



South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council

Local Development Framework

# Northstowe Area Action Plan

Habitats Directive Assessment

April 2007

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Local Development Framework

# Northstowe

Area Action Plan Document

Habitats Directive Assessment

**South Cambridgeshire District Council**

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# CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
Outcome of Assessment	1
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
The Requirement For Habitats Directive Assessment	3
What are Natura 2000 Sites?	3
What is Habitats Directive Assessment?	4
What is a Significant Effect on a Natura 2000 Site?	5
Structure of the HDA Report	5
<b>SECTION 1: Description of the Northstowe AAP</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>SECTION 2: Description of the Relevant Plans and Strategies to be Considered “In Combination”</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>SECTION 3: HDA Screening Methodology, Sets Out the Approach Used and Specific Tasks Undertaken</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>SECTION 4: Natura 2000 and Ramsar Sites Potentially Affected by the Northstowe AAP</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>SECTION 5: Screening Assessment of the Northstowe AAP</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>SECTION 6: Consultations</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>SECTION 7: Conclusions</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: Summary of Other Relevant Plans and Strategies</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: Information on the Natura 2000 Sites</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3: Maps</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>APPENDIX 4: Habitats Directive Assessment Screening Matrix</b>	<b>83</b>



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is an Assessment of the Northstowe Area Action Plan Development Plan Document, to meet the requirements of the Habitats Directive. It has been prepared by South Cambridgeshire District Council, as the relevant competent authority.

The Assessment provides a screening to examine whether the Northstowe Area Action Plan is likely to have any significant impacts on a Natura 2000 or Ramsar site, either alone or in combination with other projects and plans, in view of the site's conservation objectives. The Assessment:

- Provides details of the plan and its proposals;
- Identifies Natura 2000 sites and Ramsar sites (in accordance with PPS9, para 6) within and outside the plan area that could potentially be affected by the Northstowe Area Action Plan;
- Identifies the characteristics of these sites and their conservation objectives; and
- Screens the plan, in combination with other relevant plans or projects, to identify any likely significant effects on the sites.

The Assessment has been undertaken following a precautionary approach in accordance with the Habitats Directive.

## **OUTCOME OF ASSESSMENT**

It can be objectively concluded that the Northstowe Area Action Plan is not likely to have any significant effects on any Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites. There is therefore no requirement to proceed to the next stage of an Appropriate Assessment.



## INTRODUCTION

This report is an Assessment of the Northstowe Area Action Plan Development Plan Document, to meet the requirements of the Habitats Directive. It has been prepared by South Cambridgeshire District Council, as the relevant competent authority.

### THE REQUIREMENT FOR HABITATS DIRECTIVE ASSESSMENT

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) sets out the requirement for Assessment of plans or projects affecting Natura 2000 sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) and states:

*“(3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.*

Article 6(4) goes on to discuss alternative solutions and compensatory measures. It states:

*(4) If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.”*

### WHAT ARE NATURA 2000 SITES?

Natura 2000 is a Europe-wide network of sites of international importance for nature conservation established under the European Council Directive ‘on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora’ – (92/43/EEC ‘Habitats Directive’). This has been transposed into UK law as the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations (1994; ‘Habitats Regulations’).

Natura 2000 sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC), which are designated under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), and Special Protection Areas (SPA) classified under the ‘Birds Directive’ (79/409/EEC).

In line with Government policy in PPS9 paragraph 6, this assessment also relates to Ramsar sites although these are not strictly part of Natura 2000. These sites support

internationally important wetland habitats and are listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention, 1971).

## **WHAT IS HABITATS DIRECTIVE ASSESSMENT?**

Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) is an assessment of the potential effects of a proposed plan or project, which is not necessary for the management of the site and which is likely to have a significant effect, on one or more Natura 2000 site, in view of the site's conservation objectives.

There are 4 stages to the Habitats Directive Assessment process set out in the European Commission guidance "*Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Nature 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*" (November 2001). Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive relates to Stages 1 to 3 and Article 6(4) to Stage 4, as follows:

### **First stage - Screening**

The process, which identifies the likely impacts upon a Natura 2000 site or Ramsar site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.

### **Second stage - Appropriate Assessment**

The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site or Ramsar site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts.

### **Third stage – Assessment of alternative solutions**

The process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site or Ramsar site.

### **Fourth stage – Compensatory measures**

As assessment of compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest, it is deemed that the plan should proceed.

If it is concluded at the screening stage that there will be no significant impacts, there is no need to carry out subsequent stages. This Screening Report addresses the First Stage only of the Habitats Directive Assessment process.

## **WHAT IS A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON A NATURA 2000 SITE?**

A judgement of the significance of effects on a Natura 2000 site should be undertaken in relation to the designated interest features and conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 site (see Sections 4 and 5) using sound judgement, and with a scientific basis where available. If insufficient information is available to make a clear judgement, it should be assumed that a significant effect is possible in line with the precautionary principle.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE HDA REPORT**

Section 1	Description of the Northstowe Area Action Plan
Section 2	Description of the relevant plans and projects to be considered “in combination”
Section 3	HDA Screening Methodology, sets out the approach used and specific tasks undertaken
Section 4	Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites potentially affected by the Northstowe Area Action Plan, identifies and describes the Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites that could potentially be affected by the Northstowe Area Action Plan, including describing the conservation objectives for each site and the potential sensitivities of the sites to adverse effects
Section 5	Screening Assessment of the Northstowe Area Action Plan, considers whether there are likely to be any significant effects of the Northstowe Area Action Plan, alone or in combination with other relevant plans and projects, on Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites
Section 6	Consultations
Section 7	Conclusions, summarises the findings of the HDA Screening

## SECTION 1: DESCRIPTION OF THE NORTHSTOWE AREA ACTION PLAN

The Northstowe Area Action Plan proposes the development of a new town of 8,000 dwellings to the north west of Cambridge, with appropriate employment, services, facilities and infrastructure on a site of approximately 350 hectares lying to the east of Longstanton and north of Oakington villages and linked to the proposed Cambridge Guided Busway. The Plan covers the site for Northstowe and the surrounding rural area, but none of the nearby villages (see Map 1 in Appendix 3).

The vision for Northstowe is as follows:

*Northstowe will be a sustainable and vibrant new community with its own distinctive identity, which is founded on best practice urban design principles that draw on the traditions of fen-edge market towns and which encourages the innovation that is characteristic of the Cambridge Sub-Region.*

The Area Action Plan is not directly connected to or necessary for the management of Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites.

The policy elements contained in the Northstowe Area Action Plan can be summarised as follows:

<b>POLICY ELEMENTS</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>
Vision and Development Principles	A vision of what the town should achieve and a series of principles to guide the development.
The Site and its Setting	Defines the site for the new town, and that it will be surrounded by an extension of the Cambridge Green Belt. Seeks to achieve an appropriate landscape setting for the town, minimising adverse impacts on the surrounding area, and creation of a network of green spaces around the town, which integrate well with the surrounding countryside. The plan also requires green separation to be provided between the town and the existing closest villages of Longstanton and Oakington.
Structure of Northstowe	Describes the main land uses in the town, and other services, facilities and infrastructure that will be required.
Town Centre and Local Centres	Requires provision of a town centre with a range of shops, cultural, leisure and community facilities, and five local centres distributed along the local busway.
Housing	Policies regarding housing provision, types, mix, affordability, quality and density.
Employment	Requires provision of employment land within the town, to provide a range of employment to support development of a socially inclusive community.
Community Facilities	Seeks a range of community services and facilities to meet the needs of the town and a small hinterland of surrounding villages.
Transport	Policies require adequate highway capacity at all stages

	of the development, and high quality public transport provision, as well as a dedicated network of high quality rights of way for pedestrian, cycling and horse riding.
Landscape	Requires a landscape strategy for Northstowe, to create an attractive environment including a network of green spaces, which respects the local landscape character, and with water as a defining feature of the town, including landscaping of a linear water park along the route of the former railway line required as part of the drainage strategy for Northstowe.
Biodiversity	Requires a full programme of ecological survey and monitoring be undertaken before during and after construction, and strategies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. The creation of new biodiversity features is required, including through the water park, and green corridors that run through and beyond the town and consideration of the need for provision of new countryside recreation.
Archaeology and Heritage	A strategy for buildings and structures of historic interest must be prepared, and long-term uses proposed for heritage assets.
Meeting Recreational Needs	Requires provision of recreation facilities to meet the needs of the new town. This includes public open space within the town for a town park, formal sports, informal recreation and for children's play. To meet the informal countryside recreation needs of residents the AAP considers the provision of additional informal countryside recreation and this will be subject to negotiation based upon factors including the existing Strategic Open Space provision accessible to future Northstowe residents, the work of the Master Plan and consideration of economic viability.
Integrated Water Strategy	Requires a sustainable drainage system to drain the town, which will control run off from the site, and foul drainage and sewage treatment capacity, including at any receiving works, to ensure flood risk is not exacerbated at any time. Also requires mitigation of flood risk for Oakington and Longstanton.
Telecommunications	Requires telecommunications to be designed and installed as an integral part of the development.
Exemplar in Sustainability	Requires Northstowe to become an exemplar in sustainability, either through exemplar developments, or a high standard of sustainability across the town.
Waste	Refers to requirements in the Cambridgeshire Waste Local Plan, which identifies Northstowe as a site for a major waste management facility and a household waste recycling centre.
Implementation and Delivery	Requires a construction strategy, to minimise the impact of the construction process. Requires early delivery of

	landscaping and treatment of areas of green separation.
Monitoring	Arrangements to monitor the implementation of the plan.

### **Other Elements of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework**

The Local Development Framework (LDF) comprises a number of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that set out policies and proposals for the development and use of land in the district. The first DPDs cover the period to 2016 and were submitted to the Secretary of State in January 2006. The DPDs submitted were as follows

- Core Strategy DPD
- Development Control Policies DPD
- Site Specific Policies DPD
- Cambridge East Area Action Plan (AAP) (being prepared jointly with Cambridge City Council)
- Cambridge Southern Fringe AAP
- Northstowe AAP

The LDF includes a vision of the future of South Cambridgeshire and objectives and targets, which developments must meet to secure that vision. Once adopted, planning applications and other decisions will be made in accordance with it.

The Council adopted its Core Strategy in January 2007. The Core Strategy sets the overall level of growth and the broad spatial locations for development. The Strategy is one of concentrating development on Cambridge through a number of urban extensions to the city, including land in South Cambridgeshire, and at the new town of Northstowe. These major developments are addressed in a series of Area Action Plans. They include development that will continue beyond 2016. The strategy also allows for limited development to meet local needs in Rural Centres and other villages. New development will be accompanied by the necessary employment, community and recreation space to support the development of sustainable communities.

The Core Strategy was also subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment, and was found to have no likely significant effects on any Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites.

Other Documents currently at the Regulation 25 stage are:

- North West Cambridge Area Action Plan (AAP) (being prepared jointly with Cambridge City Council)

- Gypsy and Traveller DPD

The Local Development Framework:

- Takes account of national, regional and strategic planning policies;
- Identifies sites for, and requirements of, major developments;
- Provides the framework of policies for assessing all planning applications;
- Enables infrastructure and service providers to bring forward their services when needed by new development;
- Enables the public to be fully involved in developing local policies and proposals.

## **SECTION 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE RELEVANT PLANS AND STRATEGIES TO BE CONSIDERED “IN COMBINATION”**

The Northstowe Area Action Plan focuses specifically on planning for the new town.

Other Plans forming part of the South Cambridgeshire LDF:

- Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD)
- Development Control Policies DPD
- Site Specific Policies DPD
- Cambridge East Area Action Plan (AAP) (being prepared jointly with Cambridge City Council)
- Cambridge Southern Fringe AAP

The Core Strategy for the district of South Cambridgeshire plans for the development proposed in RPG6, and subsequently the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003.

The East of England Plan, that will replace RPG6, is currently in at an advanced stage of preparation, having reached the modifications stage. It carries forward the requirements of RPG6 for the Cambridge Sub-Region for the period to 2016. This plan has been subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment, which concludes that the plan will not have a likely significant effect on Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites, and hence Appropriate Assessment is not required for any of the policies in the RSS. It states that the reasons for this include:

- That the policies will not result in any development;
- The policies make provision for development, but the exact location is to be selected following the consideration of options in lower tier plans (i.e. by local development plans, programmes and strategies);
- The policy concentrates the development in urban areas away from Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites;
- That the policies specifically state that development should avoid any adverse effects on the integrity of Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites; and
- Policy ENV3 states that local planning authorities should ‘ensure that .....development does not have adverse effects on the integrity of sites of European or international importance’;
- Generic provisions have been made within the policies in the RSS (e.g. Policy ENV3) supported by more specific provisions to ensure that the integrity of Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites are not adversely affected by development (Policies SS9, E7, C2, and WAT2).

Whilst the HDA of the RSS is of a higher order spatial plan and a finer grain Assessment is required of the Northstowe Area Action Plan as a Local Development Document, in view of the specificity of the RSS for the spatial strategy in South Cambridgeshire, the HDA of that plan is considered a helpful guide of potential impacts of the plan on European sites, both alone and in combination with other plans, that will also be implementing the policies of the RSS. The RSS refers specifically to the proposed urban extensions to Cambridge and the location for the new town of Northstowe, as identified in the Structure Plan.

The Screening Assessment focuses on the “in-combination” effects of the Area Action Plan with other LDF level plans, including the other Development Plan Documents produced by South Cambridgeshire District Council, district LDFs of nearby authorities, and minerals and waste plans for both South Cambridgeshire itself and for nearby authorities. The plans considered in the screening Assessment are listed below. A brief summary of each plan is set out in Appendix 1:

Countywide Plans affecting South Cambridgeshire:

- Cambridgeshire Waste Local Plan 2003
- Cambridgeshire Aggregates (minerals) Local Plan 1991
- Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste DPD Preferred Options 2006
- Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011

Other Plans for Areas Outside South Cambridgeshire:

- Cambridge Local Plan 2006
- Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995
- East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2000 and Core Strategy Preferred Options June 2006
- Fenland Local Plan 1993 and Core Strategy Preferred Options 2006
- North Herts Local Plan 1996 and Core Strategy & Core Strategy Options 2005
- Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan 2005 & Core Strategy DPD Issues and Options
- Forest Heath Local Plan 1995 and Core Strategy & Development Policies Preferred Options Report October 2006
- St. Edmundsbury Local Plan 2006
- King’s Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan 1998 and Core Strategy Submission, DC Policies Preferred Options 2007
- Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2005
- Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals Core Strategy and Site Allocation Plan – Issues and Options (Jan 2006)
- Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 1998 (and review)
- Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan 1998
- Hertfordshire Minerals & Waste DPDs Issues & Options
- Suffolk Minerals Local Plan 1999 & Minerals Core Strategy Issues and Options January 2007
- Suffolk Waste Local Plan 2006

### **SECTION 3: HDA SCREENING METHODOLOGY, SETS OUT THE APPROACH USED AND SPECIFIC TASKS UNDERTAKEN**

The Habitats Directive Assessment of the Northstowe Area Action Plan has been undertaken in line with the European Commission's guidance on the 'Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Nature 2000 sites', and seeks to meet the requirements of the Habitats Directive. The tasks undertaken in preparing this Habitats Directive Assessment Screening Report are:

#### Task 1: Identification of the Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites which may be affected by the Northstowe Area Action Plan and the factors contributing to and defining the integrity of these sites

An initial investigation was undertaken to identify Natura 2000 sites and Ramsar sites within South Cambridgeshire and those outside the district with potential to be affected by the Northstowe Area Action Plan. This involved use of GIS data as well as consultation with the Natural England Four Counties team. In line with the precautionary approach, sites at significant distances from the South Cambridgeshire district boundary were included in the study. The Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites identified as potentially affected by the Northstowe Area Action Plan are identified in Section 4. The attributes, which contribute to and define the integrity of these sites were identified and described (including the conservation objectives). Information was appropriate to inform a screening decision.

#### Task 2: Completion of the Habitats Directive Assessment Screening Matrix for the Northstowe Area Action Plan, including 'Assessment of Significance of Effects'

A Habitats Directive Assessment Screening Matrix was completed for the Northstowe Area Action Plan, which looked at each European site in turn and included an 'Assessment of Significance of Effects', and is found at Section 5. The screening gives particular consideration given to the possible effects of the plan on features contributing to the integrity of the Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites (e.g. increased disturbance, changes in water quality, etc). A risk-based approach involving application of the precautionary principle was adopted in the assessment of likely effects, such that an assessment of 'no significant effect' was only made where it was considered unlikely, based on current knowledge and information available, that the Northstowe Area Action Plan could have a significant effect on the integrity of the Natura 2000 / Ramsar site. The examination of potential effects involved an examination of potential 'in-combination' effects of the Northstowe Area Action Plan and other plans and projects.

## **SECTION 4: NATURA 2000 AND RAMSAR SITES POTENTIALLY AFFECTED BY THE NORTHSTOWE AREA ACTION PLAN**

There are no Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites within the area covered by the Northstowe Area Action Plan.

However, there is one Natura 2000 site within South Cambridgeshire District considered as part of this assessment:

- Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC.

There are a number of other sites within the surrounding districts, which have also been considered as part of this Assessment, because of their proximity to the Northstowe Area Action Plan area and / or the nature of their conservation interest:

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

Candidate SACs and potential SPAs should be considered in the same way as if they had already been classified or designated. There are no relevant sites.

For the purposes of this Assessment, Ramsar sites are included although they are not Natura 2000 sites. For South Cambridgeshire, this does not introduce any additional sites, but two of the sites listed above are also Ramsar sites:

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

Natural England confirmed that this list was comprehensive for the purposes of Habitats Directive Assessment (by letter 9.11.06)

The conservation objectives for each SPA or SAC are designed to ensure that the qualifying interest of each site is maintained in the long term. Whilst these are specific to each site, there are some general principles including:

- To maintain the population of the habitat / species as a viable component of the site;
- To maintain the distribution of the habitat / species within site;
- To maintain the distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species;
- To maintain the structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species; and
- To ensure that there is no significant disturbance of the species.

For Ramsar sites the main aims are to promote the conservation of the wetland to avoid deterioration of the wetland habitats of Ramsar interest and significant disturbance of associated species.

Details of the European Sites being assessed, and their relevant conservation objectives, is provided in Appendix 2 of this assessment. Maps of the sites are attached at Appendix 3.

## **SECTION 5: SCREENING ASSESSMENT OF THE NORTHSTOWE AREA ACTION PLAN**

There are a wide range of potential impacts of development plans on designated sites, but the impacts examined 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 Natura 2000 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.

An HDA Screening Matrix, including an ‘Assessment of Significance of Effects’, is contained at Appendix 4, which assesses the potential impacts of the Northstowe Area Action Plan as set out above on the conservation interests of European sites, taking account of the policy elements of the plan.

## **SECTION 6: CONSULTATIONS**

Natural England has been consulted on the HDA report. They responded as follows

Natural England supports the conclusion that policies in the Northstowe Area Action Plan (AAP) Document are unlikely to have a likely significant effect upon the European Sites identified and that an Appropriate Assessment is therefore not required for this AAP.

## **SECTION 7: CONCLUSIONS**

The South Cambridgeshire Northstowe Area Action Plan has been assessed to determine whether there are likely to be any significant effects arising from the plan, in accordance with the Habitats Directive Articles 6(3) and (4).

The HDA has:

- Provided details of the plan and its proposals;
- Identified European Sites within and outside the plan area that may potentially be affected by the Northstowe Area Action Plan;
- Identified the characteristics of these European sites and their conservation objectives; and
- Tested the plan, in combination with other relevant plans or programmes, to identify any significant impacts on the European Sites.

It can be objectively concluded that the Northstowe Area Action Plan is not likely to have any significant effects on any Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites. There is therefore no requirement to proceed to the next stage of an Appropriate Assessment.



## **APPENDIX 1**

**Summary of other relevant plans and strategies.**



## SUMMARY OF OTHER RELEVANT PLANS AND STRATEGIES

OTHER RELEVANT PLANS AND STRATEGIES	SUMMARY
<b>County-wide Plans affecting South Cambridgeshire:</b>	
Cambridgeshire Waste Local Plan 2003	Aims to provide a sustainable strategy and policy framework for waste management in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Includes site specific proposals for waste management facilities.
Cambridgeshire Aggregates (minerals) Local Plan 1991	Sets policies for working minerals and safeguarding mineral deposits.
Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste DPD Preferred Options 2006	<p>(1) A draft Core Strategy DPD to guide the spatial strategy vision for the future of mineral extraction and the delivery of high quality sustainable waste management facilities.</p> <p>(2) A draft Site Allocations DPD with proposed allocations for waste management facilities and minerals workings.</p> <p>The documents have been subject to initial appropriate assessment, which found there were likely to be no significant effects that could not be overcome by mitigation measures through policies in the plan.</p>
Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2006 - 2011	The Local Transport Plan 2006 -11 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.
<b>Other Plans for Areas Outside South Cambridgeshire:</b>	
Cambridge Local Plan 2006	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).
Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995	The Local Plan 1995 provided for development up to 2006, and focused development onto larger settlements.
East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2000 and Core Strategy Preferred Options June 2006	The Local Plan 2000 concentrates growth in housing, employment and service provision within Ely, Soham and Littleport, including the reuse of previously developed sites. Elsewhere within the District, growth will be limited and is likely to take the form of meeting existing commitments and allocations and, where appropriate, the infilling or

<b>OTHER RELEVANT PLANS AND STRATEGIES</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>
	<p>redevelopment of sites within the built framework.</p> <p>The Core Strategy aims to provide for growth in a sustainable manner, planning for 8600 dwellings 2001 to 2021.</p>
Fenland Local Plan 1993 and Core Strategy Preferred Options 2006	The Local Plan 1993 concentrates growth in housing, employment and service provision within existing centres, an aim which is continued in the Core Strategy, when planning for the additional 4120 dwellings needed to meet the requirements of the RSS.
North Herts Local Plan 1996 and Core Strategy & Core Strategy Options 2005	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.
Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan 2005 & Core Strategy DPD Issues and Options	<p>The local plan directs housing and economic development to within and adjoining the main urban areas, and in the strategic transportation corridors South West of Bedford and in East Bedfordshire.</p> <p>The Core Strategy issues and options explores how housing and jobs required in the area should be accommodated.</p>
Forest Heath Local Plan 1995 and Core Strategy & Development Policies Preferred Options Report October 2006	The Local Plan and the LDF Preferred Options focus development on existing towns.
St. Edmundsbury Local Plan 2006	The Local Plan 1993 concentrates growth in housing, employment and service provision within existing urban areas.
King's Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan 1998 and Core Strategy Submission, DC Policies Preferred Options 2007	The Borough has to accommodate growth of 12,000 houses to be built up to 2021. The preferred options document aims to accommodate this development sustainably.
Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2005	Sets policies regarding proposals for minerals extraction and waste sites, and allocates sites.
Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals Core Strategy and Site Allocation Plan – Issues and Options (Jan 2006)	Sets policies regarding proposals for minerals extraction and waste sites, and allocates sites.

<b>OTHER RELEVANT PLANS AND STRATEGIES</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>
Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 1998 (and review)	Sets policies regarding proposals for minerals extraction, and allocates sites.
Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan 1998	Sets policies regarding proposals for waste sites, and allocates sites.
Hertfordshire Minerals & Waste DPDs Issues & Options	Sets policies regarding proposals for minerals extraction and waste sites, and allocates sites.
Suffolk Minerals Local Plan 1999 & Minerals Core Strategy Issues and Options January 2007	Sets policies regarding proposals for minerals extraction, and allocates sites.
Suffolk Waste Local Plan 2006	Sets policies regarding proposals for waste, and allocates sites.



## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Information on the Natura 2000 sites**



## **INFORMATION ON THE NATURA 2000 SITES**

### **NAME: EVERS DEN AND WIMPOLE WOODS**

#### **Designation and Code**

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – UK0030331

SSSI boundary is the same as the SAC

#### **Location**

The site is located in South Cambridgeshire District, but outside the area covered by the Northstowe Area Action Plan. The site is located close to Wimpole Park.

**Grid ref:** TL 340526

**Area:** 66.48 ha.

#### **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.

#### **Conservation objective**

To maintain, in favourable condition, the habitats for the population of Barbastelle bats.

#### **General Site characteristics**

Broadleaved deciduous woodland (100%)

Soil and geology – Basic, Clay

Geomorphology and Landscape – Lowland

#### **Species**

*Barbastella barbastellus* bats. This is one of the UK's rarest mammals. The species is protected on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

#### **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**

Natural England produced a conditions report on Eversden and Wimpole Wood SSSI in 2006 (December report) and found that the site is meeting 100% its PSA targets.<sup>1</sup> The area is 100% favourable.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> PSA target – the Government's Public Service agreement (PSA) target to have 95% of the SSSI area in favourable or recovering condition by 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Favourable condition means that the SSSI land is being adequately conserved and is meeting its conservation objectives.

<sup>3</sup> Greenaway F (2004) Advice for the management of flightlines and foraging habitats of the barbastelle Bat *Barbastella barbastellus*, English Nature Research Report 657.

The main area of importance for them is shown on proposals map 1 in the Biodiversity Strategy published by South Cambridgeshire District Council in August 2006. 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.

## **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.

**Grid ref:** TL 611622

**Area:** 8.02 ha.

### **Primary reason for selection of the site**

Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco- Brometalia*). (important orchid sites)

### **Conservation Objective**

To maintain in favourable condition unimproved calcareous grassland with particular reference to semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (CG3 and CG5 grassland) and *Himantoglossum hircinum* lizard orchid.

### **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

*Pulsatilla vulgaris* - Pasque flower

### **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 this project is to restore the dyke and there are now clear management aims. 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 speciality 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**

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. A survey carried out by Natural England in May 2002 assessed this section of the dyke as being in favourable condition. The site is meeting 100% of its PSA targets.

**Vulnerability**

Although clearance work has been undertaken there will need to be control over any regrowth of scrub and any weediness of this section.

## **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.

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

**Area:** 618.64 ha.

### **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.

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.

### **Conservation objective**

To maintain in favourable condition:

- *Molinia* meadows on chalk and clay (*Eu-Molinion* community)
- Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* (great fen sedge) and species of the *Caricion davallianae* vegetation community.

To maintain in favourable condition the habitats for the population of spined loach and great crested newts.

### **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 features. 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 willow 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**

Natural England has produced a report about the condition of the SSSI (December 2006). Only 36.10% of the site is meeting PSA targets. 52.92% is unfavourably declining.

### **Vulnerability**

The reason for the adverse conditions is related to inappropriate water levels in the fen, marsh and swamp areas.

Work carried out in the nearby river system to prevent flooding in the 1960s means 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).

## **2. CHIPPENHAM FEN**

### **Location**

This site is in East Cambridgeshire District Council.

**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**

For reporting purposes the SSSI is divided into 17 units. 85.41% of the area is meeting the PSA target.

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. Persistent drought is a potential threat as seven of nine years in the recent past have received well below average rainfall for the regions (Report dated 2002).

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.

## **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 19<sup>th</sup> 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**

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.

Considerable work has been undertaken to help progress the reed beds towards favourable conditions including annual cutting and installation of windpump to control water levels. Further scrub removal is programmed to be carried out. Major scrub clearance and coppice management work is to be completed by 2008.

**Vulnerability**

The area is meeting 100% of the PSA target. The quality of the water from the agricultural run-off needs to be monitored.

## **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.

**Grid reference:** TL 49885

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

### **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.

### **Conservation objective:**

To maintain, in favourable condition, the habitats for the populations of *Annexe 1* species (Bewicks swan, whooper swan, hen harrier, spotted crake, and ruff) migratory species of European importance (widgeon, gadwall, pintail, shoveler, pochard and black-tailed Godwit) and wintering waterfowl assemblage of European importance, with particular reference to grassland / marshy grassland with ditches and open water.

Also to maintain in favourable condition the habitat for spined loach.

### **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. platyrhynchos*, pintail *A. acuta*, garganey *A. querquedula*, 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 dependant 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 platyrhynchos* (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 clypeata* (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* (1 % 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 ostralegus*, 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. platyrhynchos*, pintail *A. acuta*, garganey *A. querquedula*, shoveler *A. clypeata*, pochard *Aythya ferina*, 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 dependant 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**

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.

### **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.

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. Water quality issues are currently the subject of debate between the Environment Agency and Natural England. Three sewage treatment works in the Great Ouse will be covered by the Urban Waste Water Directive, but there remain more than 90 smaller works. These will be subject to the Review of Consents to be undertaken by the Environment Agency within the next four years. A case could be prepared and submitted to OFWAT and the Water Industries AMP 4 Programme commencing 2005, in order to strip phosphates from all relevant sewage treatment works in the system.

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 currently 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.

## **NAME: PORTHOLME**

### **Designation and Code**

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – UK0030054.

### **Location**

This site is within Huntingdonshire District.

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

### **Primary reason for selection of this site**

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

### **Conservation objectives**

To maintain in favourable condition the lowland hay meadow.

### **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.

Part of the site is subject to a Countryside Stewardship agreement aimed at maintaining the alluvial flood meadow. The Environment Agency has produced a Water Level Management plan, which aims to maintain the current water level management regime in the long term and recommends improvements in data collection on water levels and flooding frequency. The recommendation will be incorporated in the relevant Local Environment Agency Plan (due to go to consultation in 1999).

In the past MAFF had sponsored dipwell monitoring of the meadows. Water table levels are vital to the management of this site. Currently no monitoring is being carried out. 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**

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 decline. Overall the sward composition and structure were well within the criteria recommended for MG4 grassland however the unit failed on the frequency of *Rumex crispus*.

**Vulnerability**

Without a controlled management plan the site will not retain its conservation interest.



## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Maps**



## **MAPS**

### **CONTENTS**

Map 1            Map showing area covered by the Northstowe Area Action Plan  
DPD

Site maps for each Natura 2000 site

Map 2            Eversden and Wimpole Woods

Map 3            Devil's Dyke

Map 4            Fenland - Wicken Fen

Map 5            Fenland - Chippenham Fen

Map 6            Fenland - Woodwalton Fen

Map 7            Ouse Washes - North

Map 8            Ouse Washes – South

Map 9            Portholme

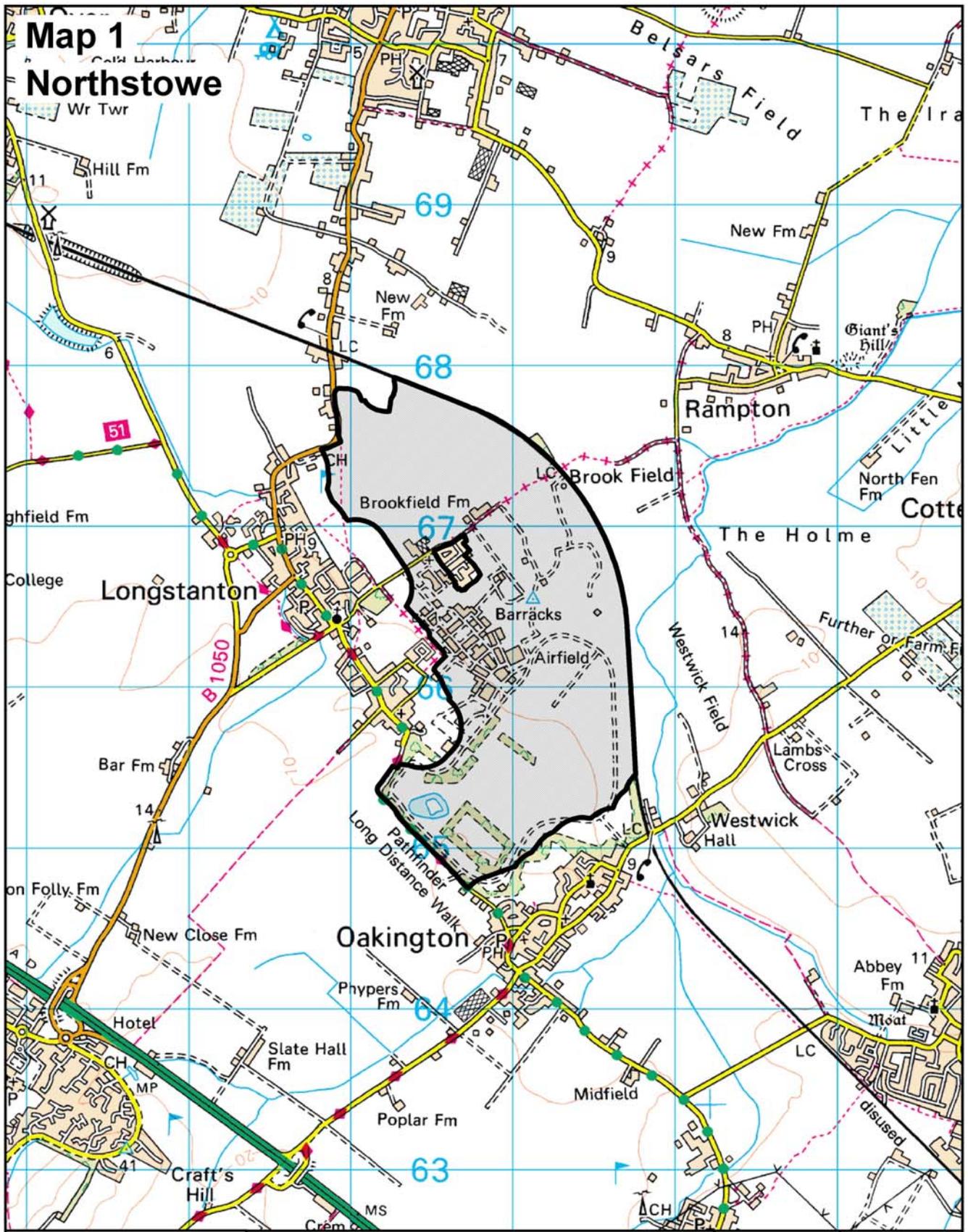
Maps showing the extent of SAC sites; SPA sites and Ramsar sites in relation to the new settlement of Northstowe within South Cambridgeshire District including a 5km radius from each designated site.

Map 10          SAC sites

Map11          SPA sites

Map 12          Ramsar sites





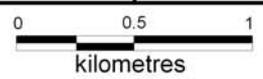
South Cambridgeshire District Council

KEY:

Major Development Site



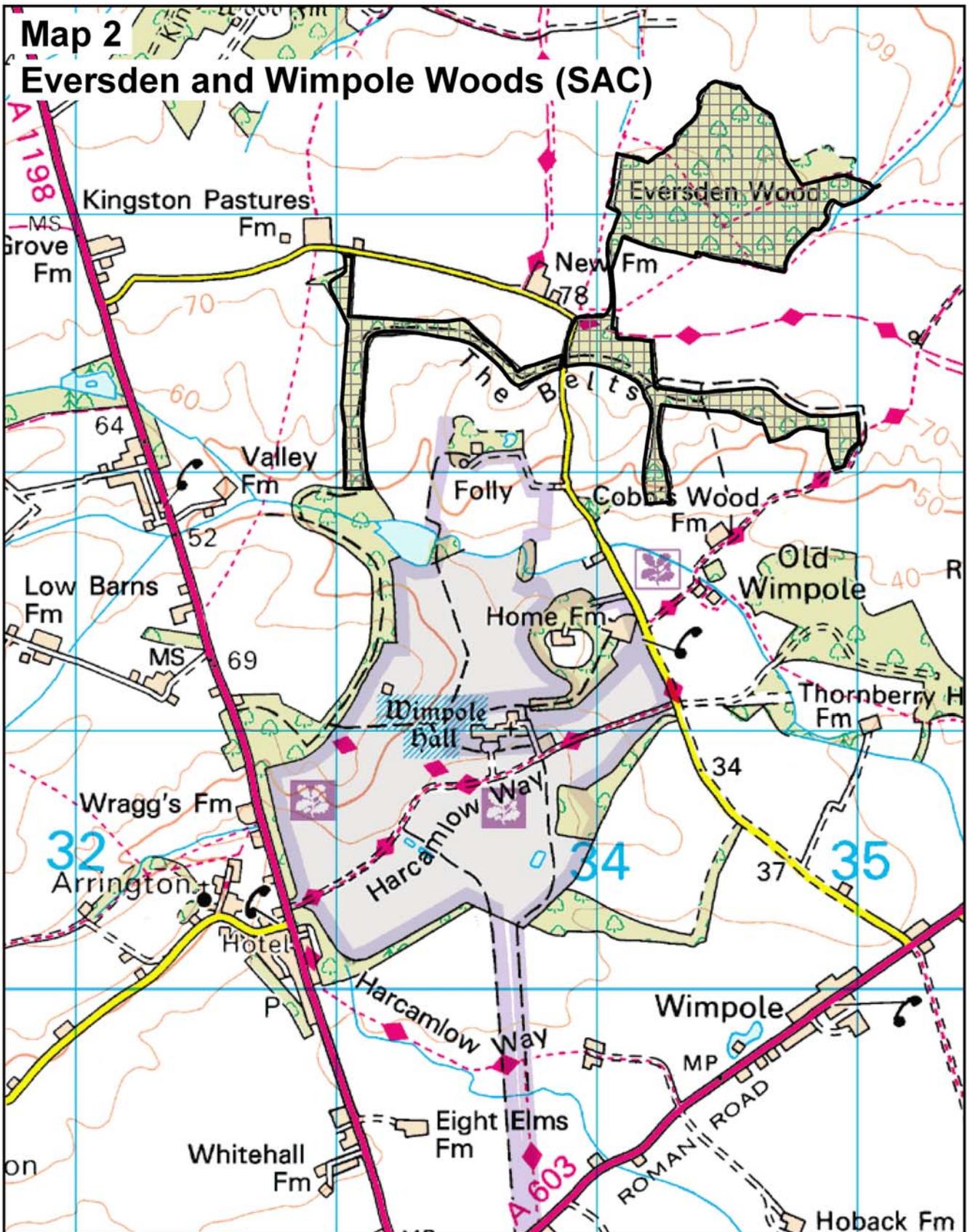
SCALE: 1:4,000 DATE: 09/02/07



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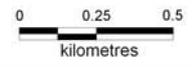
# Map 2 Eversden and Wimpole Woods (SAC)



KEY: Special Area of Conservation

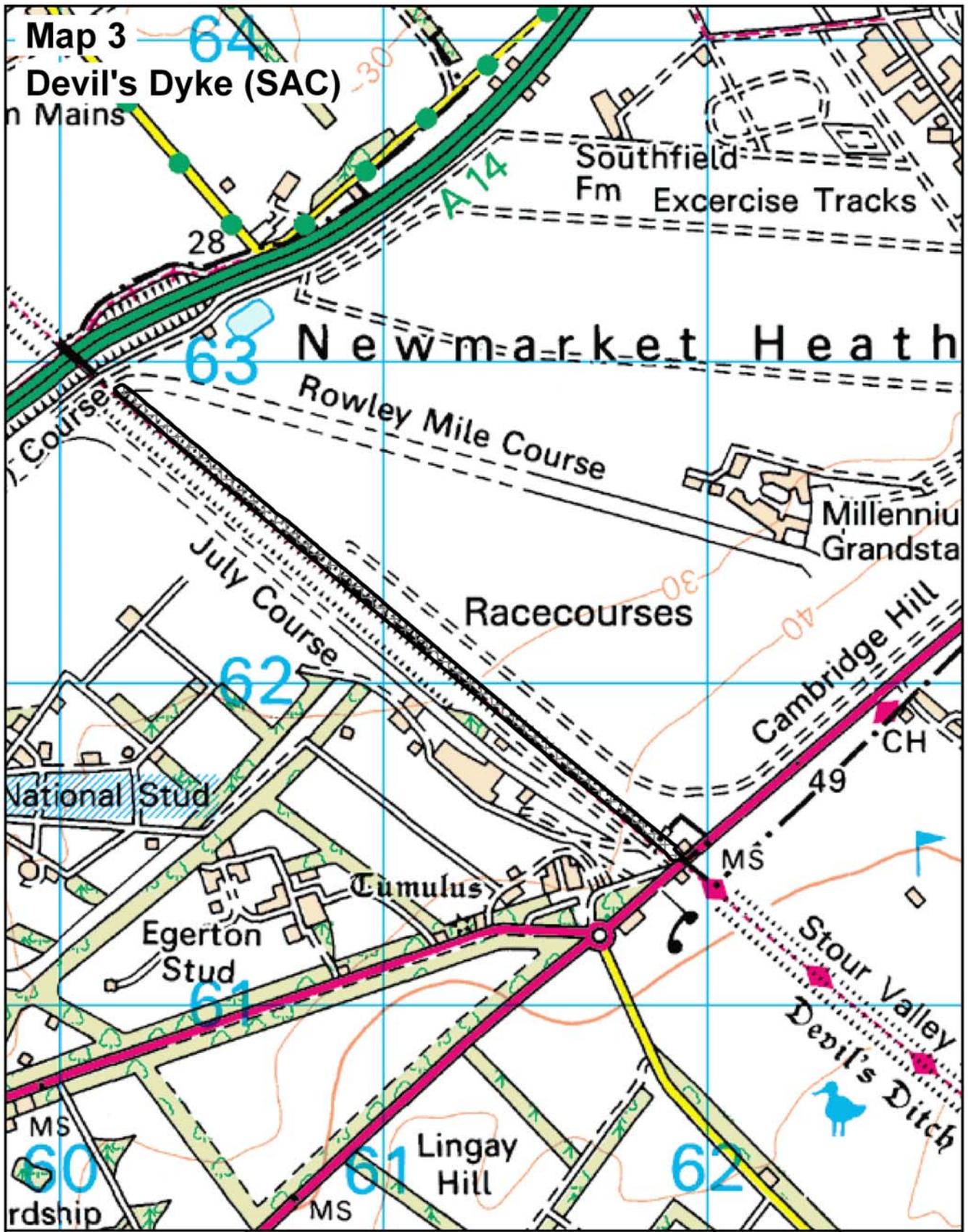


SCALE: 1:2,500 | DATE: 09/02/07



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South Cambridgeshire District Council

KEY:

 Special Area of Conservation



SCALE: 1:2,000 | DATE: 09/02/07

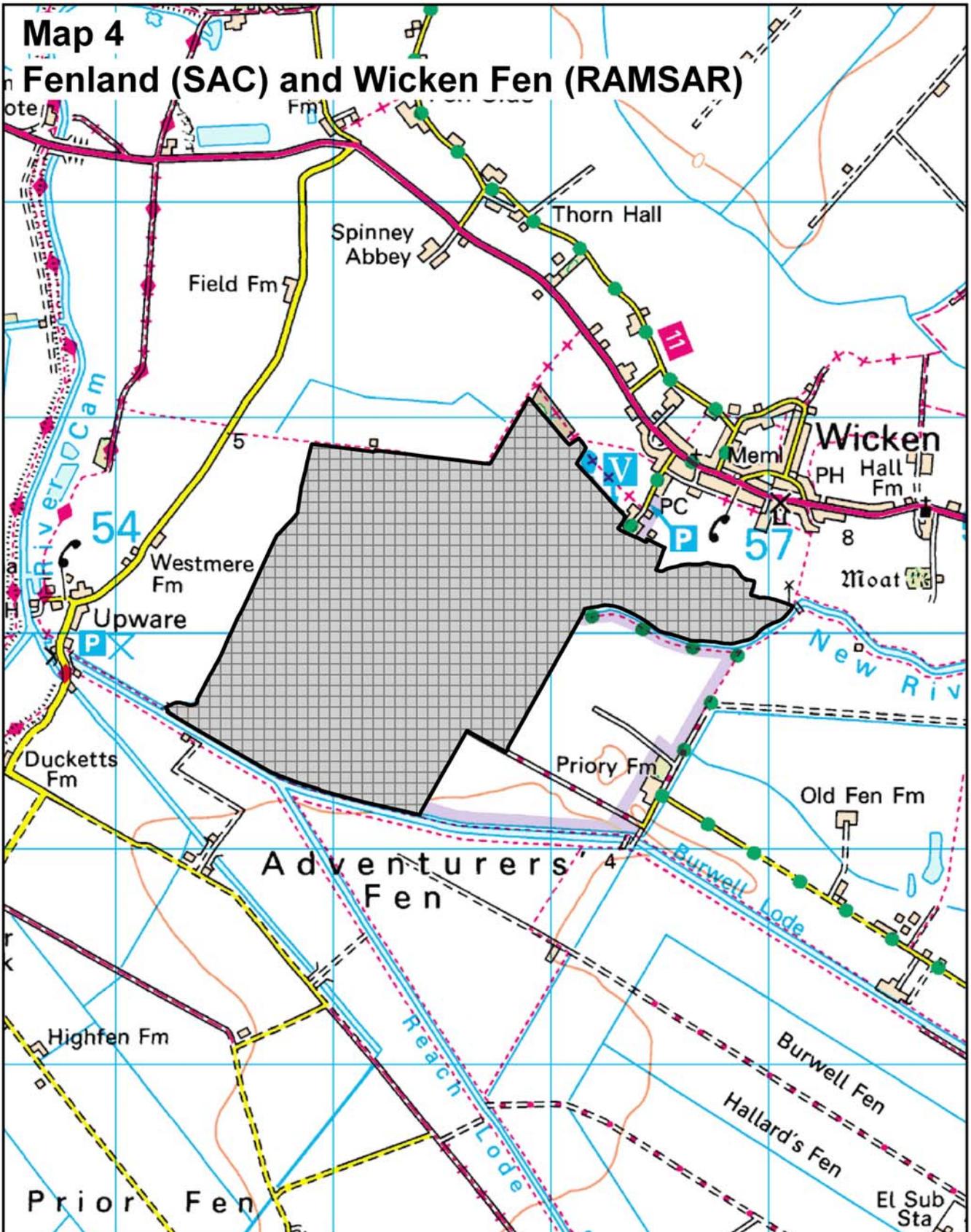
0 0.25 0.5  
kilometres

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# Map 4

## Fenland (SAC) and Wicken Fen (RAMSAR)



- KEY:
-  Special Area of Conservation
  -  RAMSAR



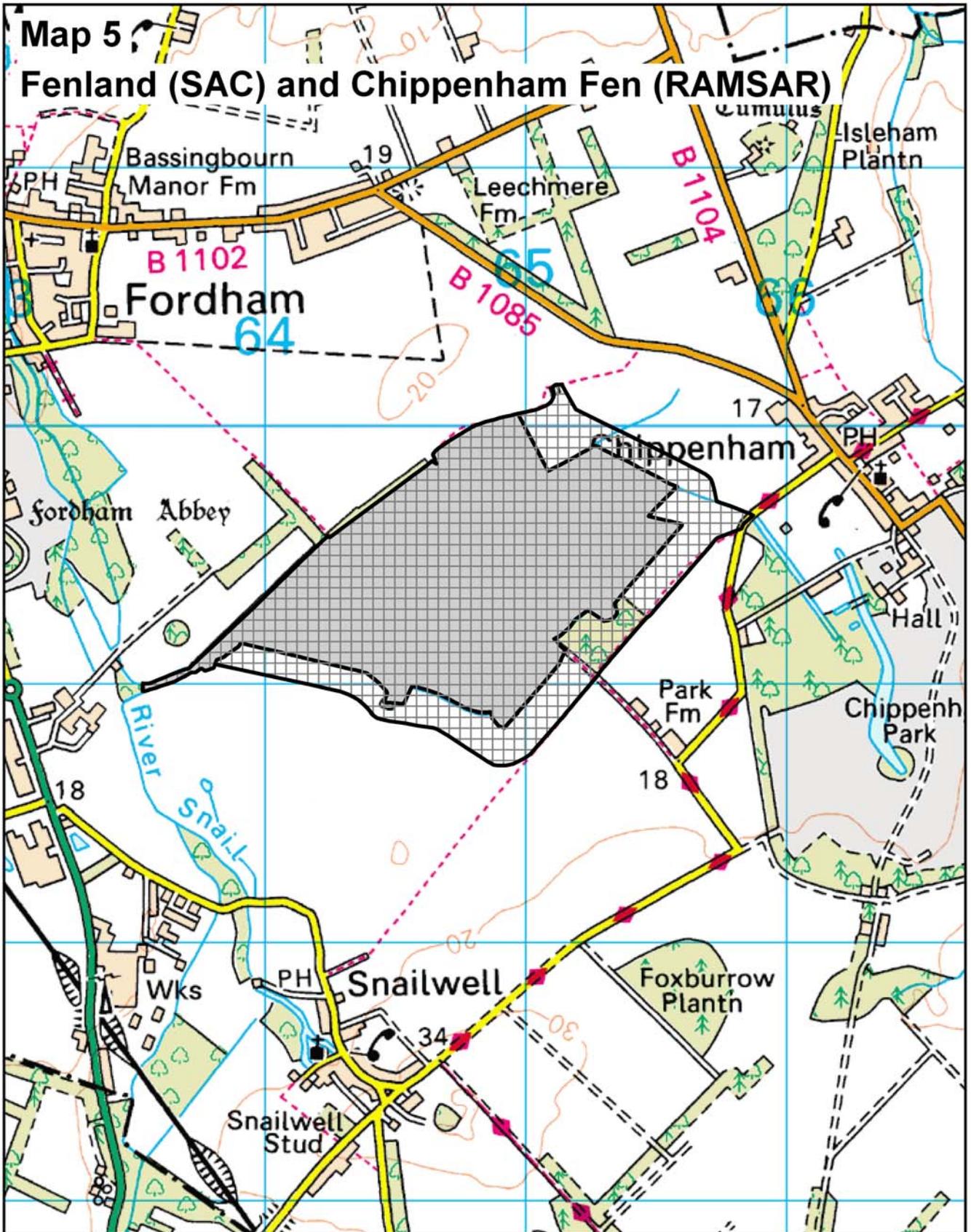
SCALE: 1:3,000 | DATE: 09/02/07



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



South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council

KEY:

-  Special Area of Conservation
-  RAMSAR



SCALE: 1:2,500 DATE: 09/02/07

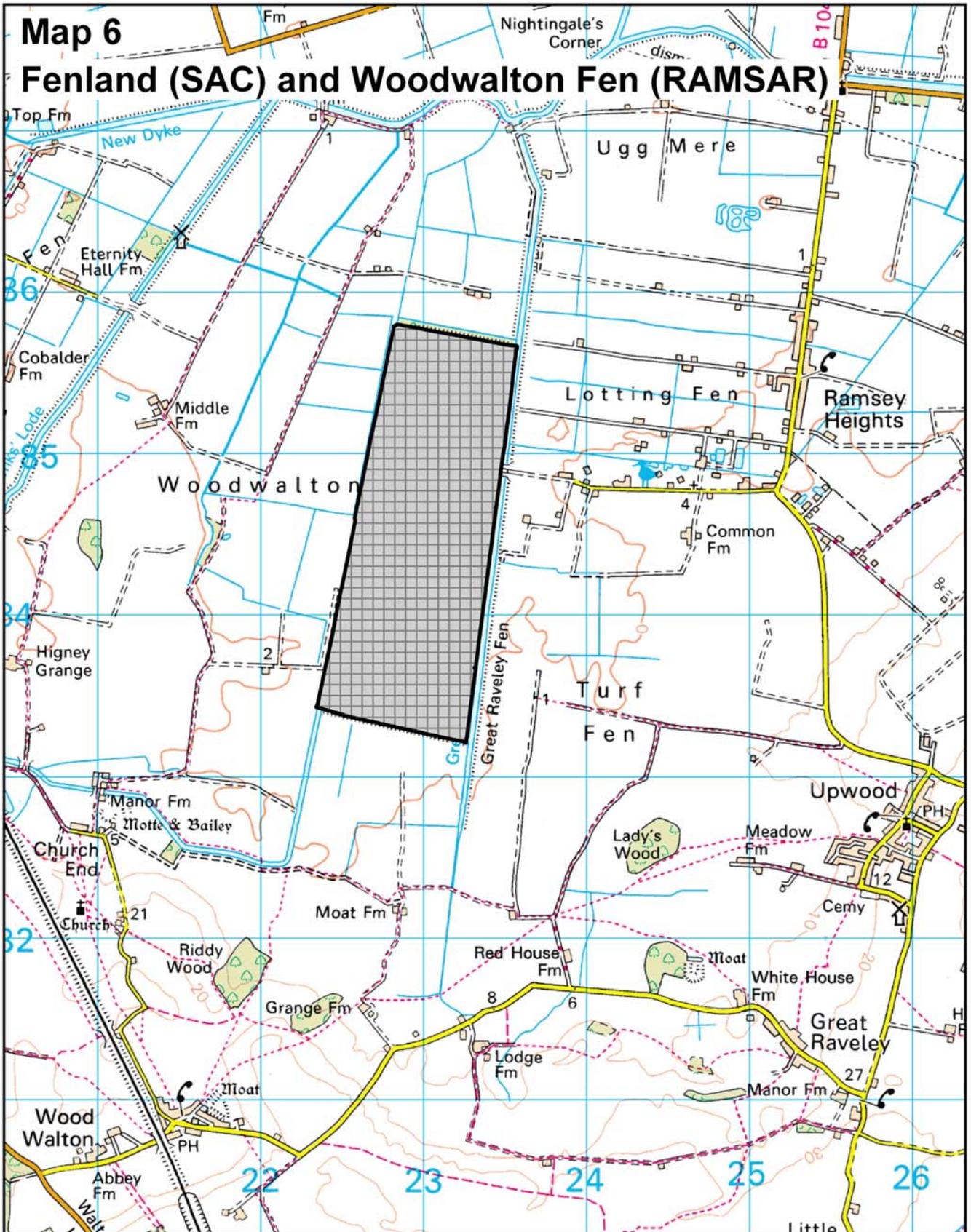


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# Map 6

## Fenland (SAC) and Woodwalton Fen (RAMSAR)



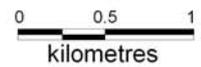
South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council

KEY:

-  Special Area of Conservation
-  RAMSAR



SCALE: 1:4,000 DATE: 09/02/07

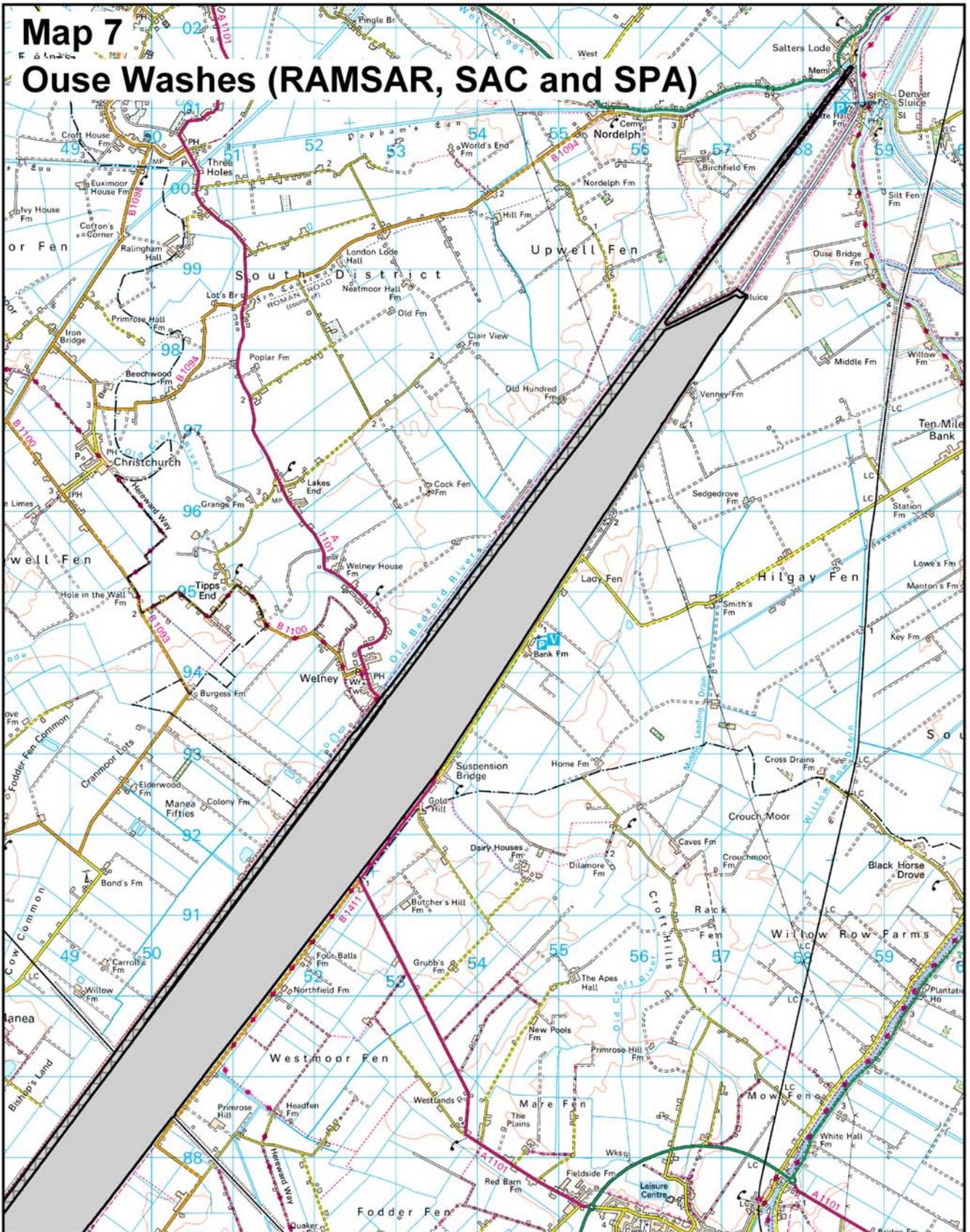


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# Map 7

## Ouse Washes (RAMSAR, SAC and SPA)

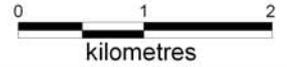


KEY:

-  Special Area of Conservation
-  RAMSAR and Special Protection Area



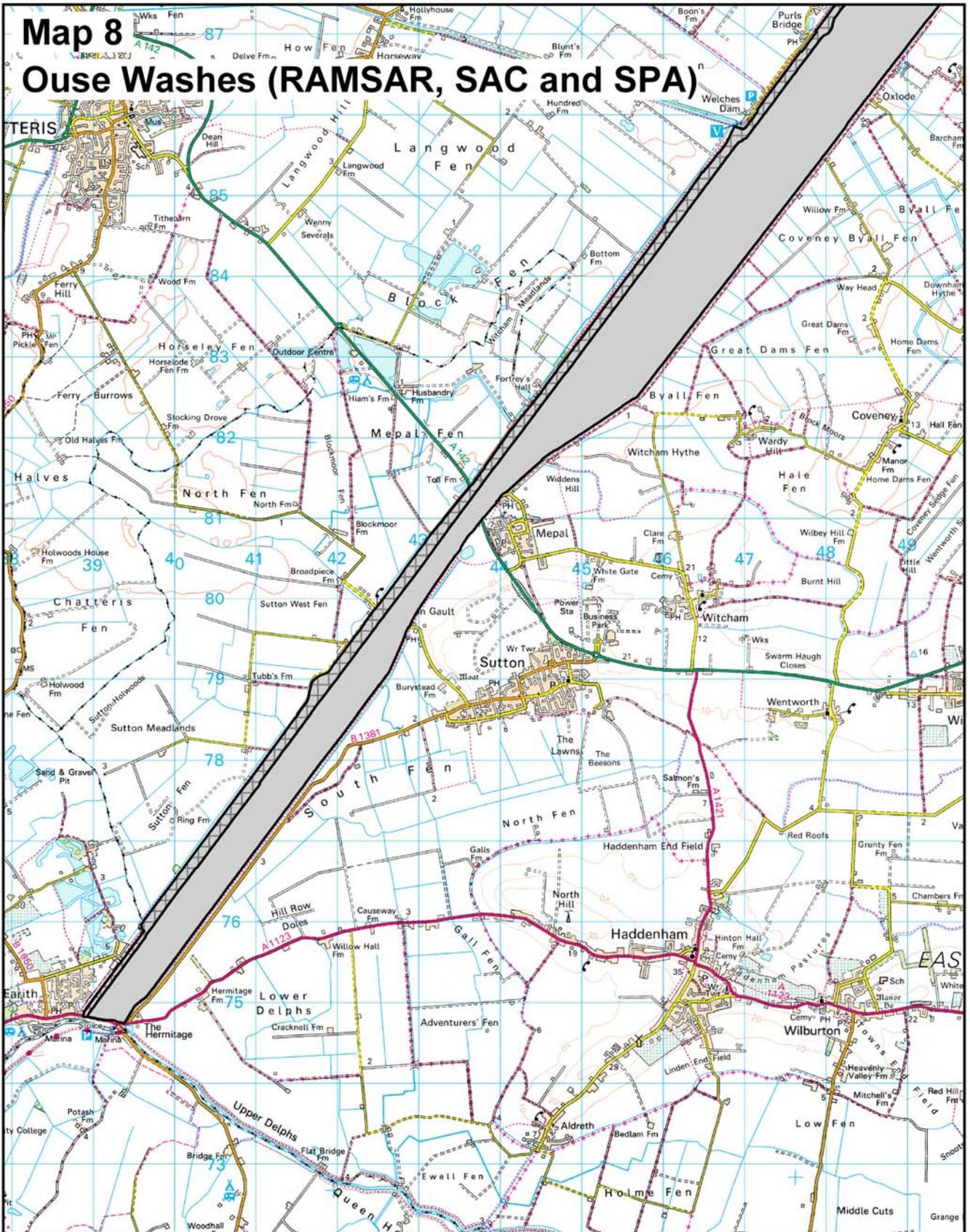
SCALE: 1:8,000 DATE: 09/02/07



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# Map 8 Ouse Washes (RAMSAR, SAC and SPA)



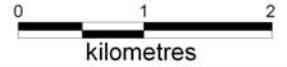
South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council

KEY:

-  Special Area of Conservation
-  RAMSAR and Special Protection Area



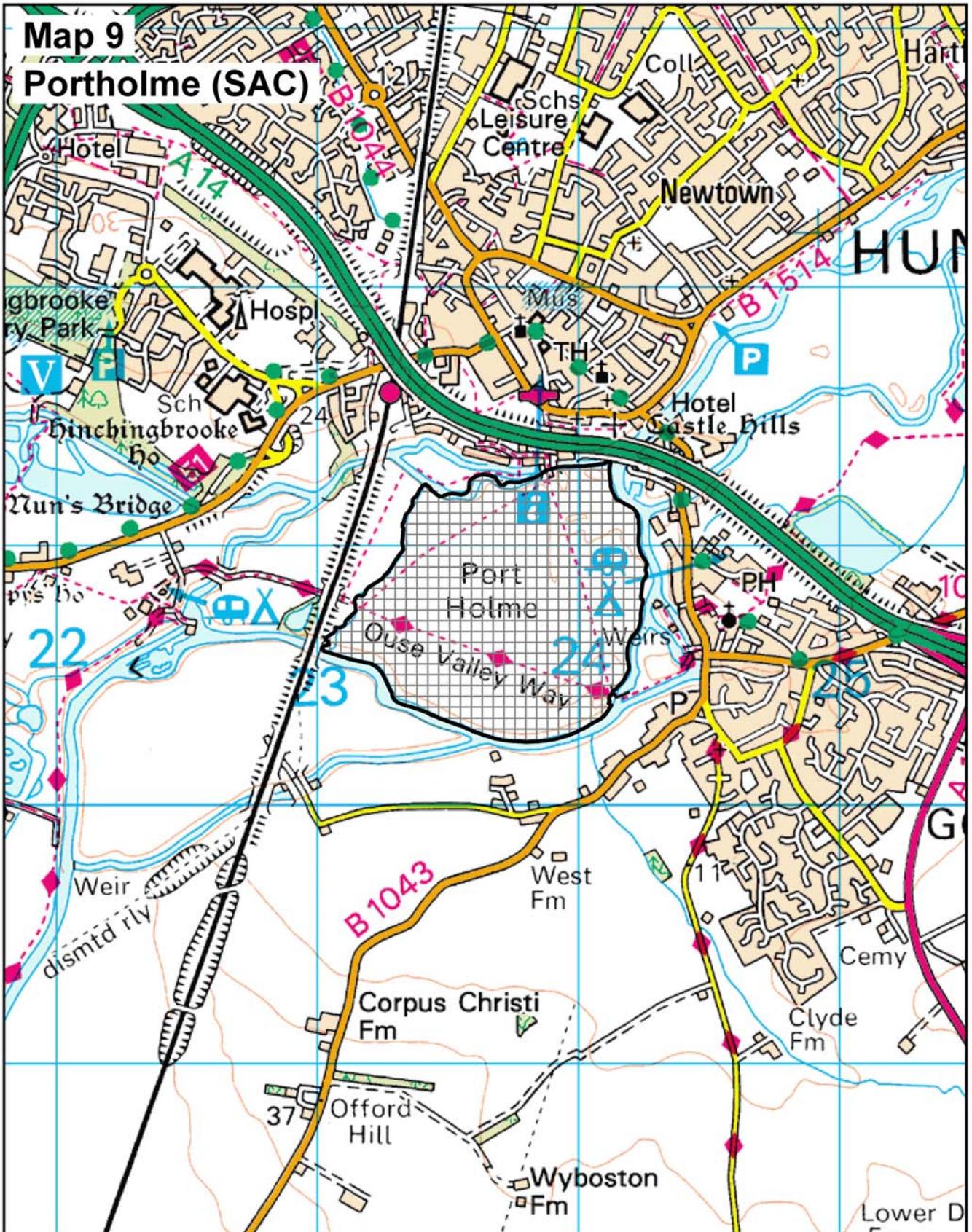
SCALE: 1:8,000 | DATE: 09/02/07



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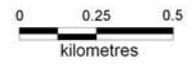
# Map 9 Portholme (SAC)



KEY: Special Area of Conservation



SCALE: 1:2,500 DATE: 09/02/07

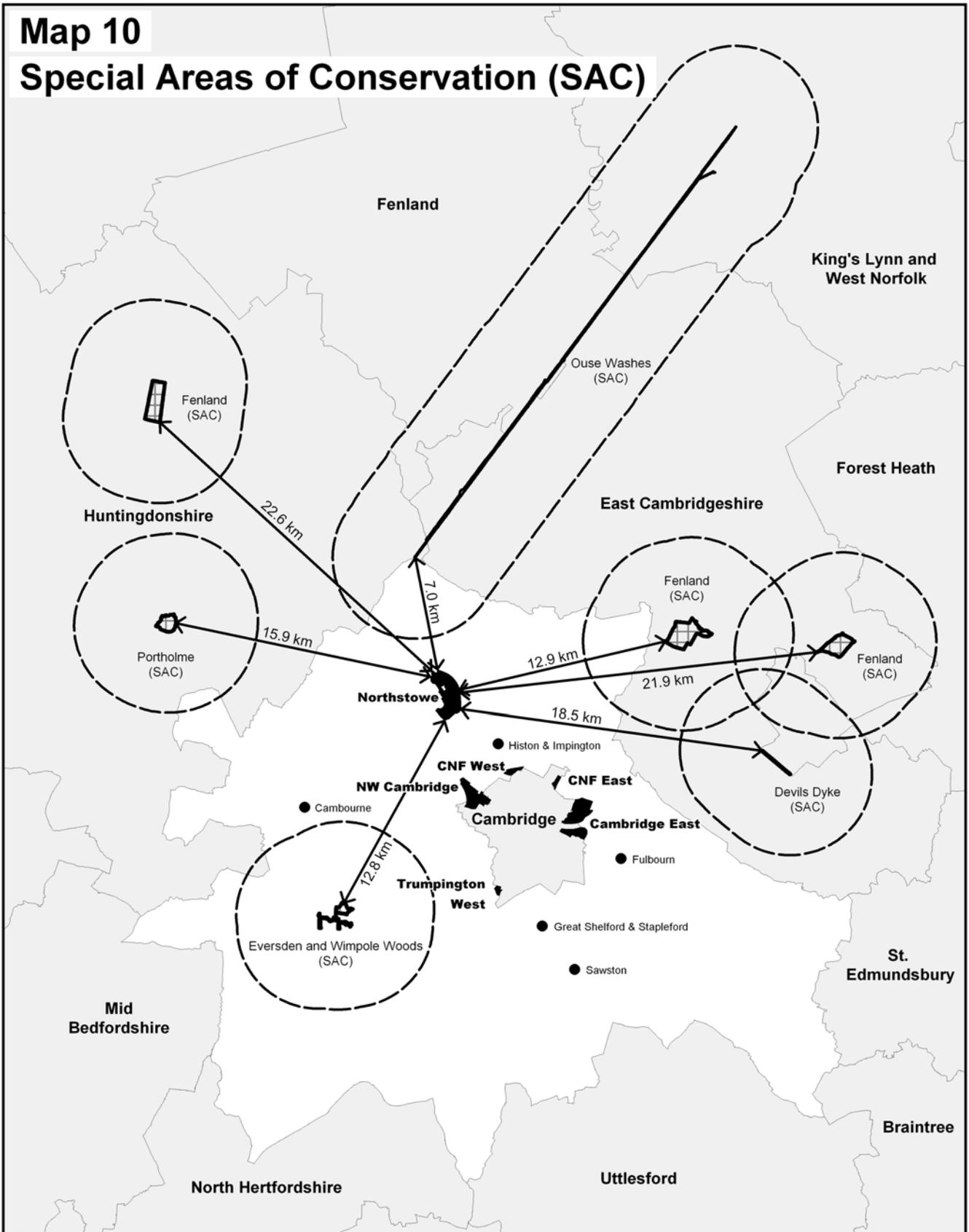


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# Map 10

## Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)



South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council

**KEY:**

- District Boundary
- Major Development Site
- SAC
- 5 km Radius of Designated Sites
- Rural Centre



SCALE: 1:400,000 | DATE: 09/02/07

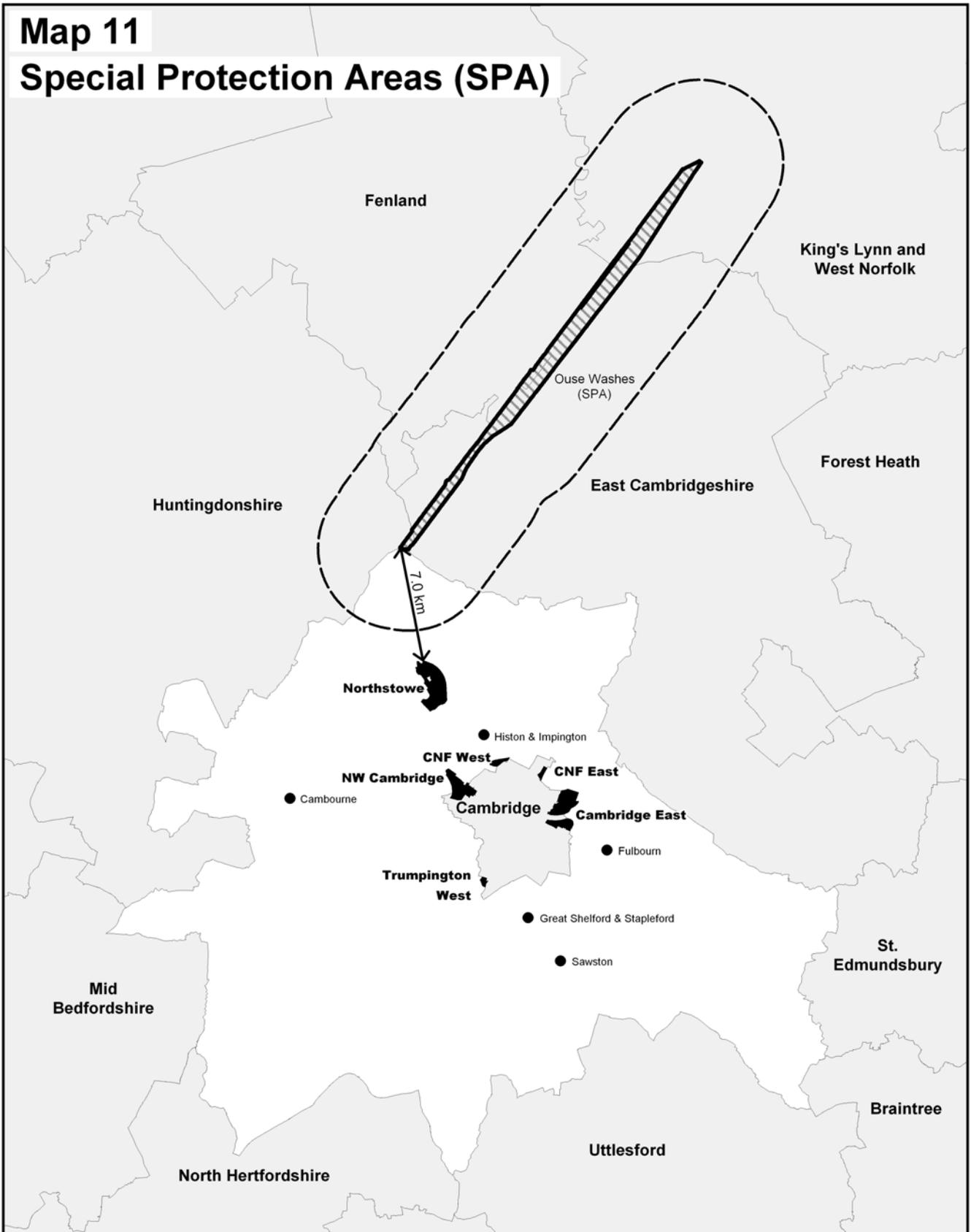


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# Map 11

## Special Protection Areas (SPA)



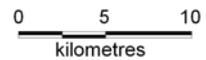
South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council

**KEY:**

-  District Boundary
-  Major Development Site
-  SPA
-  5 km Radius of Designated Sites
-  Rural Centre



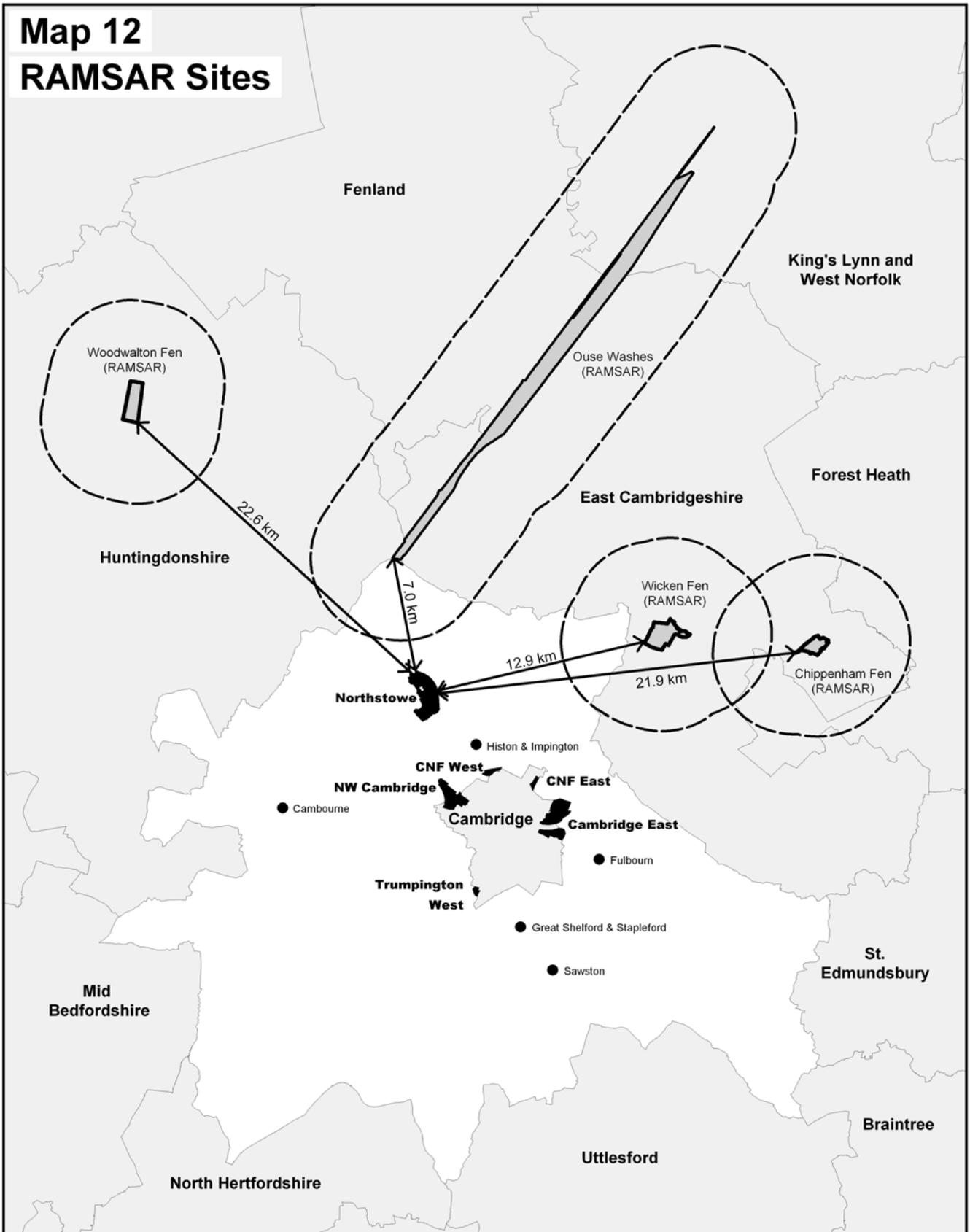
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# Map 12 RAMSAR Sites



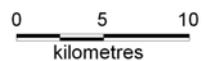
South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council

**KEY:**

- District Boundary
- Major Development Site
- RAMSAR Site
- 5 km Radius of Designated Sites
- Rural Centre



SCALE: 1:400,000 DATE: 09/02/07



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## **APPENDIX 4**

### **Habitats Directive Assessment Screening Matrix**



## APPENDIX 4: HABITATS DIRECTIVE ASSESSMENT SCREENING MATRIX

### SCREENING MATRIX For Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC

<p>Name, location and summary of conservation objectives of Natura 2000 site</p>	<p><b><u>Eversden and Wimpole Woods</u></b> (Grid Ref: TL 340526)</p> <p><b><i>Reason for designation as SAC</i></b>  Presence of colony of Barbastelle bats (<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>)</p> <p>These woods comprise a mixture of ancient coppice woodland (Eversden Wood) and high forest woods likely to be of more recent origin (Wimpole Woods). 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 foraging area. Some of the woodland is also used as a flight path when bats forage outside the site. This is one of the UK's rarest mammals.</p> <p>This site is located in South Cambridgeshire District.</p>
<p>Are there other projects or plans that together with Northstowe Area Action Plan could affect Eversden and Wimpole Wood?</p>	<p>The Northstowe Area Action Plan specifically plans for the development of the new town.</p> <p>The South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy provides the overall spatial strategy for development in the district. There are other plans in the South Cambridgeshire LDF, including various Area Action Plans for the urban extensions to Cambridge, and the Site Specific DPD, which could theoretically indirectly affect the site. These plans provide detail to the framework provided in the Core Strategy, including allocations of land for development.</p> <p>Other relevant plans:  Cambridgeshire Waste Local Plan 2003  Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste DPD Preferred Options 2006  Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2006 - 2011</p>

	<p>Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2005 Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals Core Strategy and Site Allocation Plan – Issues and Options (Jan 2006)</p> <p>Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 1998 (and review) Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan 1998 Hertfordshire Minerals &amp; Waste DPDs Issues &amp; Options</p> <p>Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 &amp; Core Strategy Draft 2006 North Herts Local Plan 1996 and Core Strategy &amp; DC Policies Preferred Options 2007 Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan 2005 &amp; Core Strategy DPD Issues and Options Cambridge Local Plan 2006</p>
--	--

**The assessment of significance of effects:**

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
<i>Land Take by Development</i>	<p>The Northstowe Area Action Plan does not propose any development that will take land from Wimpole and Eversden Woods, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats.</p> <p>No other plans propose development that would take land from this site.</p>	There are no policies in the Northstowe Area Action Plan or other plans which directly impact on the woods.
<i>Impact on protected species outside the protected sites</i>	Eversden and Wimpole Woods are home to the Barbastelle Bat. The bats can forage up to 20km from their roosts but more typically venture around 6-8km. Barbastelle bats require minimal disturbance within 2 km of their roost. The main 'area of importance' for the bats has been examined in the South Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Strategy, and is shown on map 1 attached.	The new town of Northstowe is over 13 km distant, some distance from the 'area of importance' identified in the South Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Strategy.

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	<p>The site identified for Northstowe is over 13 km from the woods, some distance from the main 'area of importance', and outside their typical foraging range.</p>	
<p><b><i>Recreational Pressure and Disturbance</i></b></p>	<p>A new town of 8000 dwellings could increase demand for countryside recreation. However, the site proposed for the town is not within 5km of the site, and is actually some 13km distant as the crow flies.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this, Wimpole Woods, and even more so Eversden Woods, does not attract a large number of visitors. Its remoteness, relative to major centres of population (existing and proposed), limits its attractiveness compared to other available rural locations. The recreation role of the woods is as part of a country walk of some distance, using footpaths passing through the woods as part of the wider countryside footpath network. By virtue of their form and character, together with their relative inaccessibility from car parking or public transport facilities, they are not areas that people would be likely to make a visit for picnics or informal play</p> <p>Access to the sites is mainly from the car park at Wimpole Hall. Whilst the start of path through Wimpole Wood is only around 1km as the crow flies from the car park, a walking route is likely to be nearer double this, which, taking account uneven terrain, is likely to be more than a half hour walk. The majority of visitors to Wimpole Hall are likely to focus their visit on the Hall, model farm, and the landscaped parkland, which includes attractive features such as two lakes, a Chinese Bridge and a hilltop folly, rather than this peripheral woodland walk.</p> <p>This applies to an even greater extent to Eversden Wood,</p>	<p>The Draft East of England Regional Spatial Strategy Habitats Directive Assessment states that in drawing up local development plans, consideration should be given to proposals for housing in areas where Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites fall within a 5km radius of the proposed Key Centres for Development and Change to reduce the risk of recreational disturbance effects to Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites from walkers, dogs, cats and other recreational uses that can result from additional housing and associated development. There are not likely to be any significant effects using this test as Northstowe is around 13km from the site.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The existing rights of way through the woods allow for some limited access to the woods but the bats roost in the trees, foraging at sunset/night so are not disturbed by day visitors and numbers will continue to be limited due to the woods relative inaccessibility both from centres of population and from car parking close to the woods.</p> <p>In view of the limited additional recreational use</p>

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	<p>which is not shown on the Wimpole Walks leaflet produced by the National Trust. A walk of around 3km from the NT car park is likely to be required to reach the woods. There is very limited parking available on the roadside near to Eversden Wood (perhaps one or two cars). This is still over 700m from the main part of the wood.</p> <p>Even though due to the nature and distance of the site from the new development it is not anticipated that there will be increased usage as a result of the Northstowe AAP as there are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations, to Northstowe. The Area Action Plan considers the provision of additional informal countryside recreation and this will be subject to negotiation based upon factors including the existing Strategic Open Space provision accessible to future Northstowe residents, the work of the Master Plan and consideration of economic viability. This provision would be local to Northstowe and will be the focus for the new community and for other nearby communities, rather than more remote locations such as Wimpole and Eversden Woods.</p> <p>New countryside recreation provision is also to be considered as part of the other major developments on the edge of Cambridge. Natural England in endorsing the HDA of the Core Strategy DPD in its letter dated 16 January 2007, commented that it "would expect that development resulting from or associated with this Core Strategy is fully supported by provision of sufficient green infrastructure in accordance with the publication 'A Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub Region' (The Landscape Partnership, 2006). On this basis Natural England support the conclusion that policies in the Core Strategy are unlikely to have significant</p>	<p>that will occur of the woods, there are not considered to be any likely significant effects.</p>

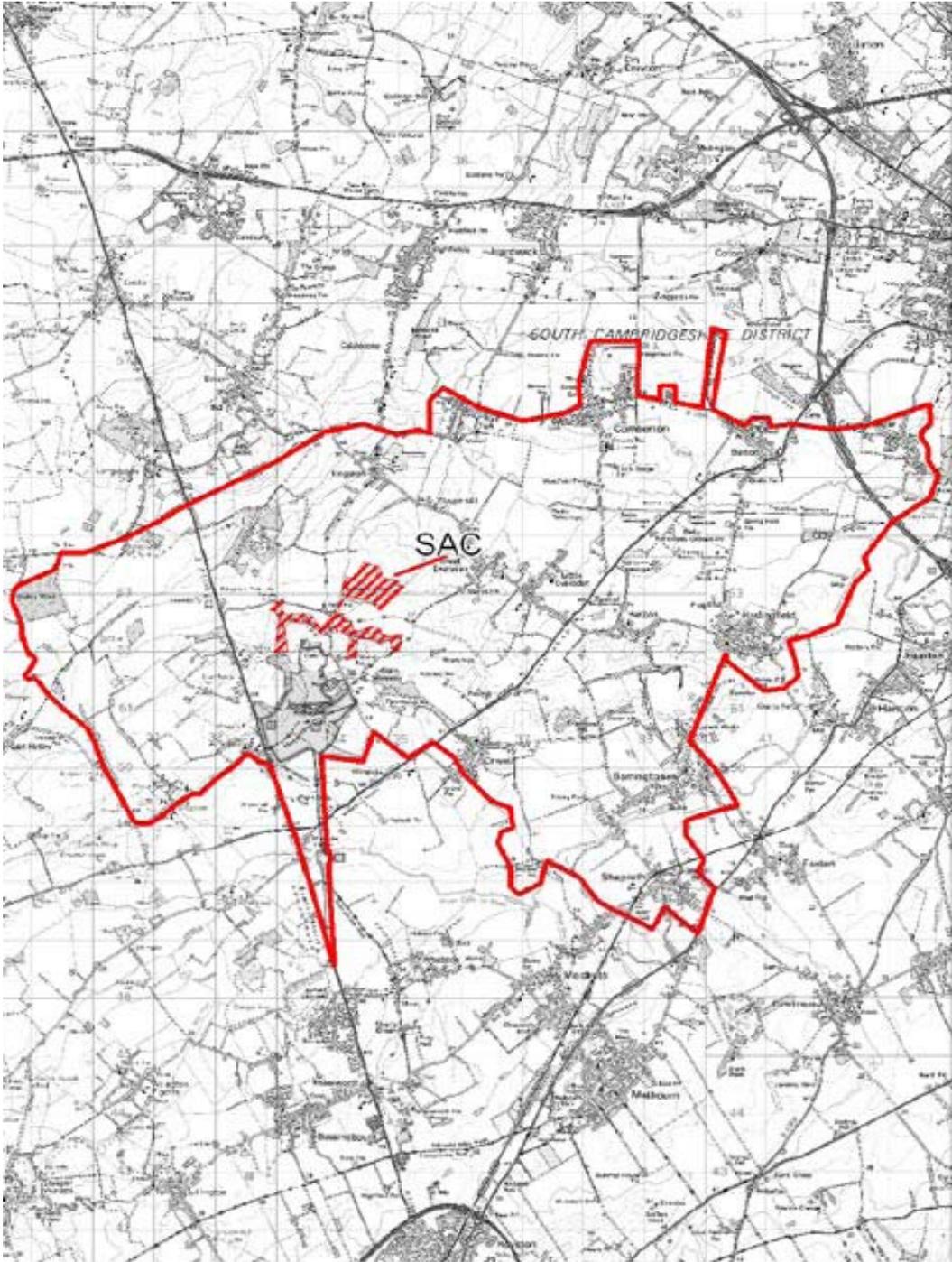
<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	<p>impacts upon the European Sites located within and in the vicinity of the District.”</p> <p>It is not considered that the level of public use of the woods will increase greatly as a result of the Northstowe Area Action Plan.</p>	
<b><i>Water Quantity and Quality</i></b>	Not relevant for the conservation objectives of this site.	Not relevant.
<b><i>Changes in Pollution Levels</i></b>	<p>The development of a new town could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated.</p> <p>Whilst the actual impact of the new town on air quality alone or in combination with other plans is difficult to quantify, the location of the new town some 13 km from the site, and the distance of the woods to major transport routes (particularly those likely to be used by traffic from Northstowe), means that any effect is not likely to be significant.</p> <p>The Northstowe Area Action Plan also includes policies which seek to achieve a modal shift away from the car, by providing high quality public transport based on the Cambridge Guided Busway between Cambridge and St Ives, and rights of way to support cycling and walking, as well as a mix of uses to support the needs of residents locally.</p> <p>The draft Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste LDF Preferred Options (Nov 2006) proposes an extension to Barrington Quarry, some 4 km from the site. The Initial Appropriate Assessment of that plan suggests that all potential adverse impacts could be mitigated against through policies of that plan. This will be assisted by the quarry being downwind of</p>	As the site is not in close proximity to the site of the new town or major transport routes, it is not considered that there is likely to be any significant impact on their nature conservation objectives.

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	the SAC in terms of the prevailing winds, which are from the southwest. Preferred Option MW36 proposes that new minerals and waste development will be permitted where emissions will be minimised. MW40 proposes that new minerals and waste development will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that there will be no likely significant adverse impacts on sites of nature conservation importance.	

Agencies consulted	Natural England
Response to Consultation	Natural England support the conclusion that policies in the Northstowe Area Action Plan are unlikely to have significant impacts upon the European Sites located within and in the vicinity of the District.

### **Overall Conclusions**

The Northstowe Area Action Plan, alone and in combination with other DPDs in the LDF and other relevant plans, was assessed for its impact on Eversden and Wimpole Woods and it was concluded that there are no likely significant effects on the conservation objectives of the site.



Map 1: Barbastelle bat - area of importance for Eversden and Wimpole Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (Source: South Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Strategy August 2006)

### SCREENING MATRIX For Devil's Dyke SAC

<p>Name, location and summary of conservation objectives of Natura 2000 site</p>	<p><b>Devil's Dyke</b> (Grid Ref: TL 611622)</p> <p><b>Reasons for designation as SAC</b> Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco- Brometalia</i>)</p> <p>Devil's Dyke consists of a mosaic of calcareous grasslands (CG3 <i>Bromus erectus</i> and CG5 <i>Bromus erectus</i> – <i>Brachypodium pinnatum</i>.) It is the only known UK semi-natural dry grassland site for lizard orchid (<i>Himantoglossum hircinum</i>.)</p> <p>This site is located in East Cambridgeshire District outside the district of South Cambridgeshire.</p>
<p>Are there other projects or plans that together with the Northstowe Area Action Plan could affect Devil's Dyke?</p>	<p>The Northstowe Area Action Plan specifically plans for the development of the new town.</p> <p>The South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy provides the overall spatial strategy for development in the district. There are other plans in the South Cambridgeshire LDF, including various Area Action Plans for the urban extensions to Cambridge, and the Site Specific DPD, which could theoretically indirectly affect the site. These plans provide detail to the framework provided in the Core Strategy, including allocations of land for development.</p> <p>Other relevant plans: Cambridgeshire Waste Local Plan 2003 Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste DPD Preferred Options 2006 Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011</p> <p>Suffolk Minerals Local Plan 1999 &amp; Minerals Core Strategy Issues and Options January 2007 Suffolk Waste Local Plan 2006</p>

	<p>Cambridge Local Plan 2006          East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2000 and Core Strategy Preferred Options June 2006          Forest Heath Local Plan 1995 and Core Strategy &amp; Development Policies Preferred Options Report October 2006          St. Edmundsbury Local Plan 2006</p>
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**The assessment of significance of effects:**

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
<i>Land Take by Development</i>	<p>The Northstowe Area Action Plan (or any policy element of it) does not propose any development that will take land from Devil's Dyke, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats.</p> <p>No other plans propose development that would take land from this site.</p>	<p>There are no policies in the Northstowe Area Action Plan or other plans which directly impact on the Devil's Dyke.</p>
<i>Impact on protected species outside the protected sites</i>	<p>The conservation objectives relate to species of plant within the grassland. Therefore there are no species listed as important to the integrity of the site that travel to forage outside the site.</p>	<p>Due to the distance of the site from Northstowe and as there are no species listed as important to the integrity of the site that travel to forage outside the site there is not likely to be any significant effect.</p>
<i>Recreational Pressure and Disturbance</i>	<p>A new town of 8000 dwellings could increase demand for countryside recreation. However, the site proposed for the town is not within 5km of the site, and is actually some 18.5 km distant as the crow flies.</p> <p>Devils Dyke is accessed via a long distance footpath that runs the length of the dyke. There is parking available at the July Race course, Newmarket. It is not considered that the level of public use of the Devil's Dyke footpaths will increase</p>	<p>The Draft East of England Regional Spatial Strategy Habitats Directive Assessment states that in drawing up local development plans, consideration should be given to proposals for housing in areas where Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites fall within a 5km radius of the proposed Key Centres for Development and Change to reduce the risk of recreational disturbance effects to Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites from walkers, dogs,</p>

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	<p>greatly as a result of the Northstowe Area Action Plan.</p> <p>Even though due to the nature and distance of the site from the new development it is not anticipated that there will be increased usage as a result of the Northstowe AAPas there are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations to Northstowe. The Area Action Plan considers the provision of additional informal countryside recreation and this will be subject to negotiation based upon factors including the existing Strategic Open Space provision accessible to future Northstowe residents, the work of the Master Plan and consideration of economic viability. This provision would be local to Northstowe and will be the focus for the new community and for other nearby communities, rather than more remote locations such as Devil's Dyke.</p> <p>New countryside recreation provision is also to be considered as part of the other major developments on the edge of Cambridge. Natural England in endorsing the HDA of the Core Strategy DPD in its letter dated 16 January 2007, commented that it "would expect that development resulting from or associated with this Core Strategy is fully supported by provision of sufficient green infrastructure in accordance with the publication 'A Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub Region' (The Landscape Partnership, 2006). On this basis Natural England support the conclusion that policies in the Core Strategy are unlikely to have significant impacts upon the European Sites located within and in the vicinity of the District."</p>	<p>cats and other recreational uses that can result from additional housing and associated development. There are not likely to be any significant effects using this test due to the distance between the site and Northstowe.</p> <p>Notwithstanding, the impact of public access is not listed in the vulnerabilities relating to the site.</p> <p>In view of the limited additional recreational use that will occur of the site, as a result of the Northstowe Area Action Plan alone or in combination with other plans there are not considered to be any likely significant effects.</p>
<b><i>Water Quantity and</i></b>	Not relevant for the conservation objectives of this site.	Not relevant.

<b>Nature of potential impact</b>	<b>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</b>	<b>Why these effects are not considered significant</b>
<i>Quality</i>		
<i>Changes in Pollution Levels</i>	<p>The development of a new town could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated.</p> <p>Whilst the actual impact of the new town on air quality alone or in combination with other plans is difficult to quantify, the location of the new town, and the distance to the Dyke, means that any effect is not likely to be significant. The Dyke is adjacent to the A14, but this is at roughly right angles to the road and therefore only a limited part of the dyke is close to a major transport route.</p> <p>The Northstowe Area Action Plan also includes policies which seek to achieve a modal shift away from the car, by providing high quality public transport based on the Cambridge Guided Busway between Cambridge and St Ives, and rights of way to support cycling and walking, as well as a mix of uses to support the needs of residents locally.</p> <p>The Core Strategy policy elements focus development onto Cambridge and areas accessible to public transport, providing access to jobs and services by means other than cars. By providing homes closer to where people work there is not likely to be any significant increase in traffic using this part of the A14 next to the Devil's Dyke as a result of the Core Strategy.</p>	<p>As the site is not in close proximity to the site proposed for Northstowe, it is not considered that there is likely to be any significant impact on the nature conservation objectives.</p> <p>There are not likely to be any significant impacts from additional traffic using the part of the A14 crossing the site as a result of the Northstowe Area Action Plan alone or in combination with other plans.</p>

Agencies consulted	Natural England
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Response to Consultation	Natural England support the conclusion that policies in the Northstowe Area Action Plan are unlikely to have significant impacts upon the European Sites located within and in the vicinity of the District.
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<b>Overall Conclusions</b>
The Northstowe Area Action Plan, alone and in combination with other DPDs in the LDF and other relevant plans, was assessed for its impact on Devil's Dyke and it was concluded that there are no likely significant effects on the conservation objectives of the site.

**SCREENING MATRIX For Fenland SAC and Ramsar Sites**

<p>Name, location and summary of conservation objectives of Natura 2000 site</p>	<p><b><u>Fenland – comprises 3 sites:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Wicken Fen</u></b></li> <li>• <b><u>Chippenham Fen</u></b></li> <li>• <b><u>Woodwalton Fen</u></b></li> </ul> <p><b><i>Reason for designation as SAC</i></b></p> <p>a) <i>Molinia</i> meadow on calcareous, peaty or clayey silt laden soils (<i>Molinion caerulea</i>)</p> <p>b) Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of <i>Caricion davalliana</i></p> <p>c) Significant presence of Spined loach (<i>Cobitis taenia</i>)</p> <p>d) Presence of Great Crested Newts (<i>Triturus cristatus</i>)</p> <p>Fenland contains, particularly at Chippenham Fen, one of the most extensive examples of the tall herb-rich East Anglian type of fen-meadow (<i>Molinia caerulea</i> – <i>Cirsium dissectum</i>). It is important for the conservation of the geographical and ecological range of the habitat type, as this type of fen-meadow is rare and ecologically distinctive in East Anglia.</p> <p>The individual sites within Fenland each hold large areas of calcareous fens, with a long and well-documented history of regular management. There is a full range from species-poor <i>Cladium</i>-dominated fen to species-rich fen with a lower proportion of <i>Cladium</i> and containing such species as black bog-rush (<i>Schoenus nigricans</i>, tormentil <i>Potentilla erecta</i>) and meadow thistle (<i>Cirsium dissectum</i>). There are good transitions to purple moor-grass (<i>Molinia caerulea</i>) and rush pastures, all set within a mosaic of reed beds and wet pastures.</p> <p>The fens also support a significant presence of spined loach (<i>Cobitis taenia</i>) and great crested newts (<i>Triturus cristatus</i>).</p> <p>The three separate Fenland sites are some distance apart. Each site is therefore assessed separately. Each site is also a Ramsar</p>
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	site and the summary of conservation objectives of each site under this designation is given below.
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**(a) Fenland – Wicken Fen - SAC and Ramsar site**

<p>Name, location and summary of conservation objectives of Ramsar site.</p>	<p><b>Wicken Fen</b> (Grid Ref: TL 555700)</p> <p><b><i>Reason for designation as Ramsar site</i></b>  One of the most outstanding remnants of East Anglian peat fens. Supports one species of British Red Data Book plant fen violet <i>Viola persicifolia</i>, which survives at only two other sites in Britain. It contains eight nationally scarce plants and 121 British Red Data invertebrates.</p> <p>This is located in East Cambridgeshire District.</p>
<p>Are there other projects or plans that together with the Northstowe Area Action Plan could affect Wicken Fen?</p>	<p>The Northstowe Area Action Plan specifically plans for the development of the new town.</p> <p>The South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy provides the overall spatial strategy for development in the district. There are other plans in the South Cambridgeshire LDF, including various Area Action Plans for the urban extensions to Cambridge, and the Site Specific DPD, which could theoretically indirectly affect the site. These plans provide detail to the framework provided in the Core Strategy, including allocations of land for development.</p> <p>Other relevant plans:  Cambridgeshire Waste Local Plan 2003  Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste DPD Preferred Options 2006  Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2006 - 2011</p> <p>Suffolk Minerals Local Plan 1999 &amp; Minerals Core Strategy Issues and Options January 2007  Suffolk Waste Local Plan 2006</p>

	<p>Cambridge Local Plan 2006          East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2000 and Core Strategy Preferred Options June 2006          Forest Heath Local Plan 1995 and Core Strategy &amp; Development Policies Preferred Options Report October 2006          St. Edmundsbury Local Plan 2006</p>
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**The assessment of significance of effects:**

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
<i>Land Take by Development</i>	<p>The Northstowe Area Action Plan (or any policy element of it) does not propose any development that will take land from Wicken Fen, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats.</p> <p>No other plans propose development that would take land from this site.</p>	<p>There are no policies in the Northstowe Area Action Plan or other plans which directly impact on Wicken Fen.</p>
<i>Impact on protected species outside the protected sites</i>	<p>The conservation objectives relate to species of plant within the fen, and species of invertebrates. The development of land for the new town will not have a significant impact on species listed as important to the integrity of the site.</p>	<p>Due to the distance of the site from the site proposed for the new town it is not considered that there is likely to be a significant effect from the plan, alone or in combination with other plans.</p>
<i>Recreational Pressure and Disturbance</i>	<p>A new town of 8000 dwellings could increase demand for countryside recreation. However, the site proposed for the town is not within 5km of the site, and is actually some 13 km distant as the crow flies. It is not considered that the level of public use of Wicken Fen will increase greatly as a result of the Northstowe Area Action Plan. In any event the National Trust controls entry to the Fen.</p> <p>Even though due to the nature and distance of the site from the new development it is not anticipated that there will be</p>	<p>The Draft East of England Regional Spatial Strategy Habitats Directive Assessment states that in drawing up local development plans, consideration should be given to proposals for housing in areas where Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites fall within a 5km radius of the proposed Key Centres for Development and Change to reduce the risk of recreational disturbance effects to Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites from walkers, dogs, cats and other recreational uses that can result</p>

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	<p>increased usage as a result of the Northstowe AAP as there are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations to Northstowe. The Area Action Plan considers the provision of additional informal countryside recreation and this will be subject to negotiation based upon factors including the existing Strategic Open Space provision accessible to future Northstowe residents, the work of the Master Plan and consideration of economic viability. This provision would be local to Northstowe and will be the focus for the new community and for other nearby communities, rather than more remote locations such as Wicken Fen.</p> <p>New countryside recreation provision is also to be considered as part of the other major developments on the edge of Cambridge. Natural England in endorsing the HDA of the Core Strategy DPD in its letter dated 16 January 2007, commented that it “would expect that development resulting from or associated with this Core Strategy is fully supported by provision of sufficient green infrastructure in accordance with the publication ‘A Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub Region’ (The Landscape Partnership, 2006). On this basis Natural England support the conclusion that policies in the Core Strategy are unlikely to have significant impacts upon the European Sites located within and in the vicinity of the District.”</p>	<p>from additional housing and associated development. There are not likely to be any significant effects using this test the site for Northstowe is not within this distance.</p> <p>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. Visitors are also managed by ‘zoning ‘ parts of the Fen near the entrance, leaving the more remote parts of the site relatively undisturbed. The site is over 12km from the site proposed for Northstowe.</p> <p>The impact of public access is not listed in the vulnerabilities relating to the site.</p>
<b><i>Water Quantity and Quality</i></b>	<p>Development of a new town 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.</p> <p>The water level problems identified as a vulnerability of the site primarily relate to its relationship with the river Cam and</p>	<p>Policies in the Area Action plan address both run off and wastewater flood risk and require that there are no unacceptable impacts. As such, the plan is not likely to result in significant impacts on the nature conservation objectives.</p> <p>The Environment Agency also has an important</p>

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	<p>issues caused by flood protection measures local to the site introduced in the 1960's. Due to the location of Northstowe, the site will drain to the river Great Ouse, and primarily through the old and new Bedford river, rather than through the river Cam.</p> <p>Northstowe AAP Policy NS/24 sets detailed requirements for a strategic sustainable drainage system to drain the town, including a requirement to restrict surface water runoff to no greater than if the site were undeveloped.</p> <p>There is also a general requirement to use sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) wherever practicable within the context of the overall strategic sustainable drainage system. Policy NE/10 of the Development Control Policies DPD also requires that the drainage of roads and hard surfaced areas used by vehicles to utilise trapped gullies, petrol / oil interceptors, or other suitable methods of pollution control.</p> <p>With regard to any impact of supplying water to a new town, water companies have planned for new resources and infrastructure within their water resources plans that were submitted in 2004. The plans show how firms intend to supply sufficient water to meet customers' needs while protecting and enhancing the environment. The plans cover the period up to 2030. In particular, the Cambridge Water Resources Plan anticipates sufficient supply beyond 2030, including taking account of the growth taking place as a result of the Government's Communities Plan. The majority of additional water supply is anticipated to come from existing licences. (Source: Maintaining Water Supply – Environment Agency July 2004)</p> <p>The need for new development of any new water resources</p>	<p>role in regulating proposals for wastewater treatment and drainage. They are also governed by the Habitats Directive, and the Urban Wastewater Directive. The quality of water released from wastewater treatment works is also a matter for regulation by the Environment Agency. Therefore, the impact of the Northstowe proposals is not considered likely to be significant on the site.</p>

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	<p>will also be linked to demand management and increasing efficiency of water use. The Area Action Plan includes a requirement for a water conservation strategy to be provided for the new town.</p> <p>The Habitats Directive (1992) aims to ensure biodiversity through the conservation, maintenance and restoration of natural habitats, flora and fauna at designated Natura 2000 sites. Whilst the site description identifies water levels as a vulnerability, abstraction can only take place or continue only if it is shown that it does not adversely affect the site's ecological integrity. (Source: The Cam and Ely Ouse Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy Consultation Document – Environment Agency October 2006).</p>	
<b><i>Changes in Pollution Levels</i></b>	<p>The development of a new town could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated.</p> <p>Whilst the actual impact of the new town on air quality alone or in combination with other plans is difficult to quantify, the location of the new town, and the distance of the Fen to major transport routes, means that any effect is not likely to be significant.</p> <p>The Northstowe Area Action Plan also includes policies which seek to achieve a modal shift away from the car, by providing high quality public transport based on the Cambridge Guided Busway between Cambridge and St Ives, and rights of way to support cycling and walking, as well as a mix of uses to support the needs of residents locally.</p>	As the site is not in close proximity to the site of the new town or major transport routes, it is not considered that there is likely to be any significant impact on their nature conservation objectives.

Agencies consulted	Natural England
Response to Consultation	Natural England support the conclusion that policies in the Northstowe Area Action Plan are unlikely to have significant impacts upon the European Sites located within and in the vicinity of the District.

**Overall Conclusions**

The Northstowe Area Action Plan, alone and in combination with other DPDs in the LDF and other relevant plans, was assessed for its impact on Wicken Fen and it was concluded that there are no likely significant effects on the conservation objectives of the site.

**(b) Fenland- Chippenham Fen- SAC and Ramsar site**

Name, location and summary of conservation objectives of Ramsar site	<p><b>Chippenham Fen</b> (Grid Ref: TL 648697)</p> <p><b>Reason for designation as Ramsar site</b>                  A spring-fed calcareous basin mire with a long history of management, which is partly reflected in the diversity of the present-day vegetation. 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. The site supports diverse vegetation types, rare and scarce plants. The site is the stronghold of Cambridge milk parsley <i>Selinum carvifolia</i>.</p> <p>This is located in East Cambridgeshire District.</p>
Are there other projects or plans that together with the Northstowe Area Action Plan could affect Chippenham Fen?	<p>The Northstowe Area Action Plan specifically plans for the development of the new town.</p> <p>The South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy provides the overall spatial strategy for development in the district. There are other plans in the South Cambridgeshire LDF, including various Area Action Plans for the urban extensions to Cambridge, and the Site Specific DPD, which could theoretically indirectly affect the site.</p>

	<p>These plans provide detail to the framework provided in the Core Strategy, including allocations of land for development.</p> <p>Other relevant plans:</p> <p>Cambridgeshire Waste Local Plan 2003          Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste DPD Preferred Options 2006          Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2006 - 2011</p> <p>Suffolk Minerals Local Plan 1999 &amp; Minerals Core Strategy Issues and Options January 2007          Suffolk Waste Local Plan 2006</p> <p>Cambridge Local Plan 2006          East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2000 and Core Strategy Preferred Options June 2006          Forest Heath Local Plan 1995 and Core Strategy &amp; Development Policies Preferred Options Report October 2006          St. Edmundsbury Local Plan 2006</p>
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**The assessment of significance of effects:**

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
<i>Land Take by Development</i>	<p>The Northstowe Area Action Plan (or any policy element of it) does not propose any development that will take land from Chippenham Fen, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats.</p> <p>No other plans propose development that would take land from this site.</p>	There are no policies in the Northstowe Area Action Plan or other plans which directly impact on Chippenham Fen.
<i>Impact on protected species outside the protected sites</i>	The conservation objectives relate to species of plant within the fen, and species of invertebrates. Due to the distance of the site from the Northstowe site there is likely to be no	Due to the distance of Northstowe from the site, it is not considered there will be any impact on the conservation objectives, or breeding bird species

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	effect, alone or in combination with other plans.	associated with the fen.
<b><i>Recreational Pressure and Disturbance</i></b>	<p>A new town of 8000 dwellings could increase demand for countryside recreation. However, the site proposed for the town is not within 5km of the Fen, and is actually some 22 km distant as the crow flies.</p> <p>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. 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. It is not considered that the level of public use of the Fen will increase greatly as a result of the Northstowe Area Action Plan.</p> <p>Even though due to the nature and distance of the site from the new development it is not anticipated that there will be increased usage as a result of the Northstowe AAP as there are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations to Northstowe. The Area Action Plan considers the provision of additional informal countryside recreation and this will be subject to negotiation based upon factors including the existing Strategic Open Space provision accessible to future Northstowe residents, the work of the Master Plan and consideration of economic viability. This provision would be local to Northstowe and will be the focus for the new community and for other nearby communities, rather than more remote locations such as Chippenham Fen.</p>	<p>The Draft East of England Regional Spatial Strategy Habitats Directive Assessment states that in drawing up local development plans, consideration should be given to proposals for housing in areas where Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites fall within a 5km radius of the proposed Key Centres for Development and Change to reduce the risk of recreational disturbance effects to Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites from walkers, dogs, cats and other recreational uses that can result from additional housing and associated development. There are not likely to be any significant effects using this test as the site for the town is not within this distance.</p> <p>It is not considered that the level of public use of Chippenham Fen will increase greatly as a result of the Northstowe Area Action Plan alone or in combination with other plans and that there will therefore be no likely significant effects on the site.</p>

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	<p>New countryside recreation provision is also to be considered as part of the other major developments on the edge of Cambridge. Natural England in endorsing the HDA of the Core Strategy DPD in its letter dated 16 January 2007, commented that it “would expect that development resulting from or associated with this Core Strategy is fully supported by provision of sufficient green infrastructure in accordance with the publication ‘A Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub Region’ (The Landscape Partnership, 2006). On this basis Natural England support the conclusion that policies in the Core Strategy are unlikely to have significant impacts upon the European Sites located within and in the vicinity of the District.</p>	
<b><i>Water Quantity and Quality</i></b>	<p>Development of a new town 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 22km from the town, and is not located on a watercourse utilised to drain the site.</p> <p>There is also a general requirement to use sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) wherever practicable within the context of the overall strategic sustainable drainage system. Policy NE/10 of the Development Control Policies DPD also requires that the drainage of roads and hard surfaced areas used by vehicles to utilise trapped gullies, petrol / oil interceptors, or other suitable methods of pollution control.</p> <p>With regard to any impact of supplying water to new development, water companies have planned for new resources and infrastructure within their water resources plans that were submitted in 2004. The plans show how</p>	<p>Policies in the Area Action Plan address both run off and wastewater flood risk and require that there is no unacceptable impacts. As such, the plan is not likely to result in significant impacts on the nature conservation objectives.</p> <p>The Environment Agency also has an important role in regulating proposals for wastewater treatment and drainage. They are also governed by the Habitats Directive, and the Urban Wastewater Directive. The quality of water released from wastewater treatment works is also a matter for regulation by the Environment Agency. Therefore, the impact of the Northstowe AAP alone or in combination with other plans is not considered likely to be significant on the site.</p>

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	<p>firms intend to supply sufficient water to meet customers' needs while protecting and enhancing the environment. The plans cover the period up to 2030. In particular, the Cambridge Water Resources Plan anticipates sufficient supply beyond 2030, including taking account of the growth taking place as a result of the Government's Communities Plan. The majority of additional water supply is anticipated to come from existing licences. (Source: Maintaining Water Supply – Environment Agency July 2004)</p> <p>The need for new development of any new water resources will also be linked to demand management and increasing efficiency of water use. The Area Action Plan includes a requirement for water conservation strategies to be provided as part of the development proposals.</p> <p>The Habitats Directive (1992) aims to ensure biodiversity through the conservation, maintenance and restoration of natural habitats, flora and fauna at designated Natura 2000 sites. Whilst the site description identifies water levels as a vulnerability, abstraction can only take place or continue only if it is shown that it does not adversely affect the site's ecological integrity. (Source: The Cam and Ely Ouse Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy Consultation Document – Environment Agency October 2006).</p>	
<b><i>Changes in Pollution Levels</i></b>	<p>The development of a new town could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated.</p> <p>Whilst the actual impact of the new town on air quality alone or in combination with other plans is difficult to quantify, the location of the new town, and the distance of the fen to major transport routes, means that any effect is not likely to be</p>	As the site is not in close proximity to the site of the new town or major transport routes, it is not considered that there is likely to be any significant impact on the nature conservation objectives.

<b>Nature of potential impact</b>	<b>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</b>	<b>Why these effects are not considered significant</b>
	<p>significant.</p> <p>The Northstowe Area Action Plan also includes policies which seek to achieve a modal shift away from the car, by providing high quality public transport based on the Cambridge Guided Busway between Cambridge and St Ives, and rights of way to support cycling and walking, as well as a mix of uses to support the needs of residents locally.</p>	

Agencies consulted	Natural England
Response to Consultation	Natural England support the conclusion that policies in the Northstowe Area Action Plan are unlikely to have significant impacts upon the European Sites located within and in the vicinity of the District.

### **Overall Conclusions**

The Northstowe Area Action Plan, alone and in combination with other DPDs in the LDF and other relevant plans, was assessed for its impact on Chippenham Fen and it was concluded that there are no likely significant effects on the conservation objectives of the site.

### **(c) Fenland - Woodwalton Fen – SAC and Ramsar site**

Name, location and summary of conservation objectives of Ramsar site	<p><b>Woodwalton Fen</b> (Grid Ref: TL 230840)</p> <p><b>Reason for designation as Ramsar site</b></p> <p>The site is within an area of one of the remaining parts of East Anglia, which has not been drained. The site supports two species of British Red Data Book plants- fen violet and fen wood rush.</p> <p>This is located in Huntingdonshire District.</p>
Are there other projects or plans that together with the Northstowe Area Action Plan could affect Woodwalton Fen?	The Northstowe Area Action Plan specifically plans for the development of the new town.

	<p>The South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy provides the overall spatial strategy for development in the district. There are other plans in the South Cambridgeshire LDF, including various Area Action Plans for the urban extensions to Cambridge, and the Site Specific DPD, which could theoretically indirectly affect the site. These plans provide detail to the framework provided in the Core Strategy, including allocations of land for development.</p> <p>Other relevant plans:          Cambridgeshire Waste Local Plan 2003          Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste DPD Preferred Options 2006          Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011</p> <p>Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 &amp; Core Strategy Draft 2006          Fenland Local Plan 1993 and Core Strategy Preferred Options 2006</p>
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**The assessment of significance of effects:**

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
<i>Land Take by Development</i>	<p>The Northstowe Area Action Plan (or any policy element of it) does not propose any development that will take land from Woodwalton Fen, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats.</p> <p>No other plans propose development that would take land from this site.</p>	There are no policies in the Northstowe Area Action Plan or other plans which directly impact on Woodwalton Fen.
<i>Impact on protected species outside the protected sites</i>	The conservation objectives relate to species of plant within the fen. Due to the distance of the site from the site proposed for Northstowe it is likely that there will be no effect.	The development of land in locations identified by the Northstowe Area Action Plan alone or in combination with other plans will not be likely to

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
		have a significant impact on species listed as important to the integrity of the site.
<b><i>Recreational Pressure and Disturbance</i></b>	<p>A new town of 8000 dwellings could increase demand for countryside recreation. However, the site proposed for the town is not within 5km of the Fen, and is actually some 23 km distant as the crow flies.</p> <p>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 although access is restricted in some areas. The site is over 20km from the development proposed at Northstowe. It is not considered that the level of public use of the Fen will increase greatly as a result of the Northstowe Area Action Plan.</p> <p>Even though due to the nature and distance of the site from the new development it is not anticipated that there will be increased usage as a result of the Northstowe AAP as there are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations to Northstowe. The Area Action Plan considers the provision of additional informal countryside recreation and this will be subject to negotiation based upon factors including the existing Strategic Open Space provision accessible to future Northstowe residents, the work of the Master Plan and consideration of economic viability. This provision would be local to Northstowe and will be the focus for the new community and for other nearby communities, rather than more remote locations such as Woodwalton Fen.</p> <p>New countryside recreation provision is also to be</p>	<p>The Draft East of England Regional Spatial Strategy Habitats Directive Assessment states that in drawing up local development plans, consideration should be given to proposals for housing in areas where Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites fall within a 5km radius of the proposed Key Centres for Development and Change to reduce the risk of recreational disturbance effects to Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites from walkers, dogs, cats and other recreational uses that can result from additional housing and associated development. There are not likely to be any significant effects using this test as the proposed site for Northstowe is not within this distance.</p> <p>Notwithstanding, public access to the site is controlled and is restricted in some areas. The impact of public access is not listed in the vulnerabilities relating to the site.</p>

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	<p>considered as part of the other major developments on the edge of Cambridge. Natural England in endorsing the HDA of the Core Strategy DPD in its letter dated 16 January 2007, commented that it “would expect that development resulting from or associated with this Core Strategy is fully supported by provision of sufficient green infrastructure in accordance with the publication ‘A Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub Region’ (The Landscape Partnership, 2006). On this basis Natural England support the conclusion that policies in the Core Strategy are unlikely to have significant impacts upon the European Sites located within and in the vicinity of the District.”</p>	
<b><i>Water Quantity and Quality</i></b>	<p>Development of a new town 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 Northstowe, and is not located on a watercourse that will be utilised to drain the town.</p> <p>Northstowe AAP Policy NS/24 sets detailed requirements for a strategic sustainable drainage system to drain the town, including a requirement to restrict surface water runoff to no greater than if the site were undeveloped. The Submission Southern Fringe AAP and the Submission Cambridge East AAP both require the preparation of a strategic surface water drainage scheme, to ensure surface water run off is addressed in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>There is also a general requirement to use sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) wherever practicable within the context of the overall strategic sustainable drainage system.</p>	<p>Policies in the Area Action Plan address both run off and wastewater flood risk and require that there is no unacceptable impacts. As such, the plan is not likely to result in significant impacts on the nature conservation objectives.</p> <p>The Environment Agency also has an important role in regulating proposals for wastewater treatment and drainage. They are also governed by the Habitats Directive, and the Urban Wastewater Directive. The quality of water released from wastewater treatment works is also a matter for regulation by the Environment Agency. Therefore, the impact of the Northstowe AAP alone or in combination with other plans is not considered likely to be significant on the site.</p>

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	<p>Policy NE/10 of the Development Control Policies DPD also requires that the drainage of roads and hard surfaced areas used by vehicles to utilise trapped gullies, petrol / oil interceptors, or other suitable methods of pollution control.</p> <p>With regard to any impact of supplying water to new development, water companies have planned for new resources and infrastructure within their water resources plans that were submitted in 2004. The plans show how firms intend to supply sufficient water to meet customers' needs while protecting and enhancing the environment. The plans cover the period up to 2030 (i.e. beyond the 2016 housing growth set out in the Core Strategy). In particular, the Cambridge Water Resources Plan anticipates sufficient supply beyond 2030, including taking account of the growth taking place as a result of the Government's Communities Plan. The majority of additional water supply is anticipated to come from existing licences. (Source: Maintaining Water Supply – Environment Agency July 2004)</p> <p>The need for new development of any new water resources will also be linked to demand management and increasing efficiency of water use. The Area Action Plan includes a requirement for a water conservation strategy to be provided as part of development proposals.</p> <p>The Habitats Directive (1992) aims to ensure biodiversity through the conservation, maintenance and restoration of natural habitats, flora and fauna at designated Natura 2000 sites. Whilst the site description identifies water levels as a vulnerability, abstraction can only take place or continue only if it is shown that it does not adversely affect the site's ecological integrity. (Source: The Cam and Ely Ouse Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy Consultation</p>	

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	Document – Environment Agency October 2006).	
<b><i>Changes in Pollution Levels</i></b>	<p>The development of a new town could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated.</p> <p>Whilst the actual impact of the new town on air quality alone or in combination with other plans is difficult to quantify, the location of the new town, and the distance of the fen to major transport routes, means that any effect is not likely to be significant.</p> <p>The Northstowe Area Action Plan also includes policies which seek to achieve a modal shift away from the car, by providing high quality public transport based on the Cambridge Guided Busway between Cambridge and St Ives, and rights of way to support cycling and walking, as well as a mix of uses to support the needs of residents locally.</p>	As the site is not in close proximity to the site of the new town or major transport routes, it is not considered that there is likely to be any significant impact on the nature conservation objectives.

Agencies consulted	Natural England
Response to Consultation	Natural England support the conclusion that policies in the Northstowe Area Action Plan are unlikely to have significant impacts upon the European Sites located within and in the vicinity of the District.

**Overall Conclusions**

The Northstowe Area Action Plan, alone and in combination with other DPDs in the LDF and other relevant plans, was assessed for its impact on Woodwalton Fen and it was concluded that there are no likely significant effects on the conservation objectives of the site.

**SCREENING MATRIX For Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and RAMSAR site**

<p>Name, location and summary of conservation objectives of Natura 2000 and Ramsar site</p>	<p><b><u>The Ouse Washes</u></b> (Grid Ref: TL 498895)</p> <p>The Ouse Washes 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.</p> <p><b><i>Reason for designation as a SAC</i></b>                  Significant presence of spined loach (<i>Cobitis taenia</i>) 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.</p> <p><b><i>Reason for designation as SPA</i></b>                  The Ouse Washes 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.</p> <p><b><i>Reason for designation as Ramsar site</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Particularly good example of a natural or near-natural wetland characteristic of its biogeographical region.</li> <li>b) The site supports a number of rare species of plants and animals</li> <li>c) The site supports a diverse collection of rare breeding waterfowl associated with seasonally flooding wet grassland.</li> <li>d) The Washes are of international importance by virtue of regularly supporting over 20,000 waterfowl.</li> <li>e) The Washes are important internationally for supporting in winter certain species.</li> </ul> <p>The boundaries of the SPA and Ramsar site varies slightly from</p>
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	<p>those of the Ouse Washes SAC. The Ouse Washes are primarily located in East Cambridgeshire District, and King's Lynn and West Norfolk District.</p>
<p>Are there other projects or plans that together with the Northstowe Area Action Plan could affect the Ouse Washes?</p>	<p>The Northstowe Area Action Plan specifically plans for the development of the new town.</p> <p>The South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy provides the overall spatial strategy for development in the district. There are other plans in the South Cambridgeshire LDF, including various Area Action Plans for the urban extensions to Cambridge, and the Site Specific DPD, which could theoretically indirectly affect the site. These plans provide detail to the framework provided in the Core Strategy, including allocations of land for development.</p> <p>Other relevant plans: Cambridgeshire Waste Local Plan 2003 Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste DPD Preferred Options 2006 Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2006 - 2011</p> <p>Cambridge Local Plan 2006 Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 &amp; Core Strategy Draft 2006 Fenland Local Plan 1993 and Core Strategy Preferred Options 2006 King's Lynn &amp; West Norfolk Local Plan 1998 and Core Strategy Submission, DC Policies Preferred Options 2007</p>

**The assessment of significance of effects:**

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
<i>Land Take by Development</i>	The Northstowe Area Action Plan (or any policy element of it) does not propose any development that will take land from the Ouse Washes, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats.	There are no policies in the Northstowe Area Action Plan or other plans which directly impact on the Ouse Washes.

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	No other plans propose development that would take land from this site.	
<i>Impact on protected species outside the protected sites</i>	The nature of site proposed for development by the Northstowe Area Action Plan, and the location relative to the washes, means that land take is not likely to have a significant impact on species associated with the integrity of the Ouse Washes.	The development of land identified in the Northstowe Area Action 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.
<i>Recreational Pressure and Disturbance</i>	<p>A new town of 8000 dwellings could increase demand for countryside recreation. However, the site proposed for the town is not within 5km of the Ouse Washes, and is actually some 7 km distant as the crow flies at its nearest point.</p> <p>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. It is not considered that the level of public use of the Ouse washes will increase greatly as a result of the Northstowe Area Action Plan.</p> <p>Even though due to the nature and distance of the site from the new development it is not anticipated that there will be increased usage as a result of the Northstowe AAP as there are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations to Northstowe. The Area Action Plan considers the provision of additional informal countryside recreation and this will be subject to negotiation based upon factors including the existing Strategic Open Space provision accessible to future Northstowe residents, the work of the Master Plan and consideration of economic viability. This provision would be</p>	<p>The Draft East of England Regional Spatial Strategy Habitats Directive Assessment states that in drawing up local development plans, consideration should be given to proposals for housing in areas where Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites fall within a 5km radius of the proposed Key Centres for Development and Change to reduce the risk of recreational disturbance effects to Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites from walkers, dogs, cats and other recreational uses that can result from additional housing and associated development. There are not likely to be any significant effects using this test the proposed site for Northstowe is not within this distance.</p> <p>It is not considered that the level of public use of the Ouse Washes will increase greatly as a result of the Northstowe Area Action Plan. Notwithstanding, the impact of public access is not listed in the vulnerabilities relating to the site.</p>

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	<p>local to Northstowe and will be the focus for the new community and for other nearby communities, rather than more remote locations such as the Ouse Washes.</p> <p>New countryside recreation provision is also to be considered as part of the other major developments on the edge of Cambridge. Natural England in endorsing the HDA of the Core Strategy DPD in its letter dated 16 January 2007, commented that it “would expect that development resulting from or associated with this Core Strategy is fully supported by provision of sufficient green infrastructure in accordance with the publication ‘A Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub Region’ (The Landscape Partnership, 2006). On this basis Natural England support the conclusion that policies in the Core Strategy are unlikely to have significant impacts upon the European Sites located within and in the vicinity of the District.”</p>	
<b><i>Water Quantity and Quality</i></b>	<p>Development of a new town 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 produced.</p> <p>The site identified for Northstowe 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, which could potentially be utilised to serve Northstowe. It is noted that seasonal flooding plays an important role in the integrity of the Ouse Washes.</p> <p>The Environment Agency also has an important role in</p>	<p>Given all the policy requirements of the LDF, taken together with the requirements of other legislation, it is considered that the Northstowe Area Action Plan alone or in combination with other plans is not likely to result in significant impacts on the site.</p>

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	<p>regulating proposals for wastewater treatment and drainage. They are also governed by the Habitats Directive, and the Urban Wastewater Directive.</p> <p>The quality of water released from wastewater treatment works is also a matter for regulation by the Environment Agency. 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 wildlife). Larger sewage treatment works discharging into a sensitive area must meet the Directive's standards for the removal of nutrients, unless it is demonstrated that the removal will have no effect on the degree of eutrophication.</p> <p>A review of the capacity at sewage treatment works in the East of England region (Halcrow, 2006), indicates that any new development draining to Uttons Drove sewage treatment works may result in an increased flood risk in the Swavesey Internal Drainage Board area, as opposed to the Great Ouse itself. The report recommended further investigation into the effect of increased effluent discharge on the receiving watercourses. The LDF includes policies that take account of this. In particular, Northstowe Area Action Plan policy NS/24 requires sufficient sewage treatment capacity to be in place prior to any phase of development, and that treated water does not exacerbate flooding in any receiving watercourse. It should also be noted that the scale of water release from this source, in comparison with total flows in the Ouse, is not considered significant.</p> <p>Northstowe AAP Policy NS/24 sets detailed requirements for a strategic sustainable drainage system to drain the town,</p>	

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	<p>including a requirement to restrict surface water runoff to no greater than if the site were undeveloped. There is also a general requirement to use sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) wherever practicable and compatible with the strategic drainage system. Policy NE/10 of the Development Control Policies DPD also requires that the drainage of roads and hard surfaced areas used by vehicles to utilise trapped gullies, petrol / oil interceptors, or other suitable methods of pollution control.</p> <p>With regard to any impact of supplying water to new development, water companies have planned for new resources and infrastructure within their water resources plans that were submitted in 2004. The plans show how firms intend to supply sufficient water to meet customers' needs while protecting and enhancing the environment. The plans cover the period up to 2030. In particular, the Cambridge Water Resources Plan anticipates sufficient supply beyond 2030, including taking account of the growth taking place as a result of the Government's Communities Plan. The majority of additional water supply is anticipated to come from existing licences. (Source: Maintaining Water Supply - Environment Agency July 2004)</p> <p>The need for new development of any new water resources will also be linked to demand management and increasing efficiency of water use. The Area Action Plan includes a requirement for a water conservation strategy to be provided as part of the new development proposals.</p> <p>The Habitats Directive (1992) aims to ensure biodiversity through the conservation, maintenance and restoration of natural habitats, flora and fauna at designated Natura 2000 sites. Abstraction can only take place or continue only if it is</p>	

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	<p>shown that it does not adversely affect the site's ecological integrity. (Source: The Cam and Ely Ouse Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy Consultation Document - Environment Agency October 2006).</p> <p>The draft Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste LDF Preferred Options (Nov 2006) proposes an Earith / Mepal Action Area Plan, Wimblington Sand and Gravel Extraction, Needingworth Minerals Safeguarding Area, and a Cottenham Minerals Safeguard Area, which could have an impact on hydrology and water resources. The Initial Appropriate Assessment of that plan suggests that all potential adverse impacts could be mitigated against through policies of that plan.</p>	
<b><i>Changes in Pollution Levels</i></b>	<p>The development of a new town could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated.</p> <p>Whilst the actual impact of the new town on air quality alone or in combination with other plans is difficult to quantify, the location of the new town, and the distance of the Fen to major transport routes, means that any effect is not likely to be significant.</p> <p>The Northstowe Area Action Plan also includes policies which seek to achieve a modal shift away from the car, by providing high quality public transport based on the Cambridge Guided Busway between Cambridge and St Ives, and rights of way to support cycling and walking, as well as a mix of uses to support the needs of residents locally.</p> <p>The draft Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste LDF Preferred Options (Nov 2006) proposes an Earith / Mepal Action Area</p>	<p>As the site is not in close proximity to the site proposed for the town, it is not considered that there is likely to be any significant impact on their nature conservation objectives from the Northstowe Area Action Plan alone or in combination with other plans.</p>

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	Plan, Wimblington Sand and Gravel Extraction, Needingworth Minerals Safeguarding Area, and Cottenham Minerals Safeguard Area, which could have an impact on emissions. The Initial Appropriate Assessment of that plan suggests that all potential adverse impacts could be mitigated against through policies of that plan.	

Agencies consulted	Natural England
Response to Consultation	Natural England support the conclusion that policies in the Northstowe Area Action Plan are unlikely to have significant impacts upon the European Sites located within and in the vicinity of the District.

<b>Overall Conclusions</b>
The Northstowe Area Action Plan, alone and in combination with other DPDs in the LDF and other relevant plans, was assessed for its impact on the Ouse Washes and it was concluded that there are no likely significant effects on the conservation objectives of the site.

**SCREENING MATRIX For Portholme SAC**

<p>Name, location and summary of conservation objectives of Natura 2000 site</p>	<p><b><u>Portholme</u></b> (Grid Ref: TL 237708)</p> <p><b><i>Reason for designation as SAC</i></b>          Best example of lowland hay meadows in eastern England. (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>)</p> <p>This site is over 90 hectares in size. It is the largest surviving traditionally managed meadow in the UK of alluvial flood meadow (7% of the total UK resource). There has been a long history of favourable management 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 (<i>Fritillaria meleagris</i>).</p> <p>The site is located in Huntingdonshire District.</p>
<p>Are there other projects or plans that together with the Northstowe Area Action Plan could affect Portholme?</p>	<p>The Northstowe Area Action Plan specifically plans for the development of the new town.</p> <p>The South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy provides the overall spatial strategy for development in the district. There are other plans in the South Cambridgeshire LDF, including various Area Action Plans for the urban extensions to Cambridge, and the Site Specific DPD, which could theoretically indirectly affect the site. These plans provide detail to the framework provided in the Core Strategy, including allocations of land for development.</p> <p>Other relevant plans:          Cambridgeshire Waste Local Plan 2003          Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste DPD Preferred Options 2006          Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011          Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 &amp; Core Strategy Draft 2006</p>

**The assessment of significance of effects:**

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
<i>Land Take by Development</i>	<p>The Northstowe Area Action Plan (or any policy element of it) does not propose any development that will take land from Portholme, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats.</p> <p>No other plans propose development that would take land from this site.</p>	There are no policies in the Northstowe Area Action Plan or other plans which directly impact on Portholme.
<i>Impact on protected species outside the protected sites</i>	The conservation objectives relate to species of plant within the hay meadow. Due to the distance of the site from the District there will be no effect. The development of land for Northstowe alone or in combination with other plans will not have a significant impact on species listed as important to the integrity of the site.	The development of land detailed in the Northstowe Area Action Plan will alone or in combination with other plans have no significant impact on insect and birds species integral to the site, due to the distance and the nature of the land proposed to be developed.
<i>Recreational Pressure and Disturbance</i>	<p>A new town of 8000 dwellings could increase demand for countryside recreation. However, the site proposed for the town is not within 5km of the hay meadow, and is actually some 16 km distant as the crow flies.</p> <p>There are footpaths through the site. It is not considered that the level of public use of the Meadow will increase greatly as a result of the Northstowe Area Action Plan.</p> <p>Even though due to the nature and distance of the site from the new development it is not anticipated that there will be increased usage as a result of the Northstowe AAP as there are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations to Northstowe. The Area Action Plan considers the provision of</p>	The Draft East of England Regional Spatial Strategy Habitats Directive Assessment states that in drawing up local development plans, consideration should be given to proposals for housing in areas where Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites fall within a 5km radius of the proposed Key Centres for Development and Change to reduce the risk of recreational disturbance effects to Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites from walkers, dogs, cats and other recreational uses that can result from additional housing and associated development. There are not likely to be any significant effects using this test due to the distance between the site and Northstowe.

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	<p>additional informal countryside recreation and this will be subject to negotiation based upon factors including the existing Strategic Open Space provision accessible to future Northstowe residents, the work of the Master Plan and consideration of economic viability. This provision would be local to Northstowe and will be the focus for the new community and for other nearby communities, rather than more remote locations such as Portholme.</p> <p>New countryside recreation provision is also to be considered as part of the other major developments on the edge of Cambridge. Natural England in endorsing the HDA of the Core Strategy DPD in its letter dated 16 January 2007, commented that it “would expect that development resulting from or associated with this Core Strategy is fully supported by provision of sufficient green infrastructure in accordance with the publication ‘A Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub Region’ (The Landscape Partnership, 2006). On this basis Natural England support the conclusion that policies in the Core Strategy are unlikely to have significant impacts upon the European Sites located within and in the vicinity of the District.”</p>	<p>Notwithstanding, the impact of public access is not listed in the vulnerabilities relating to the site.</p> <p>In view of the limited additional recreational use that will occur of the site, as a result of the Northstowe Area Action Plan alone or in combination with other plans there are not considered to be any likely significant effects.</p>
<b><i>Water Quantity and Quality</i></b>	Development of a new town 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 produced. However, the impact of the Northstowe proposals is not considered significant.	New development proposed for the town is located too far to be likely to have significant effects on the hay meadows and is located down stream on the River Ouse catchment.
<b><i>Changes in Pollution Levels</i></b>	The development of a new town could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated.	As the site is not in close proximity to the site proposed for the town, it is not considered that there is likely to be any significant impact on their nature conservation objectives from the area action

<b><i>Nature of potential impact</i></b>	<b><i>How the Northstowe Area Action Plan (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site</i></b>	<b><i>Why these effects are not considered significant</i></b>
	<p>Whilst the actual impact of the new town on air quality alone or in combination with other plans is difficult to quantify, the location of the new town, and the distance to the Meadow means that any effect is not likely to be significant. It is considered that there are not likely to be any significant increases in traffic using this part of the A14 in this location as a result of the area action plan.</p> <p>Notwithstanding, whilst the site is close to the A14, improvements are proposed to the A14 to be implemented by 2015 which involve a rerouting of the road some distance to the south of Huntingdon. This will remove the currently high traffic levels from the vicinity of the site and is likely to result in an improvement in pollution levels near the site.</p> <p>The Northstowe Area Action Plan also includes policies which seek to achieve a modal shift away from the car, by providing high quality public transport based on the Cambridge Guided Busway between Cambridge and St Ives, and rights of way to support cycling and walking, as well as a mix of uses to support the needs of residents locally.</p>	<p>plan alone or in combination with other plans.</p>

Agencies consulted	Natural England
Response to Consultation	Natural England support the conclusion that policies in the Northstowe Area Action Plan are unlikely to have significant impacts upon the European Sites located within and in the vicinity of the District.
<b>Overall Conclusions</b>	
The Northstowe Area Action Plan, alone and in combination with other DPDs in the LDF and other relevant plans, was assessed for its impact on Portholme and it was concluded that there are no likely significant effects on the conservation objectives of the site.	

**DATA COLLECTED TO CARRY OUT THE ASSESSMENT**

<b>Who carries out the assessment?</b>	<b>Sources of data</b>	<b>Level of assessment completed</b>	<b>Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed</b>
Officers of South Cambridgeshire District Council with the assistance of Natural England	Consultation with Natural England	Desktop study. South Cambridgeshire is confident with the results of the assessment.	South Cambridgeshire District Council offices and online at <a href="http://www.scambs.gov.uk/ldf">www.scambs.gov.uk/ldf</a> .





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