other reasonably foreseeable plans and projects on the identified European sites.

In February 2014, the Local Plan Submission version was re-screened. In addition to minor editorial changes to the plan, which could be screened out of the HRA, it contained an additional sub-section to Policy H/1 Residential Development at Villages and allocated three small sites for small scale residential development in Great and Little Abington, and one site in Graveley . The rescreening concluded that there are no likely significant effects from the Local Plan either alone or in combination with other reasonably foreseeable plans and projects on the identified European sites.

1 Introduction

ENVIRON UK Limited (ENVIRON) was commissioned by South Cambridgeshire District Council (the Client) to prepare a Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

This report is a screening report to inform a determination by the competent authority, South Cambridgeshire District Council, under Regulation 102 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010[1] (as amended), prior to the adoption of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. The purpose of the report is to provide a screening assessment to examine whether the policies and allocations in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Submission are likely to have significant impacts on European sites (including Ramsar sites) either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, in view of the conservation objectives of the European sites.

The HRA has been revisited in February 2014, following the proposed changes to the Local Plan as a result of public consultation, in July to September 2013, on the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan.

1.1 The need for Habitats Regulations Assessment

Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and wild flora and fauna, commonly known as the 'Habitats Directive,' provides for the protection of habitats and species of European Community importance. Article 2 of the Directive requires the maintenance (or restoration), at favourable conservation status, of habitats and species of European Community interest. This is partly implemented through a network of protected European sites, sometimes also referred to as 'Natura 2000 sites', consisting of:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) - designated under the Habitats Directive;[2] and
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs) - designated under the Wild Birds Directive.[3]

The English National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that 'Ramsar sites', designated under the Ramsar Convention 1971,[4] should be afforded the same level of consideration as SPAs and SACs.[5] They should therefore be included in an assessment, where relevant. Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires that '*Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a*

[1] Statutory Instrument No.490.

[2] Council Directive 94/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora OJ L 206/7 [1992] (the 'Habitats Directive').

[3] Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds codified version OJ [2010] L20/7 (the 'Wild Birds Directive').

[4] Convention on wetlands of international importance especially as waterfowl habitat (opened for signature 2 February 1971, in force 21 December 1975) 966 UNTS I-14583 ('Ramsar Convention').

[5] Department for Communities and Local Government, National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) , paragraph 118.

significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives.'

This requirement in the Habitats Directive is implemented in domestic English law through The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, with Regulation 102 setting out the obligations of the Directive's Article 6 placed upon local plan-making authorities:

102 (1) Where a land use plan –

(a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European sites or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination) with other plans or projects), and

(b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site,

the plan-making authority must, before the plan is given effect, make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives.

(4) In the light of the conclusions of the assessment, and subject to regulation 103 (considerations of imperative reasons of overriding public interest), the plan-making authority… must give effect to the land use plan only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site or the offshore European marine site (as the case may be).

Undertaking of these particular requirements is often termed a 'Habitat Regulations Assessment'.

The purpose of a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is to assess the significance of impacts of a plan on relevant European sites. The assessment should determine whether the plan would adversely affect the integrity of the site in terms of its nature conservation objectives. Where negative effects are identified other options should be examined to avoid any potential for damaging effects.

Screening is the initial step in the assessment process to whether the Local Plan is directly connected with or necessary to the (conservation) management of any European sites and to identify likely impacts on European sites from a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and to consider whether these impacts are likely to be significant. During screening the precautionary principle must be applied. If an effect cannot be ruled out it must be reported as likely. Where significant adverse effects are identified, the law requires further assessment to be undertaken.

1.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment to date

The Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (June 2012)[6] included a Chapter (number 20) dedicated specifically to Habitats Regulations Assessment. The Scoping Report set out the scope of the HRA and recorded information on the European sites which were scoped in to the assessment, as agreed by Natural England, within the District and surrounding area. This information included their characteristics and current condition. At the

[6] South Cambridgeshire District Council, Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (June 2012).

scoping stage a list of plans and projects which could be considered for the in-combination assessment was produced. An update to this list is provided in Annex D of this report.

An initial investigation was undertaken to identify European sites, (and Ramsar sites), within and outside the Plan Area with potential to be affected by the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. The identification of European sites to be considered within the HRA screening exercise was undertaken in consultation with the Natural England Four Counties team. Using GIS, European sites lying wholly or partially within South Cambridgeshire administrative boundaries plus a 25km buffer area around the boundaries was included to reflect the fact that the Local Plan may affect sites outside the plan area itself. This scoping for European sites found that:

There is one European site within South Cambridgeshire District:

- Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC.

There are a number of other European sites within the surrounding districts:

- Ouse Washes SAC and SPA
- Fenland SAC
- Portholme SAC
- Devil's Dyke SAC
- Breckland SAC and SPA

Two Ramsar sites:

- Ouse Washes
- Fenland (Woodwalton Fen, Chippenham Fen, Wicken Fen)

All these sites were considered as part of the initial screening assessment, because of their proximity to South Cambridgeshire and / or the nature of their conservation interest (the qualifying features) and their vulnerabilities. Map 1 Location of European Sites, in section 4.1 below shows the locations of these identified sites.

Natural England confirmed that this list was comprehensive for the purposes of Habitats Regulations Assessment (by letter 9.11.06). Breckland SAC was added later to this list in order to ensure that a thorough assessment could be made of all the designated sites that may be impacted by proposals in the future. Other local planning authorities within Cambridgeshire have included the Breckland area in their HRA work and it was therefore considered as a precautionary principle for South Cambridgeshire District Council to do likewise.

At the Issues and Options stage of the Local Plan an initial HRA screening was made of the options identified in the issues and options report, to flag up impacts that would need to be explored. The Scoping Report identified a wide range of potential impacts which could arise from the Local Plan and the activities it allows or promotes, and these can be summarised as:

- Land take by developments;
- Impact on protected species found within but which travel outside the protected sites may be relevant where development could result in effects on qualifying interest

species within the European or Ramsar site, for example through the loss of feeding grounds for an identified species;

- Increased disturbance, for example from recreational use resulting from new housing development and / or improved access due to transport infrastructure projects;
- Changes in water availability, or water quality as a result of development and increased demands for water treatment, and changes in groundwater regimes due to increased impermeable areas;
- Changes in atmospheric pollution levels due to increased traffic, waste management facilities etc. Pollution discharges from developments such as industrial developments, quarries and waste management facilities.

Screening matrices were prepared to consider potential impacts for each site, and these were reviewed to inform the current assessment.

The Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report 2012[7] included a screening exercise in Appendix 8, which identified any potential significant effects of options for the Local Plan. The initial screening assessment suggested no significant effects are likely as a result of the options, alone or in combination with other plans. It also concluded that the Council would need to continue to work with stakeholders, Anglian Water, Cambridge Water, and the Environment Agency, to ensure options selected can be appropriately served by water and waste water infrastructure.

A screening of the Local Plan Submission Draft was undertaken in May 2013 and published in June 2013. The Screening Report[8] concluded that there would be no likely significant effects either alone or in combination with other reasonably foreseeable plans or projects, on any of the identified European sites. The report was published for consultation alongside the Local Plan Submission Draft.

Natural England confirmed in representations (October 2013) that they were satisfied with the conclusion of the assessment which identifies significant effects are unlikely alone or in combination with the four Area Action Plans identified. They noted that Local Plans for neighbouring authorities will be reviewed with relation to specific potential impacts if considered appropriate. Natural England advises that to fulfil the requirements of the Conservation Regulations (2010) consideration of the in-combination effects with other relevant plans and projects should be included within the screening report.

Paragraph 3.2 of the Screening Assessment May 2013 highlighted that Local Plans for neighbouring authorities will be reviewed with relation to specific potential impacts if considered appropriate. No in combination effects were identified for further assessment for the reasons provided in the screening matrices. This update has provided confirmation that in combination effects have been considered, and confirms that no likely significant effects in combination with other plans were identified.

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[7] South Cambridgeshire District Council, Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report (July 2012), Appendix 8.

[8] South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Submission Draft Habitats Regulations Assessment Consultation Draft Screening Report (ENVIRON, June 2013).

Natural England confirmed in a letter dated 21st February 2014 to the council, that it was satisfied with the changes made to address its comments on the HRA Screening Assessment provided in May 2013. This letter also confirmed that NE was satisfied that the Local Plan, including the modifications made to the housing policy H/1 to enable Parish-led housing allocations, and those allocations in Great Abington and Little Abington do not alter the no likely significant effects conclusion. A copy of this letter is given in Annex E. Subsequent to these modifications to the Local Plan another modification for a further Parish-led housing site in Graveley has been made. This iteration of the HRA report includes a screening assessment of the significance of this additional site allocation with regards to effects on European sites. It has found that the previous conclusion of no likely significant effects, either alone or in combination remains pertinent.

2 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan

2.1 Introduction

South Cambridgeshire District Council is preparing a Local Plan for its planning area.

The Local Plan sets out a Vision for the district, that:

'South Cambridgeshire will continue to be the best place to live, work and study in the country. Our district will demonstrate impressive and sustainable economic growth. Our residents will have a superb quality of life in an exceptionally beautiful, rural and green environment.'

It then establishes six objectives for the plan to deliver this vision. The objectives of the Local Plan are given in Box 1.1. below.

The Local Plan sets the levels of employment and housing development that should be provided over the plan period to best meet the needs of the area and establish a clear strategy for meeting development needs in the most sustainable way that protects the quality of life of existing and future residents. Its policies aim to ensure that development is of high quality and will meet the challenges we face with an ageing population and changing climate. It will ensure that new development comes with the necessary schools, health facilities, shops, leisure facilities and open spaces that residents need to provide a good quality of life.

Box 1.1: Objectives of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan

A. To support economic growth by supporting South Cambridgeshire's position as a world leader in research and technology based industries, research, and education; and supporting the rural economy.

B. To protect the character of South Cambridgeshire, including its built and natural heritage, as well as protecting the Cambridge Green Belt. New development should enhance the area, and protect and enhance biodiversity.

C. To provide land for housing in sustainable locations that meets local needs and aspirations, and gives choice about type, size, tenure and cost.

D. To deliver new developments that are high quality and well-designed with distinctive character that reflects their location, and which responds robustly to the challenges of climate change.

E. To ensure that all new development provides or has access to a range of services and facilities that support healthy lifestyles and well-being for everyone, including shops, schools, doctors, community buildings, cultural facilities, local open space, and green infrastructure.

F. To maximise potential for journeys to be undertaken by sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling, bus and train.

The Local Plan includes the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1** is the introduction which describes the overall purpose of the document.
- **Chapter 2** sets out the vision and objectives and development needs for South Cambridgeshire to 2031 together with the spatial strategy which focuses development on the edge of Cambridge, at new towns/new villages; and in selected villages. It also has policies for small scale development in villages. It includes a policy about phasing, delivering and monitoring of the plan to ensure that it continues to meet its objectives.
- **Chapter 3** contains the strategic sites which will contribute most to the delivery of sustainable development in South Cambridgeshire.
- **Chapter 4** is concerned with sustainable development, climate change, water resources and flooding.
- **Chapter 5** is concerned with design, landscape, and public realm.
- **Chapter 6** contains proposals to protect and enhance the historic built and the natural environment.
- **Chapter 7** is concerned with delivering high quality housing and includes village housing sites.
- **Chapter 8** deals with building a strong and competitive economy, including sections on employment, retail and tourism and development sites.
- **Chapter 9** is concerned with creating successful communities, including the provision of open space, leisure facilities and community facilities.
- **Chapter 10** deals with promoting and delivering sustainable transport and other kinds of infrastructure.

These chapters include policies to control development, and site specific policies which make allocations for different types of development. A list of the policies in each of these chapters is provided in Annex A.

The Council has proposed a number of minor changes to the Local Plan following the consultation on the Submission Draft Local Plan. The Council has also proposed a major modification to the Local Plan to include a new sub-section to Policy H/1 Residential Development in Villages. This additional policy sub-section relates to small scale Parish-led residential development in villages. It allocates a total of three sites in the Parishes of Great Abington and Little Abington (‘the Abingtons’) for residential development and sets out three accompanying site specific policies. It also allocates one site in Graveley for small scale residential development and sets out an accompanying site specific policy.

3 Screening Methodology

The purpose of screening is to ascertain whether the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, is directly connected or necessary to the (conservation) management of any European sites; and whether it either alone or in combination, is likely to have effects on (relevant) European sites, and to consider whether it can be objectively concluded that these effects will not be significant. During the screening assessment the importance of the international conservation interest of the European site is at the forefront of decision-making. The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan is clearly not directly connected or necessary to the (conservation) management of any European sites.

Neither the Habitats Directive nor the Habitats Regulations[9] specify the method of assessment required; only that it must be 'appropriate'. The scope and depth of the assessment is to be decided by the 'Competent Authority'[10] making the decision to give permission to the plan or project, (in this case the South Cambridgeshire District Council as the local planning authority adopting the Local Plan) and depends on the location, influence and significance of the proposed plan or project. The scope of the assessment was set out in Chapter 20 of the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report June 2012 and was subject to consultation with Natural England, the statutory consultee for Habitats Regulations Assessment.

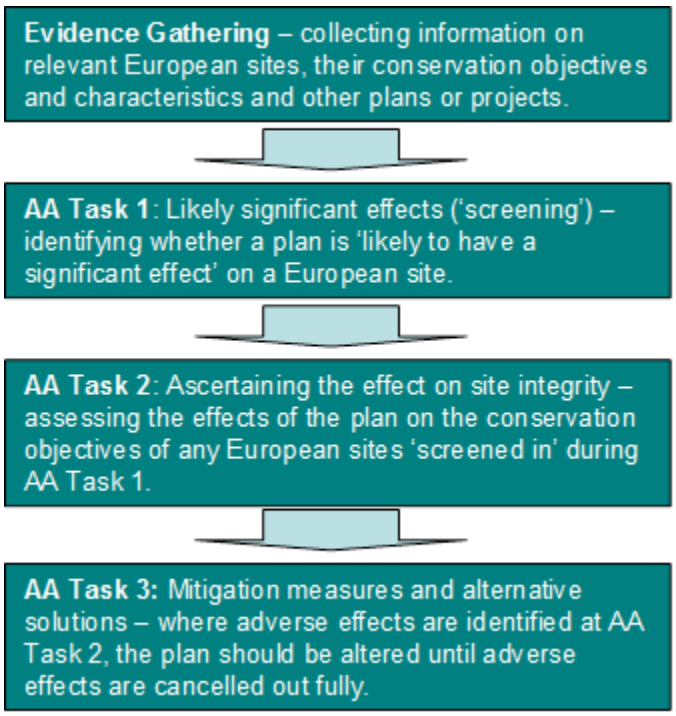
The sites scoped into the assessment were identified by South Cambridgeshire District Council for the Habitats Directive Assessment as part of their Local Plan Initial Sustainability Report (July 2012) and Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (June 2012). Natural England confirmed that these sites were appropriate for the purposes of a Habitats Regulations Assessment in a letter to South Cambridgeshire District Council dated the 9th November 2006. Breckland SAC and SPA was included in these previous assessments as it has been included in many other Local Authorities' Habitats Regulations Assessment. This approach has been reviewed, and a check for any new European sites within the 25km buffer undertaken. No additional sites were identified, and it is therefore considered appropriate to follow the previously agreed scope for this round of screening assessment on the Submission Local Plan.

9 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010), commonly known as the 'Habitats Regulations'.

10 South Cambridgeshire District Council.

3.1 Approach to the HRA

Figure 3.1 below sets out the overall HRA process in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government draft guidance.[11] This draft guidance document was never formalised but provides some useful suggestions for a staged approach to HRA. Current best practice has moved on since 2006 and demonstrates that a more flexible approach to the sequencing of the stages is the most effective method of assessing a plan as it develops.



The European Commission's Environment Directorate produced guidance in 2001 on the *Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.* These guidelines and reference to the requirements of the Directive and the English Regulations were used to inform the screening.

Screening decisions were made on the basis of currently available information relating to the European sites. The following information was collated:

1. List of SACs and SPAs agreed with Natural England in scoping and previous screening;
2. Site characterisation information;
3. Evidence base for the Local Plan;
4. Other relevant Habitats Regulations Assessments

[11] Department for Communities and Local Government (August 2006) Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment, Guidance for Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents, Consultation Document. DCLG Publications

Site characterisation has used information drawn from:

- SAC, SPA and Ramsar site Data Forms
- SAC, SPA and Ramsar site data on JNCC website
- Conservation Objectives
- Component SSSI information including:
  - Citations
  - Condition Assessments
  - Views about Management
  - Operations Likely to Damage

Information about each of the relevant European sites is given in section 4 of this report. Key factors affecting site integrity and vulnerabilities are included. This information assisted in determining possible effects on individual sites from policies or allocations within the Local Plan.

3.1.1 Assessing 'significance'

In terms of European sites a 'significant' effect is one that is not inconsequential and which is likely to undermine the achievement of the site's conservation objectives.[12]

Examples of the types of effects, which are considered likely to be significant, are provided in guidance from English Nature[13] and the European Commission[14] shown below:

1. Causing change to the coherence of the site or to the Natura 2000 network of European sites (e.g. presenting a barrier between isolated fragments, or reducing the ability of the site to act as a source of new colonisers);
2. Causing reduction in the area of habitat or of the site;
3. Causing direct or indirect change to the physical quality of the environment (including the hydrology) or habitat within the site;
4. Causing ongoing disturbance to species or habitats for which the site is notified;
5. Altering community structure (species composition);
6. Causing direct or indirect damage to the size, characteristics or reproductive ability of populations on the site;
7. Altering the vulnerability of populations etc. to other impacts;

[12] In Case C-127/02 [2004] OJ C 262/2 the European Court of Justice held that any effect likely to undermine the Conservation Objectives of an international site should be regarded as a likely significant effect.

[13] English Nature (1999), The Determination of Likely Significant Effect under The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 HRGN3. [English Nature is now part of Natural England].

[14] European Commission Environment DG, Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites. Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.

8. Causing a reduction in the resilience of the feature against external change (for example its ability to respond to extremes of environmental conditions);
9. Affecting restoration of a feature where this is a conservation objective;
10. Interfering with key relationships that define the structure of the site; and
11. Interfering with key relationships that define the function of the site.

It must be acknowledged that this list is not exhaustive, it is only indicative. Additional guidance has subsequently been published on the principles to be used in judging a likely significant effect (Tyldesley, D., 2011).[15]

Judgements on the 'significance' of impacts have been based upon the likely effect on the qualifying features of each particular site as well as the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of those impacts. The risk or likelihood of these impacts occurring was also considered.

3.2 In combination effects

The Habitats Directive and Regulations require that the effects of the plan, and their likely significance, are considered in combination with other plans and projects.

In combination effects assessment recognises that *de minimis* or minor residual effects which are not considered to be significant when considered alone may in combination with minor effects from other plans or projects, lead to cumulative effects which may be significant. Therefore, in combination effects are considered where the screening has identified that there could be residual / minor effects from the Local Plan.

The Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report of the Local Plan Issues and Options Report, published in 2012, identified surrounding plans to be considered in combination, and identified no likely significant effects of the options explored in combination with those other plans. This was subject to consultation, including with Natural England, who agreed there were no likely significant effects.

An updated version of the list of plans and projects used in the previous assessments, which has been used in this assessment, is provided in Annex D. This also gives details of the Habitats Regulations Assessment findings on those plans, where available.

[15] Tyldesley, D. (2011) Assessing projects under the Habitats Directive: guidance for competent authorities. Report to the Countryside Council for Wales, Bangor..

4 European Sites and Issues Affecting them

4.1 Introduction

An initial investigation was undertaken to identify European sites, (and Ramsar sites), within and outside the Plan Area with potential to be affected by the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. The identification of European sites to be considered within the HRA Screening exercise was undertaken in consultation with the Natural England Four Counties team. Using GIS, European sites lying wholly or partially within South Cambridgeshire administrative boundaries plus a 25km buffer area around the boundaries was included to reflect the fact that the Local Plan may affect sites outside the plan area itself. This scoping was reviewed to check for any additional newly designated European sites since the previous screening. No additional European sites were identified.

The distribution of European sites is shown on Map 1 below and individual site maps are shown in Annex B. (Please note: all maps in this report have been produced by the South Cambridgeshire District Council, under its OS Licence).

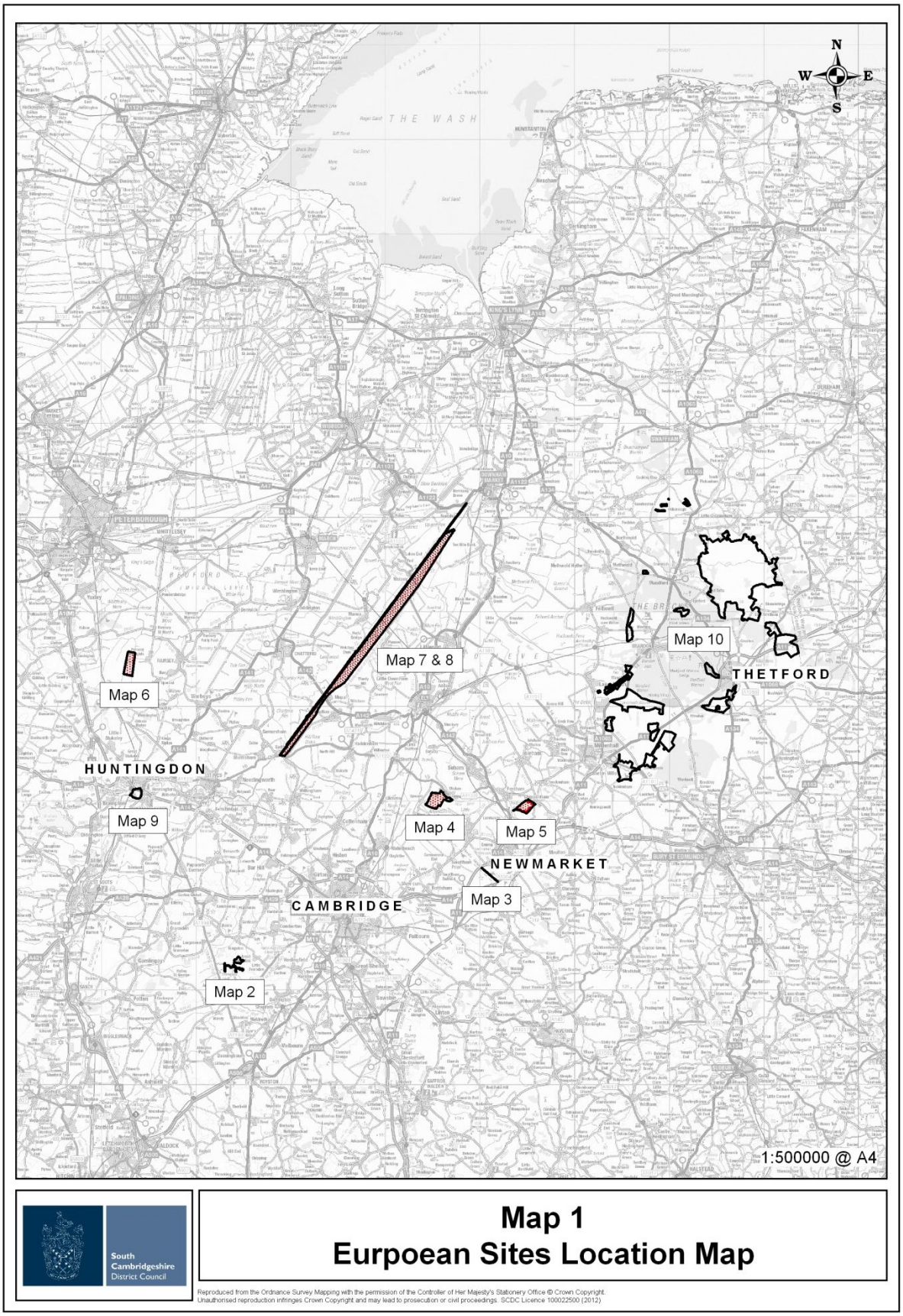
4.1 European Sites Considered in the Screening Exercise

The European sites considered in this screening exercise are listed in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 European Sites Considered in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan

SPAs	SACs	Ramsar
	Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC.	
Breckland	Breckland	
	Devil's Dyke	
	Portholme	
	Fenland	Fenland (Woodwalton Fen, Chippenham Fen, Wicken Fen)
Ouse Washes	Ouse Washes	Ouse Washes

Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC is the only European site within South Cambridgeshire District.


N
W
E
S
THE WASH
PETERBOROUGH
HUNTINGDON
CAMBRIDGE
NEWMARKET
THETFORD
Map 2
Map 3
Map 4
Map 5
Map 6
Map 7 & 8
Map 9
Map 10
1:500000 @ A4
South Cambridgeshire District Council
Map 1
Eurpoean Sites Location Map
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Information relating to the reasons for designation of the sites, their conservation objectives, requirements to maintain favourable condition of the site and the key factors affecting site integrity are all set out within in Annex B.

The text below presents a brief description of each site and provides information needed to inform the assessment.

4.1.1 Special Protection Areas

Ouse Washes

The Ouse Washes Ramsar site and the Special Protection Area is a wetland of major international importance comprising seasonally flooded wash lands, which are agriculturally managed in a traditional manner. It provides breeding and winter habitats for important assemblages of wetland bird species, particularly wildfowl and waders.

The boundaries of the Special Protection Area are coincident with those of the Ouse Washes SSSI, apart from the exclusion of a section of the Old Bedford River in the north of the SSSI.

The Ouse Washes qualifies under Article 4.1 of the EC Birds Directive by supporting, in summer, a nationally important breeding population of ruff *Philomachus pugnax*, an Annex 1 species. In recent years an average of 57 individuals have been recorded, a significant proportion of the British population.

The site also qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting internationally or nationally important wintering populations of three Annex 1 species. During the five year period 1986/87 to 1990/91, the following average peak counts were recorded: 4,980 Bewick's swan *Cygnus columbarius bewickii* (29% of the north-west European wintering population, 70% of the British wintering population), and 590 whooper swans *Cygnus Cygnus* (3% of the international population, 10% of British). In addition, between 1982-87 an average of 12 wintering hen harrier *Circus cyaneus* was recorded, representing 2% of the British wintering population.

The Ouse Washes qualifies under Article 4.2 by supporting, in summer, in recent years, nationally important breeding populations of five migratory species: 111 pairs of gadwall *Anas strepera* (20% of the British breeding population); 850 pairs of mallard *Anas platyrhynchus* (2% of British); 14 pairs of garganey *Anas querquedula* (20% of British), 155 pairs of shoveler *A. clypeata* (12% of British), and 26 pairs of black-tailed godwits *Limosa limosa* (44% of British).

The site further qualifies under Article 4.2 as a wetland of international importance by virtue of regularly supporting over 20,000 waterfowl, with an average peak count of 60,950 birds recorded in the five winter period 1986/1 to 1990/'91. This total included-internationally or nationally important wintering populations of the following migratory waterfowl (figures given are average peak counts for the five winter period 1986/87 - 1990/91): 270 cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* (296 of the British wintering population); 490 mute swan *Cygnus o*lor (3% of British); 38,000 wigeon *Anas penelope* (596 of the north-west European population, 1596 of British); 320 gadwall *Anas strepera* (5% of British); 4,100 teal *A. crecca* (1% of NW European, 4% of British); 1,450 pintail Anas acuta (2% NW European, 6% of British); 750 shoveler *Anas clvpeata* (2% of NW European, 8% of British); 2,100 pochard *Aythya ferina*

(4% of British): 860 tufted duck *Aythya fuligula* (1% of British); and 2,320 coot *Fulica atra* (l % of British).

The site also qualifies under Article 4.2 by virtue of regularly supporting, in summer, a diverse assemblage of the breeding migratory waders of lowland wet grassland including: oystercatcher *Haematopus ostmlegus*, redshank *Tringa totanus*, snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, and black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa*; and a diverse assemblage of breeding wildfowl with mute swan *Cygnus olor*, shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, gadwall *Anas strepera*, teal *A. crecca*, mallard A*. platvrhynchus*, pintail *A. acuta*, garganey *A. querquedula*, shoveler *A. clypeata*, pochard *Aythya farina*, tufted duck *Aythya fuligula*, moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* and coot *Fulica atra* occurring regularly. Many of these species are rare and much restricted in Britain and the European Community owing to habitat loss and degradation. The site thus has an important role in maintaining the ranges of several of these species, which have been affected by changes in habitat elsewhere in Britain.

During severe winter weather elsewhere, the Ouse Washes can assume even greater national and international importance as wildfowl and waders from many other areas arrive, attracted by the relatively mild climate, compared with continental European areas, and the abundant food resources available.

The continued international importance of this site is dependent on the maintenance of a winter flooding regime and a high, but controlled summer water table.

Breckland

The site qualifies as an SPA for breeding populations of stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*, European nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* and Woodlark *Lullula arborea.* The site also qualifies as an SAC and habitat descriptions are provided below.

4.1.2 Special Areas for Conservation

Eversden and Wimpole Woods

The site is located in South Cambridgeshire District and comprises a mixture of ancient coppice woodland (Eversden Wood) and high forest woods likely to be of more recent origin (Wimpole Wood). A colony of barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus* bats is associated with the trees in Wimpole Woods. These trees are used as a summer maternity roost where the female bats gather to give birth and rear their young. Most of the roost sites are within tree crevices. The bats also use the site as a foraging area. Some of the woodland is also used as a flight path when bats forage outside the area.

Devil's Dyke

This section is the most species rich of the Devil's Dyke which as a whole stretches from the Fen Edge at Reach ending at Ditton Green. The section that is identified as a SAC is adjacent to Newmarket Heath. Devil's Dyke consists of a mosaic of CG3 *Bromus erectus* and CG5 *Bromus erectus – Brachypodium pinnatum* calcareous grasslands. It is the only known UK semi-natural dry grassland site for lizard orchid *Himantoglossum hircinum*. Lizard orchid is nationally rare (i.e. occurring in 15 or fewer 10x10 km squares) and is vulnerable in Great Britain. It is restricted to calcareous grasslands and dunes in southern England.

Fenland

Fenland is a group of three sites that form SAC and Ramsar components; Wicken Fen, Woodwalton Fen and Chippenham Fen.

Wicken Fen is a marginal remnant of the original peat fenland of the East Anglian basin. It has been preserved as a flood catchment area, and its water level is controlled by sluice gates. The original peat fen lies to the north of Wicken Lodge. The site here supports fen communities of carr and sedge. The carr scrub is largely of alder buckthorn *Frangula alnus*, buckthorn *Rhamnus catharticus* and sallow over a sparse vegetation of fen plants and including marsh fen *Thelypteris palustris*. The more open areas of sedge fen are typically of tall grasses, saw sedge *Cladium mariscus,* purple moor grass *Molina caerulea*, sedges *Carex spp* and rushes *Juncus spp.* Nationally important higher plants include *Viola persicifolia*, *Lathyrus palustris, Myriophyllum verticillatum, Oenanthe fluviatilis* and milk parsley *Peucedanum palustre.* To the south of the Wicken Lode, the area is of rough pasture land, reedbed and pools which are attractive to breeding wetland birds and to wintering wildfowl, the area being subjected to winter flooding. The dykes, abandoned claypits and other watercourses carry a great wealth of aquatic plants. Many, such as greater spearwort *Ranunculus flammula* and lesser water-plaintain *Baldellia ranunculoides* are now uncommon elsewhere.

Chippenham Fen comprises areas of tall and often rich fen, fen grassland and basic flush that have developed over shallow peat soils. The site also contains calcareous grassland, neutral grassland, woodland, mixed scrub and open water. The site is in a shallow peat-filled depression underlain by a thick layer of marl which rises to the surface in places. The fen is fed by rainfall and springs from the chalk aquifer. There are several ponds on the site and a system of dykes take water from the springs, in the south of the reserve, to the Chippenham River, near its northern boundary.

The areas of tall fen are dominated by a mosaic of saw sedge *Cladium mariscus* and reed Phragmites australis are present with abundant purple moor grass *Molinia caerulea*. A rich fen has developed in mown areas supporting the nationally rare *Selinum carvifolia*. In one area this merges into a species rich basic flush where black bog rush *Schoenus nigricans* becomes abundant. Dense and scattered scrub has developed. There are areas of chalk grassland that grade into the fen grassland. The damp neutral grassland meadows are developing a fen meadow flora. The ditches support a rich aquatic flora. The water level is controlled within a series of ditches.

Because the fen contains such a wide range of habitats it supports a wide variety of breeding bird species, including hobby *Falco subbuteo*, short eared owl *Asio flammeus*, nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* and several species of warbler. It also forms the winter roosting for hen harriers.

Woodwalton Fen holds a range of wetland plant communities once characteristic of large areas of the East Anglian fens. The site was once a raised bog associated with the former Whittlesey Mere and was dug for peat in the late 19th century when most of the acidic peat was removed, exposing the underlying fen peat. The vegetation of the area today largely reflects this historical use of the site. The open fen and swamp communities represented are of several types. A relict of the acid peat holds stands of purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* with ling *Calluna vulgaris*, bog myrtle *Myrica gale*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and the saw sedge *Cladium mariscus*. A further swamp community is dominated by purple

small-reed *Calamagrostis epigejos*. Mixed fen covers a significant part of the site. This vegetation community is floristically rich and contains species such as meadow rue *Thalictrum flavum*, yellow iris *Iris pseudacorus*, swamp meadow-grass *Poa palustris* and great water dock *Rumex hydrolapathum*. Rare fen plants such as the fen wood-rush *Luzula pallescens* and fen violet *Viola persicifolia* occur.

Of particular note is the network of ditches on the site and these hold many water plants which are now relatively uncommon in Britain including bladderwort *Urticularia vulgaris* and water violet *Hottonia palustris*. In addition, two meres have been dug in order to increase the area of standing water on the site and these have proved valuable for aquatic plant and animal communities. Further habitats of significance on the site include marshy grassland, birch and alder woodland and fen carr. The carr is varied in composition and contains willow *Salix spp*., blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, birch *betula spp* and guelder rose *Viburnum opulus*.

The whole site is a patchwork of wetland communities, providing a habitat for many uncommon plant and insect species-a number of which are confined to East Anglia.

Ouse Washes

The Ouse Washes support spined loach *Cobitis taenia* populations within the River Ouse catchment. The Counter Drain with its clear water and abundant macrophytes is particularly important and a healthy population of spined loach is known to occur.

The site is an area of seasonally flooded washlands habitat managed in a traditional agricultural manner. The washlands support nationally and internationally important numbers of wintering waterfowl and nationally important numbers of breeding waterfowl. The site is also of note for the large area of unimproved neutral grassland communities, which it holds, and for the richness of the aquatic flora within the associated watercourses.

The Ouse Washes Ramsar site and its proposed extension is a wetland of major international importance comprising seasonally flooded washlands, which are agriculturally managed in a traditional manner. It provides breeding and winter habitats for important assemblages of wetland bird species, particularly wildfowl and waders.

Portholme

It is the largest surviving traditionally managed meadow in the UK with an area of 104 ha. of alluvial flood meadow (7% of the total UK resource). It is almost completely surrounded by water. There has been a long history of favourable management on traditional lines as a ‘lammas’ meadow and very little of the site has suffered from agricultural improvement, and so it demonstrates good conservation of structure and function. It supports a small population of fritillary *Fritillaria meleagris*. Watercourses on the periphery of the site have populations of some uncommon invertebrates including one dragonfly, which is of a nationally restricted distribution.

The grassland communities are characterised by the presence of such grasses as Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, yellow oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens*, meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis,*and meadow fescue *Festuca pratensis*. The range of herbs present, typical of such meadows, includes lady’s bedstraw *Galium verum*, pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus* and great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*. A number of locally rare and one nationally rare plant are also present.

Channels of the River Ouse surround the meadow, and the Alconbury Brook is close by. These water bodies are important for dragonflies (*Odonata*) in particular the restricted dragonfly *Libellula fulva*. Large flocks of waders use this site in winter.

Breckland

Wangford Warren and adjoining parts of RAF Lakenheath are included in the Breckland site as the only occurrence of this habitat type in the UK. The site has one of the best-preserved systems of active inland sand dunes in the UK. The habitat type, which is in part characterised by the nationally rare grey hair-grass *Corynephorus canescens* occurring here at its only inland station, is associated with open conditions with active sand movement. The site shows the colonization sequence from open sand to acidic grass-heath.

The Breckland meres in Norfolk represent natural eutrophic lakes in the east of England. They are examples of hollows within glacial outwash deposits and are fed by water from the underlying chalk aquifer. Natural fluctuations in groundwater tables mean that these lakes occasionally dry out. The flora is dominated by stonewort - pondweed *Characeae - Potamogetonaceae* associations.

The dry heaths of Breckland are representative of European dry heaths in East Anglia, in eastern England, developed under a semi-continental climate. Breckland has an average annual precipitation of only 600 mm, relatively hot summers and cool winters. Frosts can occur in any month of the year. The dry acidic heath of Breckland represents H1 *Calluna vulgaris – Festuca ovina* heath in the SAC series. The sand sedge dominated *Carex arenaria* sub-community (H1d) is typical of areas of blown sand – a very unusual feature of this location.

The highly variable soils of Breckland, with underlying chalk being largely covered with wind-blown sands, have resulted in mosaics of heather -dominated heathland, acidic grassland and calcareous grassland that are unlike those of any other site. In many places there is a linear or patterned distribution of heath and grassland, arising from fossilised soil patterns that formed under peri-glacial conditions. Breckland is important for rare plants, such as perennial knawel *Scleranthus perennis* ssp. prostrates, and rare invertebrates.

Breckland in East Anglia is the most extensive surviving area of the rare grassland type CG7 *Festuca ovina – Hieracium pilosella – Thymus praecox* grassland. The grassland is rich in rare species typical of dry, winter-cold, continental areas, and approaches the features of grassland types in central Europe more than almost any other semi-dry grassland found in the UK. The terrain is relatively flat, with few physical variations, but there are mosaics of calcareous grassland and heath/acid grassland, giving rise to patterns of structural variation.

4.1.3 Current issues Affecting the European Sites (by topic)

The issues affecting the European sites can be summarised as follows;

- land take by developments;
- impact on protected species found within but which travel outside the protected sites may be relevant where development could result in effects on qualifying interest species within the European or Ramsar site, for example through the loss of feeding grounds for an identified species;
- increased disturbance, for example from recreational use resulting from new housing development and / or improved access due to transport infrastructure projects;

- changes in water availability, or water quality as a result of development and increased demands for water treatment, and changes in groundwater regimes due to increased impermeable areas; and
- changes in atmospheric pollution levels due to increased traffic, waste management facilities etc. Pollution discharges from developments such as industrial Developments, quarries and waste management facilities.

These issues have been identified from the factors affecting site integrity, and the site vulnerabilities identified in the Conservation Objectives for the identified European sites.

5 Assessment of the Local Plan

5.1 Introduction

The results of the screening exercise, including the full significant effects conclusions for each site are provided in full in Annex C. Within the screening exercise all of the potential pathways for effects identified in section 4 are examined and compared with the European site's vulnerabilities and conservation objectives. Section 5.2 summarises the results of the screening exercise where specific pathways of effect have been identified as being an issue for a particular site. The conclusions of the assessment are presented in section 6.

A Schedule of Minor Changes to the Local Plan[16] was sent to ENVRON in February 2014. This made clear the proposed amendments to the Local Plan. Overall the changes relate to minor changes to text to correct typographical errors, update information or to provide additional guidance or clarification. Each section has been screened to check whether any of the amendments could have implications for the HRA. The findings of this process are presented in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 Summary of schedule of minor modifications to the Local Plan in relation to the 2013 HRA

Plan Chapter	Summary of the nature of the Changes	Comment	Change to HRA findings
Introduction	Minor corrections	The additional text does not change the intent or direction of the Local Plan	No.
Spatial Strategy	Additional text for clarification	Additional text does not change the overall strategic direction of the Local Plan	No.
Strategic Sites	Minor additional text for clarification or minor corrections	No changes have been made to the strategic site allocations. The additional text does not change the intent or direction of the Local Plan	No.
Climate Change	Minor additional text for clarification and guidance	The additional text does not change the intent or direction of the Local Plan	No.
Delivering High Quality Places	Minor additional text for clarification and guidance	The additional text does not change the intent or direction of the Local Plan	No.
Protecting and	Minor changes to correct	The additional text does not	No.

[16] South Cambridgeshire District Council, Schedule of Proposed Minor Modifications to the Proposed Submission Local Plan (February 2014).

Enhancing the Natural and Historic Environment	typographical errors, and provide clarification	change the intent or direction of the Local Plan	
Delivering High Quality Homes	Minor changes to update information and provide clarification.	The additional text does not change the intent or direction of the Local Plan	No.
Building a Strong and Competitive Economy	Minor changes to correct typographical errors, and provide clarification	The additional text does not change the intent or direction of the Local Plan	No.
Promoting Successful Communities	Minor changes to provide clarifications	The additional text does not change the intent or direction of the Local Plan	No.
Promoting and Delivering Sustainable Transport and Infrastructure	Minor changes to provide clarifications	The additional text does not change the intent or direction of the Local Plan	No.

In addition, a schedule of major changes to the local plan[17] was sent to ENVRON in February 2014. This schedule includes a change to Policy H/1 Residential Development in Villages to allow for Parish led developments in villages and the allocation of sites, where local community support has been demonstrated. This new policy section has been screened to check whether any of the modifications could have implications for the HRA. The findings of this process are presented in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2 Summary of schedule of major modifications to the Local Plan in relation to the 2013 HRA

Plan Chapter	Summary of the nature of the Changes	Comment	Change to HRA findings
Delivering High Quality Homes	Addition of new policy sub-section: Parish Council Led Allocations for Residential Development in Villages, to Policy H/1 Residential Development in Villages. This sub-section includes the allocation of three sites for small scale residential development in Great and Little Abington and accompanying site-specific policies and a single site for small scale residential development in Graveley.	The additional site allocations in Great and Little Abington are small scale and one is within the village development framework. The housing is to meet local needs. The nearest European sites are Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC (approx. 18 km away, as the crow flies (ACF)) and Devil's Dyke (approx.14km away ACF). The residents will have access to natural green space within the village for recreation and therefore it is unlikely that they will use either	No.

[17] South Cambridgeshire District Council, Schedule of Proposed Major Modifications to the Proposed Submission Local Plan (February 2014).

		European site for everyday recreation needs. The additional site allocation in Graveley is small scale for 6 homes. The nearest European sites are Portholme SAC (approx. 7.5 km away ACF) and Eversden Wimpole Woods SAC (approx.15km away ACF). The residents will have access to natural green space within the village for recreation and therefore it is unlikely that they will use either European site for everyday recreation needs. The small scale development can be accommodated within the existing utilities infrastructure and is therefore considered unlikely to have an impact on water quality or quantity in relation to Portholme SAC.	

5.2 Summary of Results of the Screening Exercise

Ouse Washes SPA

Possible effects have been identified as follows:

- Additional sewage discharge. The revised consents being negotiated between Anglian Water and the Environment Agency with regard to additional sewage discharge arising at Northstowe need to ensure that there is no deterioration in the quality or flow of the downstream watercourse due to an increase in new homes, relevant to the strategic site allocations at Northstowe and Cambourne West.
- Additional flow in the Swavesey Drain network could potentially result from an increase in the rate of surface runoff into watercourses as development is established at the Northstowe greenfield site. However, as this is being promoted as an Eco-Town it will have a high level of surface water attenuation which, with proposed on-site flood storage for events up to those with a 1 in 200 chance of occurring in any year, would result in run-off rates lower than existing greenfield.

The HRA of the Northstowe Area Action Plan (AAP) concluded that there would be no Likely Significant Effects on the Ouse Washes SPA as a result of development in the AAP area. There are unlikely to be any LSEs to Ouse Washes SPA associated with the Local Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects provided the revised consents ensure there is no deterioration in water quality.

Breckland SAC / SPA

Impacts on groundwater-dependent terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE) and the species they support can occur from increased demand on water supply. Drawdown of groundwater levels as a result of additional abstraction could result in damage to associated GWDTEs. However, since the groundwater aquifer has been identified as vulnerable to over-abstraction, no new consumptive abstractions will be licensed by the Environment Agency. Additionally, the bulk transfer infrastructure owned and operated by Cambridge Water Company to transfer water from Thetford to Cambridge would not require modification to accommodate growth within the Local Plan area. The abstraction licences currently in force at Euston and Brettenham are considered to have acceptable levels of risk of groundwater drawdown within the Breckland European sites. Therefore, because this licensed abstraction will not need to be altered to accommodate the proposed developments in South Cambridgeshire, there is no risk that development would have an adverse impact on the achievement of the Breckland SPA or SAC conservation objectives.

There are unlikely to be any LSEs to either Breckland SPA or SAC associated with the Local Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC

The current use of the woods, including public access, is considered compatible with the Barbastelle bat interest and is not considered to affect the Barbastelle population or their roosts. The Local Plan is unlikely to cause a significant increase in visits to the woods.

There are unlikely to be any LSEs to Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC associated with the Local Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

Devils Dyke SAC

Recreation - additional visitor pressure resulting in trampling and changes to vegetation structure. There is a public right of way running along the dyke and additional visitor pressure could adversely affect the habitats for which it is designated. However, due to the distance from South Cambridgeshire, it is considered that visitor numbers would be unlikely to increase significantly.

There are unlikely to be any LSEs to Devils Dyke SAC associated with the Local Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

Fenland SAC

Wicken Fen and Chippenham Fen habitats sensitive to inorganic fertilisers and pesticides. The Local Plan is unlikely to lead to changes in fertiliser or pesticide use.

Recreation - **additional visitor pressure resulting in trampling and changes to vegetation structure.** Additional visitor pressure to Wicken Fen may lead to trampling and changes to vegetation structure. Access to this site, and any recreational activities within, may need to be controlled. Visitors are already managed by zoning parts of the Fen near the entrance, leaving the more remote parts of the site relatively undisturbed.

Additional sewage discharge at Wicken Fen. This wetland site is located c.1km at its nearest point east of the Cam valley, downstream of Cambridge. The Cam receives treated sewage discharges from Cambridge wastewater treatment works (WwTW), just south of the A11 at Cambridge. That WwTW would receive additional effluent in the future from proposed developments at Cambridge, with potential consequences for downstream flows and water quality. However, analysis of hydrology indicates that Wicken Fen is topographically higher than the Cam and drains via Wicken Lode then Burwell Lode towards it. As the Cam does not feed it, there are no associated risks, which could arise from additional sewage effluent discharge at Cambridge irrespective of any changes in effluent flow or quality from that site, so such scenarios have not been considered further in this assessment.

Impacts on water availability at Chippenham Fen from increased demand on water supply. Additional pressure in the region from water abstraction may affect the local springs and aquifer. The Environment Agency (EA) are undertaking water management investigations to understand the best method of mitigating the reduction in water in the aquifer due to settlement growth in Red Lodge, Newmarket and other parts of the catchment.

There are unlikely to be any significant effects on the Fenland SAC associated with the Local Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

Portholme SAC

Changes in water levels and water quality. The Environment Agency has produced a Water Level Management Plan which aims to maintain the current water level management regime in the long-term.

There are unlikely to be any LSEs associated with the Local Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

6 Summary of conclusions on the likelihood of significant effects

6.1 Conclusions on the effects of changes to the Local Plan

There has been no significant change in the intent or direction of the Local Plan. Following the review of the modifications to the housing policy H/1 to include three small-scale Parish-led residential allocations in Great Abington and Little Abington, and one small scale Parish-led residential allocation in Graveley, it is not considered that these are significant in terms of the HRA findings and therefore the previous findings of no likely significant effects remain pertinent. It is concluded that this HRA and its conclusions still apply.

6.2 Overall Significant Effect Conclusion

There are unlikely to be significant effects on the identified European sites as a consequence of the policies and allocations as worded in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Submission. Therefore no policies require advancement to appropriate assessment. The plan is unlikely to have significant effects on the identified European sites when considered in combination with other plans and projects.

It is considered that there are no likely significant effects either alone or in combination with other plans and projects on European sites identified in the assessment.

6.3 Limitations of the screening assessment

The Screening has been undertaken on the consultation version of the Submission Draft Local Plan and has screened the effect of the policies and site allocations. Any changes, to these polices as a result of the Examination in Public not in line with recommendations in this screening report, would require revisiting prior to the adoption of the plan. Whether the alterations made are significant enough to warrant assessment will need to be considered, taking advice from Natural England.

6.4 A Note on the legal purpose of this assessment

It is important to note that the assessment process required under Regulation 102 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) is focused on the protection of the European sites and the ‘qualifying interests’ which are primary and non-primary reasons for designation of those sites.

The findings of this assessment do not obviate the competent authority (South Cambridgeshire District Council) of its statutory duty to consider all European protected species, whether or not these are qualifying features of these or other European sites, both in the use of policies and the granting of planning permission, as required by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended).

7 References

Case C-127/02 [2004] OJ C 262/2.

Convention on wetlands of international importance especially as waterfowl habitat (opened for signature 2 February 1971, in force 21 December 1975) 966 UNTS I-14583 ('Ramsar Convention').

Council Directive 94/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora OJ L 206/7 [1992], as amended (the 'Habitats Directive').

Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds codified version OJ [2010] L20/7 (the 'Wild Birds Directive').

Department for Communities and Local Government, National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012).

DG Environment, Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites. Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission, 2001).

English Nature, The Determination of Likely Significant Effect under The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 Habitats regulations guidance note 3 (English Nature, 1999).

European Commission, Managing Natura 2000 Sites The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission, 2000).

European Commission, Nature and Biodiversity Cases Ruling of the European Court of Justice (European Communities 2006).

South Cambridgeshire District Council, Schedule of Proposed Minor Modifications to the Proposed Submission Local Plan (February 2014).

South Cambridgeshire District Council, Schedule of Proposed Major Modifications to the Proposed Submission Local Plan (February 2014).

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, Statutory Instrument No.490.

Tyldesley, D. Assessing projects under the Habitats Directive: guidance for competent authorities. Report to the Countryside Council for Wales, Bangor (2011).

Annex A: South Cambridgeshire Local Plan

Contents of Submission Local Plan

Table A:1 Contents of Submission Local Plan		
Chapter	**Title**	**Policies**
1	Introduction	None
2	Spatial Strategy	Policy S/1: Vision
		Policy S/2: Objectives of the Local Plan
		Policy S/3: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
		Policy S/4: Cambridge Green Belt
		Policy S/5: Provision of new Jobs and Homes
		Policy S/6: The Development Strategy to 2031
		Policy S/7 Development Frameworks
		Policy S/8 Rural Centres
		Policy S/9 Minor Rural Centres
		Policy S/10 Group Villages
		Policy S/11: Infill Villages
		Policy S/12: Phasing, Delivery and Monitoring
3	Strategic Sites	Policy SS/1: Orchard Park
		Policy SS/2: North West Cambridge - Land between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road
		Policy SS/3: Cambridge East
		Policy SS/4: Cambridge Northern Fringe East and land surrounding the proposed Cambridge Science Park Station
		Policy SS/5: Waterbeach New Town
		Policy SS/6: New Village at Bourn Airfield
		Policy SS/7: Northstowe Extension
		Policy SS/8: West Cambourne
4	Climate Change	Policy CC/1: Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change
		Policy CC/2: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation
		Policy CC/3: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Developments

Table A:1 Contents of Submission Local Plan		
Chapter	**Title**	**Policies**
		Policy CC/4 Sustainable Design and Construction
		Policy CC/5: Sustainable Show Homes
		Policy CC/6: Construction Methods
		Policy CC/7: Water Quality
		Policy CC/8: Sustainable Drainage Systems
		Policy CC/9: Managing Flood Risk
5	Delivering High Quality Places	Policy HQ/1: Design Principles
		Policy HQ/2: Public Art and New Development
6	Protecting and Enhancing the Natural and Historic Environment	Policy NH/1: Conservation Area and Green Separation at Longstanton
		Policy NH/2: Protecting and enhancing Landscape Character
		Policy NH/3: Protecting Agricultural Land
		Policy NH/4: Biodiversity
		Policy NH/5: Sites of Biodiversity or Geological Importance
		Policy NH/6: Green Infrastructure
		Policy NH/7: Ancient woodlands and veteran trees
		Policy NH/8: Mitigating the Impact of Development in and adjoining the Green Belt
		Policy NH/9: Redevelopment of previously developed sites and infilling in the Green Belt
		Policy NH/10: Recreation in the Green Belt
		Policy NH/11: Protected Village Amenity Areas
		Policy NH/12: Local Green Space
		Policy NH/13: Important Countryside Frontage
		Policy NH/14: Heritage Assets
		Policy NH/15: Heritage assets and adapting to climate change
7	Delivering High Quality Homes	Policy H/1: Allocations for Residential Development at Villages
		Policy H/2 : Bayer CropScience Site, Hauxton
		Policy H/3 : Papworth Everard West Central
		Policy H/4 : Fen Drayton Former Land Settlement Association Estate

Table A:1 Contents of Submission Local Plan		
Chapter	**Title**	**Policies**
		Policy H/5 : South of A1307, Linton
		Policy H/6 : Residential Moorings
		Policy H/7: Housing Density
		Policy H/8: Housing Mix
		Policy H/9: Affordable Housing
		Policy H/10: Rural Exception Site Affordable Housing
		Policy H/11: Residential Space Standards for Market Housing
		Policy H/12: Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside
		Policy H/13: Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside
		Policy H/14: Countryside Dwellings of Exceptional Quality
		Policy H/15: Development of Residential Gardens
		Policy H/16: Re-use of Buildings in the Countryside for Residential Use
		Policy H/17: Working at Home
		Policy H/18: Dwellings to Support a Rural-based Enterprise
		Policy H/19: Provision for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Additional wording in Appendix E to add to this policy
		Policy H/20: Gypsy and Traveller Provision at New Communities
		Policy H/21: Proposals for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Sites on Unallocated Land Outside Development Frameworks
		Policy H/22: Design of Gypsy and Traveller Sites, and Travelling Showpeople Sites
8	Building a Strong and Competitive Economy	Policy E/1: New Employment Provision near Cambridge – Cambridge Science Park
		Policy E2: – Fulbourn Road East (Fulbourn)
		Policy E3 Allocations for Class B1 Employment Uses
		Policy E4: Allocations for Class B1, B2 and B8 Employment Uses
		Policy E/5 : Papworth Hospital
		Policy E/6: Imperial War Museum at Duxford
		Policy E/7 : Fulbourn and Ida Darwin Hospitals
		Policy E/8: Mixed-use development in Histon & Impington Station area

Table A:1 Contents of Submission Local Plan		
Chapter	**Title**	**Policies**
		Policy E/9: Promotion of Clusters
		Policy E/10: Shared Social Spaces in Employment Areas
		Policy E/11: Large Scale Warehousing and Distribution Centres
		Policy E/12: New Employment Development in Villages
		Policy E/13: New Employment Development on the Edges of Villages
		Policy E/14: Loss of Employment Land to Non Employment Uses
		Policy E/15: Established Employment Areas
		Policy E/16: Expansion of Existing Businesses in the Countryside
		Policy E/17: Conversion or Replacement of Rural Buildings for Employment
		Policy E/18: Farm Diversification
		Policy E/19: Tourist Facilities and Visitor Attractions
		Policy E/20: Tourist Accommodation
		Policy E/21: Retail Hierarchy
		Policy E/22: Applications for New Retail Development
		Policy E/23: Retailing in the Countryside
9	Promoting Successful Communities	Policy SC/1 Allocation for Open Space
		Policy SC/2 Health Impact Assessment
		Policy SC/3 Protection of Village Services and Facilities
		Policy SC/4 Meeting Community Needs NEW SUB-REGIONAL COMMUNITY AND LEISURE FACILITIES Add supporting text to Policy SC/4 (rather than adding a new policy) from Appendix E:
		Policy SC/5 Hospice Provision
		Policy SC/6 Indoor Community Facilities
		Policy SC/7 Outdoor Play Space, Informal Open Space and New Developments
		Policy SC/8 Open Space Standards
		Policy SC/9 Protection of Existing Recreation Areas, Allotments and Community Orchards
		Policy SC/10 Lighting Proposals
		Policy SC/11 Noise Pollution

Table A:1 Contents of Submission Local Plan		
Chapter	**Title**	**Policies**
		Policy SC/12 Contaminated Land
		Policy SC/13: Air Quality
		Policy SC/14 Hazardous Installations
		Policy SC/15: Odour and other fugitive emissions to air
10	Transport and Infrastructure	Policy TI/1: Chesterton Rail Station and Interchange
		Policy TI/2: Planning for Sustainable Travel
		Policy TI/3: Parking Provision
		Policy TI/4: Rail Freight and Interchanges
		Policy TI/5: Aviation-Related Development Proposals
		Policy TI/6: Cambridge Airport Public Safety Zone
		Policy TI/7: Lord's Bridge Radio Telescope
		Policy TI/8: Infrastructure and New Developments
		Policy TI/9: Education facilities
		Policy TI/10: Broadband

Annex B: European Sites

NAME: EVERSDEN AND WIMPOLE WOODS

Designation and Code

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – UK0030331

SSSI boundary is the same as the SAC boundary.

Location

The site is located in South Cambridgeshire District. The site is located close to Wimpole Park. Map 2 below shows the site's location and boundary.

Grid ref: TL 340526 **Area:** 66.48 ha.

Qualifying Features - Primary reason for selection of the site

Presence of colony of Barbastelle bats *Barbastella barbastellus* for which it is considered to be one of the best areas in UK. This is one of the UK's rarest mammals. The species is protected on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Conservation objectives

Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features.

Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species;
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

General Site characteristics

Broadleaved deciduous woodland (100%)

Soil and geology – Basic, Clay

Geomorphology and Landscape – Lowland

Site Description

The site comprises a mixture of ancient coppice woodland (Eversden Wood) and high forest woods likely to be of more recent origin (Wimpole Wood). A colony of barbastelle bats is associated with the trees in Wimpole Woods. These trees are used as a summer maternity roost where the female bats gather to give birth and rear their young. Most of the roost sites are within tree crevices. The bats also use the site as a foraging area. Some of the woodland is also used as a flight path when bats forage outside the area.

Eversden Wood is species-rich example of ancient ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) field maple (*Acer campestre)* – dog's mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) woodland and one of the largest remaining sites of this type on the Cambridgeshire chalky boulder-clay.

The woodland is predominantly relict coppice of ash and field maple over an understorey of hazel (*Corylus avellana)* with aspen (*Populus tremula*), birch (*Betula sp*) and small-leaved elm (*Ulmus minor*) also locally dominant.

The ground flora is characterised by dog's mercury and bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), and the damp soil conditions are reflected in the local abundance of associated plants such as meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and tufted hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*). Many herbs typical of old woodlands are present including yellow archangel (*Galeobdolon luteum*), wood anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) and the nationally scarce oxlip (*Primula elatior)* a species largely confined to damp chalky boulder-clay woods of eastern England. Other locally uncommon plants represented include herb-Paris(*Paris quadrifolia*), and, particularly on the drier wood banks, pignut (*Conopodium majus*) and hairy wood-rush *(Luzula pilosa*).

The woodland rides provide additional habitat diversity and support herbs such as ragged-Robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*) and false fox-sedge (*Carex otrubae).*

Management and ownership

The primary management principles used for this site are those that maintain a regime of minimum management with little disturbance in order to protect the roosting sites in the woodland for the barbastelle bats.

Wimpole Woods is owned and managed by the National Trust and their management is aimed at maintaining and where possible, enhancing the barbastelle population.

Eversden Wood is privately owned and the current management is considered compatible with the use of this wood as a foraging area / flight path by barbastelles.

Access

There is public access to the woods. Public rights of way go through both areas of woodland.

Wimpole Wood is near to Wimpole Park where the National Trust provide car parking for visitors to their estate. This is around 1km as the crow flies from the start of the woodland. There is also a minor road that runs between Wimpole and Eversden Woods and this provides very limited on road parking available closer to Eversden Wood but still some 500m away. This is not signposted as available for parking.

Current condition (June 2013)

Natural England compiled a conditions report on Eversden and Wimpole Wood SSSI in October 2011 (from survey work in January / December 2010) and found that the site is meeting 100% of its PSA targets.[18] 39.88% of the area is in a favourable condition[19] and 60.12% is in an unfavourable recovering condition. None of the area is in decline. This condition status was confirmed in a report compiled on 1st June 2013. This condition assessment relates to the condition of the broadleaved woodland habitat.

Barbastelle bats require minimal disturbance within 2 km of their roost. They can forage up to 20km from their roosts but more typically venture around 6-8km. Barbastelle bats' foraging routes radiate out from their roosting sites using a limited number of main routes, which split into major limbs and then into small branches.[20] The main area of importance for them is shown on Map 1 in the Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document adopted by South Cambridgeshire District Council in July 2009 (see page 23). It reflects the landscape and habitat of known value to bats, and also where survey effort has been deployed to date.

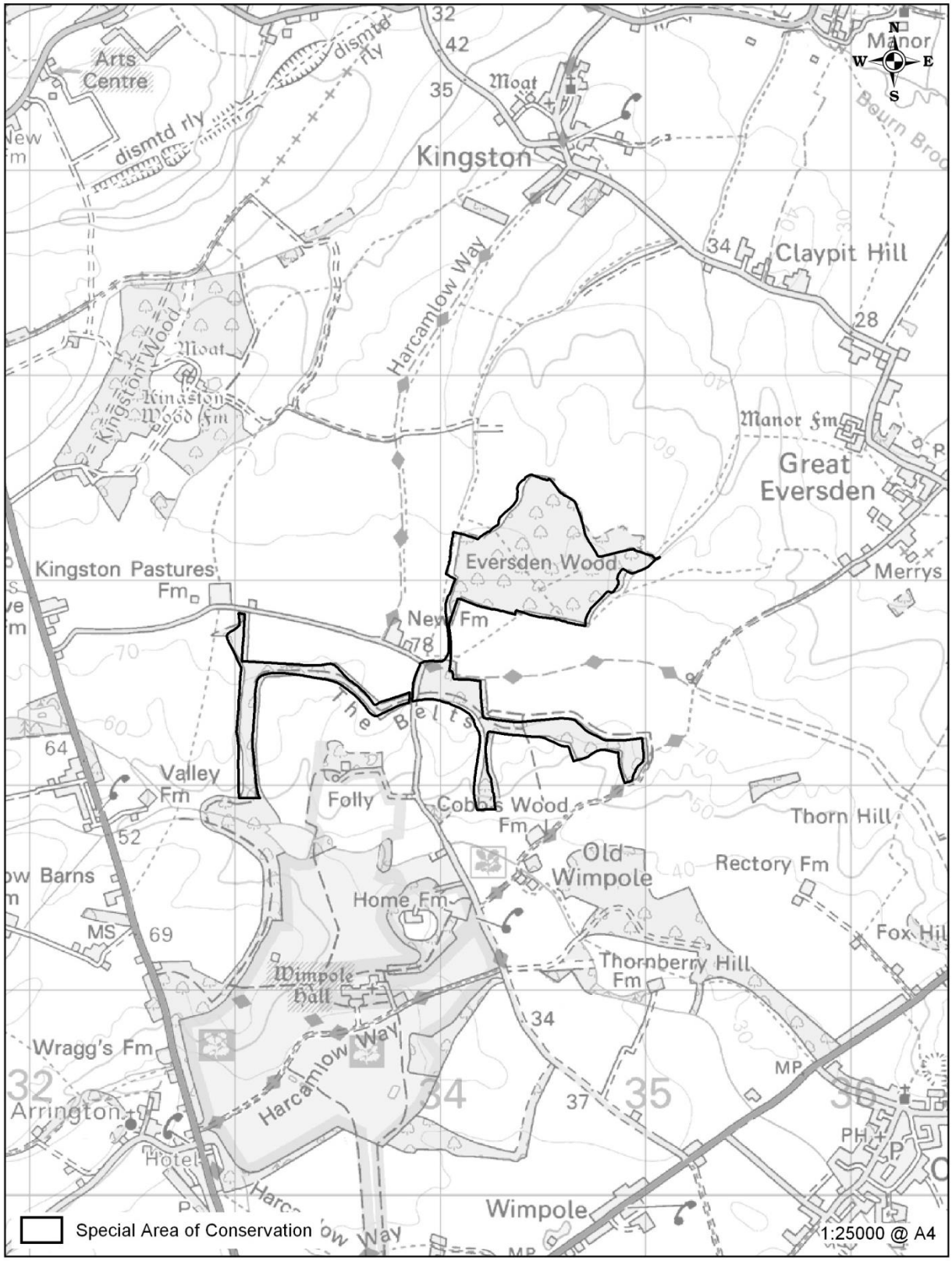
Vulnerability

The current use of the woods, including public access, is considered compatible with the barbastelle interest and should not affect the barbastelle population or their roosts.

[18] PSA target – the Government's Public Service agreement (PSA) target to have 95% of the SSSI area in favourable or recovering condition by 2010.

[19] Favourable condition means that the SSSI land is being adequately conserved and is meeting its conservation objectives.

[20] Greenaway F (2004) Advice for the management of flightlines and foraging habitats of the barbastelle Bat *Barbastella barbastellus*, English Nature Research Report 657.



South Cambridgeshire District Council

Map 2
Eversden and Wimpole Woods (SAC)

NAME: DEVIL'S DYKE

Designation and Code

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – UK0030037

Location

The site is located in East Cambridgeshire district and also extends into Forest Heath district in Suffolk. Map 3 below shows the site's location and boundary.

Grid ref: TL 611622 **Area:** 8.02 ha.

Qualifying Features - Primary reason for selection of the site

Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*). It is the only known UK semi-natural dry grassland site for Lizard Orchid (*Himantoglossum hircinium*).

Conservation Objectives

Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features.

Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species;
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

General site characteristics

Dry grassland. Steppes (100%)

Soil and geology – Basic, Limestone

Geomorphology and landscape – Lowland

Species

CG3 *Bromus erectus*

CG5 *Bromus erectus – Brachypodium pinnatum* calcareous grasslands

Himantoglossum hircinum – lizard orchid

Site Description

This section is the most species rich of the Devil's Dyke which as a whole stretches from the Fen Edge at Reach ending at Ditton Green. The section that is identified as a SAC is adjacent to Newmarket Heath. Devil's Dyke consists of a mosaic of CG3 *Bromus erectus* and CG5 *Bromus erectus – Brachypodium pinnatum* calcareous grasslands.

It is the only known UK semi-natural dry grassland site for lizard orchid *Himantoglossum hircinum.* Lizard orchid is nationally rare (i.e. occurring in 15 or fewer 10x10 km squares) and is vulnerable in Great Britain. It is restricted to calcareous grasslands and dunes in southern England.

Management and ownership

The dyke is in private ownership. There is a Devil's Dyke Restoration Project set up which is a partnership scheme involving Natural England, English Heritage, Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust and the Cambridgeshire County Council working with landowners and managers and local people. The aim of the project is to restore the dyke and there is an agreed management plan. The species rich calcareous grassland requires active management without which it rapidly becomes dominated by rank grasses which leads to the encroachment of scrub over time. Traditional management is by grazing.

The Pasque flower is a specialty of the dyke and a Local Species Action Plan has been produced for this plant.

Access

There is a public right of way running along the dyke. There is parking available at the July Race course, Newmarket.

Current condition (June 2013)

As grazing declined in the early part of the twentieth century scrub has encroached onto many areas of the dyke. In the SAC area there had been some scrub encroachment on the southern part of the site and some clearance work has been undertaken.

Surveys have been carried out by Natural England of the Dyke - the last being in November 2012.

The report compiled in October 2011, based on survey information from 2008 indicated that 49.57% of the area was in a favourable condition; 23.43% was in an unfavourable recovering condition but that 27% of the area was unfavourable with no change.

In May 2002 the site was meeting 100% of its PSA targets and this reduced to 86% in 2008 and now in 2011 is 73%. This would appear to indicate that the condition of the area is not improving.

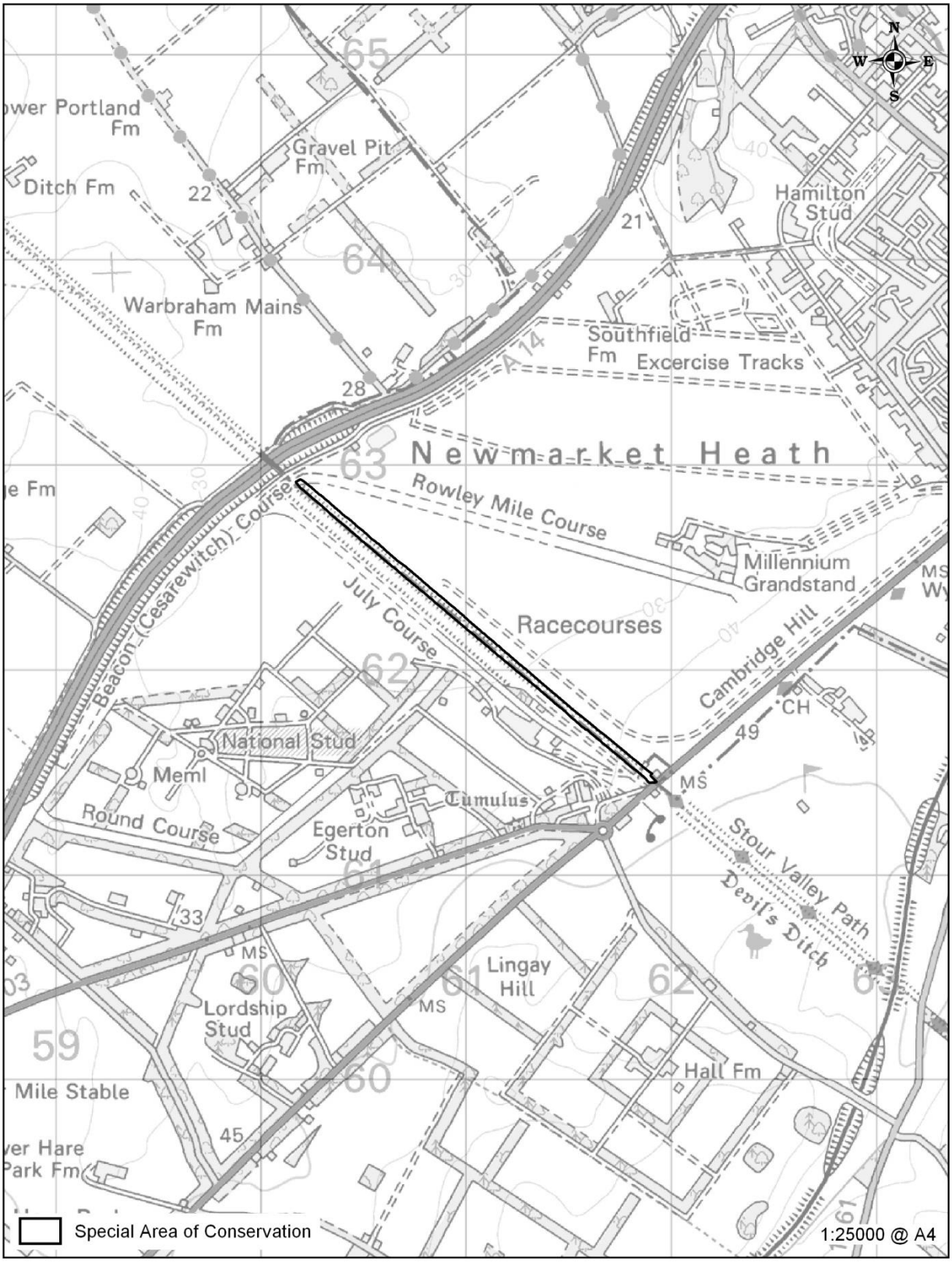
The summary report compiled in June 2013, based on survey information from November 2012, indicates that the SSSI was meeting 88.31% of its PSA target, with 49.57% in favourable condition, 38.74% in favourable recovering 11.69% in unfavourable no change condition. This is an overall improvement in site condition since the 2008 survey.

Vulnerability

Although clearance work has been undertaken there will need to be control over any regrowth of scrub and any weediness of this section. The area remains vulnerable as the reduction in meeting its PSA targets indicates over the last ten years, although the situation is beginning to improve again.

Cambridge Water Cycle Strategy Phase 2 findings (August 2011)

This site is not mentioned in the assessment.



South Cambridgeshire District Council

Map 3
Devil's Dyke (SAC)

NAME: FENLAND

Designation and Code

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – UK 0014782

There are three fens that together form the Fenland SAC

1. Wicken Fen
2. Chippenham Fen
3. Woodwalton Fen

Each site is also a Ramsar site.

Location

Wicken Fen and Chippenham Fen are in East Cambridgeshire District; Woodwalton Fen is in Huntingdonshire District. Maps 4 to 6 below shows the sites' locations and boundaries.

Grid ref: Wicken Fen TL 555700; Chippenham Fen TL 648697;
Woodwalton Fen TL 230840

Area: 618.64 ha.

Qualifying Features - Primary reason for selection of site for SAC

Molinia meadows on calcareous peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae)* – considered to be one of the best areas in UK. This type of fen meadow is ecologically distinctive in East Anglia.

Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae* – considered to be rare as its total extent in the UK is estimated to be less than 1,000 ha; considered to be one of the best areas in UK. (**Priority Feature**).

Qualifying features - but not a primary reason for site selection

Spined Loach *Cobitis taenia*

Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*

Conservation objectives

Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features.

Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species;
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

General site characteristics

Bog. Marshes. Water fringed vegetation. Fens (70%)

Broadleaved deciduous woodland (20%)

Inland water body (standing water, running water) (5%)

Other arable land (5%)

Soil and geology – Basic, peat

Geomorphology – Floodplain, Lowland

Species

Molinion caeruleae

Cladium mariscus

Caricion davallianae

Cobitis taenia (Spined loach)

Triturus cristatus (Great crested newt)

Current conditions

The fenland grasslands are dependent upon traditional management practices of cutting and grazing by livestock. In recent decades scrub and woodland have spread at the expense of fen vegetation. Appropriate water management is vital to maintenance of the special feature. The three constituent sites are all National Nature Reserves and the site management plans include actions to address this problem.

Description of each site that together forms the Fenland SAC

1. WICKEN FEN

Location This site is in East Cambridgeshire District.
Area: 254 ha.

Reason for Ramsar allocation

Criterion 1 – One of the most outstanding remnants of East Anglian peat fens. The area is one of the few, which has not been drained. Traditional management has created a mosaic of habitats from open water to sedge and litter fields.

Criterion 2 - The site supports one species of British Red Data Book plant fen violet *Viola persicifolia* which survives at only two other sites in Britain. It contains eight nationally scarce plants and 121 British Red Data invertebrates.

Site description

This site is a marginal remnant of the original peat fenland of the East Anglian basin. It has been preserved as a flood catchment area, and its water level is controlled by sluice gates.

The original peat fen lies to the north of Wicken Lodge. The site here supports fen communities of carr and sedge. The carr scrub is largely of alder buckthorn *Frangula alnus*, buckthorn *Rhamnus catharticus* and sallow over a sparse vegetation of fen plants and including marsh fen *Thelypteris palustris.* The more open areas of sedge fen are typically of tall grasses, saw sedge *Cladium mariscus*, purple moor grass *Molina caerulea*, sedges *Carex* spp and rushes *Juncus* spp.

Nationally important higher plants include *Viola persicifolia, Lathyrus palustris, Myriophyllum verticillatum, Oenanthe fluviatilis* and milk parsley *Peucedanum palustre.*

To the south of the Wicken Lode, the area is of rough pasture land, reedbed and pools which are attractive to breeding wetland birds and to wintering wildfowl, the area being subjected to winter flooding.

The dykes, abandoned claypits and other watercourses carry a great wealth of aquatic plants. Many, such as greater spearwort *Ranunculus flammula* and lesser water-plaintain *Baldellia ranunculoides* are now uncommon elsewhere.

Management and ownership

The site is owned by the National Trust and managed by a local management committee, which reports to the East Anglian Regional Office of the National Trust.

The continuation of the historic systems of management and the effective monitoring and maintenance of water levels underlies the Fen's ecology and are crucial for the success of all other management practices. The Fen is artificially protected from drying out by a water-retaining membrane.

Access

There is a visitor centre and shop, nature trails, three hides and 16km of walking routes. Entry is by permit only to help control visitor numbers. Visitors are also managed by 'zoning parts of the Fen near the entrance, leaving the more remote parts of the site relatively undisturbed. The Fen is open throughout the year from dawn to dusk.

Current conditions (October 2011)

In 2008 Natural England compiled a report about the condition of the SSSI and only 36% of the site was then meeting PSA targets with 53% of the area in unfavourable decline. More recently the condition of the fen was surveyed in 2009/10 and it was found that the site had improved from the previous survey results. The latest report by Natural England in October 2011 shows the site meeting 100% of PSA targets with no areas declining – 47.08% of the area in a favourable condition and 52.92% in unfavourable recovering.

The condition of the site would appear to have improved since 2008.

Vulnerability

Work carried out in the nearby river system to prevent flooding in the 1960s has meant that the site no longer receives the amount of winter water as it did in the past. This has brought about a lowering of the water table over the past 40 years (Ramsar Report 5.5.06).

The habitats within this site are highly sensitive to inorganic fertilisers and pesticides. Access to this site, and any recreational activities within, may need to be controlled.

Cambridge Water Cycle Strategy Phase 2 findings (August 2011)

This wetland site is located c.1km at its nearest point east of the Cam valley, downstream of Cambridge. The Cam receives treated sewage discharges from Cambridge wastewater treatment works (WwTW), just south of the A11 at Cambridge. That WwTW would receive additional effluent in the future from proposed developments at Cambridge, with potential consequences for downstream flows and water quality.

However, analysis of hydrology indicates that Wicken Fen is topographically higher than the Cam and drains via Wicken Lode then Burwell Lode towards it. As the Cam does not feed it,

there are no associated risks, which could arise from additional sewage effluent discharge at Cambridge irrespective of any changes in effluent flow or quality from that site, so such scenarios have not been considered further in this assessment.

Wicken Fen Ramsar site can be screened out of any further assessment.

2. CHIPPENHAM FEN

Location

This site is in East Cambridgeshire District

Area: 112 ha.

Reason for Ramsar allocation

Criterion 1 - A spring-fed calcareous basin mire with a long history of management which is partly reflected in the diversity of the present-day vegetation.

Criterion 2 – The invertebrate fauna is very rich partly due to its transitional position between Fenland and Breckland. The species list is very long, including many rare and scarce invertebrates characteristics of ancient fenland sites in GB.

Criterion 3 – The site supports diverse vegetation types, rare and scarce plants. The site is the stronghold of Cambridge milk parsley *Selinum carvifolia*

Site description

The site comprises areas of tall and often rich fen, fen grassland and basic flush that have developed over shallow peat soils. The site also contains calcareous grassland, neutral grassland, woodland, mixed scrub and open water.

The site is in a shallow peat-filled depression underlain by a thick layer of marl which rises to the surface in places. The fen is fed by rainfall and springs from the chalk aquifer. There are several ponds on the site and a system of dykes take water from the springs, in the south of the reserve, to the Chippenham River, near its northern boundary.

The areas of tall fen are dominated by a mosaic of saw sedge *Cladium mariscus* and reed *Phragmites australis* are present with abundant purple moor grass *Molinia caerulea*. A rich fen has developed in mown areas supporting the nationally rare *Selinum carvifolia*. In one area this merges into a species rich basic flush where black bog rush *Schoenus nigricans* becomes abundant. Dense and scattered scrub has developed. There are areas of chalk grassland that grade into the fen grassland. The damp neutral grassland meadows are developing a fen meadow flora. The ditches support a rich aquatic flora.

The water level is controlled within a series of ditches.

Because the fen contains such a wide range of habitats it supports a wide variety of breeding bird species, including hobby, short eared owl, nightingale and several species of warbler. It also forms the winter roosting for hen harriers.

Management and ownership

Both the site and surrounding areas are privately owned. Part of the site is under unspecified tenure. The site is mainly used for nature conservation

The site is actively managed by Natural England through regular cutting and grazing with cattle. Encroaching scrub is being removed to restore fen where appropriate. A water compensation scheme has been instituted to ameliorate the effects of water abstraction. The Environment Agency monitors groundwater changes in the aquifer.

Access

There are rights of way across the site. Access away from the paths is by permit only. The nearest car parking is in the villages of Fordham or Chippenham.

There is a low level of usage by local inhabitants using the rights of way through the middle of the site according to the Ramsar information sheet. Few people apply for permits for recreational purposes, they are mainly requested by naturalists.

Current conditions (June 2013)

In October 2011 100% of the area was meeting the PSA target – 72.65% of the area is in a favourable condition and 27.35% in and unfavourable recovering condition.

The SSSI condition summary compiled in June 2013 indicates that 100% of the area is meeting the PSA target, 90.27% of the area is in a favourable condition and 9.73% is in unfavourable recovering condition. Therefore overall the site is in better condition than in previous years.

Chippenham Fen NNR has suffered from a changed hydrological regime due to abstraction from the underlying chalk aquifer. This problem is being addressed through supply of supplementary water together with a programme of vegetation and invertebrate population monitoring. This project is being taken forward by Natural England, the Environment Agency and Anglian Water Services plc.

Vulnerability

There is considerable pressure in the region from the water abstraction that may affect the local springs and aquifer.

The Green Infrastructure Strategy for Cambridgeshire published in July 2011 identifies Chippenham Fen as a target area within the strategy and indicates that there are water management investigations being carried out by the Environment Agency to understand the best method of mitigating the reduction in water in the aquifer due to settlement growth in Red Lodge, Newmarket and other parts of the catchment.

The habitats within the site are highly sensitive to inorganic fertilisers and pesticides, applications of which should be avoided both within the site itself and in adjacent surrounding areas.

Cambridge Water Cycle Strategy findings (August 2011)

The Fenland SAC did not meet the criteria to be included in the assessment.

3. WOODWALTON FEN

Location

This fen is in Huntingdonshire District.

Area: 229.7 ha.

Reason for Ramsar allocation

Criterion 1 – The site is within an area of one of the remaining parts of East Anglia, which has not been drained.

Criterion 2 – The site supports two species of British Red Data Book plants - fen violet and fen wood rush.

Site description

This fen holds a range of wetland plant communities once characteristic of large areas of the East Anglian fens. The site was once a raised bog associated with the former Whittlesey Mere and was dug for peat in the late 19th century when most of the acidic peat was removed, exposing the underlying fen peat. The vegetation of the area today largely reflects this historical use of the site. The open fen and swamp communities represented are of several types. A relict of the acid peat holds stands of purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* with ling *Calluna vulgaris*, bog myrtle *Myrica gale,* tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and the saw sedge *Cladium mariscus.* A further swamp community is dominated by purple small-reed *Calamagrostis epigejos*. Mixed fen covers a significant part of the site. This vegetation community is floristically rich and contains species such as meadow rue *Thalictrum flavum*, yellow iris *Iris pseudacorus*, swamp meadow-grass *Poa palustris* and great water dock *Rumex hydrolapathum*. Rare fen plants such as the fen wood-rush *Luzula pallescens* and fen violet *Viola persicifolia* occur.

Of particular note is the network of ditches on the site and these hold many water plants which are now relatively uncommon in Britain including bladderwort *Urticularia vulgaris* and water violet *Hottonia palustris*. In addition, two meres have been dug in order to increase the area of standing water on the site and these have proved valuable for aquatic plant and animal communities. Further habitats of significance on the site include marshy grassland, birch and alder woodland and fen carr. The carr is varied in composition and contains willow *Salix* spp., blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, birch *betula* spp and guelder rose *Viburnum opulus*.

The whole site is a patchwork of wetland communities, providing a habitat for many uncommon plant and insect species-a number of which are confined to East Anglia.

Management and ownership

The site was purchased by Hon Charles Rothschild in 1910 and donated to the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves (now the Royal Society for Nature Conservation) in 1919. Since the 1950s the pro-active management of the site has sought to reverse the drying out process and therefore conserve this crucial fenland habitat. The site is leased from the Wildlife Trust to Natural England.

The effective monitoring and maintenance of water levels underlies the Fen ecology and is crucial for the success of all other management practises. A Water Level Management Plan has been implemented and the site is flooded in winter in time of high water flows thus protecting low-lying farmland. However as a consequence nutrient levels in the water can be high due to agricultural runoff. Water inflows and outflows are strictly controlled. In the 1980s clay sealed banks were constructed around the perimeter of the reserve, this isolated water levels on the fen from that of the surrounding area.

The Great Fen project aims to link this nature reserve with Holme Fen.

Access

Parking is limited at this site – some being available alongside the Great Raveley Drain. There are three marked trails around the fen following the rides. There are no public rights of way across the reserve but visitors are allowed access to the site. There is restricted access to some areas of the site and no dogs are allowed onto any part of the site.

Current condition (October 2011)

The site is meeting 97.91% of its PSA target - 53.28% of the area is in favourable condition and 44.63% is unfavourable recovering. However 2.09% is unfavourable with no change. In

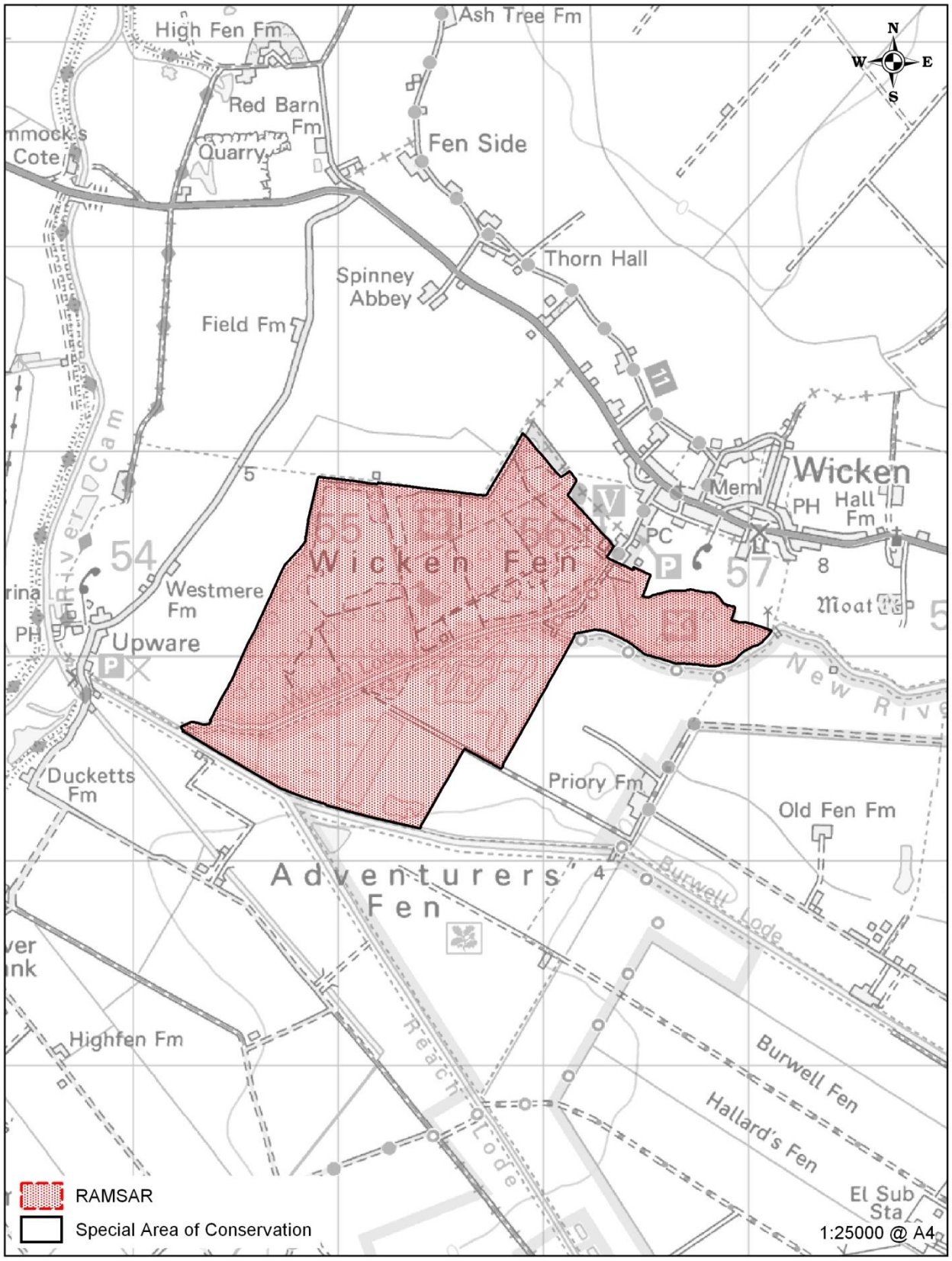
2008 the site was meeting 100% of the PSA targets so there is a slight decline in its condition. The SSSI condition summary compiled in June 2013 indicates the site remains in the same condition. Although Great Crested Newts were not assessed in 2009.

Vulnerability

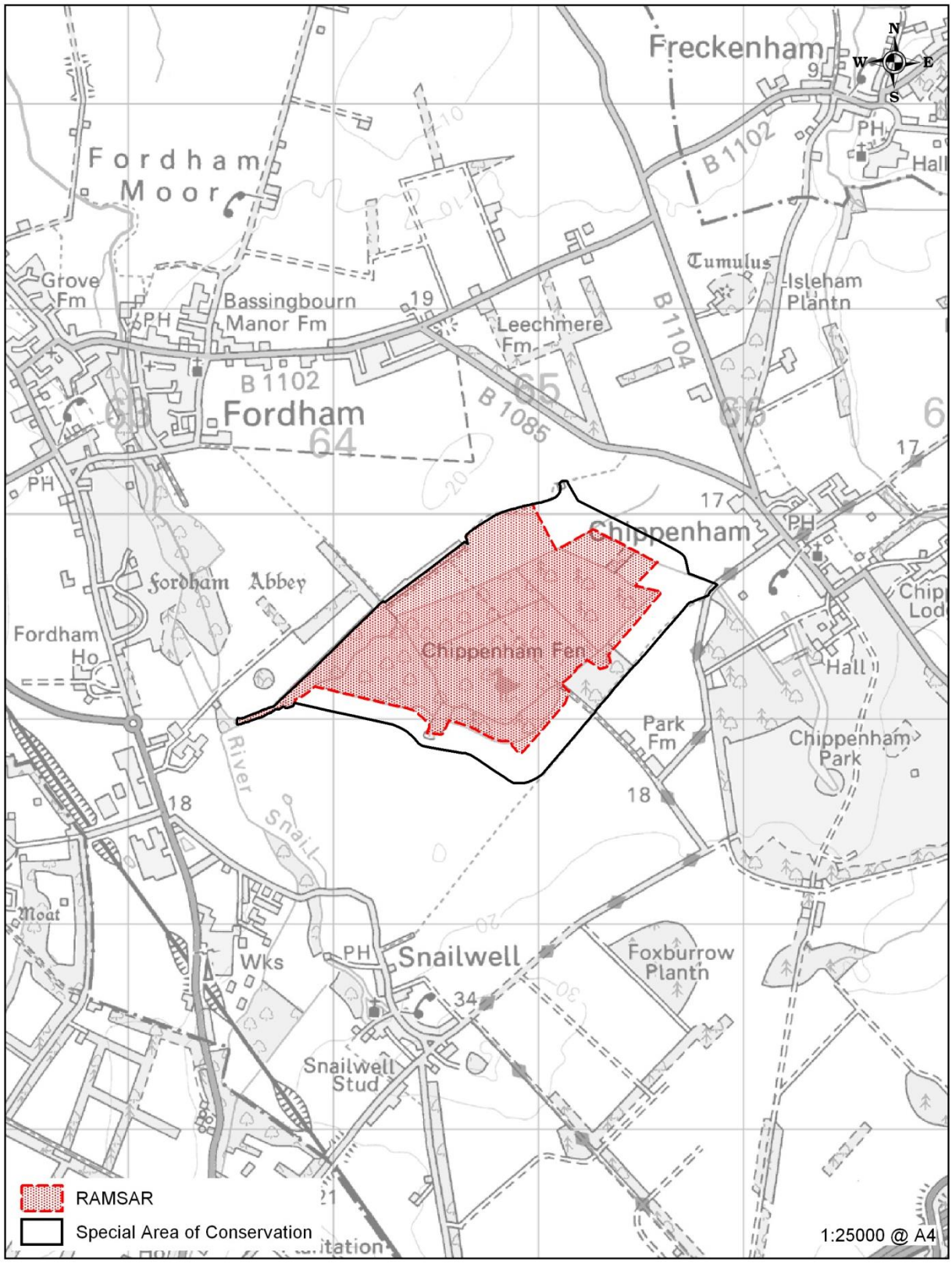
Woodwalton Fen takes water in the summer months from the surrounding drains. In the winter months the fen is designed to be used as a flood storage area, although this occurs infrequently. In both these circumstances the water entering the Fen is high in nutrients from agricultural run-off. It is intended to undertake research to investigate what effects the flooding may be having on the site's interests. The quality of the water from the agricultural run-off needs to be monitored.

Cambridge Water Cycle Strategy findings (August 2011)

The Fenland SAC did not meet the criteria to be included in the assessment.

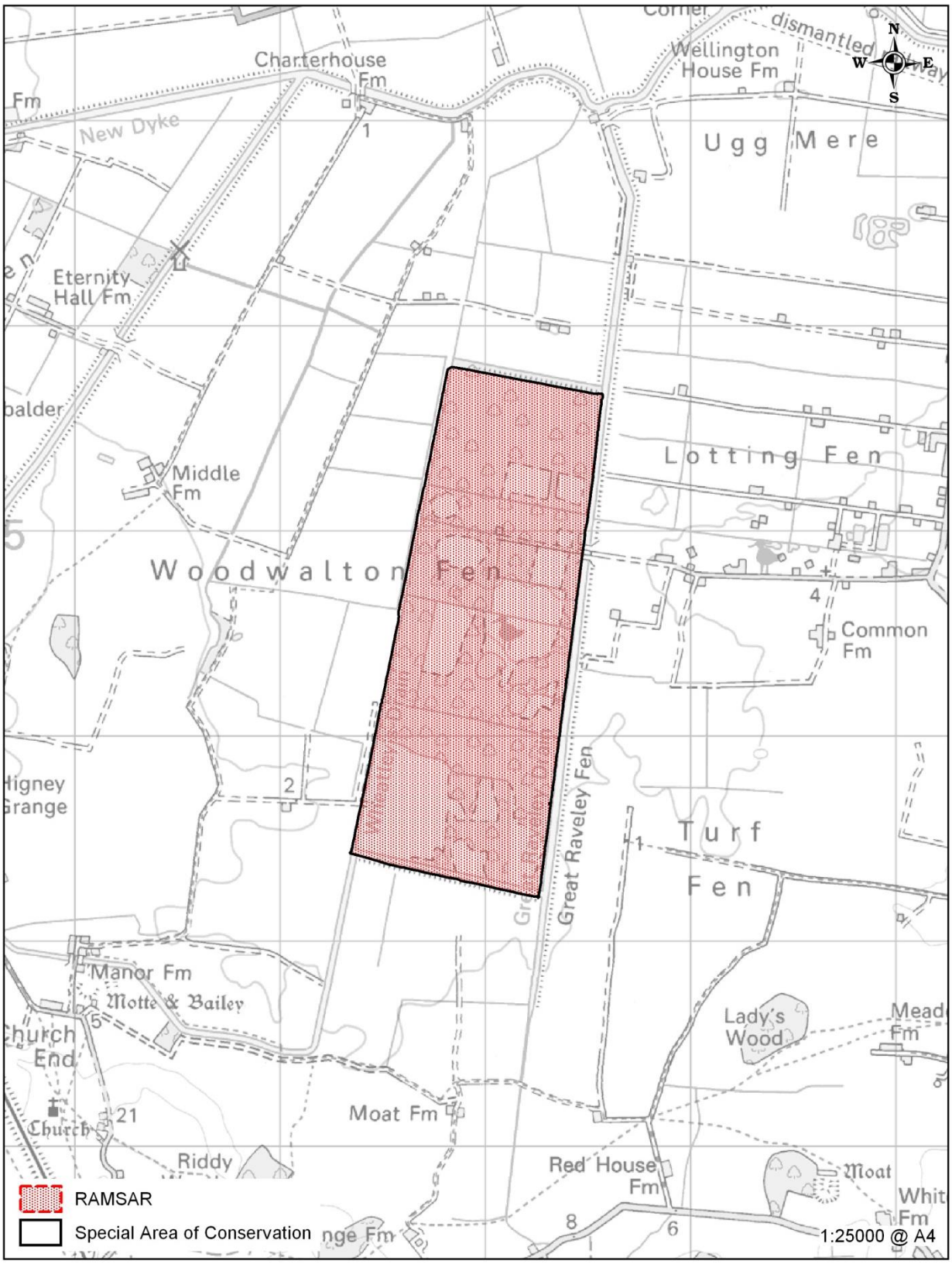


Map 4
Fenland (SAC) and Wicken Fen (RAMSAR)



South Cambridgeshire District Council

Map 5
Fenland (SAC) and Chippenham Fen (RAMSAR)



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Map 6
Fenland (SAC) and Woodwalton Fen (RAMSAR)

NAME: OUSE WASHES

Designation and Code

Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site – UK0013011.

The boundaries of the Ramsar site as extended are coincident with those of the Ouse Washes SSSI.

Location

This site is located in East Cambridgeshire, Fenland and West Norfolk Districts. Maps 7 and 8 below shows the site's location and boundaries.

Grid reference: TL 498895

Area: 2,403 ha**.** (Ramsar site and SSSI): 311.35 ha. (SAC site).

Qualifying Features - Primary reason for selection of this site as SAC

Spined loach *Cobitis taenia* – This site is only one of four known outstanding localities in the UK.

SAC Conservation objectives

Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features.

Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species;
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

SPA Conservation Objectives

Avoid the deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying features, and the significant disturbance of the qualifying features, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of the Birds Directive.

Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;
- The populations of the qualifying features;
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

General site characteristics

Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (50%)

Bogs Marshes. Water fringed vegetation. Fens (20%)

Improved grassland (30%)

Site Description

The Ouse Washes represent spined loach populations within the River Ouse catchment. The Counter Drain with its clear water and abundant macrophytes is particularly important and a healthy population of spined loach is known to occur.

The site is an area of seasonally flooded washlands habitat managed in a traditional agricultural manner. The washlands support nationally and internationally important numbers of wintering waterfowl and nationally important numbers of breeding waterfowl. The site is also of note for the large area of unimproved neutral grassland communities, which it holds, and for the richness of the aquatic flora within the associated watercourses.

Reasons for identification as a Ramsar Site

The Ouse Washes Ramsar site and its proposed extension is a wetland of major international importance comprising seasonally flooded washlands, which are agriculturally managed in a traditional manner. It provides breeding and winter habitats for important assemblages of wetland bird species, particularly wildfowl and waders.

Ramsar Criterion 1a - The site qualifies by being a particularly good representative example of a natural or near-natural wetland characteristic of its biogeographical region. It is one of the most extensive areas of seasonally flooding washland of its type in Britain, and the wetland has high conservation value for many plant and animal groups.

Ramsar Criterion 2a - The site qualifies by supporting a number of rare species of plants and animals. The site holds several nationally scarce plants, including the whorled water-milfoil *Myriophyllum verticillatum*, greater water parsnip *Sium latifolium*, river water-dropwort *Oenanthe fluviatilis*, fringed water-lily *Nymphoides peltata*, long stalked pondweed *Potamogeton praelongus*, hair-like pondweed *Potamogeton trichoides*, grass-wrack pondweed *Potamogeton compressus*, tasteless water-pepper *Polygonum mite*, small water-pepper *Polygonum minus* and marsh dock *Rumex palustris*. Invertebrate records indicate that the site holds a good relict fenland fauna for several groups, reflecting the diversity of wetland habitats. Two rare Red Data Book insects have been recorded, the large darter dragonfly *Libellula fulva* and the riffle beetle *Oulimnius major*.

Ramsar Criterion 2a - The Ouse Washes also qualifies by supporting a diverse assemblage of rare breeding waterfowl associated with seasonally flooding wet grassland. This includes breeding migratory waders of lowland wet grassland: oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*, redshank *Tringa totanus*, snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, ruff *Phdomachus pugnax*. lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, and black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa*, and a diverse assemblage of breeding wildfowl with mute swan *Cygnus olor*, shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, gadwall *Anas strepera*, teal *A. crecca*, mallard *A. platyritynchus*, pintail *A. acuta*, garganey *A*. *querquedu"* shoveler *A. clypeata*, pochard *Aythya ferina*, tufted duck *Aythya fuligulaa*, moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* and coot *Fulica atra* occurring regularly. Many of these species are rare and much restricted in Britain and the European Community owing to habitat loss and degradation. The site thus has an important role in maintaining the ranges of several of these species, which have been affected by changes in habitat elsewhere in Britain.

Breeding gadwall, mallard, garganey *A. querquedula*, shoveler and bar-tailed godwit are all present in nationally important numbers.

Ramsar Criterion 5 - The Ouse Washes qualifies as a wetland of international importance by virtue of regularly supporting over 20,000 waterfowl, with an average peak count of 60,950 birds recorded in the five winter periods 1986/7 to 1990/91.

Ramsar Criterion 6 - The Ouse Washes also qualifies by supporting, in winter, internationally important populations of the following species (figures given are average peak counts for the five winter period 1986/87 - 1990/91): 4,980 Bewick's swan *Cygnus columbarius bewicki* (29% of the north-west European wintering population); 590 whooper swans *Cygnus Cygnus* (3% of the international population); 38,000 wigeon *Anas penelope* (5% of the north-west European population); 4,100 teal *A. crecca* (1% of NW European); 1,450 pintail *Anas acuta* (2$^{\%}$ NW European); and 750 shoveler *Anas clypeata* (2% of NW European). Also notable are the following nationally important wintering populations: 270 cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* (2% of the British wintering population); 490 mute swan *Cygnus olor* (3% of British); 320 gadwall *Anas strepera* (5% of British); 2,100 pochard Aythya *ferina* (4% of British); 860 tufted duck *Aythya fuligula* (1 % of British); and 2,320 coot *Fulica atra*.

During severe winter weather elsewhere, the Ouse Washes can assume even greater national and international importance as wildfowl and waders from many other areas arrive, attracted by the relatively mild climate, compared with continental European areas, and the abundant food resources available.

The continued international importance of this site is dependent on the maintenance of a winter flooding regime and a high, but controlled summer water table.

Reasons for identification as a Special Protection Area

The Ouse Washes Ramsar site and the Special Protection Area is a wetland of major international importance comprising seasonally flooded wash lands, which are agriculturally managed in a traditional manner. It provides breeding and winter habitats for important assemblages of wetland bird species, particularly wildfowl and waders.

The boundaries of the Special Protection Area are coincident with those of the Ouse Washes SSSI, apart from the exclusion of a section of the Old Bedford River in the north of the SSSI.

The Ouse Washes qualifies under Article 4.1 of the EC Birds Directive by supporting, in summer, a nationally important breeding population of ruff *Philomachus pugnax*, an Annex 1 species. In recent years an average of 57 individuals have been recorded, a significant proportion of the British population.

The site also qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting internationally or nationally important wintering populations of three Annex 1 species. During the five year period 1986/87 to 1990/91, the following average peak counts were recorded: 4,980 Bewick's swan *Cygnus columbarius bewickii* (29% of the north-west European wintering population, 70% of the British wintering population), and 590 whooper swans *Cygnus Cygnus* (3% of the international population, 10% of British). In addition, between 1982-87 an average of 12 wintering hen harrier *Circus cyaneus* was recorded, representing 2% of the British wintering population.

The Ouse Washes qualifies under Article 4.2 by supporting, in summer, in recent years, nationally important breeding populations of five migratory species: 111 pairs of gadwall *Anas strepera* (20% of the British breeding population); 850 pairs of mallard *Anas*

platyrhynchus (2% of British); 14 pairs of garganey *Anas querquedula* (20% of British), 155 pairs of shoveler *A. clypeata* (12% of British), and 26 pairs of black-tailed godwits *Limosa limosa* (44% of British).

The site further qualifies under Article 42 as a wetland of international importance by virtue of regularly supporting over 20,000 waterfowl, with an average peak count of 60,950 birds recorded in the five winter period 1986/1 to 1990/'91. This total included-internationally or nationally important wintering populations of the following migratory waterfowl (figures given are average peak counts for the five winter period 1986/87 - 1990/91): 270 cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo (296* of the British wintering population); 490 mute swan *Cygnus olor* (3% of British); 38,000 wigeon *Anas penelope* (596 of the north-west European population, *1596* of British); 320 gadwall *Anas strepera* (5% of British); 4,100 teal *A. crecca* (1% *of* NW European, 4% of British); 1,450 pintail *Anas acuta* (2% NW European, 6% of British); 750 shoveler *Anas clvpeata* (2% of NW European, 8% of British); 2,100 pochard *Aythya ferina* (4% of British): 860 tufted duck *Aythya fuligula* (1% of British); and 2,320 coot *Fulica atra* (l % of British).

The site also qualifies under Article 4.2 by virtue of regularly supporting, in summer, a diverse assemblage of the breeding migratory waders of lowland wet grassland including: oystercatcher *Haematopus ostmlegus,* redshank *Tringa totanus*, snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* lapwing *Vanellus vanellus,* and black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa*; and a diverse assemblage of breeding wildfowl with mute swan *Cygnus olor*, shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, gadwall *Anas strepera,* teal *A. crecca*, mallard *A. platvrhynchus,* pintail *A. acuta*, garganey *A. querquedula,* shoveler *A. clypeata*, pochard *Aythya farina*, tufted duck *Aythya fuligula*, moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* and coot *Fulica atra* occurring regularly. Many of these species are rare and much restricted in Britain and the European Community owing to habitat loss and degradation. The site thus has an important role in maintaining the ranges of several of these species, which have been affected by changes in habitat elsewhere in Britain.

During severe winter weather elsewhere, the Ouse Washes can assume even greater national and international importance as wildfowl and waders from many other areas arrive, attracted by the relatively mild climate, compared with continental European areas, and the abundant food resources available.

The continued international importance of this site is dependent on the maintenance of a winter flooding regime and a high, but controlled summer water table.

Management and ownership

Given the extent of the Ouse Washes there are a number of management techniques that need to be carried out in the washes. Wetland grassland requires active management if it is to retain its conservation interest this has traditionally been done by grazing. Partial winter flooding is required to maintain suitable habitat conditions for wintering birds. A mosaic of winter flooded grassland and permanently un-flooded grassland is desirable. Ditches are artificial habitats created by land drainage – if left unmanaged silt accumulates in the bottom of the ditches leading to the loss the range of aquatic plants and animals colonising the ditches. There needs to be a rotation undertaken on ditch management. Also the level of water in the ditches and its quality needs to be regulated to maintain the optimum level for the plant and animal community. All the habitats are highly sensitive to inorganic fertilisers and pesticides.

Access

There is a network of public rights of way in the Washes. The RSPB manage a nature reserve at Welches Dam where there is a visitor centre and a number of bird hides. The WWT manage a nature reserve at Welney, Norfolk also with a centre and hides.

Current condition (November 2011)

Assessment work was carried out in 2003 and at this time many of the units that comprise the Washes were in an unfavourable state. Only 12.93% of the site meets the PSA target. The water quality regularly fails to meet total Phosphorus target of 0.1mg/l. Until this can be remedied the site will continue to remain unfavourable.

More recent survey work carried out in November 2009 on a number of different units that make up the Washes showed no improvements because there was inappropriate water levels within the unit areas. This survey work showed that there was a decline in the majority of the breeding bird features, some wintering bird features and the loss of extent and quality of neutral grassland feature.

In August and September 2011 further units were surveyed and found to be favourable.

The report compiled by Natural England in November 2011 on the condition of the SSSI found that only 19.13% of the site meets the PSA target which is a slight improvement from 2009. Of this 15.56% of the area is favourable and 3.57% is unfavourable recovering. 80.87% of the area is in an unfavourable condition with no change.

Vulnerability

Two independent and parallel rivers comprise the SAC. The Counter Drain / Old Bedford (known also as the outer river) drains adjacent farmland. The Old Bedford / Delph (known also as the inner river) is sourced by the River Great Ouse. During the winter and increasingly during the spring and summer months as well, the inner river takes flood-water from the Great Ouse, and therefore has an important flood defence function. Issues of concern relate to water quantity, water quality, salinity, turbidity and sediment.

The need to ensure there is sufficient water for the rivers is addressed through the Water Level Management Plan agreed by the Environment Agency and partner organisations. The outer river is also a source of water for nearby arable land forming spray irrigation, but this abstraction is unmetered for the most part. Abstraction of water from the Great Ouse system to Essex via the Ely-Ouse Transfer Scheme is monitored through the Denver License Variation. Other proposals for water abstraction, e.g. to Rutland Water by Anglia Water, have been the subject of assessment, but there are no current proposals.

It has been found that in the Environment Agency Review of Consents that there was very little difference between the different abstraction scenarios in terms of water resource availability to the Ouse Washes. The water table depth ranges are, therefore, relatively similar between the different scenarios i.e. there is little difference between the naturalised and current and maximum licensed scenarios. Therefore abstraction licences have no effect on the vegetation supporting the SPA features under the existing operating regime. Therefore the Agency concluded that water resources consents do not adversely affect the integrity of the European site, with respect to SPA features.

Water quality is a major issue of concern. Increases in two plant nutrients - nitrogen and particularly phosphorus (thought to be derived from sewage treatment works) - are leading to changes in the macrophyte communities, shown by a decline in species diversity and the

loss of species together with an increase in species tolerant of eutrophic conditions. This is particularly apparent in the inner river. There is evidence that agricultural inputs are a minor component. In addition, blanket-weed (aquatic algae) poses problems to navigation and angling, leading to issues of timing and frequency of aquatic weed-cutting.

It is clear from the Environment Agency Review of Consents process that high phosphorus concentrations are currently the main issue for the Ouse Washes leading to eutrophication in the main watercourses and internal ditches and degradation of the wet grassland habitat. From all of the available evidence, phosphorus levels are above the desired target level, in some cases by a considerable amount. The main contribution to the phosphorus load comes from consented point source discharges of sewage effluent.

In addition, flood water draining off the adjacent Ouse Washes into the inner river can be of a very poor quality (particularly in warm weather) leading to problems of deoxygenation with resultant fish-kills. The frequency of increased spring and summer flooding on the Ouse Washes is being studied to ascertain ways of ameliorating its effects.

Saline intrusion through the northernmost tidal lock gate may be contributing to an increase in salinity levels of the outer river.

Conditions must be applied to planning permissions for gravel extraction from quarries near to the SAC, to ensure that drainage water from de-watering and washings does not affect the turbidity and sediment levels in the outer river.

Cambridge Water Cycle Strategy Phase 2 findings

Ouse Washes SAC, Ramsar site and SSSI lies between the New Bedford River and the Old Bedford River to the east of Earith. The site is seasonally-flooded washland, internationally important for birds. Recent reports identify that water levels across the Ouse Washes are increasingly too high in the Spring and Summer as a result of impeded seasonal drainage which itself is consequent upon siltation in the Hundred Foot Drain.

Potential concerns associated with the Cambridge WCS are related to the discharge of sewage via the Uttons Drove WwTW, which would serve the proposed development at Northstowe. This discharges to the Swavesey Drain, which in turn feeds into the River Great Ouse upstream of Ouse Washes. Significant additional flow could exacerbate the existing problem associated with high Spring / Summer water levels. Significant deterioration in sewage effluent quality could also have adverse effects on standing water quality at Ouse Washes. However, any such risks need to be considered in the context of the following:

The distance from Uttons Drove WwTW to Ouse Washes is greater than 10 km by river, providing for considerable dilution and dispersal of any contamination between this potential source and potential receptor.

The WwTW can make only a very minor contribution to total flow at Ouse Washes, since the total catchment draining to the River Great Ouse at Earith is approximately 3000 km^2. For comparison, the mean flow from the sewage works discharge is currently estimated at 4332m^3/day compared a mean flow in the Ouse in excess of 1,185,408 m^3/day (which is the flow at Offord, upstream of Earith).

The current consented dry weather flow (i.e. foul sewage excluding surface drainage) at the works is 3350 m^3/day. However, Anglian Water plc has submitted a proposal to Ofwat under PRO9 (i.e. spending proposals for the period 2010 to 2015) to increase the consent to 6992m^3/day. Whilst the existing consent would not be able to accommodate additional influent from proposed development at Northstowe, the proposed new consent would.

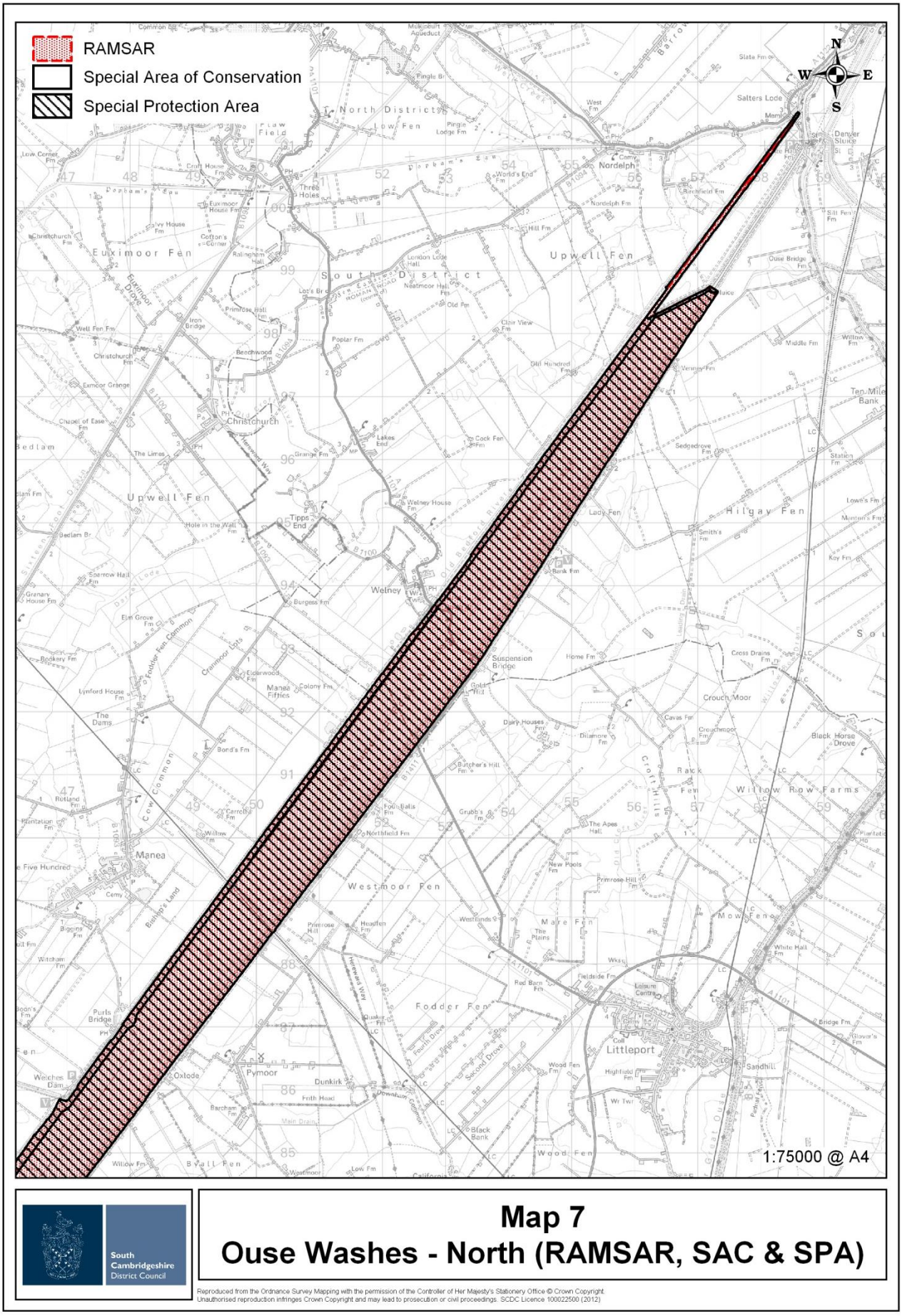
The proposed revised consent would have associated improvements in effluent quality, to ensure no deterioration in downstream water quality, specifically tightening of effluent quality to:

- Biochemical Oxygen Demand - 10 mg/l (evidence in the Phase 2 WCS indicates the consent might need to be set to 9 mg/l to ensure no deterioration);
- Ammonia - 5 mg/l;
- Phosphate - 2 mg/l.

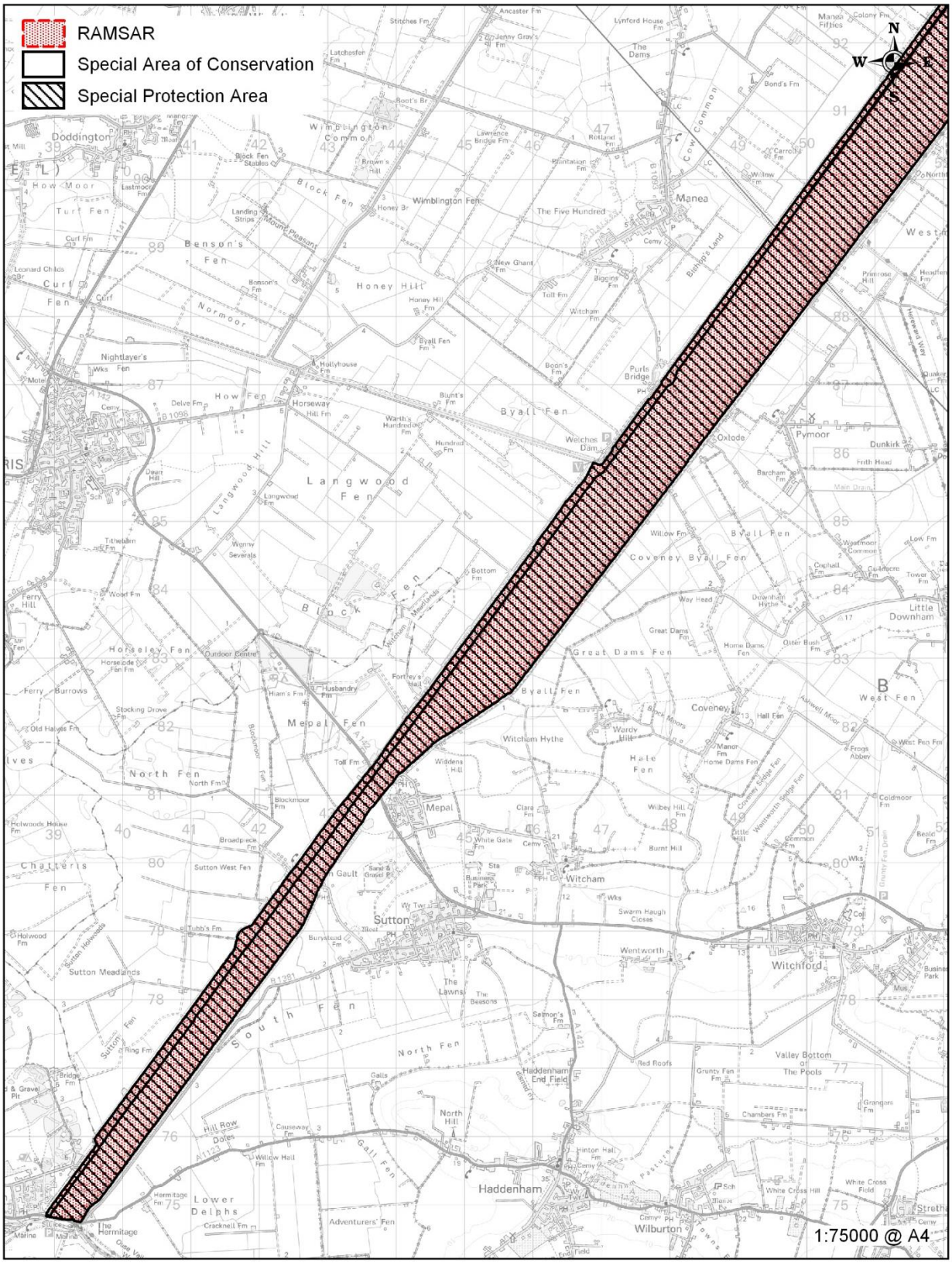
Thus, any requirement for HRA associated with additional sewage discharge arising at Northstowe rests with Anglian Water Services as the body promoting the change in consented discharge and the Environment Agency as the competent authority considering that revised consent. Based on the revised consents being negotiated between Anglian Water and the Environment Agency this will ensure that there is no deterioration in the downstream watercourse due to growth.

Additional flow in the Swavesey Drain network could potentially result from an increase in the rate of surface runoff into watercourses as development is established at the Northstowe greenfield site. However, as this is being promoted as an Eco-Town it will have a high level of surface water attenuation which, with proposed on-site flood storage for events up to those with a 1 in 200 chance of occurring in any year, would result in run-off rates lower than existing greenfield.

Thus, Ouse Washes SAC and Ramsar site can be screened out of any further assessment, but it is noted that implementation of the Northstowe development as planned is subject to approval of the proposed consent revision at Uttons Drove sewage treatment works. And hence further HRA may be required dependent upon the outcome of consenting process / details and appropriate implementation and management of SUDS.



Map 7
Ouse Washes - North (RAMSAR, SAC & SPA)



South Cambridgeshire District Council

Map 8
Ouse Washes - South (RAMSAR, SAC & SPA)

NAME: PORTHOLME

Designation and Code

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – UK0030054.

Location

This site is within Huntingdonshire District. Map 9 below shows the site's location and boundary.

Grid reference: TL 237708 **Area:** 91.93 ha.

Qualifying features - Primary reason for selection of this site

Lowland hay meadows MG4 *Alopecurus pratensis Sanguisorba officinalis* – considered to be one of the best areas in UK.

Conservation objectives

Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features.

Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species;
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

General site characteristics

Humid grassland (100%)

Soil and geology – Alluvial, Neutral

Geomorphology and landscape – Floodplain, Lowland

Species

Alopecurus pratensis

Sanguisorba officinalis

Fritillaria meleagris

Libellula fulva.

Site Description

It is the largest surviving traditionally managed meadow in the UK with an area of 104 ha. of alluvial flood meadow (7% of the total UK resource). It is almost completely surrounded by water. There has been a long history of favourable management on traditional lines as a 'lammas' meadow and very little of the site has suffered from agricultural improvement, and so it demonstrates good conservation of structure and function. It supports a small

population of fritillary (*Fritillaria meleagris)*. Watercourses on the periphery of the site have populations of some uncommon invertebrates including one dragonfly, which is of a nationally restricted distribution.

The grassland communities are characterised by the presence of such grasses as Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus,* yellow oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens*, meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*,and meadow fescue *Festuca pratensis.* The range of herbs present, typical of such meadows, includes lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*, pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus* and great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*. A number of locally rare and one nationally rare plant are also present.

Channels of the River Ouse surround the meadow, and the Alconbury Brook is close by. These water bodies are important for dragonflies *(Odonata*) in particular the restricted dragonfly *Libellula fulva.*

Large flocks of waders use this site in winter.

Management and ownership

The London Anglers Association owns the site and is advised on the management of the site by Natural England.

Neutral grassland requires active management if it is to retain its conservation interest. In order to maintain a species rich sward, each year's growth of vegetation must be removed; otherwise the sward becomes progressively dominated by tall and vigorous grasses. These, together with an associated build up of dead plant matter, suppress less vigorous species and reduce the botanical diversity of the site.

The traditional management of this site, which still continues, is by cutting for hay followed by grazing of the aftermath in later summer until the autumn. In winter and early spring Portholme is inundated by floodwaters. This provides natural fertilising of the soil and it is this seasonal flooding coupled with the traditional management that maintains the diversity of the natural plant communities.

The Environment Agency carried out drainage improvements on Portholme Meadow, Huntingdon, in September 2010 to help re-establish rare types of grassland that had been found to be not in good condition. This unfavourable condition was due to the amount of curled dock present. Curled dock is an invasive weed which degrades the quality of the natural grassland. Floodwater ponding had caused deterioration in the vegetation community and these inappropriate water levels had resulted in the changes to the meadows. The plan by the Environment Agency has allowed the floodwater to drain off more quickly from the affected area and reduce the curled dock populations, allowing the desired grassland communities to reestablish. The works also improved the site's ability to adapt to climate change.

In the past MAFF had sponsored dipwell monitoring of the meadows. Water table levels are vital to the management of this site. Anglian Water Services (AWS) is required to produce a statutory water company drought plan under the requirements of the new s39B of the Water Industry Act 1991 as introduced by the Water Act 2003. For each site, potential changes arising from the drought actions have been identified and the existence and adequacy of current monitoring programmes has been provisionally assessed. For the most part, existing monitoring are adequate for monitoring the effects of the drought actions. In relation to Portholme it recommends in the 2006 Drought Plan the following:

'One site (Portholme Meadow) has been monitored in the past and this work is probably sufficient to determine a baseline. However, no monitoring is currently being undertaken. Previous modelling studies suggest that reductions in river water levels are likely to be very small and are therefore unlikely to have any effect on riparian water table levels in adjacent meadows or water levels in adjacent gravel pits.'

Access

There are three main entrances to the meadow and visitors can walk around the site on the extensive footpaths, which lead off the main entrances. The footpaths form a triangle across the meadow and each footpath is approximately 1.6km in length.

Current condition (November 2011)

The units of the site were assessed in June 2005 and 2006 and it was found to have inappropriate cutting / mowing regimes and inappropriate weed control. The site was not meeting the PSA target at all. 90.92% of the area was seen to be in unfavourable but remaining unchanged i.e. not in decline. By November 2010 there was an improvement since the site was recorded as meeting 100% of the PSA target in an unfavourable recovering condition.

The report compiled by Natural England in November 2011 indicated that the site was meeting 100% of its PSA targets and that it was in unfavourable recovering. The last survey of the site was carried out in June 2011. It would appear that the drainage improvement works carried out by the Environment Agency has had a positive impact.

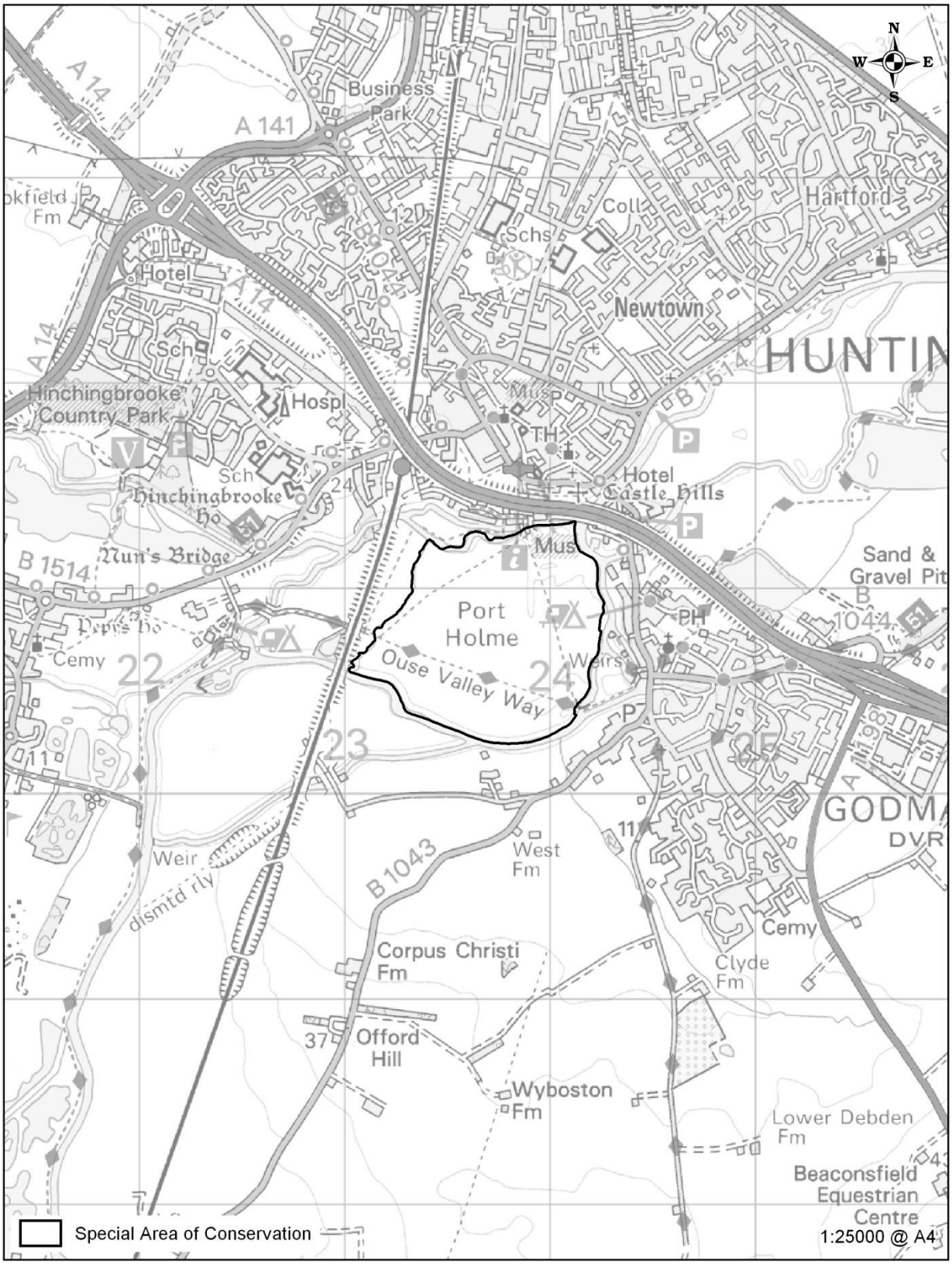
The latest assessment report compiled by Natural England in June 2013 indicates that the site 100% of the site continues to be in unfavourable recovering condition.

Vulnerability

Without a controlled management plan the site will not retain its conservation interest. The improvement in drainage carried out by the Environment Agency shows how the correct management can greatly improve an area's biodiversity.

Cambridge Water Cycle Strategy Phase 2 findings (August 2011)

This site did not meet the criteria to be included in the assessment.



South Cambridgeshire District Council

Map 9
Portholme (SAC)

NAME: BRECKLAND

Designation and Code

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – UK0019865

Special Protection Area (SPA) – UK9009201

Although covering much of the same land the boundary of the SAC is not contiguous with that of the SPA.

Location

This site is within Forest Heath in Suffolk and Kings Lynn and West Norfolk District in Norfolk. Map 10 below shows the locations and boundaries of the sites' component areas.

Grid reference: TL862948 **Area:** SPA – 39433.65; SAC – 7548.06

SAC Conservation Objectives

Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features.

Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species;
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Qualifying features - Primary reasons for selection of this site for SAC

- Inland dunes with open *Corynephorus* and *Agrostis* grasslands.
- Natural eutrophic lakes with *Magnopotamion* or *Hydrocharition*-type vegetation
- European dry heaths
- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland species on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*).

Other qualifying features but not primary reasons for site selection

Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) (A **Priority Feature**) - The area is considered to support a significant presence.

Triturus cristatus (great crested newt) - The area is considered to support a significant presence.

General site characteristics

Inland water bodies (0.5%)

Bogs. Marshes. Water fringed vegetation. Fens (1%)

Dry grassland (59.4%)

Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (20%)

Improved grassland (0.2%)

Other arable land (0.1%)

Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (9%)

Coniferous woodland (4%)

Inland rocks. Screes. Sands. Permanent snow and ice (0.5%)

Other land (0.3%)

Site Description

Wangford Warren and adjoining parts of RAF Lakenheath are included in the Breckland site as the only occurrence of this habitat type in the UK. The site has one of the best-preserved systems of active inland sand dunes in the UK. The habitat type, which is in part characterised by the nationally rare grey hair –grass *Corynephorus canescens* occurring here at its only inland station is associated with open conditions with active sand movement. The site shows the colonization sequence from open sand to acidic grass-heath.

The Breckland meres in Norfolk represent natural eutrophic lakes in the east of England. They are examples of hollows within glacial outwash deposits and are fed by water from the underlying chalk aquifer. Natural fluctuations in groundwater tables mean that these lakes occasionally dry out. The flora is dominated by stonewort – pondweed *Characeae – Potamogetonaceae* associations.

The dry heaths of Breckland are representative of European dry heaths in East Anglia, in eastern England, developed under a semi-continental climate. Breckland has an average annual precipitation of only 600mm, relatively hot summers and cool winters. Frosts can occur in any month of the year. The dry acidic heath of Breckland represents H1 *Calluna vulgaris – Festuca ovina* heath in the SAC series. The sand sedge dominated *Carex arenaria* sub-community (H1d) is typical of areas of blown sand – a very unusual feature of this location.

The highly variable soils of Breckland, with underlying chalk being largely covered with wind-blown sands, have resulted in mosaics of heather -dominated heathland, acidic grassland and calcareous grassland that are unlike those of any other site. In many places there is a linear or patterned distribution of heath and grassland, arising from fossilised soil patterns that formed under peri-glacial conditions. Breckland is important for rare plants, such as perennial knawel *Scleranthus perennis* ssp. *prostrates,* and rare invertebrates.

Breckland in East Anglia is the most extensive surviving area of the rare grassland type CG7 *Festuca ovina – Hieracium pilosella – Thymus praecox* grassland. The grassland is rich in rare species typical of dry, winter-cold, continental areas, and approaches the features of grassland types in central Europe more than almost any other semi-dry grassland found in the UK. The terrain is relatively flat, with few physical variations, but there are mosaics of calcareous grassland and heath/acid grassland, giving rise to patterns of structural variation.

Current Condition:

In recent decades, scrub and woodland have spread at the expense of the heathland and chalk grassland vegetation due to the cessation of traditional cutting and grazing

management. Management agreements and particularly Environmentally Sensitive Area payments go part of the way towards re-introducing this largely uneconomical traditional management, and controlling the scrub. Strong populations of rabbits are important in maintaining the Breckland swards.

Vulnerability:

Grazing by sheep/cattle is essential to the maintenance of habitats. Problems include nutrient deposition from the atmosphere and adjacent arable land, invasion by self sown trees/shrubs, and uncontrolled and inappropriate recreational activities. Local ground water abstraction has a deleterious impact on the natural eutrophic lakes, the Breckland meres, and is the subject of active liaison between Natural England and the Environment Agency.

SPA Conservation Objectives

Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of the Birds Directive.

Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species;
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site .

Qualifying Features / Reasons for identification as a Special Protection Area:

During the breeding season the area regularly supports:

Burhinus oedicnemus (Western Europe - breeding) - 60.1% of the GB breeding population of stone curlews

Caprimulgus europaeus - 12.2% of the GB breeding population of nightjars.

Lullula arborea - 28.7% of the GB breeding population of woodlarks.

General Site Characteristics:

Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (0.9%)

Dry Grassland. Steppes (19.7)

Humid grassland. Mesophile Grassland (1.3%)

Improved grassland (0.3%)

Other arable land (31.5%)

Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (1.4%)

Coniferous woodland (44.7%)

Vulnerability:

Stone-Curlews are largely reliant on arable land for nesting and are thus vulnerable to disturbance and nest destruction from agricultural operations. Stone curlews require very short vegetation, with abundant patches of bare and stony ground. The bare stony ground provides excellent camouflage for adults, chicks and eggs, whilst the short vegetation allows good visibility for predator avoidance.

The best way to achieve suitable conditions for stone curlews in arable land is to plant spring-sown crops that develop slowly. Autumn sown crops are usually too dense and tall by the spring nesting season. It can be useful to provide a rotation system of a range of spring sown crops that includes summer fallows, thus supplying both nest sites and invertebrate rich areas for foraging. Ideal ploughing times are just before the birds arrive (usually early March) and just before egg laying commences (usually early May). Alternatively, crops that grow too tall for nesting stone-curlew can be treated with herbicide to restore bare ground.

Management agreements are in place to provide nest plots and thus safeguard the population.

Stone-Curlew, Nightjar and Woodlark are vulnerable to predation from corvids[21] and foxes and to disturbance caused by human activity, including dog walking. There should be the absolute minimum of disturbance to breeding stone-curlew, particularly by people on foot within sight of, and up to 500m from nests. In 2005, new public access was introduced on heaths by legislation. Safeguards to protect stone-curlew have been included but the situation will require monitoring to determine how successful restrictions have been in preventing additional disturbance.

Breckland heathlands and acid grasslands supporting stone-curlew, nightjar and woodlark are fragile in terms of the high background levels of air pollution in the area, particularly high nitrogen loads causing undesirable habitat changes. Research on this topic is ongoing, and measures to export the nutrients off heaths (such as night time sheep folding or topsoil stripping) to counter the effects of pollution are potential management options. There are development pressures on the area, particularly for infrastructure, which requires substantial discussion and mitigation in some cases.

This is achieved through Natural England commenting on planning applications and providing input to structural and local plans.

Woodlark and nightjar benefit from clear-fell forestry rotational management. Surveys for both woodlark and nightjar were carried out in 2010. The woodlark survey recorded 209 breeding pairs; a figure below 253 would indicate unfavourable condition. The nightjar survey recorded 240 churring males; a figure below 311 would indicate unfavourable condition. The appropriate management is currently taking place in the forests carried out by the Forestry Commission (FC). The FC's Design Plan for the Breckland Forest area indicates that there has not been a change in the extent of the habitat and therefore a programme of research and experimental management is underway to determine the cause of the population changes with a commitment from FC to adopt management practices to meet population targets.

Collecting of eggs of stone-curlew, and to some extent night jar and woodlark, is believed to be a serious threat to individual birds and to population size. The loss of eggs to this illegal

[21] Corvids; Crows, jays, magpies, ravens, jackdaws and rooks all belong to the Family of birds called Corvidea.

activity is unknown. There is a police-based alert system in place in Breckland to try and reduce this type of crime, and landowners are vigilant.

Current condition of component SSSIs of the SAC and SPA

Breckland farmland SSSI

The report compiled by Natural England in November 2011 showed that 100% of the PSA target is being met for the numerous units that make up the Breckland Farmland SSSI – all are in a favourable condition. This was reconfirmed in the SSSI condition summary report compiled in June 2013.

Stanford Training Area SSSI

The report compiled by Natural England in June 2013 indicates that 95.92% of the area meeting its PSA target. 47.42% is in favourable condition, 48.49% is unfavourable recovering condition and 4.03% is in unfavourable no change condition. This assessment was based on surveys carried out between 2008 and 2012. Reasons for areas remaining in unfavourable no change condition include undergrazing, areas of unfavourable recovering condition ha d also generally been undergrazed owing to excessive rabbit control, which has now been relaxed.

Breckland Forest SSSI

The condition of the units making up the Breckland Forest SSSI area also is meeting 100% of the PSA target although only 0.09% of the site is in favourable condition, 99.91% is unfavourable recovering due to the reduction in the number of stone curlews and nightjars found in the 2010 survey. The drivers for population change are not clear as the habitat extent has remained the same. A programme of research and experimental management are underway with Forestry Commission to determine the cause of the declines. There has been no further survey recorded in the condition assessment since 2010.

Lakenheath Warren SSSI

In the summary report for June 2013, the condition of the units making up the Lakenheath Warren SSSI area also is meeting 100% of the PSA target although only 1.62% is in favourable condition, 98.38% is in favourable recovering condition. The principal reasons for unfavourable condition are undergrazing and the associated domination of coarse grasses or bracken. Last surveyed in 2009, the condition reports suggest that grazing is being increased in many of the interest units, which is the reason for its unfavourable recovering status.

RAF Lakenheath SSSI

In the summary report for June 2013, the condition of the units making up the Lakenheath Warren SSSI area also is meeting 100% of the PSA target. 100% of the site is in favourable condition.

Bridgham and Brettenham Heaths SSSI

In the summary report for June 2013, the condition of the units making up the Bridgham and Brettenham Heaths SSSI area also is meeting100% of the PSA target. Although, only 13.03% of the area is in favourable condition, with 86.97% in unfavourable recovering condition. The last assessment date was 2009. The main reasons for adverse condition were undergazing owing to the low rabbit population, which is now increasing. Some units have subsequently had sheep grazing and mowing regimes restored.

Field Barn Heaths SSSI

In the summary report for June 2013, 100% of the site was in unfavourable recovering condition. This summary report was based on an assessment date of July 2009.

Gooderstone Warren SSSI

In the summary report for June 2013, 100% of the site was in unfavourable recovering condition. The main reasons for unfavourable condition were the grazing regime (undergrazing), but these units are undergoing restoration grazing using sheep. Areas of acid grassland lacked ground disturbance.

Weeting Heath SSSI

In the summary report for June 2013, 79.12% of the site was meeting the PSA target. 43.64% was in favourable condition, 35.48% in unfavourable recovering condition, and 20.88% was recorded as unfavourable no change. The main reasons for unfavourable condition are the lack of bare ground owing to complete lack of or low numbers of rabbits in the SSSI units. All but one of the units (arable and horticultural) was surveyed in March 2013.

Berner's Heath, Icklingham

In the summary report for June 2013, based on assessments in October 2009 and August 2010, 97.09% of the site was meeting the PSA target. 97.09% was in favourable condition, but 2.91% was destroyed. However, the two destroyed SSSI units, could be included in Breckland Farm SSSI with stone curlew as its sole interest feature, in which case the units could be considered favourable.

Weather and Horns Heaths, Eriswell

In the summary report for June 2013, based on assessments in October 2009 97.76% of the site is in unfavourable declining condition and only 2.24% is unfavourable no change condition. Reasons for adverse condition include large amounts of heather die-back, lack of regeneration and domination by over-mature heather. One unit is also threatened by the A11 dualling. The site is therefore not meeting the PSA target.

Cranwich Camp SSSI

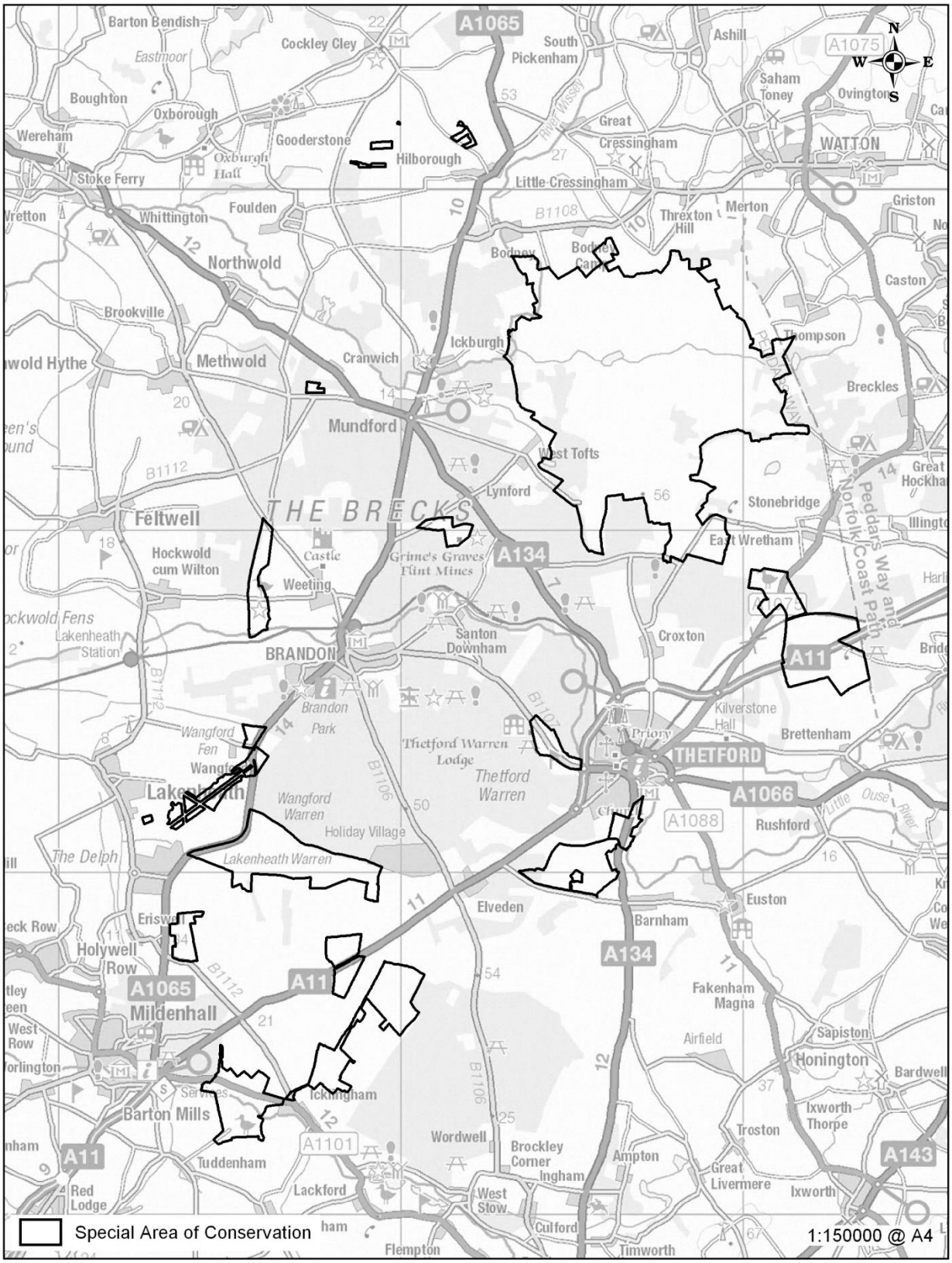
In the summary report for June 2013, based on assessment in July 2009, indicate that 100% of the site is in favourable recovering condition. Reasons for unfavourable condition include historic undergrazing.

Cavernham Icklingham Heaths SSSI

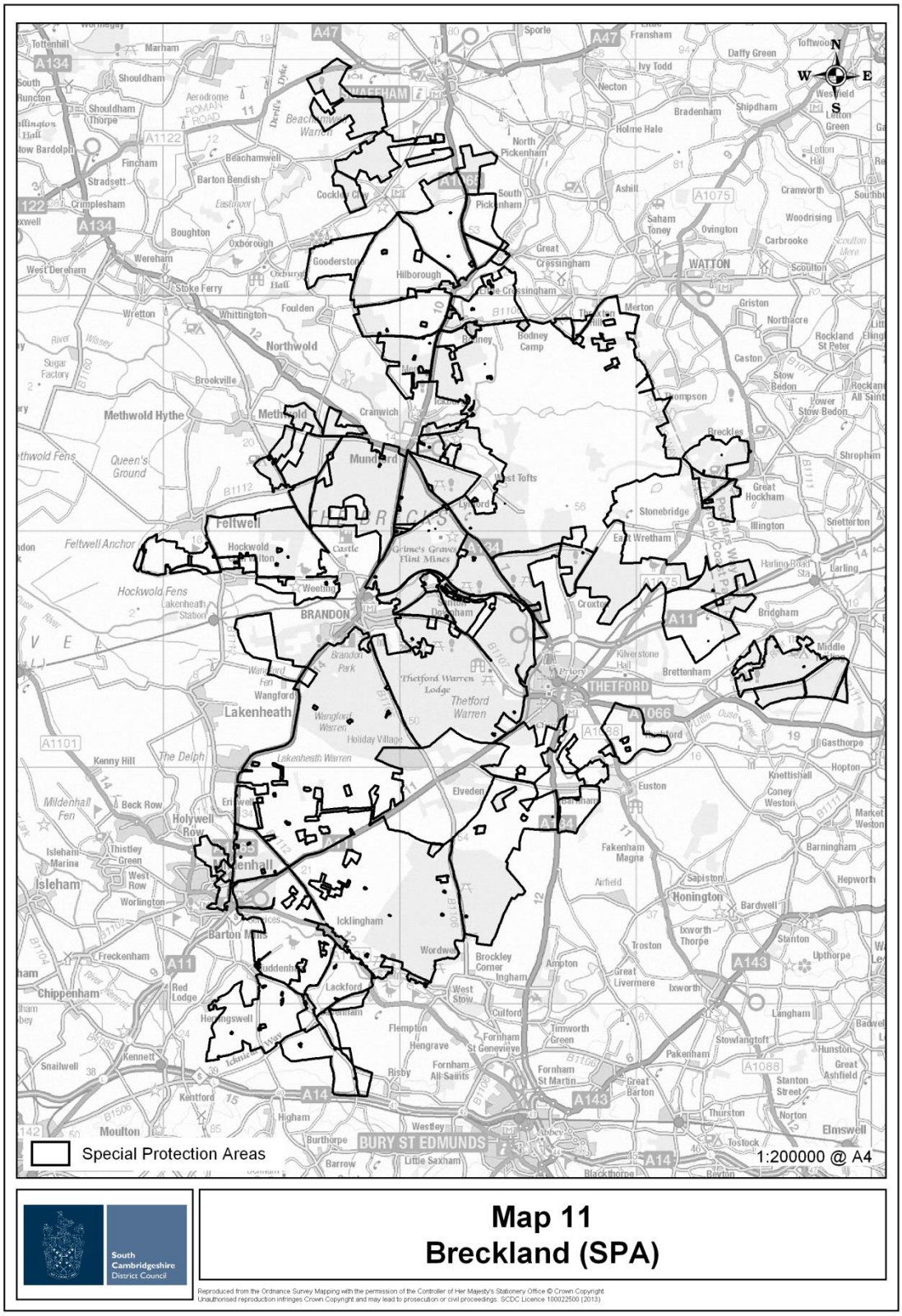
In the summary report for June 2013, 30.2% of the site was in favourable condition, 65.03% was favourable recovering condition, 1.665 was unfavourable no change, and 2.59% was destroyed. The destroyed areas are not within the Breckland SAC.

Fox Hole Heath, Erswell SSSI

In the summary report for June 2013, 100% was in favourable condition.



Map 10
Breckland (SAC)


N
W
E
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Special Protection Areas
1:200000 @ A4
Map 11
Breckland (SPA)
South Cambridgeshire District Council
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Annex C: Screening Assessment

Table C:1 Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC		
Nature of potential impact	**Potential of the Local Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) to affect the European site**	**Commentary on likelihood and significance**
Land Take by Development	The Local Plan does not propose development that will take land from Wimpole and Eversden Woods, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats. Therefore there is no effects pathway. The site and the main area of importance for the bats fall entirely within South Cambridgeshire District. No other plans or projects, not directly related to the management of the site, propose development that would use land from this site. Therefore there is no effects pathway.	There are no site allocations which directly impact on land within the woods. Any developments which are not allocated in the plan which come forward will be subject to separate Habitats Regulations Assessment at the planning application stage. The Local Plan policies prevent development from affecting European sites. The site and the main area of importance to the bats fall entirely within South Cambridgeshire. Therefore there is no pathway though which other plans and project could affect the site or the area of importance through land take. There are no likely significant effects in combination with other plans.
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	Eversden and Wimpole Woods are designated because of the presence of a colony of Barbastelle Bat. The bats can forage up to 20 km from their roosts but more typically venture around 6-8 km. Barbastelle bats require minimal disturbance within 2 km of their roost. The main 'area of importance' for the bats was examined in the South Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Strategy (and identified in the sustainability appraisal scoping report). Policy H/1 Allocations for Residential Development at Villages makes an allocation of 90 dwellings (H/1h) on Land at Bennell Farm Comberton (in Toft Parish) which falls at the outer edges of	The woods are relatively isolated, and are not located near to any of the locations for major development allocations. The woods are some distance from any villages where small-scale windfall development could take place under village development frameworks policies. Due to the distance from the woods of the majority of development proposed within the Local Plan (with the exception of the allocation H/1h), and the scale of development identified, the potential impacts are not

	this 'area of importance'. Policy SS/8 Cambourne West allocates land which lies 6km from the woods, and outside the main area of importance. Land south of the A428, northwest of lower Cambourne, including an area within the current business park is allocated for the development of a sustainable, fourth linked village to Cambourne of approximately 1,200 dwellings by 2031. The policy requires the retention of existing woods, hedges, unimproved grassland areas and water features and that these are managed to enhance their ecological value and linked together by areas of open space to provide a network of accessible green infrastructure. This would contribute to ensuring habitat fragmentation in the landscape surrounding the main area of importance would be maintained. The closest major developments to these woods are on the fringes of Cambridge (the Southern Fringe and North West of Cambridge) both these are over 8km from the woods and are outside the main area of importance. An Area Action Plan has been adopted for the Southern Fringe and an Area Action Plan has been produced for the North West Cambridge site. The North West Cambridge AAP was subject to HRA and concluded that the preferred options draft had no Likely Significant Effects either alone or in combination with other parts of the development plan. The Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan was subject to HRA and it was concluded that the Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan had no Likely Significant Effects either alone or in combination with other parts of the development plan. No other plans propose development within or near the area of importance. The nearest other plan which proposes increases in housing is the Cambridge Local Plan. This was subject to HRA and considered that there will be no significant impact from increased recreational pressure and disturbance on the Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC as a result of the Cambridge Local Plan 2014 alone or in	considered to be significant. Any development at Comberton will be subject to Policy NH/4 Biodiversity at the planning application stage which, alongside the Habitats Regulations, will require protected species surveys and appropriate mitigation. The site and the main area of importance to the bats fall entirely within South Cambridgeshire. Therefore there is no pathway though which other plans and projects outside the district could affect the site or the area of importance through land take. There are not considered to be likely significant effects in combination with other plans.

	combination with other plans.	
Recreational Pressure and Disturbance	The level of proposed growth in housing in the district could also lead to an increase in demand for countryside recreation. Notwithstanding this, Wimpole Woods, and even more so Eversden Woods, does not attract a large number of visitors, and are relatively far from centres of population. Nearby car parking is also limited. The site's remoteness, relative to major centres of population limits its attractiveness compared to other available rural locations. The recreation role of the woods is as part of a longer walk, using existing public rights of way which pass through the site. The character and locational inaccessibility via public transport and limited car parking mean that the woods are unlikely to be visited for picnics or informal play. The Local Plan policy SC/1 proposes allocations for open space. All developments are required to contribute to or provide open space with Policy SC/8 Open Space Standards setting the minimum levels of provision. These policies should ensure that there is no local deficiency in Accessible Natural Green Space (ANGS). The policies relating to the new communities specifically require the provision of open space for recreation within the development. A number of larger site proposals specifically reference the potential to deliver significant open space beyond the minimum required by policy. New strategic open spaces are already planned, and the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011) proposes new countryside recreation opportunities, to support growth in Cambridgeshire. The Southern Fringe AAP includes a requirement for a Country Park at Trumpington which should be of sufficient size to satisfy the increase recreational demand, to the satisfaction of Natural England. It is not considered that the level of public use of the woods will increase significantly as a result of the Local Plan. Residential allocations in the Cambridge Local Plan 2014 may lead to an increased demand for access to the countryside recreation.	No major allocations in the Local Plan are within 5 km. Notwithstanding, according to the Natura 2000 Data, the current use of the woods, including public access, is considered compatible with the Barbastelle bats' interest and should not affect the Barbastelle population or their roosts. The existing rights of way through the woods allow for some limited access. The bats roost in the trees, foraging at sunset/night are not generally disturbed by daytime visitors and visitor numbers will continue to be limited owing to the woods' relative inaccessibility from centres of population and with regards to limited car parking close to the woods. There are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, both within and outside the Local Plan area available in more accessible locations to the major centres of population. The new settlements proposed in the Local Plan must include natural green space for recreation. The nearest settlements outside the district are Sandy, Biggleswade and Royston. Although these settlements are planned for additional development, the distance from the site and nature of the attraction mean additional visitor numbers are likely to be limited. In view of the limited additional recreational use of the woods that will occur, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, and the fact that it is not considered that recreation use would undermine the site's conservation objectives. The effects are not considered to be significant.

	The Cambridge Local Plan requires the delivery of additional open space as part of new developments. The HRA of the Cambridge Local Plan concluded that this coupled with the relative distance of development sites from the Eversden and Wimpole Woods, leads to the conclusion that the Plan will not lead to increased recreational pressure and disturbance on the woods. The nearest settlements outside the district are Sandy, Biggleswade in Central Bedfordshire, and Royston in North Hertfordshire (9.6km away). Although these settlements are planned for additional development, the distance from the site (over the 5km distance for likely recreational use as a result of development) and nature of the attraction mean additional visitor numbers are likely to be limited. North Hertfordshire has opportunities for informal outdoor recreation that provide alternative locations for any increases in population proposed in the plan are.	
Water Quantity and Quality	Not relevant for the conservation objectives of this site.	Not relevant.
Changes in Pollution Levels	The level of growth in the Local Plan could lead to increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through static emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated. Whilst the actual impact of the Local Plan on air quality alone or in combination with other plans is difficult to quantify, the location of the site is not in close proximity to any major development allocations, proposed by this or other plans, or major transport routes. Static emissions will be controlled through the Environmental Permitting regime.	As the site is not in close proximity to any developments proposed or major transport routes, it is not considered that there is likely to be any significant impact on its nature conservation objectives. The Local Plan also seeks to reduce the need to travel through the location of services and facilities close to dwellings. For the same reasons it is considered that there will be no likely significant in combination effects with other plans.
Overall Conclusions	No Likely Significant Effects have been identified either alone or in combination with other reasonably foreseeable plans and projects. It is therefore considered that the Local Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects is not likely to have significant effects on this site.	

Table C:2 Devil's Dyke SAC		
Nature of potential impact	**Potential of the Local Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) to affect the European site**	**Commentary on likelihood and significance**
Land Take by Development	There are no allocations in the Local Plan that will take land from Devil's Dyke, and will not result in the direct land take or fragmentation of habitats. No effects pathway from the Local Plan.	No effects pathway from the Local Plan. There are no allocations in the Local Plan which will impact directly on the Devil's Dyke SAC. No effects to consider in combination.
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	The qualifying features of the site relate solely to the semi-natural dry grasslands and scrub habitats. No animal species are qualifying features of the site. Therefore there no effects are possible.	No effects pathway from the Local Plan. No likely significant effects are possible as there are no qualifying species which will forage outside the SAC. No effects to consider in combination.
Recreational Pressure and Disturbance	Increasing the dwelling stock in the district could increase demand for countryside recreation. However, no allocations are within 5 km of the site. Devils Dyke is accessed via a long distance footpath which is a public right of way, running the length of the dyke. Parking is available at the July Race course, Newmarket. The site is over 10 km from the nearest development proposed at Cambridge East. It is not considered that the level of public use of the Devil's Dyke footpaths will increase greatly as a result of the Local Plan's proposed allocations. The site is located in the East Cambridgeshire District. Proposed increases in housing in East Cambridge could lead to increased recreation use of the site. Development resulting from the Cambridge Local Plan 2014 site allocations will include an element of residential uses, and this could lead to an increased demand for access to the countryside recreation.	No major allocations in the Local Plan are within 5 kilometres. Impacts from recreation are not listed as site vulnerability. Therefore the current public access is not causing significant effects. In view of the limited additional recreational use of the site that could occur, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, and the fact that it is not considered that recreation use would undermine the site's conservation objectives, the possible effects are not considered to be significant. For similar reasons the screening of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan where the site is located, also concluded there would be no likely significant effects alone or in combination with other plans.

Water Quantity and Quality	Not relevant to the site's vulnerabilities and conservation objectives.	Not relevant.
Changes in Pollution Levels	The level of development proposed by the local plan could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated. Whilst the actual impact of the Local Plan on air quality alone or in combination with other plans is difficult to quantify, the location of the site is not in close proximity to any development allocations. Static emissions will be controlled through the Environmental Permitting regime.	As the site is not in close proximity to proposed allocations, it is not considered that there is likely to be any significant impact on their nature conservation objectives. Policy NH/4 Biodiversity in the Local Plan requires that development does not harm the identified European Sites and the Local Plan has a general air policy to address air quality from developments.
Overall Conclusions	No Likely Significant Effects have been identified either alone or in combination with other reasonably foreseeable plans and projects. It is considered that the Local Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects is not likely to have significant effects on this site.	

Table C:3 Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site		
Nature of potential impact	**Potential of the Local Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) to affect the European site**	**Commentary on likelihood and significance**
Land Take by Development	The Local Plan does not propose any development that will take land from Wicken Fen, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats. No effects pathway from the Local Plan.	No effects pathway from the Local Plan. There are no allocations which directly impact on Wicken Fen SAC or Ramsar. Therefore no significant effects are likely. No in combination effects.
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	The SAC qualifying features relate to the fen habitat. Qualifying species are spined loach and great crested newt. Spined loach is restricted to a specific microhabitat, not found in the wider countryside. Therefore there is no effects pathway between the Local Plan and this qualifying feature. Great crested newts may be found in a b road range of habitats outside the protected site. However the site is located outside the Local Plan Area, therefore there is no effects pathway between the Local Plan and this	No effects pathway from the Local Plan. Due to the distance of the site from the District it is not considered that there is likely to be an effect from the allocations identified in the Local Plan. Therefore no significant effects are likely. No in combination effects.

	qualifying feature. The Ramsar criteria relate to the fen habitat and species of plant within the fen, and species of invertebrates which are not found in the wider countryside. The allocations identified in the Local Plan will not have a significant impact on species listed as important to the integrity of the sites. No effects pathway between the Local Plan and the Ramsar site.	
Recreational Pressure and Disturbance	Increasing the dwelling stock in the district could increase demand for countryside recreation. However, no allocations identified are within 5 km of the site. It is not considered that the level of public use of Wicken Fen will increase greatly as a result of allocations identified in the Local Plan. There are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations to the major centres of population. New strategic open spaces are already planned, and the Green Infrastructure Strategy 2012 proposes new countryside recreation opportunities, to support growth in the area.	No allocations identified are within 5km of the site. Notwithstanding, public access to Wicken Fen is managed by the National Trust. There is a visitor centre and shop, nature trails, three hides and 16km of walking routes. Entry is by permit only to help control visitor numbers and visitors are also managed by 'zoning' parts of the Fen near the entrance, leaving the more remote parts of the site relatively undisturbed. The impact of public access is not listed in the vulnerabilities relating to the site.
Water Quantity and Quality	Development within the Local Plan area could theoretically have an impact on water quantity, through run off from development sites, or water use. It could also have an impact on water quality, through additional waste products produced. The water level problems identified as a vulnerability of the site primarily relate to its relationship with the River Cam and issues caused by flood protection measures local to the site introduced in the 1960's. Development in Cambridge could lead to increase water demand.	The Cambridge Water Cycle Strategy 2011 states that analysis of hydrology indicates that Wicken Fen is topographically higher than the Cam and drains via Wicken Lode then Burwell Lode towards it. As the Cam does not feed it, there are no associated risks, which could arise from additional sewage effluent discharge at Cambridge irrespective of any changes in effluent flow or quality from that site. Policies are included in the Local Plan to ensure that developments protect water quality, and ensure that the appropriate waste water infrastructure is confirmed as being available prior to development being given consent. Policies also require that appropriate pollution control measures are included on sites. Development at all the proposed new communities must exceed the Building Regulations and meet Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 for water efficiency. This will ensure that

		stringent water efficiency measures are implemented as an integral part of development. The Council is working with Anglian Water and Cambridge water to explore infrastructure requirements of site allocations, and ensure developments can be appropriately serviced. For these reasons the Local Plan is not likely to have any significant effects alone or in combination with other plans. For similar reasons the screening of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan where the site is located, also concluded there would be no likely significant effects alone or in combination with other plans.
Changes in Pollution Levels	The level of development proposed by the Local Plan could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated. Whilst the actual impact of the Local Plan on air quality alone or in combination with other plans is difficult to quantify, the location of the site is not in close proximity to any development allocations. Static emissions will be controlled through the Environmental Permitting regime.	As the site is not in close proximity to site options proposed, there are likely to be no significant impacts on their nature conservation objectives. The Local Plan proposes general policy requirements that development does not harm the identified European Sites and to address air quality. For these reasons the Local Plan is not likely to have any significant effects alone or in combination with other plans. For similar reasons the screening of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan where the site is located, also concluded there would be no likely significant effects alone or in combination with other plans.
Overall Conclusions	No Likely Significant Effects have been identified either alone or in combination with other reasonably foreseeable plans and projects. It is considered that the Local Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects is not likely to have significant effects on this site.	

Table C:4 Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site		
Nature of potential impact	**Potential of the Local Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) to affect the European site**	**Commentary on likelihood and significance**
Land Take by Development	The Local Plan does not identify any allocations that will take land from Chippenham Fen, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats. No effects pathway from the Local Plan.	No effects pathway from the Local Plan. There are no allocations which directly impact on Chippenham Fen.
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	The SAC qualifying features relate to the fen habitat. Qualifying species are spined loach and great crested newt. Spined loach is restricted to a specific microhabitat, not found in the wider countryside. Therefore there is no effects pathway between the Local Plan and this qualifying feature. Great crested newts may be found in a b road range of habitats outside the protected site. However the site is located outside the Local Plan Area, therefore there is no effects pathway between the Local Plan and this qualifying feature. The Ramsar criteria relate to the fen habitat and species of plant within the fen, and species of invertebrates which are not found in the wider countryside. The allocations identified in the Local Plan will not have a significant impact on species listed as important to the integrity of the sites. No effects pathway between the Local Plan and the Ramsar site.	No effects pathway from the Local Plan. Therefore no significant effects are likely. Due to the distance and the nature of locations proposed for development, it is also not considered there will be any impact on breeding bird species associated with the fen (birds do not constitute reasons for designation as either SAC or Ramsar). Therefore, the development of land in locations identified by the Local Plan alone or in combination with other plans is not likely to have a significant impact on qualifying species or the integrity of the SAC or Ramsar.
Recreational Pressure and Disturbance	Increasing the dwelling stock in the district could increase demand for countryside recreation. However, no allocations identified are within 5 km of the site. Access to the wider site away from rights of way is limited. Access to the reserve is by permit only and these are generally requested by naturalists. There is the potential for in combination effects from increased demand for recreation within Eat Cambridge district where the site is located. There are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations to the major centres of population. New strategic open spaces are	Access to the site is controlled by permit which controls the risks of disturbance to the site from recreation. It is not considered that the level of public use of Chippenham Fen will increase as a result of allocations in the Local Plan alone or in combination with other plans and projects and that there will therefore be no likely significant effects on the site.

	already planned, and the Green Infrastructure Strategy proposes new countryside recreation opportunities, to support growth in the area. Any increase in recreation from other plans will also be restricted by the permit access.	
Water Quantity and Quality	Development could theoretically have an impact on water quantity, through run off from development sites, or water use. It could also have an impact on water quality, through additional waste products produced. However, the fen is some distance from allocations proposed, and is not located on a watercourse utilised to drain the District.	Policies are included in the Local Plan to ensure that developments protect water quality, and ensure that the appropriate waste water infrastructure is confirmed as being available prior to development being given consent. Policies also require that appropriate pollution control measures are included on sites. Development at all the proposed new communities must exceed the Building Regulations and meet Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 for water efficiency. This will ensure that stringent water efficiency measures are implemented as an integral part of development. The Council is working with Anglian Water and Cambridge Water to explore infrastructure requirements of site allocations, and ensure developments can be appropriately serviced. Water is available to meet growth plans from existing licences, identified in the Cambridge Water Resources Management Plan. Controls are in place by the Environment Agency regarding future licencing. Water Resource Management Plans are also subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment. The assessment by Cambridge Water concluded no likely significant effects. The screening of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan where the site is located, also concluded there would be no likely significant effects alone or in combination with other plans. The Anglian Water Resources Management Plan identifies sufficient water resources to meet needs in their supply area for the next 25 years, as well as plans to ensure Chippenham Fen meets Water

		Framework Directive Standards. It has been subject to HRA and concludes no likely significant effects alone or in combination with other plans. It is considered that there are no likely significant effects either alone or in combination.
Changes in Pollution Levels	The level of development proposed by the Local Plan could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated. There is the potential for development in East Cambridgeshire, where the site is located, to increase levels of atmospheric pollution, through emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated. The Plan proposes policies to reduce the need to travel and improve public transport and cycle links in order to encourage a modal shift away from the car. Static emissions will be controlled through the Environmental Permitting regime.	As the site is not in close proximity to the Allocations proposed, it is not considered that there is likely to be any significant impact on their nature conservation objectives. Local Plan proposes general policy requirements that development does not harm the identified European Sites and to address air quality. The screening of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan where the site is located also concluded there would be no likely significant effects alone or in combination with other plans.
Overall Conclusions	No Likely Significant Effects have been identified either alone or in combination with other reasonably foreseeable plans and projects. It is considered that the Local Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects is not likely to have significant effects on this site.	

Table C:5 Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site		
Nature of potential impact	**Potential of the Local Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) to affect the European site**	**Commentary on likelihood and significance**
Land Take by Development	The Local Plan does not propose any allocations that will take land from Woodwalton Fen, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats. No effects pathway from the Local Plan.	No effects pathway from the Local Plan. There are no allocations in the Local Plan which directly impact on Woodwalton Fen. No in combination effects.
Impact on protected species outside the	The SAC qualifying features relate to the fen habitat. Qualifying species are spined loach and great crested newt. Spined loach is restricted to a specific microhabitat, not found in the wider	No effects pathway between the Local Plan and the SAC or Ramsar site.

protected sites	countryside. Therefore there is no effects pathway between the Local Plan and this qualifying feature. Great crested newts may be found in a b road range of habitats outside the protected site. However the site is located outside the Local Plan Area, therefore there is no effects pathway between the Local Plan and this qualifying feature. The Ramsar criteria relate to the fen habitat and species of plant within the fen, and species of invertebrates which are not found in the wider countryside. The allocations identified in the Local Plan will not have a significant impact on species listed as important to the integrity of the sites.	The allocations identified in the Local Plan alone or in combination with other plans will not be likely to have a significant impact on species listed as important to the integrity of the site. No in combination effects.
Recreational Pressure and Disturbance	Increasing the dwelling stock in the district could increase demand for countryside recreation. However, the site is a significant distance from the District. Parking is limited at this site – some being available alongside the Great Raveley Drain. There are three marked trails around the fen following the rides. There are no public rights of way across the reserve but visitors are allowed access after obtaining a permit from Natural England. Increased recreation pressure could result from development in East Cambridge and Cambridge. There are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations to the major centres of population. New strategic open spaces are already planned, and the Green Infrastructure Strategy proposes new countryside recreation opportunities, to support growth in the area.	The impact of public access is not listed in the vulnerabilities relating to the site. It is considered that the level of public use of Woodwalton Fen will not increase greatly as a result of allocations identified in the Local Plan. The site is also already subject to visitor restrictions on the most sensitive areas of the site. For these reasons there is no likely significant effect alone or in combination with other plans.
Water Quantity and Quality	Development could theoretically have an impact on water quantity, through run off from development sites, or water use. It could also have an impact on water quality, through additional waste products produced. However, the fen is a considerable distance from the district, and is not located on a watercourse utilised to drain the District. Therefore there is no pathway for effects on water quality. No in combination effects with other plans for water quality.	Policies are included in the Local Plan to ensure that developments protect water quality, and ensure that the appropriate waste water infrastructure is confirmed as being available prior to development being given consent. Policies also require that appropriate pollution control measures are included on sites. Development at all the proposed new communities must exceed the Building Regulations and meet Code for Sustainable

	The Local Plan includes measures to increase water efficiency.	Homes Level 4 for water efficiency. This will ensure that stringent water efficiency measures are implemented as an integral part of development. The Council is continuing to work with Anglian Water and Cambridge water to explore infrastructure requirements of site allocations, and ensure developments can be appropriately serviced. With these safeguards in place it is not considered likely that there will be effects on water quality and quantity. For these reasons there is no likely significant effect alone or in combination with other plans.
Changes in Pollution Levels	The level of development proposed by the Local Plan could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated. Static emissions will be controlled through the Environmental Permitting regime.	As the site is not in close proximity to the allocations proposed, it is not considered that there is likely to be any significant impact on their nature conservation objectives. Policy NH/4 Biodiversity also requires that development does not harm the identified European Sites and there is a further policy which requires any development to address air quality impacts.
Overall Conclusions	No Likely Significant Effects have been identified either alone or in combination with other reasonably foreseeable plans and projects. It is considered that the Local Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects is not likely to have significant effects on this site.	

Table C:6 Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site		
Nature of potential impact	**Potential of the Local Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) to affect the European site**	**Commentary on likelihood and significance**
Land Take by Development	The Local Plan does not propose any allocations that will take land from the Ouse Washes, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats. No effects pathway from the Local Plan. No in combination effects.	No effects pathway from the Local Plan. The Local Plan does not propose any allocations that will take land from the Ouse Washes, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats. No effects are likely. No in combination effects assessment required.
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	The qualifying feature of the Ouse Washes SAC is spined loach. This species has a restricted distribution found in a restricted microhabitat not found in the wider countryside. The nature of the allocations identified in the Local Plan, and their location relative to the Ouse Washes, means that land take outside the site is not likely to have an effect on species associated with the integrity of the Ouse Washes SPA and Ramsar site	No effects pathway, as the qualifying species is unlikely to be found outside the SAC. Therefore, no likely effect on the SAC. No in combination assessment required in this respect. No development in the Plan is allocated near the Ouse Washes (which lie predominantly outside the plan area) in its contiguous surrounding habitat. The allocations identified alone or in combination with other plans will not be likely to have a significant effect on species listed as important to the integrity of the SPA and Ramsar.
Recreational Pressure and Disturbance	Increasing the dwelling stock in the district could increase demand for countryside recreation. However, the site is some distance from the District. There is a network of public rights of way in the Washes. The RSPB manage a nature reserve at Welches Dam where there is a visitor centre and a number of bird hides. The WWT manage a nature reserve at Welney, Norfolk also with a centre and hides. The nearest point on the Washes is over 7km from the development planned at Northstowe. There are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations to the major centres of population. This includes the Fen Drayton Lakes, near	Policies relating to new major settlements proposed in the Local Plan require the provision of open space which should include on site publically accessible natural green space for recreation. All development is required either to provide open space on site or contributions, to meet the open space standards in the Local Plan. It is not considered that the level of public use of the Ouse Washes will increase significantly as a result of allocations in the Local Plan. Notwithstanding, the impact of public access is not listed in the vulnerabilities relating to the site. Therefore no significant effects are

	Northstowe, in Strategic Area 3 Great Ouse propose in The Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011) proposes new countryside recreation opportunities in the Northstowe area to support growth in the area. The Local Plan allocates the reserve land identified in the Northstowe Area Action Plan 2007. The Northstowe Area Action Plan has been subject to HRA. This concluded that there would be no likely significant effects on any European sites.	likely. For these reasons there is no likely significant effect alone or in combination with other plans. The screening of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan where the site is located also concluded there would be no likely significant effects alone or in combination with other plans.
Water Quantity and Quality	Development could potentially have an impact on water quantity, through run off from the sites, or water use. It could also have an impact on water quality, through additional waste products produced. The majority of the District of South Cambridgeshire drains into the River Great Ouse catchment. The Ouse Washes (SAC and Ramsar) form part of this river system. The Swavesey Drain tributary, which drains the northwest part of the District, joins the Great Ouse upstream of the washes. This drain is also utilised by the Uttons Drove wastewater treatment works (WwTW), which is planned to be utilised to serve Northstowe, as well as Cambourne. The Local Plan has allocated a new site in Cambourne (Policy SS/8) and includes Policy SS/7 allocating an extension to Northstowe, on the reserve site in the Northstowe Areas Action Plan. All of the Cambridge City area drains upstream of the Ouse Washes via the River Cam. Increases in housing identified in the Cambridge Local Plan could increase water demand. The plan contains policies on water efficiency and for consumption requirements in line with Levels 5 and 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. All new development is required to mitigate impacts from run-off through SuDS. The majority of additional water supply in Cambridgeshire is anticipated to come from existing licences The Huntingdonshire Local Plan contains policy measures to ensure that appropriate waste water infrastructure is confirmed as	Policies are included in the Local Plan to ensure that developments protect water quality, and ensure that the appropriate waste water infrastructure is confirmed as being available prior to development being given consent. Policies also require that appropriate pollution control measures are included on sites. Development at all the proposed new communities must exceed the Building Regulations and meet Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 for water efficiency. This will ensure that stringent water efficiency measures are implemented as an integral part of development. The Cambridge Water Cycle Strategy explored the impacts of existing planned development at Northstowe and Cambourne being served by Uttons Drove, and concluded no significant effects. In particular: ・ The WwTW can make only a very minor contribution to total flow at Ouse Washes. ・ The distance from Uttons Drove WwTW to Ouse Washes is greater than 10 km by river, providing for considerable dilution and dispersal of any contamination between this potential source at Northstowe or Cambourne and the potential receptor. The requirement for HRA associated with additional sewage discharge rests with Anglian Water Services as the statutory undertaker applying for the change in

	being available prior to development being given consent. A major part of East Cambridgeshire drains into the River Great Ouse catchment. However, the River Great Ouse joins the Ouse Washes site at Denver sluices downstream of the Washes. (East Cambridgeshire Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan 2014 HRA Screening) Therefore there is no pathway of effects on water quality. It is noted that seasonal flooding plays an important role in the integrity of the Ouse Washes. The Great Ouse, including the Ouse washes, has been identified as a Eutrophic Sensitive Area (Eutrophication occurs where the nutrient richness of the water causes excess growth and decay of algae and other plants, leading to a lack of oxygen. This can be detrimental to aquatic wildlife).	consented discharge and the Environment Agency as the competent authority considering that revised consent. This would similarly be the case in other areas. The Council will continue to work with Anglian Water, Cambridge water, and the environment Agency to explore infrastructure requirements of sites, and ensure developments can be appropriately serviced particularly those in Northstowe and Cambourne. No likely significant effects either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.
Changes in Pollution Levels	The level of development proposed by Local Plan could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated. However, the location of the site is not in close proximity to the allocations proposed. Policies for major allocations also seek to promote sustainable forms of travel. No new residential or transport developments are proposed in other plans close to the Ouse Washes.	As the site is not in close proximity to the major allocations proposed, it is not considered that there is likely to be any significant impact on their nature conservation objectives. Air quality is not identified as a vulnerability for the site. The Local Plan proposes general policy requirements that development does not harm the identified European Sites and to address air quality. For similar reasons it is considered that there are no likely significant effects in combination with other plans and projects.
Overall Conclusions	No Likely Significant Effects have been identified either alone or in combination with other reasonably foreseeable plans and projects. It is considered that the Local Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects is not likely to have significant effects on this site.	

Table C:7 Portholme SAC		
Nature of potential impact	**Potential of the Local Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) to affect the European site**	**Commentary on likelihood and significance**
Land Take by Development	The SAC is located outside the district. The Local Plan does not propose any development that will take land from Portholme, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats. No effects pathway from the Local Plan.	No effects pathway from the Local Plan. There are no allocations which directly impact on Portholme SAC. No likely effects. No in combination assessment required.
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	The SAC has no qualifying species. The conservation objectives relate to lowland hay meadows within the site. This and the distance of the site from the District means there will be no effect.	N/A. No in combination assessment required.
Recreational Pressure and Disturbance	.Increasing the dwelling stock in the district could increase demand for countryside recreation. However, the site is at some distance from the District in Huntingdonshire district, near Godmanchester. There are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations to the major centres of population. This includes the Fen Drayton Lakes near Northstowe. New strategic open spaces are already planned, and the Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011) proposes new countryside recreation opportunities, to support growth in the area. Development in Huntingdonshire could lead to increased demand for recreation. This could have impacts on Portholme SAC. The Huntingdonshire Local Plan contains policies which require the creation of several large new areas of accessible greenspace across the district to offset recreational impacts on Portholme SAC.	It is not considered that the level of public use of Portholme will increase greatly as a result of the allocations in the Local Plan. Also, the impact of public access is not listed in the vulnerabilities relating to the site and therefore the site's integrity is not likely to be undermined. Policies relating to new major settlements proposed in the Local Plan require the provision of open space which will also include publically accessible natural green space for recreation. For the same reasons it is not considered that the plan in combination with other plans and projects will have likely significant effects.
Water Quantity and Quality	Development could theoretically have an impact on water quantity, through run off from the sites, or water use. It could also have an impact on water quality, through additional waste products	There is no effects pathway with regards water quality effects. The hay meadows are located up stream on the River Ouse catchment. No water quality effects from the

	produced. The site is located up stream on the River Ouse catchment from the District. Therefore there is no direct effects pathway between the plan area and the site. Therefore, no water quality effects or effects from increased water quantity from the Local Plan are likely. Water level management is important to the SAC qualifying features in order to maintain the alluvial flood meadows. The Environment Agency has produced a Water Level Management Plan which aims to maintain the current water management regime in the long term. There is the potential for in combination effects on water quantity through abstraction requirements.	Local Plan are likely. Therefore there is no requirement to consider in combination effects on water quality. Policies are included in the Local Plan to ensure that developments protect water quality, and ensure that the appropriate waste water infrastructure is confirmed as being available *prior* to development being given consent. Policies also require that appropriate pollution control measures are included on sites. Development at all the proposed new communities must exceed the Building Regulations and meet Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 for water efficiency. This will ensure that stringent water efficiency measures are implemented as an integral part of development. Policy NH/4 Biodiversity which will be applied also seeks to protect designated sites. No significant effects are likely as a result of the Local Plan. The Water Level Management Plan will ensure that in combination effects on water quantity will not result in significant effects. Therefore the Local Plan alone or in combination with other plans and projects is not considered likely to have significant effects.
Changes in Pollution Levels	The level of development proposed by the Local Plan could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated. Whilst the actual impact of the Local Plan allocations on air quality is difficult to quantify, the location of the site is not in close proximity to the site allocations. The development strategy in Policy S/6 seeks to promote sustainable patterns of growth by locating development close to services and facilities which reduces the need to travel. The Local Plan seeks to reduce the levels of out commuting and is therefore not likely to lead in increased journeys outside the district. The site is located adjacent to the A14 in Huntingdonshire and air quality is listed as a vulnerability of the site. This road is expected	The Local Plan proposes general policy requirements (Policy NH/4 Biodiversity) that development does not harm European Sites and requires development to address air quality. The Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan concluded that there would be no significant adverse air quality effects from transport proposals in combination with other plans. It is considered that the Local Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects is not likely to have significant effects.

	to be rerouted by the Huntingdon to Cambridge Improvement Scheme meaning that traffic levels and therefore air quality impacts are likely to decrease.	
Overall Conclusion	No Likely Significant Effects have been identified either alone or in combination with other reasonably foreseeable plans and projects. It is considered that the Local Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects is not likely to have significant effects on this site.	

Table C:8 Breckland SAC and SPA		
Nature of potential impact	**Potential of the Local Plan (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) to affect the European site**	**Commentary on likelihood and significance**
Land Take by Development	The Local Plan does not propose any development on land in the Breckland SAC or SPA, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats. No effects pathway from the Local Plan.	No effects pathway from the Local Plan. There are no site allocations which directly impact on Breckland SAC or SPA. No in combination effects assessment required.
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	The qualifying features of the SAC relate to habitats. Great Crested Newts are a qualifying feature (but not a primary reason for selection). Owing to the distance of the site from the District the likelihood of development within the plan area affecting great crested newts is remote. The qualifying features of the SPA are breeding Stone Curlew, Nightjar and Woodlark. Owing to the distance of the component sites from the District the likelihood of development within the plan area affecting these species is remote.	No effects pathway from the Local Plan. It is reasonable to conclude that the Local Plan would not be likely to have significant effects on the qualifying features of the SAC or SPA. The likelihood of effects on the qualifying features, owing to the distance from the site and absence of impact pathways, is negligible. No likely effects. No in combination effects assessment required.
Recreational Pressure and Disturbance	The proposed levels of development within the Local Plan could increase demand for countryside recreation. The qualifying features for the Breckland SPA are Stone-Curlew, Nightjar and Woodlark, which are vulnerable to disturbance caused by human activity, including dog walking, particularly by people on foot within sight of, and up to 500m from nests. However, the component sites are located some distance from the District. Additionally, there	It is reasonable to conclude that the Local Plan would not be likely to have significant effects on this site. Recreation is not listed as one of the vulnerabilities for the SAC. Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that there will be no likely significant effects on the SAC. Human disturbance is a vulnerability for the qualifying features of the SPA. However, it is not considered that

	are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations to the major centres of population in the Local Plan area. New strategic open spaces are already planned, and the Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011) proposes new countryside recreation opportunities, to support growth in the area.	the level of public access to and recreational use of Breckland will increase greatly as a result of the Local Plan.
Water Quantity and Quality	There is the potential for the levels of development proposed in the Local Plan to impact on water quantity, through run-off from the sites, or increased water use. Potential impacts on water quality could occur through increases in waste water requiring treatment, if this could not be accommodated by existing or new waste water treatment works.	Policies are included in the Local Plan to ensure that developments protect water quality, and ensure that the appropriate waste water infrastructure is confirmed as being available prior to development being given consent. Policies also require that appropriate pollution control measures are included on sites. Development at all the proposed new communities must exceed the Building Regulations and meet Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 for water efficiency. This will ensure that stringent water efficiency measures are implemented as an integral part of development. Policy NH/4 Biodiversity seeks to protect designated sites. The impact of water use was explored in the Cambridge Water Cycle Strategy. Cambridge Water Company's strategy to provide additional public water supply to developments at Cambridge would include abstracting the full licensed amount from the boreholes in the Thetford area with no additional abstraction over and above this. Between 2000 and 2010 the Environment Agency reviewed all permissions that were granted before the Habitats Regulations came into force (the 'review of consents'). Thus the abstraction licenses currently in force at Euston and Brettenham are considered to have acceptable levels of risk of groundwater drawdown within the Breckland European sites. Proposed levels of growth in the Local Plan are lower

		than the level of growth of the East of England Plan which guided Cambridge Water Resource Management Plan.
Changes in Pollution Levels	The level of development proposed by Local Plan could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated. The Local Plan's spatial strategy seeks to minimise emissions to air from car journeys by locating development next to the most sustainable settlements to reduce the need to travel. The Local Plan could combine with effects from development in other Local Plan areas, such as Cambridge and Breckland, Norfolk. Development in the Cambridgeshire Local Plan's HRA concluded that it would have no likely significant effects alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. An Air Quality Policy is also included in the Cambridge Local Plan 2014. This policy relates to air pollution from all potential sources and seeks to ensure that new development does not have an adverse impact on air quality.	The Air Pollution Information System (APIS) suggests that the SAC site is not exceeding its critical load for nitrogen deposition to dry heathland habitats, and is well below its acidity critical load. For Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) it is nearing, but has not exceeded its acidity critical load. The Local Plan proposes general policy requirements that development does not harm the identified European Sites and to address air quality. Whilst the actual impact of the Local Plan on air quality is difficult to quantify, the location of the site is not in close proximity to the allocations proposed. The nearest part of the site is around 30km from Cambridge. Policies and the Local Plan spatial strategy also seek to promote sustainable forms of travel. All surrounding Local Plans include measures to reduce the need to travel, encourage sustainable transport and reduce emissions from development. It is considered that in this case the Local Plan in combination with other plans and projects is not likely to have significant effects.
Overall Conclusion	No Likely Significant Effects have been identified either alone or in combination with other reasonably foreseeable plans and projects. It is considered that the Local Plan either alone or in combination with other plans and projects is not likely to have significant effects on this site.	

Annex D: Scoping of other plans and projects for in combination assessment

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
Other plans for South Cambridgeshire:			
Cambridge East Area Action Plan	Action plan for development east of Cambridge. Prepared in partnership with Cambridge City Council. Some policies amended by the Local Plan.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Northstowe Area Action Plan	Action plan for development of a new town between Oakington and Longstanton. Some policies amended by the Local Plan.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Cambridge Southern Fringe Area	Action plan for development south of	Screening Report – No	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
Action Plan	Cambridge.	Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
North West Cambridge Area Action Plan	Action plan for development on north west of Cambridge. Prepared in partnership with Cambridge City Council.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
County-wide Plans affecting South Cambridgeshire:			
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Core Strategy DPD – Adopted 2011	Core Strategy DPD to guide the spatial strategy vision for the future of mineral extraction and the delivery of high quality sustainable waste management	Appropriate Assessment - No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
	facilities. The document has been subject to HRA and found there were likely to be no significant effects that could not be overcome by mitigation measures through policies in the plan.	plans.	• Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Site Specific Proposals Plan DPD – Adopted February 2012	Site Specific Proposals Plan DPD with allocations for waste management facilities and minerals workings. The document has been subject to HRA and some sites were subject to full appropriate assessments. The conclusions are that it was found there were likely to be no significant effects that could not be overcome by mitigation measures through policies in the plan.	Appropriate Assessment - No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026	The Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 for Cambridgeshire sets out how Government capital funding allocated for transport will be spent, and how this will be used to meet local and national targets.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
			• Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Other Plans for Areas Outside the Plan area:			
Cambridge Local Plan 2014: Proposed Submission	The land use spatial strategy for Cambridge up to 2031 including policies for the city centre and areas of major change (includes areas which extend into South Cambridgeshire - Northern Fringe East where a joint AAP will be prepared with South Cambs; Southern Fringe areas; and NIAB1 area).	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Cambridge Local Plan 2004	The land use strategy up to 2016 focuses growth in Cambridge on the Station area and four urban extensions comprising mixed use centres to the north, south, west and east of the City as a focus for future employment and residential expansion, connected to each other and to the City Centre by high quality public transport (includes sites that extend into South Cambridgeshire).		• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Local Plan to 2036 for Huntingdonshire. Consultation on first draft July 2013 + additional site	Plan to cover period up to 2036 which will replace all current parts of the development plan. Plan will set out strategy for development in Huntingdonshire, incorporating policies		• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
assessment consultation November to December 2013.	for managing development and site-specific proposals. Considers Alconbury Enterprise Zone and other proposed development on Airfield, as well as other opportunities that have arisen since Core Strategy adopted in 2009. Also includes consideration of Gypsy and Traveller site provision.		• Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 / Local Plan Alterations 2002	The Local Plan 1995 provided for development up to 2006, and focused development onto larger settlements. Saved polices from this and alterations agreed 2002 form part of the current Development Plan for district.		• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Huntingdonshire Core Strategy DPD –adopted 2009	The Core Strategy sets the framework for how Huntingdonshire will develop up to 2026. It contains strategic policies to manage growth and guide new development. Provides for development including 14,000 new homes up to 2026 and focuses development on larger settlements.	Appropriate Assessment - No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Huntingdon West Area Action	The area action plan covers		• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
Plan Adopted 2011	approximately 300 hectares of land west of Huntingdon's town centre. Of this, some 20 hectares is land between the town centre and the railway line and includes the Huntingdon Railway Station. The remaining land extends west to encompass the Hinchingbrooke area. The Huntingdon West Area Action Plan is an area where significant change is expected. It will help deliver planned growth, stimulate regeneration, protect areas particularly sensitive to change, and resolve potentially conflicting objectives in this area.		• Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Local Plan for East Cambridgeshire Submission August 2013	Local plan sets out a blueprint for future growth of district. Covers period up to 2031. Contains a strategic vision for future growth and policies to guide development. It sets out how each settlement should change and improve and identifies sites for development.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy DPD – Adopted 2009	The East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy DPD covers the entire district of East Cambridgeshire and provides the overall spatial planning strategy for	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
	the District up to 2025. The Core Strategy sets out the strategic vision for the district of East Cambridgeshire and the policies to be used when considering individual planning proposals. Allocations of land for specific purposes will be considered in a separate documents (the Allocated Sites DPD and The Ely Area Action Plan), which will conform to the framework set out by the Core Strategy. The rate of growth currently envisaged by the Core Strategy would result in an additional 3398 dwellings in Ely by 2025, 1100 of these outside the settlement boundary.		• Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Ely Masterplan – approved by East Cambridgeshire District Council in February 2010.	The Ely Masterplan is the Council's longer term vision for the future of Ely. It sets out a strategy for development based on long term growth supported by significant infrastructure improvements. The vision of the Masterplan will be taken forward in stages. In the short term action will focus on delivering much needed improvements to leisure facilities, open space, shopping and employment and a start will be made on key regeneration and opportunity sites.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
Soham Masterplan – approved by East Cambs. DC on May 2010.	The Soham Masterplan Vision is the Council's longer term vision for the future of Soham. The Masterplan Vision sets out bold and ambitious plans for the town's future, which will help to complete its transformation from an expanded village into a welcoming and thriving 21st Century Cambridgeshire Market Town. Work has now commenced on the next phase of the Soham Vision with further detailed work on the opportunity sites.		• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Littleport Masterplan adopted by East Cambs. DC in May 2011.	The Littleport Masterplan is the Council's longer term vision for the future of Littleport. The Littleport Masterplan presents a vision for Littleport that embraces its unique natural fen landscape setting, and is focused on revitalising the town centre, improving job opportunities, and achieving high quality development that enhances the image of the town.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Fenland Local Plan – Draft Core Strategy Submission September 2013.	Short plan focusing on key issues and guides development. Aims to give local communities the maximum opportunity to get development exactly as they want it. Plans for next 20 years. Aim to build 11,000 new homes with large new housing areas on edge of Wisbech, March, Chatteris and	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
	Whittlesey. Villages will be permitted development to ensure remain thriving local communities.		• Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Fenland Local Plan 1993	The Local Plan 1993 concentrates growth in housing, employment and service provision within existing centres.		• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Uttlesford Draft Local Plan Consultation - November 2013 to January 2014.	District wide local plan to cover up to 2031. Consulted on Draft Plan in June 2012 – Reviewed housing need and revised figure with additional housing sites hence further consultation. Further consultation planned Spring 2014.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Uttlesford Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation DPD Call for sites October 2012	Commissioned Essex wide needs assessment to form part of evidence base for DPD – anticipated January		• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
	2014. Once scale of need established look to identify sites – public consultation due on DPD Nov/Dec 2014.		• Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
North Herts Local Plan 1996	The local plan 1996 seeks to restrain development pressures, maintain the existing pattern of settlements and countryside, and enhance the character of existing land uses in urban and rural areas. Certain policies saved from 1996 Local Plan since 2007.		• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Draft Local Plan North Herts Housing Additional Location Options July 2013	Work to establish new housing target for district and sites that could be used up to 2031. Consulted in February 2013. Consulted on additional sites proposed in Feb consultation. Aim to publish draft Local Plan for consultation early 2014.		• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire – Published for consultation Jan 2013.	Sets out spatial strategy and development principles for district. Will replace existing Core Strategy and Development Management DPDs for northern area. Anticipated submission in June 2013 but reviewing plan due to implications of new population and household projects from ONS. Revised timetable.		• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy and Development Management Policies for Northern Area Adopted 2009	The plan sets out the vision, objectives, spatial strategy and overarching policies to guide development. At least 5,000 new homes and approximately 77ha of employment land (B1 – B8) must be provided between 2010 and 2026. Settlement hierarchy policy to direct development.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Central Bedfordshire Site Allocation DPD for Northern Area – adopted 2011	Plan identifies where development to take place within district concentrating most in the larger more sustainable settlements .	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
			• Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Central Bedfordshire Draft Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan Pre submission	Planning framework for Gypsy and Traveller development. Identifies amount and location of accommodation required. Reviewed in Jan 2014 following publishing of new accommodation assessment. Planning for 157 pitches by 2031. Amended draft for consultation Feb/March 2014.		• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Bedford Local Plan 2032 Issues and options consultation Jan/ Feb 2014.	District wide local plan to cover up to 2032. Consulting on finding sites for between 940 and 3,860 new houses and 3,000 jobs. Most development directed to urban areas and settlements to SW of Bedford and Kempston. Development restricted in rest of district. Five options for growth.		• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
Bedford Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan – Adopted 2008	Plans for district up to 2021. The areas of Bedford, Kempston and the northern Marston Vale (the Growth Area) are the focus for development.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Bedford Allocations and Designations Local Plan Adopted July 2013.	Focuses development in main urban areas (Bedford and Kempston) and Marston Vale	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Luton Local Plan 2011 – 2031 Pre- submission consultation 2014.	District wide local plan. Revised timetable to fit with CIL consultation. Pre-submission consultation planned for autumn 2014.		• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
			• Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Forest Heath Core Strategy – Adopted 2010	Core Strategy focuses development on existing towns. Sets out development until 2026 (with housing 2031)	Appropriate Assessment - No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
St.Edmundsbury Core Strategy DPD – adopted 2010	Core Strategy concentrates growth in housing, employment and service provision within existing urban areas. Plans up to 2031.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031	Vision 2031 – Comprehensive plan to guide overall direction of how where for	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
Haverhill Vision 2031 Rural Vision 2031 – Submission October 2013	planning in Bury St Edmunds; Haverhill and within rural areas of district.	Alone or in combination with other plans	• Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council Development Management Policies Submission Dec 2013.	Joint planning document to support and provide more detailed policies to those in Core Strategy. Will be used in day to day planning decisions. Replace existing adopted Local Plans for each authority.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
King's Lynn & West Norfolk Core Strategy – adopted 2011	Core Strategy will guide development up to 2025	Appropriate Assessment - No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
			• Breckland SAC and SPA
King's Lynn & West Norfolk Detailed Policies and Site Plan Preferred options consultation Oct 2013.	Allocation suitable sites for development. Proposed to consult on prosed submission plan later in 2014.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans on Sites tested in the South Cambs HRA.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals and Waste DPD – Strategic sites and policies Adopted 2014	Joint plan by three unitary authorities - Sets policies regarding proposals for minerals extraction and waste sites, and allocates sites. Propose to adopt early 2014.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 1998 (and review adopted 2007)	Sets policies regarding proposals for minerals extraction, and allocates sites.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
			• Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Hertfordshire Waste Framework including Core Strategy and Development Management DPD - Adopted 2012	The Waste Core Strategy sets out the spatial vision and strategic objectives for waste planning in the county. This contains core policies needed to implement the overall objectives and covers the period to 2026.	Appropriate Assessment - No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Hertfordshire Waste Framework Site Allocations Submission 2013	Identifies waste site allocations. Due for adoption in 2014.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
Suffolk Minerals Core Strategy Adopted 2008 & Minerals Specific Site Allocations DPD, Adopted 2009	Sets policies regarding proposals for minerals extraction, and allocates sites. The Core Strategy sets out the key elements of minerals planning framework for the county and a suite of generic development control policies.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Suffolk Waste Core Strategy Adopted 2011	Sets policies regarding proposals for waste, and allocates sites.	Appropriate Assessment - No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Milton Keynes Core Strategy – Adopted July 2013	Includes a new strategic land allocation for around 2,900 homes in the south east of Milton Keynes. Replaces strategic policies in 2005 Local Plan. Rest of 2005 Local Plan policies saved	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
			• Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Milton Keynes Strategic Land Allocation Development Framework SPD Consultation Sept 2013	Revised draft consulted upon following adoption of Core Strategy in 2013. Covers 192 hectares on south east flank of Milton Keynes.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Plan: Milton Keynes Evidence gathering stage.	New district wide local plan to extend cover up to 2031. Review of Core Strategy and extend strategic planning to at least 2031. Will also include development management policies and site allocations.	To be completed	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (MWCS) Development Plan Document was adopted in November 2012.	Sets policies regarding proposals for waste, and allocates sites.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans on Sites tested in the South Cambs HRA.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Milton Keynes Waste DPD Adopted 2008	Sets policies regarding proposals for waste.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Milton Keynes Minerals Local Plan 2006;	Sets policies regarding proposals for minerals extraction, and allocates sites.		• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
			• Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Milton Keynes Minerals Plan Issues and options consultation October –January 2013	Plan will set out the policies and proposals against which planning applications for mineral development will be determined. Consultation on draft plan summer 2014.	Screening Report – No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Norfolk Mineral and Waste Core Strategy and Development Control Document - Adopted 2011	Sets out policies for both minerals and waste planning	Appropriate Assessment - No Likely Significant Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC • Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA
Norfolk Minerals Site Specific Allocation DPD and Waste Site	Sets out site allocations for both minerals and waste planning	Appropriate Assessment - No Likely Significant	• Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC

Other Relevant Plans and Projects	Summary	Conclusions of HRA	Sites considered in Screening for Potential In Combination Effects
Specific Allocations DPD adopted 2013		Effects Alone or in combination with other plans.	• Devil's Dyke SAC • Fenland SAC and Wicken Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Chippenham Fen Ramsar site • Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site • Portholme SAC • Breckland SAC and SPA

Annex E: Correspondence from Natural England

Date: 21st February 2014
Our ref: 113121
Your ref:

Natural England
Consultation Service
Hornbeam House
Electra Way
Crewe Business Park
CREWE
CW1 6GJ

T: 0300 060 3900

Jonathan Dixon
Principal Planning Policy Officer
South Cambridgeshire District Council

BY E-MAIL ONLY

Dear Mr Dixon

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan – Revision to Habitats Regulations Assessment

Thank you for consulting Natural England on the revised version of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), in your email of 17th February 2014.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

We welcome the revisions made to address our previous comments; in particular we are satisfied with the conclusion of the revised HRA that the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan is unlikely to give rise to significant in-combination effects.

We note the inclusion of text within the HRA to consider the effects of two additional sites in Great Abington; we are satisfied with the conclusion of the assessment that these are unlikely to have any significant effect on European sites.

We hope you will find these comments helpful. For any correspondence or queries relating to this consultation only, please contact me using the details below. For all other correspondence, please contact the address above.

Yours sincerely

Janet Nuttall
Land Use Operations

T: 0300 060 1239
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Sheffield S3 8NH

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