

Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan

Local Plan Update Preferred Options Consultation
HRA Screening Report

October 2025



LEPUS CONSULTING
LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGY, PLANNING & URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan

Local Plan Update Preferred Options Consultation

HRA Screening Report

LC-1376	Document Control Box
Client	Huntingdonshire District Council
Report Title	Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Local Plan Update Preferred Options Consultation Draft HRA Screening Report
Status	Final
Filename	LC-1376_Huntingdonshire_Preferred Options HRA_5_151025HS.docx
Date	October 2025
Author	FA/SC
Reviewed	SC
Approved	ND

Front Cover: Fen Violet (*Viola persicifolia*) (Source: Shutterstock)

About this report & notes for readers

Lepus Consulting Ltd (Lepus) has prepared this report for the use of Huntingdonshire District Council. There are a number of limitations that should be borne in mind when considering the conclusions of this report. No party should alter or change this report without written permission from Lepus.

© Lepus Consulting Ltd

The conclusions below are based on the best available information, including information that is publicly available. No attempt to verify these secondary data sources has been made and they have been assumed to be accurate as published. This report was prepared during August and October 2025 and is subject to and limited by the information available during this time. This report has been prepared with

reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the contract with the client. Lepus Consulting accepts no responsibility to the client and third parties of any matters outside the scope of this report. Third parties to whom this report or any part thereof is made known rely upon the report at their own risk.

Client comments can be sent to Lepus using the following address.

Eagle Tower,
Montpellier Drive
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 1TA

Telephone: 01242 525222

E-mail: enquiries@lepusconsulting.com
www.lepusconsulting.com

Contents

Executive summary	v
1 Introduction	1
1.1 A new Local Plan for Huntingdonshire	1
1.2 Purpose of report	1
1.3 Habitats Regulations Assessment	1
1.4 Previous HRA work	4
2 Methodology	5
2.1 Overview	5
2.2 Stage 1: Screening for Likely Significant Effects	6
2.3 Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment and Integrity Test	8
2.4 Dealing with uncertainty	8
2.5 The Precautionary Principle	9
3 Scoping of threats and pressures at European sites	10
3.1 Introduction	10
3.2 Identification of an HRA study area	10
3.3 Scoping impact pathways	11
3.4 Air quality	13
3.5 Water quality and water quantity	18
3.6 Recreational pressure	39
3.7 Urbanisation effects	47
3.8 European sites threats and pressures	51
4 Screening	55
4.1 Policy and allocations screening	55
4.2 Screening Conclusion	56
4.3 Information requirements to inform the AA	57
5 Next steps	62
5.1 Conclusions	62
5.2 Next Steps	62

Appendix A In-Combination Assessment

Appendix B European Site Conservation Objectives, Qualifying Features, Threats and Pressures

Appendix C Policies screening summary to inform test of likely significance

Appendix D Screening of Local Plan Preferred Options Allocations

Tables

Table 2.1: Screening evaluation and reasoning categories from Part F of the DTA Handbook	6
Table 3.1: Assessment of air quality impact pathways for European sites within the influence of the Local Plan.16	
Table 3.2: Assessment of hydrological impact pathways for European sites within the influence of the Local Plan	31
Table 3.3: Summary of recreational impact pathways for European sites within the influence of the Local Plan..46	
Table 3.4: Summary of urbanisation impact pathways for European sites within the influence of the Local Plan (approx 400m)	51
Table 3.5: Summary of impact pathways to European sites which may be associated with the Local Plan.....	51
Table 4.1: Summary of screened in policies and allocations	55

Boxes

Box 4.1: Preliminary air quality recommendations	58
Box 4.2: Preliminary water quality and quantity recommendations	59
Box 4.3: Preliminary recreational impact recommendations.....	60
Box 4.4: Preliminary urbanisation impact recommendations	61

Figures

Figure 1.1: Huntingdonshire Plan Area.....	3
Figure 2.1: Stages in the Habitats Regulations Assessment process	5
Figure 3.1: Watercourses and Surface Water Management Catchments (SWMCs) in and around the Plan area	21
Figure 3.2: Watercourses and Water Suppliers in and around the Plan area	24
Figure 3.3: Great Fen project area and relevant biodiversity designations	28
Figure 3.4: Habitats in the Great Fen area identified by Huntingdonshire District Council.....	29
Figure 3.5: Ecological priority areas identified by Huntingdonshire District Council	30
Figure 3.6: European sites scoped into the HRA process (1).....	53
Figure 3.7: European sites scoped into the HRA process (2) to illustrate the location of The Wash SPA, The Wash Ramsar and The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC.	54

Acronyms & Abbreviations

AA	Appropriate Assessment
AADT	Average annual daily traffic flow
ALAN	Artificial light at night
ALS	Abstraction Licensing Strategy
APIS	Air Pollution Information System
AW	Affinity Water
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
CAMS	Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
CSZ	Core Sustenance Zones
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
DfT	Department for Transport
DLHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
DMRB	Design Manual for Roads and Bridges
DTA	David Tyldesley and Associates
EA	Environment Agency
FLL	Functionally Linked Land
FZ	Flood Zone
GES	Good Ecological Status
G&T	Gypsy and Traveller
GIS	Geographic Information System
ha	Hectares
HDV	Heavy-duty vehicle
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
IAQM	Institute of Air Quality Management
IRZ	Impact Risk Zone
IWMS	Integrated Water Management Strategy
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
LSE	Likely Significant Effect
LPA	Local Plan Area
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
NE	Natural England
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NOx	Nitrous Oxides
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework

ONS	Office for National Statistics
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
pSAC	Possible/proposed Special Area of Conservation
pSPA	Potential Special Protection Area
RBMP	River Basin Management Plan
RIA	Recreational Impact Assessment
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SAMM	Strategic Access Management and Monitoring
SANG	Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace
SIP	Site Improvement Plan
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
sqm	Square metres
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SWFR	Surface Water Flood Risk
SWMC	Surface Water Management Catchment
SWMP	Surface Water Management Plan
UK	United Kingdom
WCS	Water Cycle Study
WeBS	Wetland Bird Survey
WFA	Whole Feature Assessment
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WRMP	Water Resource Management Plan
WRC	Water Recycling Centre
WRZ	Water Resource Zone
WwTW	Wastewater Treatment Works
ZoI	Zone of Influence

Executive summary

- E1. Huntingdonshire District Council is preparing a full update to the adopted Local Plan¹ to provide an up-to-date vision and framework to guide decision making on how, where and when development can come forward in the district for the period up to 2046.
- E2. The Council is currently at the preliminary stages of the plan making process and has prepared the first complete draft of the Local Plan update, referred to as the Preferred Options Local Plan Consultation at Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)². This consultation contains both strategic and non-strategic policies.
- E3. Lepus Consulting has been appointed, on behalf of Huntingdonshire District Council, to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) alongside preparation of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan in compliance with the Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended)³.
- E4. HRA is undertaken in a number of stages. The first stage of the process is the screening stage (Stage 1), which aims to identify whether there are any aspects of a plan which may lead to a Likely Significant Effect (LSEs) at a European site, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. Stage 2 of the process, known as the Appropriate Assessment (AA), is undertaken where screening identifies LSEs. Where an AA concludes adverse impacts on site integrity cannot be mitigated, the next stage in the process is the consideration of alternative solutions (Stage 3). Where no alternative solutions are available it is next necessary to proceed to Stage 4 of the process, where consideration is given to imperative reasons of overriding public interest and securing compensatory measures.
- E5. An important initial stage of the screening process (Stage 1) is gathering information on European sites which may be affected by the Local Plan. This exercise is informally known as 'scoping' and provides an understanding of potential impact pathways from the Local Plan and connections to European sites and their vulnerabilities. This report provides the outputs of the scoping and screening process (Stage 1).
- E6. The Local Plan is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site. Consideration was therefore given to potential links or causal connections between the effects of the Local Plan and European sites to identify LSEs. This exercise was undertaken through the collation of information for each European site and application of a 'source-pathway-receptor' model.

¹ Huntingdonshire District Council (2019) Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036. Available at: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/3872/190516-final-adopted-local-plan-to-2036.pdf> [Date accessed: 22/07/25]

² The Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 Statutory Instrument 767.

³ The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 SI No. 2017/1012, TSO (The Stationery Office), London. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents> [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

- E7. Each component of the Preferred Options Local Plan, including policies and allocations, was screened for LSEs. Taking no account of mitigation measures, the screening stage concluded that the following European sites and potential impacts associated with the Local Plan have been screened into the HRA process:
- **Air quality:** Portholme SAC.
 - **Water quality:** Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar.
 - **Water quantity:** Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Orton Pit SAC; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar.
 - **Recreational pressure:** Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC; Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar.
 - **Urbanisation effects:** Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC; Portholme SAC; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar.
- E8. It is therefore concluded that the Preferred Options Local Plan will be screened into the HRA process. The next stage of the HRA process will be Stage 2, Appropriate Assessment.
- E9. It is too early at this stage of the plan making process to undertake a full Appropriate Assessment as key pieces of evidence are in preparation, and these will inform the details within the submission version of the Local Plan (Regulation 19).
- E10. This report sets out a series of recommendations to inform Local Plan policies and identifies further work that will be undertaken as part of an Appropriate Assessment as the plan develops. The outputs of the Appropriate Assessment will be reported at Regulation 19.

1 Introduction

1.1 A new Local Plan for Huntingdonshire

- 1.1.1 Huntingdonshire District Council (hereafter referred to as ‘the Council’) is preparing a full update to the adopted Local Plan⁴ to provide an up-to-date vision and framework to guide decision making on how, where, and when development can come forward in the district for the period up to 2046.
- 1.1.2 The new Huntingdonshire Local Plan, referred to as the ‘Local Plan’ hereafter, will cover the entirety of Huntingdonshire District. This area is henceforth referred to as the ‘Plan area’ and is illustrated in **Figure 1.1**. The Plan area includes the district’s five main towns of Huntingdon, Godmanchester, Ramsey, St Neots and St Ives, together with a number of large and small villages and hamlets.
- 1.1.3 The Council is currently at the preliminary stages of the plan making process and has prepared the first complete draft of the Local Plan update, referred to as the Preferred Options Local Plan Consultation at Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)⁵.
- 1.1.4 The Preferred Options consultation document includes details on the scale and types of housing required to meet future needs, the quantity and nature of employment land and opportunities necessary to sustain economic growth and support local job creation, and infrastructure requirements to accommodate and enable this level of growth. The Preferred Options consultation contains both strategic policies, which shape decisions on major issues or set the overall ambition for the Local Plan and non-strategic policies, which typically provide more detailed guidance on specific aspects to help with decision-making.

1.2 Purpose of report

- 1.2.1 Lepus Consulting has been commissioned by Huntingdonshire District Council to carry out a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to support the preparation of the Preferred Options Local Plan⁶. This report provides the outputs of an informal scoping process and screening assessment to help inform the plan-making process at the early stages of its development and avoid any adverse effects on European sites.

1.3 Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.3.1 The application of HRA to land-use plans is a requirement of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)⁷. HRA applies to plans and projects, including all Local Development Documents in England and Wales.

⁴ Huntingdonshire District Council (2019) Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036. Available at: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/3872/190516-final-adopted-local-plan-to-2036.pdf> [Date accessed: 22/07/25]

⁵ The Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 Statutory Instrument 767.

⁶ Huntingdonshire District Council (October, 2025) Local Plan Update Preferred Options Consultation Draft: Huntingdonshire District Council | Local Plan Update Preferred Options Consultation Draft

⁷ Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 SI No. 2017/1012, TSO (The Stationery Office), London, as amended by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

- 1.3.2 Where a plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone, or in-combination) and is not directly connected with, or necessary to, the management of the European site, Regulation 105 of the Habitats Regulations notes that the plan-making authority for that plan must, before the plan is given effect, make an Appropriate Assessment (AA) of the implications for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives. These tests are referred to collectively as a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).
- 1.3.3 The Habitats Regulations provide a definition of a European site at Regulation 8. These sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Sites of Community Importance, Special Protection Areas (SPA) and sites proposed to the European Commission in accordance with Article 4(1) of the Habitats Directive. In addition, policy in England and Wales notes that the following sites should also be given the same level of protection as a European site⁸:
- A potential SPA (pSPA);
 - A possible/proposed SAC (pSAC);
 - Listed and proposed Ramsar Sites (wetland of international importance); and,
 - In England, sites identified or required as compensation measures for adverse effects on statutory European sites, pSPA, pSAC, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.
- 1.3.4 The Council, as the competent authority, is responsible for making the Integrity Test. The Integrity test asks whether the Local Plan will have an adverse effect upon the integrity of any European site (either alone, or in-combination) and will be undertaken in light of the conclusions of the HRA process having regard to representations made by Natural England (NE) under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations. The Integrity Test will be made following preparation of the full Local Plan, normally at the Pre-Submission (Publication) Consultation Stage at Regulation 19.
- 1.3.5 This HRA screening report has been prepared using the following guidance:
- Planning Practice Guidance: Appropriate Assessment⁹; and,
 - The Habitat Regulations Assessment Handbook - David Tyldesley and Associates (referred to hereafter as the DTA Handbook), 2013 (in particular Part F: 'Practical Guidance for the Assessment of Plans under the Regulations')¹⁰.

⁸ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024). National Planning Policy Framework. Para 194.

⁹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Government (July 2019) Planning Practice Guidance Note, Appropriate Assessment, Guidance on the use of Habitats Regulations Assessment.

¹⁰ Tyldesley, D., and Chapman, C. (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook (June) (2024) edition UK: DTA Publications Limited.

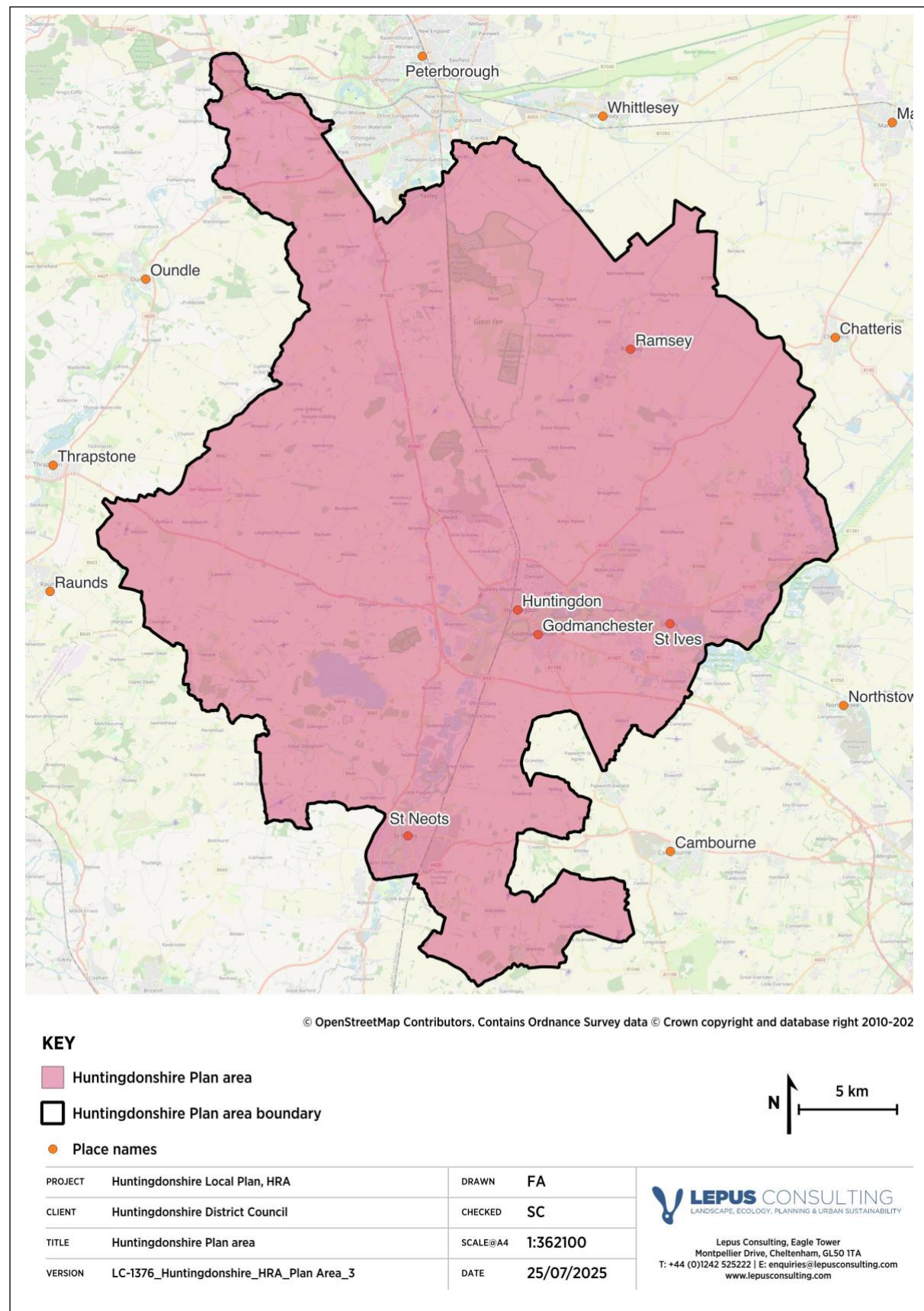


Figure 1.1: Huntingdonshire Plan Area

1.4 Previous HRA work

1.4.1 The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036¹¹ was adopted in May 2019 and sets out a development strategy and planning policies. It was supported by an HRA Screening¹², which considered likely significant effects upon the following European sites, located within 15km of the Plan area or hydrologically linked to the Plan area:

- Barnack Hills & Holes SAC;
- Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC;
- Fenland SAC;
- Nene Washes SAC,
- Nene Washes SPA;
- Nene Washes Ramsar;
- Orton Pit SAC;
- Ouse Washes SAC,
- Ouse Washes SPA;
- Ouse Washes Ramsar;
- Portholme SAC;
- Rutland Water SPA;
- Rutland Water Ramsar;
- The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC;
- The Wash SPA;
- The Wash Ramsar;
- Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA;
- Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar; and,
- Woodwalton Fen Ramsar.

1.4.2 The AA of this HRA concluded that there would be no adverse impacts on the integrity of European sites, either alone, or in-combination, so long as the “*policies identified as key in [the HRA] report are retained, and/or the wording changes recommended for policies highlighted are adopted*”.

¹¹ Huntingdonshire District Council (2019) Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, May 2019. Available at: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/3872/190516-final-adopted-local-plan-to-2036.pdf> [Date accessed: 25/07/25]

¹² Bodsey Ecology Limited (2017) Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 – Habitats Regulations Assessment 2017. Available at: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/2684/habitats-regulations-assessment-2017.pdf> [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

2 Methodology

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 HRA is a rigorous precautionary process centred around the conservation objectives of a European site's qualifying interests. It is intended to ensure that European sites are protected from impacts that could adversely affect their integrity. A step-by-step guide to the methodology followed for the HRA, as outlined in the DTA Handbook, is illustrated in **Figure 2.1**.

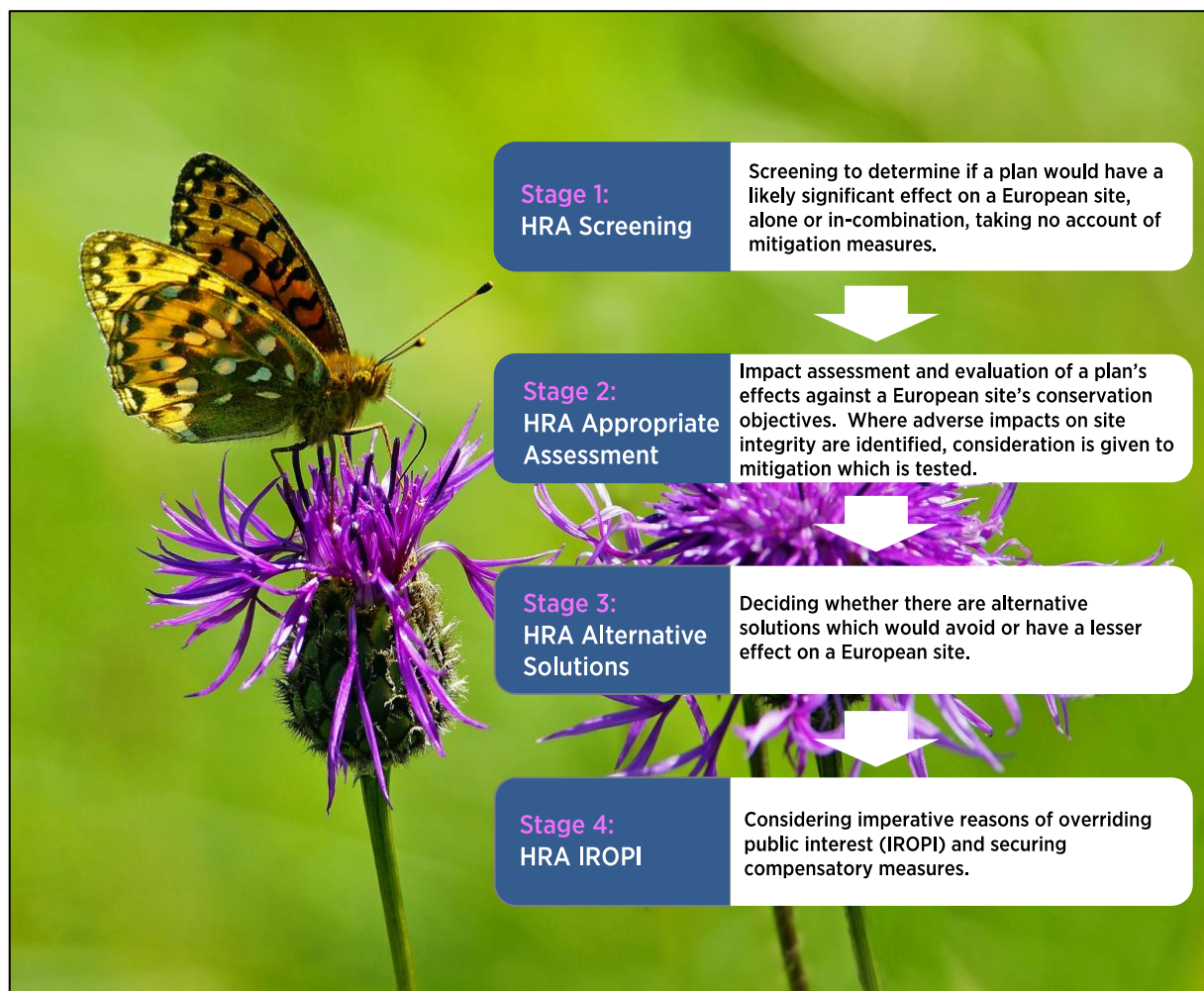


Figure 2.1: Stages in the Habitats Regulations Assessment process¹³

¹³ Tyldesley, D., and Chapman, C. (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook (December) (2019) edition UK: DTA Publications Limited. Available at: <http://www.dtapublications.co.uk/> [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

2.2 Stage 1: Screening for Likely Significant Effects

- 2.2.1 The first stage in the HRA process comprises the screening stage (see **Figure 2.1**). The purpose of the screening process is to firstly determine whether a plan is either (1) exempt (because it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site); (2) able to be excluded (because it is not a plan); or (3) able to be eliminated (because there would be no conceivable effects) from the HRA process. If none of these conditions apply, it is next necessary to identify whether there are any aspects of the Local Plan which may lead to a likely significant effect (LSE) at a European site, either alone, or in-combination with other plans or projects.
- 2.2.2 Where elements of the Local Plan will not result in an LSE on a European site (alone, or in-combination), these elements are screened out and not considered in further detail in the process. Where LSEs are identified, these elements of the Local Plan are screened in for further consideration in an AA. The screening process uses a number of evaluation codes to summarise whether or not a plan component is likely to have LSEs alone, or in-combination. These codes are set out in **Table 2.1** and are used to inform the formal screening decision (Column 2).

Table 2.1: Screening evaluation and reasoning categories from Part F of the DTA Handbook¹⁴

Screening evaluation and reasoning categories from Chapter F of the Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook (DTA Publications, 2013)	Screen in / Screen out
A. General statements of policy / general aspirations.	Screen Out
B. Policies listing general criteria for testing the acceptability / sustainability of proposals.	Screen Out
C. Proposal referred to but not proposed by the Plan.	Screen Out
D. General plan-wide environmental protection / designated site safeguarding / threshold policies.	Screen Out
E. Policies or proposals that steer change in such a way as to protect European sites from adverse effects.	Screen Out
F. Policies or proposals that cannot lead to development or other change.	Screen Out
G. Policies or proposals that could not have any conceivable or adverse effect on a site.	Screen Out
H. Policies or proposals the (actual or theoretical) effects of which cannot undermine the conservation objectives (either alone or in-combination with other aspects of this or other plans or projects).	Screen Out
I. Policies or proposals with a Likely Significant Effect on a site alone.	Screen In
J. Policies or proposals unlikely to have a significant effect alone.	Screen Out
K. Policies or proposals unlikely to have a significant effect either alone or in-combination.	Screen Out
L. Policies or proposals which might be likely to have a significant effect in-combination.	Screen In
M. Bespoke area, site or case-specific policies or proposals intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on a European site.	Screen In

¹⁴ Tyldesley, D., and Chapman, C. (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook (December) (2019) edition UK: DTA Publications Limited. Available at: <http://www.dtapublications.co.uk/> [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

- 2.2.3 The judgement by the European Court of Justice on the interpretation of the Habitats Directive in the case of People Over Wind and Sweetman vs Coillte Teoranta (Case C-323/17¹⁵) determined that mitigation measures are only permitted to be considered as part of the AA stage of the HRA process. Therefore, when assessing the LSEs of the Local Plan on European sites, the HRA screening process will take no account of incorporated mitigation or avoidance measures that are intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on a site. These are measures which, if removed (i.e. should they no longer be required for the benefit of a European site), would still allow the lawful and practical implementation of a plan.
- 2.2.4 Where screening concludes there are no LSEs from the Local Plan alone, it is next necessary to consider whether the effects of the Local Plan in-combination with other plans and projects would result in an LSE on any European site. It may be that the Local Plan alone will not have a significant effect but could have a residual effect that may contribute to in-combination effects on a European site.
- 2.2.5 Plans and projects which are considered to be most relevant to the in-combination assessment of the Local Plan include those that have similar impact pathways. These include plans and projects with potential to increase development in the HRA study area. In addition, plans and projects with potential to increase traffic across the study area and which may act in-combination with the Local Plan, such as the transport^{16,17}, and waste and mineral¹⁸ plans, will also be considered. Plans which allocate water resources or are likely to influence water quality within the study area will also be considered. Finally, local plans of neighbouring authorities (listed below and detailed in **Appendix A**), which may increase development-related pressures at European sites, will be considered. It is recognised that the status of other plans and projects will change over the timescale of the development of the Local Plan; at the time of writing, neighbouring plans include:
- North Northamptonshire Local Plan¹⁹;
 - Peterborough Local Plan²⁰;
 - Fenland Local Plan²¹;
 - East Cambridgeshire District Local Plan²²;

¹⁵ InfoCuria (2018) Case C-323/17. Available at: <http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?docid=200970&doclang=EN> [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

¹⁶ Cambridgeshire County Council (2015) Third Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2031: Policies and Strategy. Available at: [https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/imported-assets/The_Local_Transport_Plan_3%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/imported-assets/The_Local_Transport_Plan_3%20(1).pdf) [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

¹⁷ Cambridgeshire County Council (2015) Huntingdonshire Transport Strategy: Action Plan. Available at: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/huntingdonshire-transport-strategy-action-plan-march-2024.pdf> [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

¹⁸ Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council (2021) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2036. Available at: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/planning-and-development/planning-policy/adopted-minerals-and-waste-plan> [Date accessed: 23/07/25]

¹⁹ North Northamptonshire Council (2016) North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031. Available at: <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/planning-strategies-and-plans/north-northamptonshire-local-plan> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

²⁰ Peterborough City Council (2019) Peterborough Local Plan 2016 to 2036. Available at: <https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/council/planning-and-development/planning-policies/local-development-plan> [Date accessed: 23/07/25]

²¹ Fenland District Council (2014) Fenland Local Plan (Adopted May 2014). Available at: https://www.fenland.gov.uk/media/12064/Fenland-Local-Plan-Adopted-2014/pdf/Fenland_Local_Plan-Adopted_2014.pdf?m=1591111057500 [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

²² East Cambridgeshire District Council (2023) East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023). Available at: <https://eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-10/Local%20Plan%20adopted%2019%20October%202023%20-%20final%20with%20cover.pdf> [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

- South Cambridgeshire District Local Plan²³;
- Central Bedfordshire Local Plan²⁴; and,
- Bedford Borough Local Plan²⁵.

2.2.6 The approach taken to the consideration of in-combination effects will be compliant with the Wealden Judgement²⁶, which requires an in-combination approach that considers the development of neighbouring and nearby authorities when assessing LSEs.

2.3 Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment and Integrity Test

2.3.1 Stage 2 of the HRA process comprises the AA and Integrity Test. The purpose of the AA is to undertake an assessment of the implications of a plan for a European site in light of its conservation objectives²⁷.

2.3.2 As part of this process, plan makers should take account of the potential consequences of no action and the uncertainties inherent in scientific evaluation, and they should consult interested parties on the possible ways of managing the risk, for instance, through the adoption of mitigation measures. Mitigation measures should aim to avoid, minimise or reduce significant effects on European sites. Mitigation measures may take the form of policies within the Local Plan, or mitigation proposed through other plans or regulatory mechanisms. All mitigation measures must be deliverable and able to mitigate the adverse effects for which they are targeted.

2.3.3 The AA aims to present information regarding all aspects of the Local Plan and ways in which it could, either alone, or in-combination with other plans and projects, impact a European site. The plan-making body (as the Competent Authority) must then ascertain, based on the findings of the AA, whether the Local Plan will adversely affect the integrity of a European site, either alone, or in-combination with other plans and projects. This is referred to as the Integrity Test.

2.3.4 It is too early at this stage of the plan-making process to undertake an AA, as key pieces of the evidence base which will inform the Local Plan are in preparation. An AA, if required, will be undertaken to support the Local Plan as it develops.

2.4 Dealing with uncertainty

2.4.1 Uncertainty is an inherent characteristic of an HRA, and decisions can be made using currently available and relevant information. This concept is reinforced in the 7th September 2004 'Waddenzee' ruling²⁸:

²³ South Cambridgeshire District Council (2018) South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (Adopted September 2018). Available at: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/media/h0vjdxj/south-cambridgeshire-adopted-local-plan-2018-1.pdf> [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

²⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2021) Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035 (July 2021). Available at: https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/153/central_bedfordshire_local_plan_2015_to_2035/1034/adopted_local_plan [Date accessed: 23/07/25]

²⁵ Bedford Borough Council (2022) Local Plan 2040: Plan for Submission (April 2022). Available at: <https://edrms.bedford.gov.uk/OpenDocument.aspx?id=xivh8bP%2bAJZXEaq26SnEFQ%3d%3d&name=PLAN%20FOR%20SUBMISSION.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

²⁶ Wealden District Council & Lewes District Council before Mr Justice Jay. Available at: <http://SLP.baillii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2017/351.html> [Date accessed: 01/07/25].

²⁷ MHCLG and DLHC (2019) Appropriate assessment: Guidance on use of Habitats Regulations Assessment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appropriate-assessment> [Date accessed: 22/07/25]

²⁸ EUR-Lex (2004) Case C-127/02. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:62002CJ0127:EN:PDF>. [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

- 2.4.2 *“However, the necessary certainty cannot be construed as meaning absolute certainty since that is almost impossible to attain. Instead, it is clear from the second sentence of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive that the competent authorities must take a decision having assessed all the relevant information which is set out in particular in the AA. The conclusion of this assessment is, of necessity, subjective in nature. Therefore, the competent authorities can, from their point of view, be certain that there will be no adverse effects even though, from an objective point of view, there is no absolute certainty.”*

2.5 The Precautionary Principle

- 2.5.1 The HRA process is characterised by the Precautionary Principle. This is described by the European Commission: *“If a preliminary scientific evaluation shows that there are reasonable grounds for concern that a particular activity might lead to damaging effects on the environment, or on human, animal or plant health, which would be inconsistent with protection normally afforded to these within the European Community, the Precautionary Principle is triggered”*. The Precautionary Principle is embedded in the Integrity Test.

3 Scoping of threats and pressures at European sites

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 An important initial stage of the screening process is gathering information on European sites which may be affected by the Local Plan. This is informally known as scoping and provides an understanding of potential impact pathways from the Local Plan and connections to European sites and their vulnerabilities. This information will be used to inform the formal screening assessment of the Local Plan provided in **Chapter 4**.

3.2 Identification of an HRA study area

- 3.2.1 Each European site has its own intrinsic qualities, besides the habitats or species for which it has been designated, that enable the site to support its particular ecosystems. An important aspect of this is that the ecological integrity of each site can be vulnerable to change from natural and human-induced activities in the surrounding environment (known as pressures and threats). For example, sites can be affected by land use plans in a number of different ways, including the direct land take of new development; the type of use the land will be put to (for example, an extractive or noise-emitting use); or, the pressure/threat a development generates (air pollution, water pollution or increased recreational pressure) and the resources used (for example, water abstraction).
- 3.2.2 An intrinsic quality of any European site is its functionality at the landscape ecology scale. This refers to how the site interacts with its immediate surroundings, as well as the wider area. This is particularly the case where there is potential for development resulting from a plan to generate water or air-borne pollutants, use water resources, or otherwise affect water levels. Adverse effects may also occur via impacts to mobile species when located outside a designated site boundary, but which are qualifying features of the site. For example, there may be effects on protected birds, bats and fish which use land or waterbodies outside a designated site for foraging, feeding, spawning, roosting, breeding or other activities.
- 3.2.3 There is no guidance that defines the study area for inclusion in an HRA. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) for AA indicates that: *“The scope and content of an appropriate assessment will depend on the nature, location, duration and scale of the proposed plan or project and the interest features of the relevant site. ‘Appropriate’ is not a technical term. It indicates that an assessment needs to be proportionate and sufficient to support the task of the competent authority in determining whether the plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of the site”*²⁹.

²⁹ MHCLG and DLHC (2019) Planning Practice Guidance Note, Appropriate Assessment, Guidance on the use of Habitats Regulations Assessment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appropriate-assessment>. [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

3.3 Scoping impact pathways

- 3.3.1 Threats and pressures to which European sites are vulnerable have been identified through reference to data held by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and Natural England (NE), and through reference to Ramsar Information Sheets and Site Improvement Plans (SIPs). This information provides current and predicted issues at each European site and is summarised in **Appendix B**.
- 3.3.2 Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives prepared by NE often provides more recent information on threats and pressures upon European sites than SIPs and has, therefore, also been reviewed.
- 3.3.3 A number of threats and pressures are unlikely to be exacerbated by the Local Plan and have not been considered.
- 3.3.4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are protected areas in the United Kingdom (UK). SSSIs are the building blocks of site-based nature conservation in the UK. An SSSI will be designated based on the characteristics of its fauna, flora, geology and/or geomorphology. The conservation status of SSSI features that overlap with European sites offer a useful indicator of habitat/species health at a particular location.
- 3.3.5 NE conducts Whole Feature Assessments (WFAs) which measure the condition of each notified feature across the whole of a SSSI. The conservation status of each notified feature highlights any areas which are particularly vulnerable to threats/pressures. Conservation status is defined as below:
- Favourable;
 - Unfavourable – recovering;
 - Unfavourable – no change; or,
 - Unfavourable – declining.
- 3.3.6 SSSI features in either an 'Unfavourable – no change' or 'Unfavourable – declining' condition indicate that the European site may be particularly vulnerable to certain threats or pressures. It is important to remember that SSSI features may be in an unfavourable state due to the condition of features unrelated to its designation. However, it is considered that the conservation status of SSSI features that overlap with European sites offer a useful indicator of habitat/species health at a particular location.

- 3.3.7 NE defines zones around each SSSI which may be at risk from specific types of development; these are known as Impact Risk Zones (IRZs). These IRZs are “a GIS tool developed by Natural England to make a rapid initial assessment of the potential risks to SSSIs posed by development proposals. They define zones around each SSSI which reflect the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and indicate the types of development proposal which could potentially have adverse impacts. The IRZs also cover the interest features and sensitivities of European sites, which are underpinned by the SSSI designation and ‘Compensation Site’, which have been secured as compensation for impacts on Natura 2000/Ramsar sites”³⁰. The location of IRZs has been taken into consideration in this assessment, as they provide a useful guide as to the location of functionally linked land and likely vulnerabilities to development proposed within the Local Plan.
- 3.3.8 Based on previous HRA work undertaken to support the adopted Local Plan (see **Section 1.4**), and technical expertise and experience in HRA, the following potential impact pathways are considered to be within the scope of influence of the Local Plan.
- **Air pollution:** Land use planning has the potential to increase atmospheric emissions of pollutants to the air. This can result in adverse effects at European sites, such as eutrophication (nitrogen), acidification (nitrogen and sulphur) and direct toxicity (ozone, ammonia and nitrogen oxides)³¹.
 - **Water resources and water levels:** Development can change runoff rates from urbanised areas to European sites or watercourses which run through them. An increase in housing provision can also influence supply and demand for water within the region, which may impact water levels.
 - **Water quality:** Surface water runoff from urban areas has the potential to reduce the quality of water entering a catchment. Water quality may also be reduced through point source effluent discharges from new development at Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTWs) and other controlled discharge sources.
 - **Recreational pressure:** New housing development has the potential to increase recreational pressure upon European sites which are accessible to the public.
 - **Urbanisation effects:** Development has the potential to result in disturbing activities (such as noise, lighting, cat predation and visual disturbance). Disturbance effects may impact upon European sites themselves, and their qualifying features, when outside a designated site boundary.

³⁰ Natural England (2019) Natural England’s Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest User Guidance. Available at: https://magic.defra.gov.uk/Metadata_for_magic/SSSI_IRZ_User_Guidance_MAGIC.pdf [Date accessed: 18/07/25]

³¹ APIS. APIENs Home. Available at: <https://www.apis.ac.uk/APIENs>. [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

- 3.3.9 Land use planning also has the potential to result in impacts upon qualifying features of a European site when located outside a designation boundary, known as FLL. *“The term ‘functional linkage’ refers to the role or ‘function’ that land or sea beyond the boundary of a European site might fulfil in terms of ecologically supporting the populations for which the site was designated or classified. Such land is therefore ‘linked’ to the European site in question because it provides an important role in maintaining or restoring the population of qualifying species at favourable conservation status”³²*. This HRA, therefore, also considers effects upon FLL or mobile species when located outside a designated site boundary within the above topic assessments.
- 3.3.10 The Local Plan will trigger development in the form of housing, employment and retail development. The exact location, scale and nature of this development is not known at this stage in the plan-making process.
- 3.3.11 European sites assessed in this HRA report were identified through consideration of a review of impact pathways and previous HRA work undertaken in support of the adopted Local Plan.

3.4 Air quality

- 3.4.1 The main mechanisms through which air pollution can have an adverse effect is through eutrophication (nitrogen), acidification (nitrogen and sulphur) and direct toxicity (ozone, ammonia and nitrogen oxides). As highlighted through the review of threats and pressures at European sites (**Appendix B**), air pollution, and in particular atmospheric nitrogen deposition, has been identified as a threat or pressure for qualifying features of a number of European sites within the relevant SIPs and Supplementary Conservation Advice notes.
- 3.4.2 Excess atmospheric nitrogen deposition within an ecosystem or habitat can disrupt the delicate balance of ecological processes interacting with one another. As the availability of nitrogen increases in the local environment, some plants that are characteristic of that ecosystem may become competitively excluded in favour of more nitrophilic plants. It also upsets the ammonium and nitrate balance of the ecosystem, which disrupts the growth, structure and resilience of some plant species.
- 3.4.3 Excess nitrogen deposition often leads to the acidification of soils and a reduction in the soils’ buffering capacity (the ability of soil to resist pH changes). It can also render the ecosystem more susceptible to adverse effects of secondary stresses, such as frost or drought, and disturbance events, such as foraging by herbivores.

³² Natural England (2016) Commissioned Report. NECR207. Functional linkage: How areas that are functionally linked to European sites have been considered when they may be affected by plans and projects - a review of authoritative decisions. Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6087702630891520>. [Date accessed: 01/0725]

3.4.4 Natural England has developed a standard methodology for the assessment of traffic-related air quality impacts under the Habitats Regulations, which is relevant to the HRA of land use plans which may result in a change in traffic flows³³. In addition, the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM)³⁴ and the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)³⁵ have prepared advice on the assessment of air quality impacts at designated sites. This guidance sets thresholds for screening of air quality LSEs at the HRA screening stage (Stage 1 of the HRA process) and methodologies for further AA (Stage 2 of the HRA process) of air quality impacts where relevant.

3.4.5 NE's guidance (in the form of the questions below) has been applied to determine potential air quality impact pathways to European sites:

- Does the Local Plan give rise to emissions which are likely to reach a European site?
- Are the qualifying features of sites within 200m of a road sensitive to air pollution?
- Could the sensitive qualifying features of the site be exposed to emissions?
- Application of screening thresholds (alone and then, if necessary, in combination).

Does the Local Plan give rise to emissions which are likely to reach a European site?

3.4.6 The Local Plan will trigger housing and employment development and, therefore, increase traffic-related emissions. Air quality impacts have been shown to typically affect European sites within 10km of a Plan boundary³⁶. For the purpose of decision-making, unless local circumstances support a wider zone, JNCC guidance notes that plan HRA should take account of the potential effects of traffic emissions on European sites located within 10km of the plan boundary. This zone is based on professional judgment recognising that the effects of growth from development beyond 10km will have been accounted for in the Nitrogen Futures modelling work business as usual scenario³⁷.

3.4.7 This 10km distance threshold can be a useful guide to identify the broad areas that may be impacted by air quality. However, it is noted that consideration should also be given to larger residential or commercial allocations and their wider potential for air quality impacts, in the context of the local and regional road network, including key commuting areas.

³³ Natural England (2018) Natural England's approach to advising competent authorities on the assessment of road traffic emissions under the Habitats Regulations (NEA001). Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4720542048845824>. [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

³⁴ IAQM (2019) A guide to the assessment of air quality impacts on designated nature conservation sites – version 1.0. Available at: <https://iaqm.co.uk/text/guidance/air-quality-impacts-on-nature-sites-2019.pdf>. [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

³⁵ CIEEM (2021) Advisory Note: Ecological Assessment of Air Quality Impacts. Available at: <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Air-Quality-advice-note.pdf>. [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

³⁶ Chapman, C., and Kite, B. (2021) Guidance on Decision-making Thresholds for Air Pollution. Available at: <https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/6cce4f2e-e481-4ec2-b369-2b4026c88447>. [Date accessed: 09/05/25]

³⁷ Chapman, C., and Kite, B. (2021) Main Report Guidance on Decision-making Thresholds for Air Pollution. Available at: <https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/6cce4f2e-e481-4ec2-b369-2b4026c88447/JNCC-Report-696-Main-FINAL-WEB.pdf>. [Date accessed: 28/08/25]

- 3.4.8 Data obtained from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in 2021 highlights the most common destinations for journeys to work arising from, and finishing in, the Plan area³⁸. The most common commuting destinations/origins are Peterborough (which lies just north of the Plan area), Fenland (which is located northeast of the Plan area) and South Cambridgeshire (which is located southeast of the Plan area). Other common commuting destinations/origins include the neighbouring areas of Bedford and East Cambridgeshire. This commuting pattern is reflected in the Economic and Employment Needs Assessment prepared in support of the Local Plan³⁹.
- 3.4.9 European sites beyond 10km of the Plan area but within these key commuting areas which are sensitive to air quality effects are also considered within this HRA where they are linked to the Plan area via key strategic road links. These are roads which provide a clear route linking residential and employment areas within the Plan area.
- 3.4.10 Taking this information into consideration, a 10km buffer from the Plan area is considered precautionary, as it encompasses both the key commuting areas (**paragraph 3.4.7**) and strategic road links that connect to the Plan area.

Are the qualifying features of sites within 200m of a road sensitive to air pollution?

- 3.4.11 It is widely accepted that air quality impacts are greatest within 200m of a road source, decreasing with distance^{40,41,42}. Baseline mapping data has been used to determine the proximity of European sites, and their qualifying features, to roads (within 200m) which may result in an exceedance of NE's screening thresholds.
- 3.4.12 The UK Air Pollution Information System (APIS) provides information on all European sites and the sensitivity of their qualifying features (habitats and/or species) to air pollution. This data has been interrogated, alongside a desk-based review of site-based data (**Appendix B**), to determine whether there may be impact pathways from the Local Plan to any European site, through a change in atmospheric emissions.
- 3.4.13 The results (shown in **Table 3.1**) indicate that six European sites within 10km of the Plan area (which corresponds to the key commuting area) are sensitive to air quality impacts.

³⁸ ONS (2023) Visualising people flows. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusorigindestination/#workplace> [Date accessed: 25/07/25]

³⁹ Volterra (2025) Economic and Employment Needs Assessment.

⁴⁰ The Highways Agency, Transport Scotland, Welsh Assembly Government, The Department for Regional Development Northern Ireland (2007) Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 11, Section 3, Part 1: Air Quality. Available at: <http://www.semmms.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Design-Manual-for-Roads-and-Bridges-Volume-11-Section-3-Part-1.-PDF-981Kb.pdf>. [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

⁴¹ Natural England (2018) Natural England's approach to advising competent authorities on the assessment of road traffic emissions under the Habitats Regulations (NEA001). Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4720542048845824>. [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

⁴² Bignal, K., Ashmore, M. & Power, S. (2004) The ecological effects of diffuse air pollution from road transport. English Nature Research Report No.580, Peterborough. Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/133002>. [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

- 3.4.14 Of the six European sites deemed sensitive to air quality impacts, Barnack Hills & Holes SAC, Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC, Fenland SAC⁴³ and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar, are not located within 200m of a strategic road link. Therefore, these four sites can be scoped out of the HRA process in terms of air quality impacts. A review of Natural England data for Orton Pit SAC indicates that it is not sensitive to air quality impacts and therefore can also be scoped out of the HRA process. The remaining European site (Portholme SAC) is scoped into the HRA process based on air quality impact pathways.

Table 3.1: Assessment of air quality impact pathways for European sites within the influence of the Local Plan⁴⁴

European sites within the influence of the Local Plan	Is the European site sensitive to air quality impacts (as per SIP – Appendix B)?	Is there a strategic road link (A and B road or motorway) located within 200m of the site?
Barnack Hills & Holes SAC	Yes	No (the closest strategic road link, the B1443, is located approximately 240m north of the site).
Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC	Yes	No (the closest strategic road link, the A1198, is located approximately 650m from the site).
Fenland SAC	Yes	No (the closest strategic road link, the B660, is located approximately 1.9km to the north of the SAC).
Nene Washes SAC	No	N/A
Nene Washes SPA	No	N/A
Nene Washes Ramsar	No	N/A
Orton Pit SAC	No	N/A
Ouse Washes SAC	No	N/A
Ouse Washes SPA	No	N/A
Ouse Washes Ramsar	No	N/A

⁴³ Fenland SAC is split across three components which lie 27 miles apart. The component of the SAC within 10km of the Plan area is underpinned by Woodwalton Fen SSSI.

⁴⁴ Green shading in Chapter 3 scoping tables indicate threat / pressure at European site is scoped out. Red shading indicates threat / pressure at European site is scoped in for further consideration in the HRA process.

European sites within the influence of the Local Plan	Is the European site sensitive to air quality impacts (as per SIP – Appendix B)?	Is there a strategic road link (A and B road or motorway) located within 200m of the site?
Portholme SAC	Yes	Yes (the A1307 is located approximately 40m from the SAC's northern boundary, the B1514 approximately 190m from this boundary, the B1044 approximately 150m from the eastern boundary, and the B1043 approximately 175m from the SAC's southern boundary).
Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA	No	N/A
Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar	No	N/A
Woodwalton Fen Ramsar	Yes	No (the closest strategic road link, the B660, is located approximately 1.9km to the north of the Ramsar).

Could the sensitive qualifying features of the site be exposed to emissions?

- 3.4.15 The Local Plan will trigger housing and employment development. Therefore, there is potential for an increase in traffic-related emissions within 10km of the Plan area and key commuting areas. As a consequence, there is potential for an increase in traffic-related emissions along road links located within 200m of four European sites that have been identified as sensitive to air quality impacts.

Application of screening thresholds (alone, and then if necessary, in-combination)

- 3.4.16 NE's advice on the assessment of air quality impacts under the Habitats Regulations states that consideration should be given to the risk of road traffic emissions associated with a local plan⁴⁵. This advice states that an assessment of the risks from road traffic emissions can be expressed in terms of the average annual daily traffic flow (AADT, as a proxy for emissions). The use of the AADT screening threshold is advocated by Highways England in their Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). This screening threshold is intended to be used as a guide to determine whether a more detailed assessment of the impact of emissions from road traffic is required. This non-statutory or guideline threshold is based on a predicted change of daily traffic flows of 1,000 AADT or more (or heavy-duty vehicle flows on motorways (HDV) change by 200 AADT or more).

⁴⁵ Natural England (2018) Natural England's approach to advising competent authorities on the assessment of road traffic emissions under the Habitats Regulations (NEA001). Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4720542048845824> [Accessed: 22/07/25]

- 3.4.17 The AADT thresholds do not themselves imply any intrinsic environmental effects and are used solely as a trigger for further investigation. Widely accepted environmental benchmarks for imperceptible impacts are set at 1% of the critical load or level, which is considered to be roughly equivalent to DMRB thresholds for changes in traffic flow of 1,000 AADT and for HDV of 200 AADT. This has been confirmed by modelling using the DMRB Screening Tool that used average traffic flow and speed figures from the Department for Transport (DfT) data to calculate whether the NO_x outputs could result in a change of >1% of critical load/level on different road types. A change of >1,000 AADT on a road was found to equate to a change in traffic flow which might increase emissions by 1% of the critical load or level and might consequentially result in an environmental effect nearby (e.g. within 10m of roadside).
- 3.4.18 The AADT thresholds and 1% of critical load/level are considered by NE to be suitably precautionary as any emissions below this level are widely considered to be imperceptible and, in the case of AADT, undetectable through the DMRB model. There can, therefore, be a high degree of confidence in its application to screen for risks of an effect.
- 3.4.19 Given the Local Plan is currently at the preliminary stages of the plan-making process, traffic data was not available at the time of writing to allow application of the above screening thresholds. Taking a precautionary approach at this stage in the process, as identified in **Table 3.1**, Portholme SAC will, therefore, be scoped in for further consideration of air quality impacts in the HRA process.

3.5 Water quality and water quantity

- 3.5.1 Urban development coming forward through the Local Plan has the ability to affect water-dependent European sites through a number of impacts, as listed below. These impacts have the potential to change the water balance (levels) entering European sites and the quality of this water:
- Change in surface permeability and runoff rates;
 - Increased water demand to supply new homes and businesses;
 - Reduced quality of surface water runoff; and,
 - Increased effluent discharge for treatment.
- 3.5.2 The Water Framework Directive (WFD) provides an indication of the health of the water environment and whether a water body is at 'good' status or potential. Surface water bodies can be classed as 'high', 'good', 'moderate', 'poor' or 'bad' status. This is determined through an assessment of a range of elements relating to the biology and chemical quality of surface waters and quantitative and chemical quality of groundwater. To achieve 'good' ecological status or potential, 'good' chemical status or 'good' groundwater status, every element assessed must be at 'good' status or better. If one element is below its threshold for 'good' status, then the status for the whole water body is classed below 'good'.

- 3.5.3 The WFD sets out areas which require special protection. These include areas designated for “*the protection of habitats or species where the maintenance or improvement of the status of water is an important factor in their protection including relevant Natura 2000 sites designated under Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive) and Directive 79/409/EEC (the Birds Directive)*”⁴⁶.
- 3.5.4 The Local Plan may impact functionally linked watercourses and habitat through a deterioration in water quality, flows and loss, and/or deterioration of riparian and in-stream habitat. If this is the case, the Local Plan may have adverse effects on the achievement of the conservation objectives which aim to maintain and restore the condition of these features for relevant qualifying species. NE consider that ‘good’ ecological status under the WFD is an appropriate standard for functionally linked watercourse⁴⁷.
- 3.5.5 The main watercourse that flows through the Plan area is the River Great Ouse, with the River Nene also flowing along the northern Plan area boundary. The River Great Ouse and its tributaries, which include the River Kym and River Til, drain the southern section of the Plan area. These rivers form a network of watercourses that discharge at the Wash Estuary, through three European sites: The Wash SPA, The Wash Ramsar, and The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC. Several waterways that are part of the Middle Level Navigations waterway network are also located in the centre of the district, between the River Great Ouse and River Nene, and are largely used for land drainage. Numerous tributaries and smaller watercourses also flow through the Plan area, including Bury Brook, Cock Brook, Ellington Brook, Diddington Brook, West Brook, Marley Gap Brook, Billing Brook and Alconbury Brook.
- 3.5.6 The Plan area lies within the Anglian River Basin District. River Basin Districts are subdivided into surface water management catchments (SWMCs)⁴⁸. The majority of the northern half of the Plan area is located within the Old Bedford including the Middle Level SWMC and the majority of the southern part of the Plan area is located within the Ouse Upper and Bedford SWMC, with two small areas in the north and east falling into the Nene SWMC, and a very small portion of southeast Huntingdonshire falling within the Cam and Ely Ouse SWMC (see **Figure 3.1**).
- 3.5.7 River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) provide a framework for protecting and enhancing the benefits provided by the water environment. To achieve this, and because water and land resources are closely linked, they also inform decisions on land-use planning. **Appendix A** provides a summary of the Anglian RBMP⁴⁹.

⁴⁶ Official Journal of the European Communities (2000) Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:5c835afb-2ec6-4577-bdf8-756d3d694eeb.0004.02/DOC_1&format=PDF. [Date accessed: 04/07/25]

⁴⁷ DEFRA (2014) Water Framework Directive implementation in England and Wales: new and updated standards to protect the water environment: May 2014. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307788/river-basin-planning-standards.pdf [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

⁴⁸ DEFRA. River basin districts, England. Available at: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/> [Date accessed: 04/07/25]

⁴⁹ Environment Agency (2022) Anglian river basin district river basin management plan: updated 2022. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/anglian-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan-updated-2022> [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

- 3.5.8 Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMS) are six-year strategies developed by the Environment Agency (EA) for managing water resources at the local level, produced for every river catchment area in England and Wales. Through the CAMS process, the EA prepares an Abstraction Licensing Strategy (ALS) to manage water resources and contribute to implementation of the WFD, with strategies that feed into Water Resource Management Plans (WRMPs).

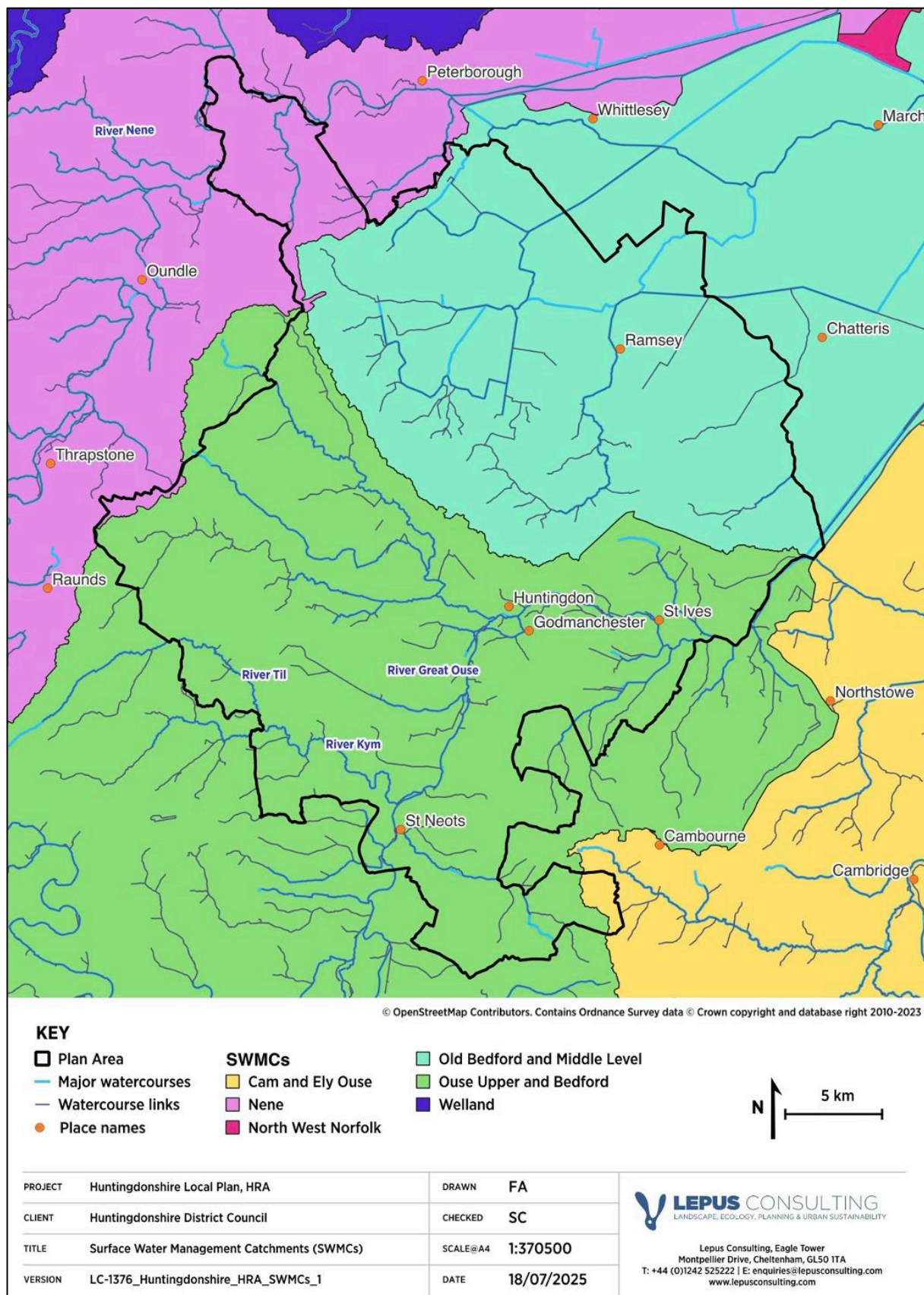


Figure 3.1: Watercourses and Surface Water Management Catchments (SWMCs) in and around the Plan area

- 3.5.9 The Plan area is located predominantly within the Old Bedford including the Middle Level, and the Ouse Upper and Bedford ALS catchments. A small portion of the northern and eastern parts of the Plan area also falls within the Nene ALS catchment. A very small portion of southeast Huntingdonshire falls within the Cam and Ely Ouse ALS catchment. The ALSs outline the available water resources in each catchment area, alongside how these water resources are being used and the intention regarding management of further abstraction. European sites located within these catchment areas have the potential to be affected by water abstraction. The Old Bedford including the Middle Level ALS⁵⁰ lists the Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar as vulnerable to the impacts of poor/unsustainable water abstraction practices. The Ouse Upper and Bedford ALS⁵¹ lists Portholme SAC; the Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; and The Wash SPA, as able to be affected by abstraction practices within the ALS area. The Nene ALS⁵² lists the Nene Washes SPA, Orton Pit SAC, the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar, The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC, The Wash SPA and The Wash Ramsar as vulnerable to the impacts of poor/unsustainable water abstraction practices, due to the water-dependency of their qualifying features.
- 3.5.10 For the purposes of water resource planning and supply, the country is divided into Water Resource Zones (WRZs). WRZs are the largest possible zone for water resource management in which customers share the same risk of a resource shortfall. The Plan area is served by the Ruthamford North and Ruthamford South WRZs, as supplied by Anglian Water, and the Cambridge Water Company Wide WRZ, as supplied by Cambridge Water (see **Figure 3.2**). To increase resilience to drought, water trading with Affinity Water is discussed within the Anglian Water WRMP. Both Ruthamford North and South have been identified as being at risk of climate change impacts in the future; hence, Huntingdonshire's water supply is vulnerable to climate-related risks⁵³. The EA has designated the whole of the Anglian Water region as under serious water stress.
- 3.5.11 Decisions relating to water abstraction for supply and disposal of water are controlled through a number of licensing mechanisms and a high-level water planning framework which is subject to HRA. This ensures the protection of the water environment and compliance with the WFD. One element of this framework is the WRMP that each water service provider is obligated to produce and publish every five years. WRMPs articulate long term plans to accommodate the impacts of population growth, drought, environmental obligations and climate change uncertainty, in order to balance water supply and demand.

⁵⁰ Environment Agency (2017) Old Bedford including Middle Level abstraction licensing strategy. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a82f227ed915d74e62386d3/ALS_2017_Old_Bedford.pdf [Date accessed: 04/07/25]

⁵¹ Environment Agency (2017) Upper Ouse and Bedford Ouse abstraction licensing strategy. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a820dd6e5274a2e87dc0e7f/ALS_2017_Upper_Ouse_and_Bedford_Ouse.pdf [Date accessed: 04/07/25]

⁵² Environment Agency (2021) Nene Catchment Abstraction Licensing Strategy. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/606d91e28fa8f57359cf4346/CAMS-Nene-Catchment-Abstraction-Management-Strategy.pdf> [Date accessed: 04/07/25]

⁵³ Ibid.

3.5.12 The water service providers for the Plan area are Anglian Water and Cambridge Water. Anglian Water's 2024 WRMP⁵⁴ highlights the potential for a shortfall of 571 megalitres of water per day by 2050, with a deficit anticipated across 25 of the 27 WRZs that Anglian Water supplies, if no action is taken. The WRMP outlines a number of measures that need to be taken to ensure the continuation of sustainable sources of supply, including smart metering, leakage reduction and progressing strategic resource options (such as making effective use of the Lincolnshire and Fens reservoirs). The Anglian Water WRMP was supported by an HRA⁵⁵ which recommended mitigation measures that, if implemented, should help to avoid adverse impacts upon the integrity of any European sites either alone, or in-combination. Cambridge Water's WRMP⁵⁶ also demonstrates the potential for a growing supply/demand deficit in the absence of effective management planning. The WRMP also places emphasis on leakage reduction, in addition to reducing household and non-household water consumption, and enforcing universal metering by 2030. The Cambridge Water WRMP was supported by an HRA⁵⁷ which concluded that, alone, the WRMP would have LSEs upon the following European sites, if the recommended mitigation measures were not implemented:

- Ouse Washes SAC;
- Ouse Washes SPA;
- Ouse Washes Ramsar;
- Fenland SAC; and,
- Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC.

3.5.13 WRMPs are linked to Drought Plans. Drought Plans outline the steps that water companies must take in a drought event to ensure that the population maintains access to sufficient water supplies, without detrimentally impacting rivers and the environment. The Anglian Water Drought Plan⁵⁸ and the Cambridge Water Drought Plan⁵⁹ both cover the period from 2022 to 2027 and set out a series of actions to address droughts, including actions to reduce customer demand for water and identification circumstances wherein drought orders and permits may be required.

⁵⁴ Anglian Water (2023) Our Water Resources Management Plan 2024. Available at: <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/siteassets/household/about-us/wrmp/revised-draft-wrmp24-main-report-v2.pdf> [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

⁵⁵ Mott MacDonald (2023) Anglian Water Revised Draft Water Resource Management Plan 2024 Environmental Report Sub-Report A: Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). Available at: <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/SysSiteAssets/household/about-us/wrmp/revised-draft-wrmp24-environmental-report-sub-report-a---hra.pdf> [Accessed 20/05/25].

⁵⁶ Cambridge Water (2025) Final Water Resources Management Plan 2024. Available at: <https://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/media/zadnmcfe/cam-water-resources-management-plan-2024-final.pdf> [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

⁵⁷ Ricardo (2023) Habitats Regulations Assessment: Draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024. Available at: <https://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/media/twqh2ovj/cambridge-water-draft-wrmp24-hra-issue-3.pdf> [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

⁵⁸ Anglian Water (2022) Drought Plan 2022 Final Version. Available at: <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/siteassets/household/about-us/aws-drought-plan-2022.pdf> [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

⁵⁹ Cambridge Water (2022) Cambridge Water drought plan. Available at: <https://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/media/udchgvd1/cambridge-water-final-drought-plan-2022.pdf> [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

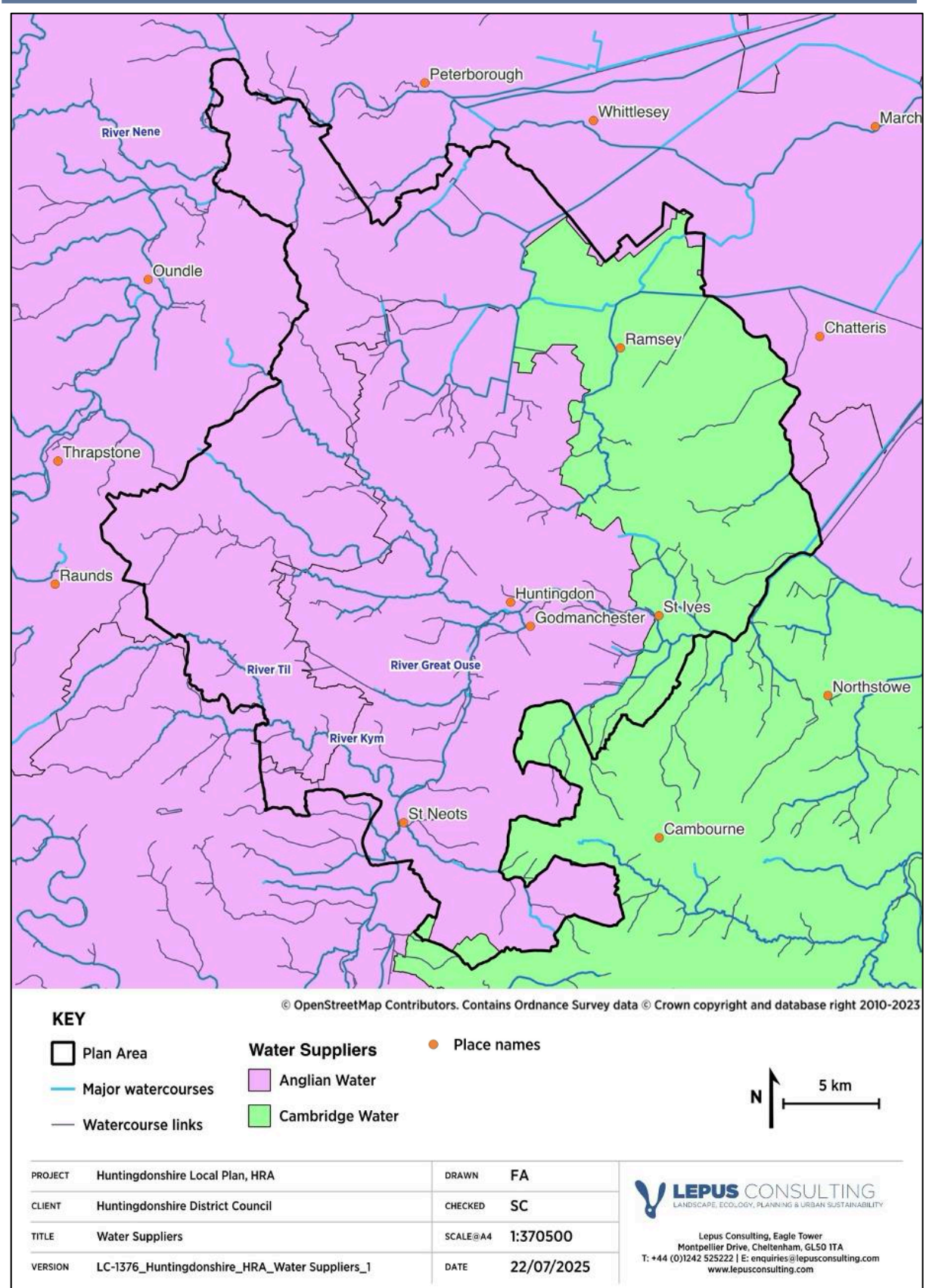


Figure 3.2: Watercourses and Water Suppliers in and around the Plan area

- 3.5.14 Anglian Water provide wastewater services for development in Huntingdonshire. Anglian Water use the term Water Recycling Centres (WRC) to refer to these services. There are 33 WRCs that are within or currently serving communities in Huntingdonshire. Twenty-nine of these are expected to serve growth from commitments or adopted plans⁶⁰. Sewerage Undertakers have a duty under Section 94 of the Water Industry Act 1991 to provide sewerage and treat wastewater arising from new domestic development⁶¹. Environmental permits are used alongside water quality limits as a means of controlling the pollutant load discharged from a WRC to a receiving watercourse. In March 2024, Huntingdonshire District Council completed a Stage 1 Water Cycle Study⁶², comprising the first stage of the Integrated Water Management Strategy (IWMS) for Huntingdonshire. This assessed headroom at WRCs serving Huntingdonshire and identified a requirement for an increase in flow permits and potential upgrades to treatment processes.
- 3.5.15 The IWMS sets out the anticipated growth of the study area up to 2046 and outlines a set of objectives for assessing future water management options. The report also highlights that, according to the latest WFD assessment data, *“all of the watercourses in the study area have moderate or poor overall status”*, largely due to *“the water industry (sewage dischargers) and agricultural and rural land management (livestock, arable and land drainage)”* and pollution from *“urban and highway runoff”*. It is stated that outputs of the EA’s SIMCAT water quality model indicate that *“watercourses within Huntingdonshire may be sensitive to increases in discharge of treated wastewater”*. A Stage 2 Water Cycle Study is currently being prepared in support of the Local Plan alongside plan preparation. Findings from the Phase 2 IWMS will inform later stages of the HRA and plan-making process.

⁶⁰ Huntingdonshire District Council (2024) Huntingdonshire Integrated Water Management Strategy: Stage 1 Water Cycle Study Final Report. Available at: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/ht0h2ww5/huntingdonshire-integrated-water-management-strategy-stage-1-water-cycle-study.pdf> [Date accessed: 14/07/25]

⁶¹ Water Industry Act – 1991. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/56/section/94>. [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

⁶² Huntingdonshire District Council (2024) Huntingdonshire Integrated Water Management Strategy: Stage 1 Water Cycle Study Final Report. Available at: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/ht0h2ww5/huntingdonshire-integrated-water-management-strategy-stage-1-water-cycle-study.pdf> [Date accessed: 14/07/25]

- 3.5.16 As noted in **paragraph 3.5.5**, the main watercourses in the Plan area drain into The Wash Estuary, which comprises three European sites: The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC, The Wash SPA, and The Wash Ramsar. These sites encompass the largest embayment in the UK, as well as extensive intertidal sand and mudflats, subtidal sandbanks, biogenic and geogenic reef, saltmarsh, and a barrier beach system. These systems support populations of Common Seal (*Phoca vitulina*) and Otter (*Lutra lutra*), and provide rich foraging grounds and important roosting habitat for a number of bird species for which the SPA and Ramsar sites are designated^{63,64,65}. The species and habitats for which the three European sites are designated are sensitive to changes in water quality and quantity^{66,67,68}. As the River Great Ouse and Nene flow through and around the Plan area and discharge at The Wash, there is a possibility for activity in the Plan area to adversely affect the quality of water flowing to the three European sites. Furthermore, as the Plan area falls partly within the same ALS catchment area as the Wash (the Nene ALS catchment area), water use/extraction activity within the Plan area has the potential to adversely affect the quantity of water at the European sites. Consequently, despite their location being outside of the Plan area, it is necessary to scope The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC, The Wash SPA, and The Wash Ramsar into the HRA process based on hydrological impact pathways.
- 3.5.17 The northern central section of the Plan area comprises the Great Fen, which was once part of a natural fenland landscape, with a large area of open water called Whittlesey Mere dominating the north, and a mosaic of bogs, fens and wet woodland to the south⁶⁹. The Fenland SAC (where it is underpinned by Woodwalton Fen SSSI and also Woodwalton National Nature Reserve (NNR)) and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar are located within the Great Fen area (see **Figure 3.3**) and, alongside surrounding supporting habitat (see **Figure 3.4**), have significant ecological importance (**Figure 3.5**).
- 3.5.18 The Council has partnered with the EA, NE, and the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, to carry out the Great Fen project⁷⁰. The aim of this project is to help restore the Great Fen and improve the connectivity of its habitats, ultimately aspiring to oversee the creation of a large-scale nature recovery network including the restoration of 14 square miles of wild fen over the next 50 to 100 years.

⁶³ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC (UK0017075). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5950176598425600> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

⁶⁴ JNCC (1988) Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS): The Wash. Available at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/uk11072.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

⁶⁵ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives for The Wash SPA (UK9008021). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5747661105790976> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

⁶⁶ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: The Wash and North Norfolk Coast (SIP245). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5327498292232192> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

⁶⁷ Natural England (2024) The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC, Supplementary Advice. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ConservationAdvice/SupplementaryAdvice.aspx?SiteCode=UK0017075&SiteName=the+wash+&SiteNameDisplay=The+Wash+and+North+Norfolk+Coast+SAC&countyCode=29&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=&NumMarineSeasonality=2> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

⁶⁸ Natural England (2024) The Wash SPA, Supplementary Advice. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ConservationAdvice/SupplementaryAdvice.aspx?SiteCode=UK9008021&SiteName=the%20wash%20&SiteNameDisplay=The+Wash+SPA&countyCode=29&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=&NumMarineSeasonality=21> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

⁶⁹ Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, Environment Agency, Natural England, and Huntingdonshire District Council (2010) Great Fen Masterplan, March 2010. Available at: <https://www.greatfen.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-10/env03-great-fen-masterplan-2010.pdf> [Date accessed: 16/07/25]

⁷⁰ Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, Environment Agency, Natural England, and Huntingdonshire District Council (n.d.) About the Great Fen. Available at: <https://www.greatfen.org.uk/about-great-fen> [Date accessed: 16/07/25]

- 3.5.19 The Council has collaborated on the Great Fen Masterplan⁷¹ to help achieve the aims of the Great Fen project. This masterplan advocates for the re-establishment of pastoral farming practices and promoting the occurrence of natural processes, which will benefit wildlife and locals alike. Good progress has been made to date⁷² and the Local Plan should seek to facilitate further progress by aligning with the aims of the project. This will also require consideration of the SSSIs and National Nature Reserves (NNRs) that underpin the Woodwalton Fen European sites (Woodwalton Fen SSSI and Woodwalton Fen NNR) and other parts of the Great Fen area (Holme Fen SSSI and Holme Fen NNR). These national designations (see **Figure 3.3**) play a crucial role in the wider ecological landscape through provision of functional linkages and processes. Woodwalton Fen NNR supports many important species, including over 1,000 beetle species (of which over 200 are rare), over 900 species of moths and butterflies, over 400 species of wildflowers, and birds such as the Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*)⁷³ (see **Figures 3.4** and **3.5**). Holme Fen NNR also supports numerous species of birds, including the Nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*) and the Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*), as well as Dragonflies (*Anisoptera*), around 450 species of fungi, and an extensive Birch (*Betula*) population⁷⁴.
- 3.5.20 The features of the Great Fen, including the qualifying features of Fenland SAC (where it is underpinned by Woodwalton Fen SSSI) and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar (**Appendix B**) and surrounding areas of supporting habitat, are dependent on wetland habitats which are reliant on surface and/or groundwater. Therefore, maintaining the quality and quantity of water supply is critical to these designations. These European sites, and areas of surrounding functionally linked habitat across the Great Fen area, are, therefore, scoped into the HRA process in terms of water quality and water quantity impacts.

⁷¹ Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, Environment Agency, Natural England, and Huntingdonshire District Council (2010) Great Fen Masterplan, March 2010. Available at: <https://www.greatfen.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-10/env03-great-fen-masterplan-2010.pdf> [Date accessed: 16/07/25]

⁷² Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, Environment Agency, Natural England, and Huntingdonshire District Council (n.d.) Progress towards the Great Fen vision. Available at: <https://www.greatfen.org.uk/about-great-fen/restoration-project-progress> [Date accessed: 16/07/25]

⁷³ Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, Environment Agency, and Natural England, and Huntingdonshire District Council (n.d.) Sites to Visit – Nature Reserve, Woodwalton Fen. Available at: <https://www.greatfen.org.uk/woodwalton-fen> [Date accessed: 16/07/25]

⁷⁴ Woodland Trust (n.d.) Holme Fen. Available at: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/woods/holme-fen/> [Date accessed: 16/07/25]

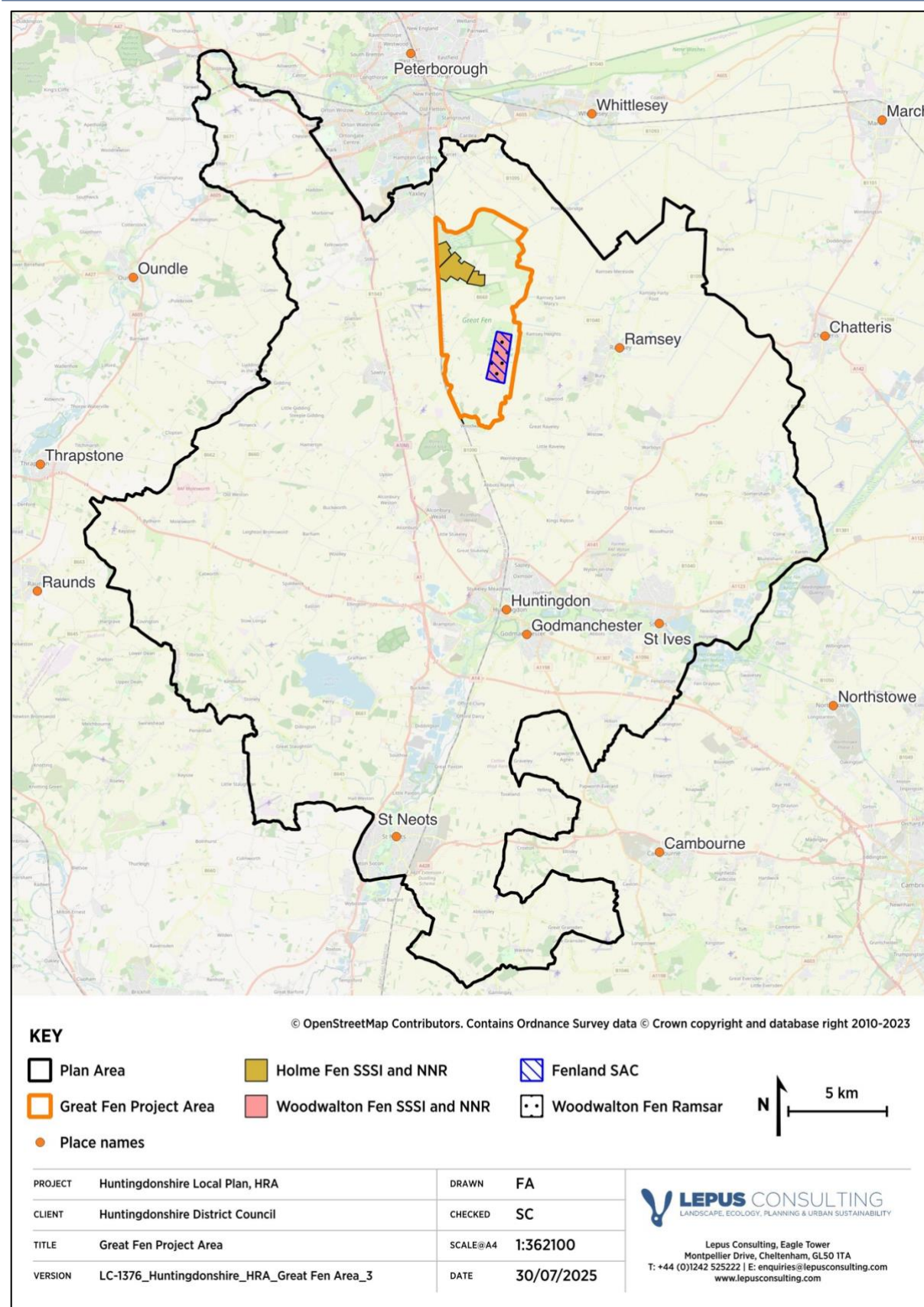


Figure 3.3: Great Fen project area and relevant biodiversity designations

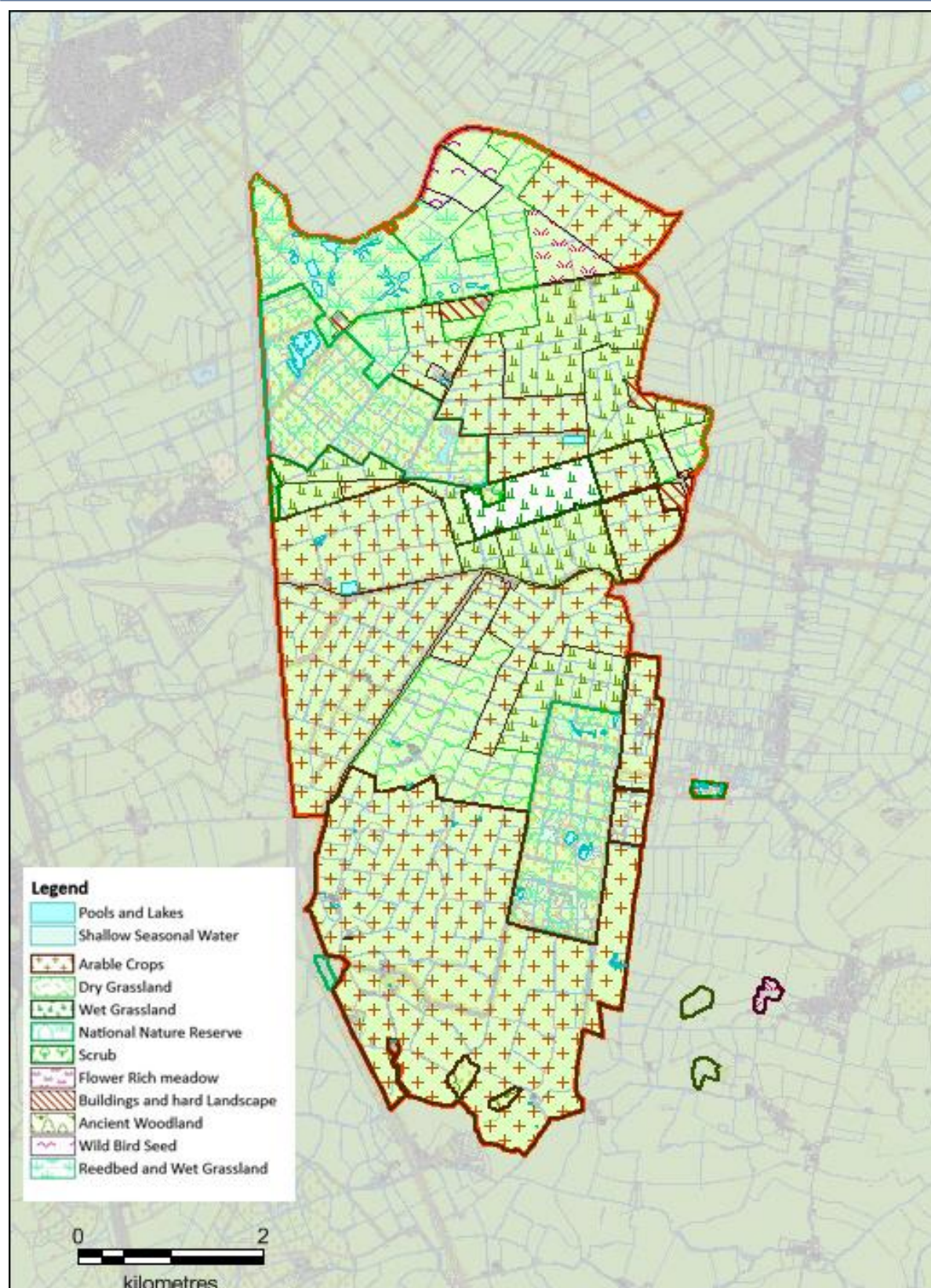


Figure 3.4: Habitats in the Great Fen area identified by Huntingdonshire District Council⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Huntingdonshire District Council (n.d.) Great Fen Masterplan Maps, Habitats. Available at: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-documents/great-fen-masterplan-maps/> [Date accessed: 16/07/25]

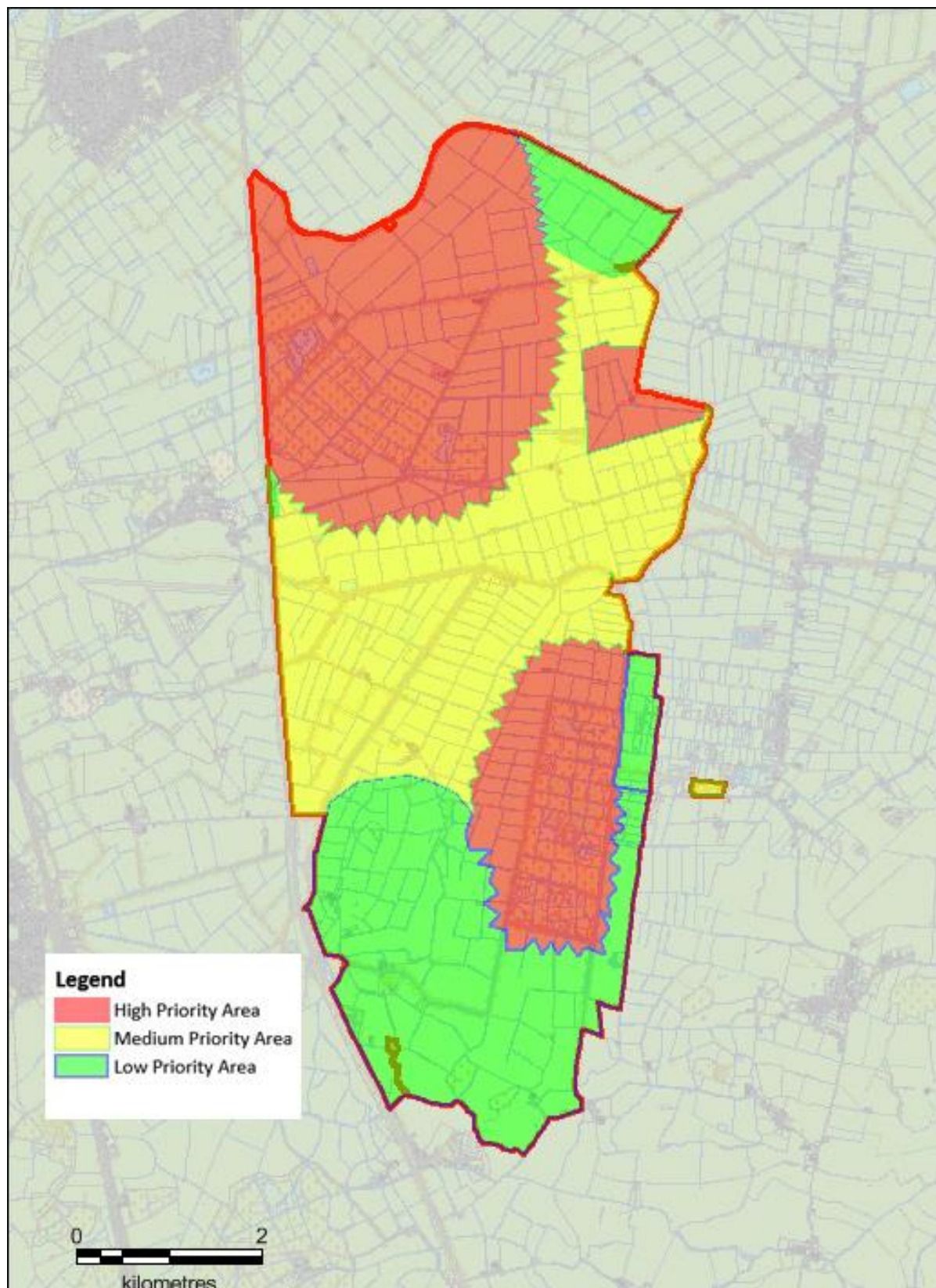


Figure 3.5: Ecological priority areas identified by Huntingdonshire District Council⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Huntingdonshire District Council (n.d.) Great Fen Masterplan Maps, Ecological Priorities. Available at: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-documents/great-fen-masterplan-maps/> [Date accessed: 16/07/25]

3.5.21 Taking into consideration potential changes in water supply (through abstraction for water supply) and water quality (through surface water run-off and discharges from WwTWs), European sites were screened for potential hydrological impact pathways. This review looked at European sites which are hydrologically linked to the Plan area and hydrologically sensitive, including impacts upon functionally linked watercourses. **Table 3.2** indicates those European sites that will be scoped into the screening assessment for further consideration in the HRA process based on hydrological impact pathways.

Table 3.2: Assessment of hydrological impact pathways for European sites within the influence of the Local Plan

European sites with hydrological links to the Plan area	Potential water quality LSEs	Potential water quantity LSEs	Will the European site be scoped in for further assessment in the HRA process?
Fenland SAC ⁷⁷	Fenland SAC is designated for its calcareous fen and meadow habitats, which support populations of Spined Loach (<i>Cobitis taenia</i>) and Great Crested Newt (<i>Triturus cristatus</i>). Fenlands are notably sensitive to changes in water quality, with changes to nutrient levels and water chemistry easily able to offset the balance of the ecosystem ⁷⁸ . The SAC is located within the Plan area; therefore, development under the Local Plan has the potential to adversely affect the SAC through changes to water quality. As such, the site is scoped in for further consideration in the HRA process based upon water quality impact pathways.	Fenland SAC (and the northern half of the Plan area) is located within the Old Bedford including the Middle Level ALS catchment area. The ALS ⁷⁹ concluded that “ <i>licensed abstraction has such a small influence on water levels in Woodwalton Fen that they can be shown not to have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site</i> ”. However, the Great Fen area (specifically the Woodwalton Fen area) has been identified as vulnerable to changes to water levels via flooding ⁸⁰ , which may become more prevalent as a result of decreased permeability of land associated with development under the Local Plan. Fenlands are highly sensitive to changes in water quantity ⁸¹ ; hence, activity within the Plan area has the potential to threaten the status of the fenland habitats and supported species. Therefore, the SAC is scoped into the HRA process for water quantity impact pathways.	Yes

⁷⁷ Fenland SAC is split across three components which lie 27 miles apart. The component of the SAC within 10km of the Plan area is underpinned by Woodwalton Fen SSSI.

⁷⁸ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features Fenland (SAC) Site Code: UK0014782. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0014782.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

⁷⁹ Environment Agency (2017) Old Bedford including Middle Level abstraction licensing strategy. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a82f227ed915d74e62386d3/ALS_2017_Old_Bedford.pdf [Date accessed: 04/07/25]

⁸⁰ Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, Environment Agency, Natural England, and Huntingdonshire District Council. Big Ideas: Flood Protection. Available at: <https://www.greatfen.org.uk/big-ideas/flood-protection#:~:text=Flooding%20is%20a%20particular%20risk,areas%20are%20below%20sea%20level.> [Date accessed: 22/07/25]

⁸¹ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features Fenland (SAC) Site Code: UK0014782. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0014782.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

European sites with hydrological links to the Plan area	Potential water quality LSEs	Potential water quantity LSEs	Will the European site be scoped in for further assessment in the HRA process?
Nene Washes SAC	Nene Washes SAC ⁸² is designated for supporting the Spined Loach, which is sensitive to changes in water quality. The site is located approximately 2.1km north of the Plan area and is hydrologically connected to the Plan area via the River Nene and its tributaries. As such, the site is scoped in for further consideration in the HRA process based upon water quality impact pathways.	Nene Washes SAC is located within the Nene ALS catchment area. Whilst northern and eastern parts of the Plan area do also fall within the Nene ALS catchment area, the SAC was not identified as vulnerable to changes in water levels as a result of abstraction in the Nene ALS ⁸³ . Therefore, the site is scoped out of the HRA process for water quantity impact pathways.	Yes
Nene Washes SPA	Nene Washes SPA ⁸⁴ is designated for supporting numerous breeding and non-breeding bird species, such as the Northern Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>), which are sensitive to changes in water quality. The site is located approximately 2.1km north of the Plan area and is hydrologically connected to the Plan area via the River Nene and its tributaries. As such, the site is scoped in for further consideration in the HRA process based upon water quality impact pathways.	Nene Washes SPA is located within the Nene ALS catchment area and identified as vulnerable to changes in water levels as a result of abstraction in the Nene ALS. The Nene ALS catchment area covers some of the northern and eastern parts of the Plan area; hence, increased abstraction rates to serve development within the Plan area may adversely affect the water levels of the supporting habitat upon which bird species, such as the Northern Shoveler for which the site is designated, rely. As such, the site is scoped into the HRA process for water quantity impact pathways.	Yes

⁸² Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for Ouse Washes SAC (UK0013011). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4894882430713856> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

⁸³ Environment Agency (2021) Nene Catchment Abstraction Licensing Strategy. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/606d91e28fa8f57359cf4346/CAMS-Nene-Catchment-Abstraction-Management-Strategy.pdf> [Date accessed: 04/07/25]

⁸⁴ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives for Nene Washes SPA (UK9008031). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4894064390438912> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

European sites with hydrological links to the Plan area	Potential water quality LSEs	Potential water quantity LSEs	Will the European site be scoped in for further assessment in the HRA process?
Nene Washes Ramsar	Nene Washes Ramsar ⁸⁵ is designated for supporting “an assemblage of nationally rare breeding birds”, “a wide range of raptors”, “several nationally scarce plants”, “two vulnerable and two rare British Red Data Book invertebrate species” and the Tundra Swan (<i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>). Many of these qualifying species are sensitive to changes in water quality. The site is located approximately 2.1km north of the Plan area and is hydrologically connected to the Plan area via the River Nene and its tributaries. As such, the Ramsar is scoped in for further consideration in the HRA process based upon water quality impact pathways.	Nene Washes Ramsar is located within the Nene ALS catchment area, which covers some of the northern and eastern parts of the Plan area. As the Nene Washes SPA is identified as vulnerable to changes in water levels as a result of abstraction in the Nene ALS, it can be assumed that the Nene Washes Ramsar site is similarly vulnerable given the similarity in qualifying features. Increased abstraction rates to serve development within the Plan area may adversely affect the water levels of the supporting habitat upon which qualifying bird species rely. As such, the Ramsar is scoped into the HRA process for water quantity impact pathways.	Yes
Orton Pit SAC	Orton Pit SAC ⁸⁶ is designated for its calcium-rich, nutrient-poor waters and Great Crested Newt. The site is located within 600m of the Plan area’s northern boundary; however, the only waterbody proximate to the site (Stanground Lode) has its source downstream of the Plan area. As such, the SAC can be scoped out of the HRA process for water quality impact pathways.	The Nene ALS lists Orton Pit SAC as one of the water-dependent European sites located within the catchment area with the potential to be affected by abstraction practices. As the Plan area is partially located within the Nene ALS catchment area, additional abstraction to serve development within the area may result in changes to the water levels at Orton Pit, which could adversely affect both the habitat and species for which it is designated. Therefore, the SAC is scoped into the HRA process for water quantity impact pathways.	Yes

⁸⁵ JNCC (1993) Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS): Nene Washes. Available at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11046.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

⁸⁶ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for Orton Pit SAC (UK0030053). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5289941760212992> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

European sites with hydrological links to the Plan area	Potential water quality LSEs	Potential water quantity LSEs	Will the European site be scoped in for further assessment in the HRA process?
Ouse Washes SAC	Ouse Washes SAC ⁸⁷ is designated for supporting the Spined Loach, which is sensitive to changes in water quality. The southern portion of the site coincides with the eastern part of the Plan area. The site is downstream of, and hydrologically connected to, the Plan area via the River Great Ouse and its tributaries. As such, the SAC is scoped in for further consideration in the HRA process based upon water quality impact pathways.	Ouse Washes SAC is located within The Old Bedford including the Middle Level ALS catchment area, adjacent to the Ouse Upper and Bedford ALS ⁸⁸ catchment area. Both ALSs consider the Ouse Washes SAC as a proximate, water-dependent site that may be affected by abstraction practices within the area. Increased abstraction rates to serve development within the Plan area (also partly located within the two ALS catchment areas) may have an impact upon the supporting habitat for the Spined Loach for which the site is designated. As such, the SAC is scoped into the HRA process for water quantity impact pathways.	Yes
Ouse Washes SPA	Ouse Washes SPA ⁸⁹ is designated for supporting numerous breeding and non-breeding bird species, such as the Northern Shoveler, which are sensitive to changes in water quality. The southern portion of the site coincides with the eastern part of the Plan area. The site is downstream of, and hydrologically connected to, the Plan area via the River Great Ouse and its tributaries. As such, the site is scoped in for further consideration in the HRA process based upon water quality impact pathways.	Ouse Washes SPA is located within The Old Bedford including the Middle Level ALS catchment area, adjacent to the Ouse Upper and Bedford ALS catchment area. Both ALSs consider the Ouse Washes SPA as a proximate, water-dependent site that may be affected by abstraction practices within the area. Increased abstraction rates to serve development within the Plan area (also partly located within the two ALS catchment areas) may have an impact upon the supporting habitat for the Northern Shoveler and other species of breeding and non-breeding birds for which the site is designated. As such, the SPA is scoped into the HRA process for water quantity impact pathways.	Yes

⁸⁷ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for Ouse Washes SAC (UK0013011). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4894882430713856> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

⁸⁸ Environment Agency (2017) Upper Ouse and Bedford Ouse abstraction licensing strategy. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a820dd6e5274a2e87dc0e7f/ALS_2017_Upper_Ouse_and_Bedford_Ouse.pdf [Date accessed: 04/07/25]

⁸⁹ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives for Ouse Washes SPA (UK9008041). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6636062256398336> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

European sites with hydrological links to the Plan area	Potential water quality LSEs	Potential water quantity LSEs	Will the European site be scoped in for further assessment in the HRA process?
Ouse Washes Ramsar	Ouse Washes Ramsar ⁹⁰ is designated for supporting a number of bird species, as well as relict fenland fauna and “ <i>several nationally scarce plants</i> ”, such as the Small Water Pepper (<i>Polygonum minus</i>) that is sensitive to changes in water quality. The southern portion of the site coincides with the eastern part of the Plan area. The site is downstream of, and hydrologically connected to, the Plan area via the River Great Ouse and its tributaries. As such, the site is scoped in for further consideration in the HRA process based upon water quality impact pathways.	Ouse Washes Ramsar is located within The Old Bedford including the Middle Level ALS catchment area, adjacent to the Ouse Upper and Bedford ALS catchment. Both ALSs consider the Ouse Washes Ramsar as a proximate, water-dependent site that may be affected by abstraction practices within the area. Increased abstraction rates to serve development within the Plan area (also partly located within the two ALS catchment areas) may have an impact upon the supporting habitat for the Small Water Pepper and other aquatic species for which the site is designated. As such, the Ramsar is scoped into the HRA process for water quantity impact pathways.	Yes
Portholme SAC	Portholme SAC ⁹¹ , designated for its lowland hay meadows, is located within the centre of the Plan area, surrounded by numerous tributaries of the River Great Ouse. The site is identified in NE’s SIP ⁹² and Supplementary Advice ⁹³ documents as vulnerable to changes in water quality from the floodwaters arising from the River Great Ouse, which may be impacted by development occurring through the Local Plan. As such, the SAC is scoped in for further consideration in the HRA process based upon water quality impact pathways.	Portholme SAC is located within the Ouse Upper and Bedford ALS catchment area and is identified in the associated ALS as vulnerable to changes in water levels as a result of abstraction activity in the area. Approximately half of the Plan area falls within this ALS catchment area. Therefore, the SAC is scoped into the HRA process based upon water quantity impact pathways as the meadows may be adversely affected by changes to water levels due to increased abstraction to serve development allocated under the Local Plan.	Yes

⁹⁰ JNCC (1976) Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS): Ouse Washes. Available at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11051.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

⁹¹ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for Portholme SAC (UK0030054). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4802651548024832> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

⁹² Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Portholme SAC (SIP177). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6533964571344896> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

⁹³ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features Portholme Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Site Code: UK0030054. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0030054.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

European sites with hydrological links to the Plan area	Potential water quality LSEs	Potential water quantity LSEs	Will the European site be scoped in for further assessment in the HRA process?
The Wash & North Norfolk SAC	Two of the main waterbodies in and around the Plan area (the River Great Ouse and River Nene) discharge at The Wash Estuary, where The Wash & North Norfolk SAC is located. The SAC ⁹⁴ is designated for numerous habitats (such as intertidal sandbanks and mudflats) and species (such as the Common Seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>) and Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)) that are noted as sensitive to changes in water quality ^{95,96} . As such, the site is scoped in for further consideration in the HRA process based upon water quality impact pathways.	The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC lies partly within the Nene ALS catchment area. The site is identified as vulnerable to changing water levels due to abstraction practices within the area ⁹⁷ . Increased abstraction rates to serve development within the Plan area (also partly located within this ALS catchment) has potential to alter water levels at the site, adversely affecting the status of the water-dependent habitats and supporting species for which it is designated. The Ouse Upper and Bedford ALS also identified vulnerability to changing water levels due to abstraction practices within this catchment area (which covers approximately half of the Plan area). Therefore, the SAC is scoped into the HRA process based upon water quantity impact pathways.	Yes

⁹⁴ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC (UK0017075). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5950176598425600> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

⁹⁵ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: The Wash and North Norfolk Coast (SIP245). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5327498292232192> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

⁹⁶ Natural England (2024) The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC, Supplementary Advice. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/3kzmvxch> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

⁹⁷ Environment Agency (2021) Nene Catchment Abstraction Licensing Strategy. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/606d91e28fa8f57359cf4346/CAMS-Nene-Catchment-Abstraction-Management-Strategy.pdf> [Date accessed: 04/07/25]

European sites with hydrological links to the Plan area	Potential water quality LSEs	Potential water quantity LSEs	Will the European site be scoped in for further assessment in the HRA process?
The Wash SPA	Two of the main waterbodies in and around the Plan area (the River Great Ouse and River Nene) discharge at The Wash Estuary, where The Wash SPA is located. The SPA ⁹⁸ is designated for numerous breeding and non-breeding bird species (such as the Grey Plover, <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) that are noted as sensitive to changes in water quality ^{99,100} . As such, the site is scoped in for further consideration in the HRA process based upon water quality impact pathways.	The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC lies partly within the Nene ALS catchment area. The site is identified in the Nene ALS as vulnerable to changing water levels as a result of abstraction practices within the area. Increased abstraction rates to serve development within the Plan area (also partly located within this ALS catchment area) has the potential to alter water levels at the site, adversely affecting habitats of the bird species for which it is designated. The site is also identified in the Ouse Upper and Bedford ALS as vulnerable to changing water levels as a result of abstraction practices within this nearby catchment area (which covers approximately half of the Plan area). Therefore, the SPA is scoped into the HRA process based upon water quantity impact pathways.	Yes
The Wash Ramsar	Two of the main waterbodies in and around the Plan area (the River Great Ouse and River Nene) discharge at The Wash Estuary, where The Wash Ramsar is located. The Ramsar ¹⁰¹ is designated for numerous breeding and non-breeding bird species (such as the Grey Plover, <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) that are noted as sensitive to changes in water quality ¹⁰² . As such, the site is scoped in for further consideration in the HRA process based upon water quality impact pathways.	The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC lies partly within the Nene ALS catchment and is vulnerable to changing water levels as a result of abstraction practices within the area. Increased abstraction rates to serve development within the Plan area (also partly located within this ALS catchment) has potential to alter water levels at the site, adversely affecting supporting habitats for the bird species for which it is designated. The site is also identified in the Ouse Upper and Bedford ALS as vulnerable to changing water levels due to abstraction practices within this catchment area (which covers approximately half of the Plan area). Therefore, the Ramsar is scoped into the HRA process based upon water quantity impact pathways.	Yes

⁹⁸ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC (UK0017075). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5950176598425600> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

⁹⁹ Natural England (2024) The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC, Supplementary Advice. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/3kzmvxch> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

¹⁰⁰ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: The Wash and North Norfolk Coast (SIP245). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5327498292232192> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

¹⁰¹ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC (UK0017075). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5950176598425600> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

¹⁰² Natural England (2024) The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC, Supplementary Advice. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/3kzmvxch> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

European sites with hydrological links to the Plan area	Potential water quality LSEs	Potential water quantity LSEs	Will the European site be scoped in for further assessment in the HRA process?
Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA	Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA is designated for the Great Bittern, Gadwall, and European Golden Plover. The closest part of the European site to the Plan area is located approximately 3.5km from the eastern boundary. The SPA is positioned along the River Nene; however, it lies upstream of the Plan area. As such, LSEs upon water quality at the SPA are not anticipated to arise through development occurring under the Local Plan. Therefore, the SPA is scoped out of the HRA process for water quality impact pathways.	Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA is located within the Nene ALS catchment area. The site is noted as vulnerable to changing water levels due to abstraction within the Nene ALS. The Nene ALS catchment covers some of the northern and eastern parts of the Plan area. Increased abstraction rates to serve development within the Plan area may adversely affect the water levels of the habitats supporting qualifying bird species. As such, the site is scoped into the HRA process for water quantity impact pathways.	Yes
Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar	Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar is designated for a waterbird assemblage, including Mute Swans and Gadwall. The closest part of the European site to the Plan area is located approximately 3.5km from the eastern boundary. The Ramsar is positioned along the River Nene; however, it lies upstream of the Plan area. As such, LSEs upon water quality at the SPA are not anticipated to arise through development occurring under the Local Plan. Therefore, the SPA is scoped out of the HRA process for water quality impact pathways.	Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar is located within the Nene ALS catchment area. The site is noted as vulnerable to changing water levels as a result of abstraction within the Nene ALS. The Nene ALS catchment area covers some of the northern and eastern parts of the Plan area. Increased abstraction rates to serve development within the Plan area may adversely affect the water levels of the habitats supporting the qualifying bird species. As such, the site is scoped into the HRA process for water quantity impact pathways.	Yes

European sites with hydrological links to the Plan area	Potential water quality LSEs	Potential water quantity LSEs	Will the European site be scoped in for further assessment in the HRA process?
Woodwalton Fen Ramsar	Woodwalton Fen Ramsar is designated for its fenland habitat, which supports two species of British Red Data Book plants (Fen Violet (<i>Viola persicifolia</i>) and Fen Wood-rush (<i>Luzula pallidula</i>)), as well as many wetland invertebrates, aquatic beetles, flies and moths. Fenlands are notably sensitive to changes in water quality, with changes to nutrient levels and water chemistry easily able to offset the balance of the ecosystem ^{103,104} . The site is located within the Plan area; therefore, development under the Local Plan has the potential to adversely affect the Ramsar through changes to water quality. As such, the site is scoped in for further consideration in the HRA process based upon water quality impact pathways.	Woodwalton Fen Ramsar (and the northern half of the Plan area) lies in the Old Bedford including the Middle Level ALS catchment area. Increased abstraction rates to serve development within the Plan area may cause a decline in water levels, affecting the fenland habitat and supporting species for which the site is designated. Furthermore, the Woodwalton Fen area is vulnerable to changes to water levels via flooding ¹⁰⁵ , which may become more prevalent due to decreased permeability of land associated with development under the Local Plan. Fenlands are highly sensitive to changes in water quantity ¹⁰⁶ ; hence, activity within the Plan area has the potential to threaten the status of the fenland habitats and supported species. Therefore, the Ramsar is scoped into the HRA process for water quantity impact pathways.	Yes

3.6 Recreational pressure

- 3.6.1 Increased recreational pressure at European sites can result in damage to habitats in a number of ways, including through erosion and compaction; troubling of grazing stock; causing changes in behaviour to animals such as birds at nesting and feeding sites; spreading invasive species; dog fouling; and tree climbing.
- 3.6.2 A common approach taken across the UK to address recreational impacts at European sites is to establish a buffer zone or Zone of Influence (ZoI) based on detailed visitor survey data. The ZoI is the area within which there are likely to be significant effects arising from recreational activities undertaken by additional residents due to growth. This is often calculated by taking the distance travelled to reach a particular site by 75% of the respondents to visitor surveys. Where available, buffer distances have been applied to determine potential pathways of recreational impacts from the Local Plan.

¹⁰³ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Fenland SAC (SIP084). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6024783481274368> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

¹⁰⁴ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features Fenland (SAC) Site Code: UK0014782. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0014782.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

¹⁰⁵ Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, Environment Agency, Natural England, and Huntingdonshire District Council. Big Ideas: Flood Protection. Available at: <https://www.greatfen.org.uk/big-ideas/flood-protection#:~:text=Flooding%20is%20a%20particular%20risk,areas%20are%20below%20sea%20level>. [Date accessed: 22/07/25]

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

- 3.6.3 The broad principle of buffer zones is one component of the HRA screening process for recreational pressures. The recreational draw of a European site depends on a number of factors. These factors include the extent and range of facilities provided (in particular parking); accessibility, both within the European site and in terms of linkages to the wider area beyond the site; incorporation of a European site as part of a wider designation, such as a National Park; and promotion of the site. A review of Recreational Impact Assessments (RIAs) undertaken for other European sites across the UK indicates that visitors typically live within 4.2 km (overall median value) of nature conservation sites and that the majority (75%) live within 12.6 km¹⁰⁷. However, this review recognises that some visitors are prepared to travel longer distances to visit particular sites, for instance coastal and wetland sites.
- 3.6.4 As such, a precautionary distance of 15km has been applied to the scoping of European sites which may be sensitive to potential recreational impact pathways. This scoping exercise draws on a review of NE data which identifies vulnerabilities at each of the European sites located within 15km of the Plan area (**Appendix B**).
- 3.6.5 The following 14 European sites are located within 15km of the Plan area:
- Barnack Hills & Holes SAC;
 - Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC;
 - Fenland SAC¹⁰⁸;
 - Nene Washes SAC,
 - Nene Washes SPA;
 - Nene Washes Ramsar;
 - Orton Pit SAC;
 - Ouse Washes SAC,
 - Ouse Washes SPA;
 - Ouse Washes Ramsar;
 - Portholme SAC;
 - Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA;
 - Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar; and,
 - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar.

¹⁰⁷ Weitowitz, D, C. Panter, C. Hoskin, R. and Liley, D. (2019) The effect of urban development on visitor numbers to nearby protected nature conservation sites. Journal of Urban Ecology, 5(1). Available at: <https://academic.oup.com/jue/article/5/1/juz019/5602629>. [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

¹⁰⁸ Fenland SAC is split across three components which lie 27 miles apart. The component of the SAC within 10km of the Plan area is underpinned by Woodwalton Fen SSSI.

- 3.6.6 Barnack Hills & Holes SAC¹⁰⁹ comprises semi-natural dry grassland and scrubland habitat on calcareous substrates within a disused medieval quarry and is an important orchid site. The SAC is also designated as an NNR. The features of the SAC have been identified as vulnerable to public access and disturbance, particularly from dog walkers which are compacting the grassland and increasing nitrogen loading and the spread of negative indicator species¹¹⁰. The HRA of the adopted Local Plan highlighted the risk of increased visitor pressure from the nearby village of Barnack¹¹¹. A review of mapping data indicates that the site is only accessible on foot via a car park on Wittering Road to the north of the site. Given the site is a disused quarry it is steep in parts and paths are uneven. No visitor facilities are provided on the site itself and the visitor draw is likely to be limited, predominantly from the village of Barnack, but no further than 5km. Whilst Barnack does not lie within Huntingdonshire, as the European site is located just under 5km from the Plan area's northern boundary, it is possible that residential development concentrated in the north of the district could result in an increasing number of dog walkers visiting the SAC. Therefore, Barnack Hills & Holes SAC is scoped into the HRA process for further consideration of recreational pressures in the screening assessment.
- 3.6.7 The qualifying species of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC¹¹² is the Barbastelle Bat (*Barbastella barbastellus*). This SAC is situated approximately 4km to the west of the Plan area. Public disturbance has been identified as a threat to the SAC in the SIP^{113,114}. Public access is permitted through the woods¹¹⁵ and it is possible that increased residential development in the Plan area will result in greater recreational pressure upon the SAC. South Cambridgeshire District Council has published a Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which identifies a key conservation area around the SAC of 5km and a 10km sustenance or wider conservation area. It is noted that the SSSI IRZs for this SAC are currently under review by NE¹¹⁶. These zones can however be used as a guide to the potential extent of recreational impacts. As such, Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC is scoped into the HRA process for further consideration of recreational pressures.

¹⁰⁹ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for Barnack Hills & Holes SAC (UK0030031). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5111783597539328> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹¹⁰ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Barnack Hills & Holes SAC (SIP009). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4529218465562624> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹¹¹ Bodsey Ecology Limited (2017) Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 – Habitats Regulations Assessment 2017. Available at: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/2684/habitats-regulations-assessment-2017.pdf> [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

¹¹² Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC (UK0030331). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6736081810620416> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹¹³ Natural England (2015) Site Improvement Plan: Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC (SIP078). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5757354431741952> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹¹⁴ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features, Eversden and Wimpole Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Site Code: UK0030331. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0030331.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹¹⁵ Bodsey Ecology Limited (2017) Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 – Habitats Regulations Assessment 2017. Available at: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/2684/habitats-regulations-assessment-2017.pdf> [Date accessed: 01/07/25]

¹¹⁶ Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (2022) Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document Adopted Final February 2022. Available at: <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/media/2504/qcsp-biodiversity-spd-final-copy-march-2022-1.pdf> [Date accessed: 23/07/25]

- 3.6.8 Nene Washes SAC¹¹⁷ and Ramsar¹¹⁸ are designated for supporting the Spined Loach (**Appendix B**). The Spined Loach is restricted to five east-flowing rivers in eastern England. This species appears to have limited means of dispersal; therefore, distribution records are patchy¹¹⁹. The Nene Washes SAC and Ramsar contain the highest recorded density of Spined Loach. Recreation is, however, not identified as a threat to the SAC or Ramsar for this species due to a lack of angling interest^{120,121} and, therefore, recreational impacts upon the Nene Washes SAC can be scoped out of any further assessment.
- 3.6.9 The qualifying species of the Nene Washes SPA¹²² include a number internationally important species of birds which are reliant on the Washes seasonally flooded habitat for providing breeding and wintering habitat. The Nene Washes Ramsar is also designated for Tundra Swan and a number of breeding birds, raptors and nationally scarce plants and invertebrates (**Appendix B**). The Nene Way long distance path runs along the northern bank of the River Nene, providing public access from Peterborough eastwards past Whittlesey to Ring's End. The SPA and Ramsar designations have been identified as vulnerable to disturbance caused by human activity upon bird populations, specifically through visitors engaging in recreational activities such as angling, wildfowling, bird watching and skating at the site¹²³. As the SPA and Ramsar are located approximately 2km from the northern boundary of the Plan area, residential development allocated in the Plan has the potential to increase recreational pressure upon the designation; therefore, both sites are scoped into the HRA process for further consideration of this impact pathway.
- 3.6.10 Orton Pit SAC¹²⁴ is designated for its calcium-rich, nutrient-poor waters and the Great Crested Newt. The site is privately owned with no public access; therefore, recreational impact pathways can be scoped out of the HRA process¹²⁵.

¹¹⁷ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for Nene Washes SAC (UK0030222). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5559224163631104> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹¹⁸ JNCC (1993) Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS): Nene Washes. Available at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11046.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

¹¹⁹ JNCC. 1149 Spined loach *Cobitis taenia*. Available at: <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/species/S1149/> [Date accessed: 22/07/25]

¹²⁰ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Nene Washes (SIP146). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5376938197647360> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹²¹ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features, Nene Washes (SAC) Site Code: UK0030222. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0030222.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹²² Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives for Nene Washes SPA (UK9008031). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4894064390438912> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹²³ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features, Nene Washes (SPA) Site Code: UK9008031. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK9008031.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹²⁴ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for Orton Pit SAC (UK0030053). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5289941760212992> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹²⁵ Froglife. Hampton Nature Reserve (Private Site). Available at: <https://www.froglife.org/what-we-do/improving-habitats/froglife-reserves/hampton-nature-reserve/> [Date accessed: 22/07/25]

- 3.6.11 The Ouse Washes SAC¹²⁶ is designated for the Spined Loach. As set out in **paragraph 3.6.8** for the Nene Washes SAC, recreational impacts upon the Spined Loach are unlikely and this SAC can, therefore, be scoped out of the HRA process in terms of this impact pathway. The Ouse Washes SPA¹²⁷ is designated for supporting numerous breeding and non-breeding bird species. The Ouse Washes Ramsar¹²⁸ is also designated for supporting a number of bird species, as well as relict fenland fauna and “*several nationally scarce plants*”, such as the Small Water Pepper. The conservation of habitats at the Ouse Washes SPA is noted to be dependent on control of access and recreational activities¹²⁹. The Ouse Washes SPA and Ramsar designations extend into the eastern section of the Plan area. The Ouse Washes encompasses two canalised main river channels of the River Great Ouse that run along each side of its length, with an extensive area of wet grassland and field drains in between¹³⁰. Public access is possible along both the main river channels and the open access land in the fields between. Given the location of these designations within the Plan area, the SPA and Ramsar will be scoped into the HRA process for further consideration of recreational impacts.
- 3.6.12 Portholme SAC¹³¹, designated for its lowland hay meadows, is located within the centre of the Plan area. The meadows have not been identified as vulnerable to recreational pressure^{132,133} in the SIP or Supplementary Advice documents provided by NE; however, in their comments on the HRA for the adopted Local Plan, NE expressed concern surrounding the sensitivity of meadow flora communities to existing recreational activities such as walking and dog walking. The SAC is open access land with three Public Rights of Way, including the Ouse Valley Way, passing through the SAC with parking provided to its immediate north. Development under the Local Plan that is concentrated within walkable and drivable distance from the SAC has the potential to increase the extent of recreational pressure. Therefore, Portholme SAC is scoped into the HRA process based upon the recreational pressure impact pathway.

¹²⁶ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for Ouse Washes SAC (UK0013011). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4894882430713856> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹²⁷ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives for Ouse Washes SPA (UK9008041). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6636062256398336> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹²⁸ JNCC (1976) Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS): Ouse Washes. Available at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11051.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

¹²⁹ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features, Ouse Washes (SPA) Site Code: UK9008041. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK9008041.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹³⁰ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features, Ouse Washes (SPA) Site Code: UK9008041. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK9008041.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹³¹ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for Portholme SAC (UK0030054). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4802651548024832> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹³² Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Portholme SAC (SIP177). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6533964571344896> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹³³ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features Portholme Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Site Code: UK0030054. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0030054.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

3.6.13 Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA¹³⁴ and Ramsar¹³⁵ comprise a series of disused sand and gravel pits along the River Nene valley which provide valuable nesting and feeding conditions for major inland concentrations of wintering water birds. Disturbance from recreation (particularly walkers and dogs) affects wintering birds at these designations by reducing the time available for feeding and increasing energy expenditure when birds take flight to avoid sources of recreational disturbance¹³⁶. North Northamptonshire Council, West Northamptonshire Council and Bedford Borough Council jointly commissioned a study on the recreational impacts at the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits designations to inform the HRAs of their respective Local Plans. This project consisted of two surveys:

- Visitor Access Survey¹³⁷; and,
- Bird Disturbance Survey¹³⁸.

3.6.14 These surveys identified bird disturbance from walkers with dogs, walkers, watersports activities, wildfowling and anglers. Visitor survey results showed that 75% of visitors on a short visit, directly from home, during the winter, lived within a 5.9km Zol of the SPA. This distance has informed a recommended zone within which new development is likely to have an adverse in-combination recreational effect upon the SPA. As the SPA and Ramsar sites are located approximately 3.5km from Huntingdonshire, the Plan area falls within this Zol. Therefore, both designations are scoped into the HRA process for further consideration of recreational impacts.

¹³⁴ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives for Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA (UK9020296). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5495529882517504> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹³⁵ JNCC (2011) Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS): Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits. Available at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11083.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

¹³⁶ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA (SIP254). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6732225261338624> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹³⁷ Panter, C., Bishop, E. & Liley, D. (2023) Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Visitor Access Study. Report by Footprint Ecology for West Northamptonshire, North Northamptonshire, and Bedford Borough Council. Available at: <https://northnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s24657/Appendix%20C%20-%20Upper%20Nene%20Valley%20Gravel%20Pits%20Visitor%20Access%20Study.pdf> [Date accessed: 15/07/25]

¹³⁸ Wild Frontier Ecology (2023) Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA Bird Disturbance Study, March 2023. Available at: <https://www.wildlifebcn.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/Upper%20Nene%20Valley%20Gravel%20Pits%20Special%20Protection%20Area%20%E2%80%93%20Bird%20Disturbance%20Study%20%E2%80%93%20March%202023.pdf> [Date accessed: 17/07/25]

- 3.6.15 Fenland SAC (where it is underpinned by Woodwalton SSSI and Woodwalton NNR)¹³⁹ and Woodwalton Ramsar¹⁴⁰ are located near the centre of the Plan area. The SAC is designated for its meadow and fen habitats, as well as Great Crested Newt and Spined Loach. The Ramsar is designated for Fen Violet and Fen Wood-rush, as well as numerous wetland invertebrates, aquatic beetles, flies and moths. The conservation of meadow habitats at Fenland SAC are noted to be dependent on recreation/visitor management¹⁴¹. The site is bound by watercourses including Wheatley's Drain and Great Raveley Drain and crossed by a number of smaller watercourses. The Rothschild Way footpath extends into the eastern area of the SAC and Ramsar. This footpath links the two NNRs of Woodwalton Fen in Huntingdonshire and Wicken Fen in Cambridgeshire, covering a distance of 39 miles. Given the location of the SAC and Ramsar within the Plan area and public access, these designations will be scoped into the HRA process for further consideration of recreational impacts.
- 3.6.16 Rutland Water SPA¹⁴² and Ramsar¹⁴³ are designated for numerous breeding and non-breeding bird species. These designations lie just over 15km from the Plan area. However, advertising itself as the "*playground of the East Midlands*"¹⁴⁴, Rutland Water has a notable recreational draw and has been identified as vulnerable to associated recreational threats and pressures¹⁴⁵ from a range of activities, including watersports, dog walking, cycling, golfing, fishing, and bird watching¹⁴⁶. Given the extent of recreational draw to this European site, it has also been included for assessment in this scoping assessment. However, the HRA¹⁴⁷ completed to inform the Rutland Local Plan established a recreational ZOI of 6-7km within which recreational impacts from new development were considered likely at Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar. The Huntingdonshire Plan area does not fall within 7km of Rutland Water, being located 15.1km to its southeast. It can, therefore, be concluded that development under the Local Plan will not increase recreational pressure upon the SPA or Ramsar site. As such, these designations have been scoped out of the HRA process based upon this impact pathway.
- 3.6.17 **Tabel 3.3** summarises European sites where recreational effects associated with the Local Plan will be considered further in the HRA process.

¹³⁹ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for Fenland SAC (UK0014782). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6712672527581184> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

¹⁴⁰ JNCC (1995) Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS): Woodwalton Fen. Available at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11078.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

¹⁴¹ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features Fenland (SAC) Site Code: UK0014782. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0014782.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

¹⁴² Natural England (2023) European Site Conservation Objectives for Rutland Water SPA (UK9008051). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4978639963684864> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹⁴³ JNCC (1991) Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS): Rutland Water. Available at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11062.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

¹⁴⁴ Discover Rutland (n.d.) Rutland Water. Available at: <https://discover-rutland.co.uk/listing/rutland-water/> [Date accessed: 14/07/25]

¹⁴⁵ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Rutland Water SPA (SIP208). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5985520903520256> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹⁴⁶ Discover Rutland (n.d.) Rutland Water. Available at: <https://discover-rutland.co.uk/listing/rutland-water/> [Date accessed: 14/07/25]

¹⁴⁷ Rutland County Council (2023) Local Plan 2021-2041 Habitats Regulations Assessment, Preferred Options (regulation 18) Consultation – HRA Review. Available at: <https://www.rutland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-11/Preferred%20Options%20HRA%20November%202023.pdf> [Date accessed: 15/07/25]

Table 3.3: Summary of recreational impact pathways for European sites within the influence of the Local Plan

European sites within the influence of the Local Plan	Potential recreation LSEs	Will the European site be scoped in for further assessment in the HRA process?
Barnack Hills & Holes SAC	Barnack Hills & Holes SAC is also designated as a NNR and has been identified as being vulnerable to public access and disturbance. Recreation LSEs from the Local Plan are possible and will therefore be considered further in the HRA process.	Yes
Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC	The Plan area is located within the 4km Zol of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC and is publicly accessible. Recreation LSEs are therefore possible and will be considered further in the HRA process.	Yes
Fenland SAC	Given the location of Fenland SAC within the Plan area, the vulnerability of its meadow and fen habitats and access at the SAC, it will be scoped into the HRA process.	Yes
Nene Washes SAC	The qualifying features of the Nene Washes SAC are not sensitive to recreational impacts. Recreational LSEs will therefore be scoped out of the HRA process.	No
Nene Washes SPA	The qualifying features of the Nene Washes SPA are sensitive to recreational impacts associated with public access. Recreation LSEs are possible and will therefore be considered further in the HRA process.	Yes
Nene Washes Ramsar	The qualifying features of the Nene Washes Ramsar are sensitive to recreational impacts associated with public access. Recreation LSEs are therefore possible and will be considered further in the HRA process.	Yes
Orton Pit SAC	There is no public access to Orton Pit SAC and therefore recreational LSEs will be scoped out of the HRA process.	No
Ouse Washes SAC	The qualifying features of the Ouse Washes SAC are not sensitive to recreational impacts. Recreational LSEs will therefore be scoped out of the HRA process.	No
Ouse Washes SPA	The qualifying features of the Ouse Washes SPA are sensitive to recreational impacts associated with public access. Recreation LSEs are possible and will therefore be considered further in the HRA process.	Yes
Ouse Washes Ramsar	The qualifying features of the Ouse Washes Ramsar are sensitive to recreational impacts associated with public access. Recreation LSEs are possible and will therefore be considered further in the HRA process.	Yes
Portholme SAC	Given the location of Portholme SAC within the Plan area, the vulnerability of its features to recreational impacts and public access at the site, this SAC will be scoped into the HRA process.	Yes
Rutland Water SPA	Given the Plan area is located outside the recreational Zol for Rutland Water, the SPA will be scoped out of the HRA process as recreational LSEs are considered unlikely.	No
Rutland Water Ramsar	Given the Plan area is outside the recreational Zol for Rutland Water, this Ramsar will be scoped out of the HRA process as recreational LSEs are considered unlikely.	No

European sites within the influence of the Local Plan	Potential recreation LSEs	Will the European site be scoped in for further assessment in the HRA process?
Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA	Given the location of the Plan area within the recreational pressure ZOI for the SPA this site will be scoped into the HRA process.	Yes
Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar	Given the location of the Plan area within the recreational pressure ZOI for the Ramsar this site will be scoped into the HRA process.	Yes
Woodwalton Fen Ramsar	Given the location of Woodwalton Ramsar within the Plan area, the vulnerability of its meadow and fen habitats and access at the Ramsar, it will be scoped into the HRA process.	Yes

3.7 Urbanisation effects

- 3.7.1 Urbanisation effects typically occur when development is located close to a European site boundary. Impacts may include noise disturbance, lighting effects, cat predation, fly-tipping, wildfire, littering and vandalism. Strategic mitigation schemes elsewhere in the UK have set out to limit development (i.e. avoid a net increase in residential dwellings) on the basis of site-specific evidence on how to safeguard against these impacts.
- 3.7.2 As with recreational impacts, it is common practice for urbanisation mitigation strategies in the UK to involve the implementation of a buffer zone. Typically, these zones extend around 400m from the edge of a designation. This accounts for likely impacts from pets (e.g. cat predation) and the distance from which people tend to access a site on foot. However, urbanisation effects may also take place at FLL (see definition in **paragraph 3.3.9**), which is especially relevant for European sites which are designated for species which rely on the wider landscape for activities such as feeding, commuting and foraging. For instance, certain species of birds use a variety of habitats outside the designation boundary of a European site as feeding or roosting habitat and bats may use the wider landscape for foraging and commuting. These habitats may be functionally linked where they play an important role in maintaining or restoring the population of a qualifying species at a favourable conservation status. The tests set out in the Habitats Regulations need to be applied to plans which may significantly affect FLL. This scoping exercise focuses upon European sites falling within 400m of the Plan area, but also takes FLL into consideration.
- 3.7.3 Portholme SAC is located within the Plan area, immediately south of Huntingdon and north west of Godmanchester, two of the district's towns, and also in close proximity to key roads and public transport routes. As outlined in **paragraph 3.6.12**, the grasslands for which Portholme SAC is designated are sensitive to recreational impacts, such as trampling by walkers and dog walkers. Whilst urbanisation effects, such as noise and light pollution, are unlikely to affect the conservation status of the grasslands, impacts such as fly tipping, anti-social behaviour and littering may have an impact. Given the location of Portholme SAC within the Plan area, it will be scoped into the HRA process for further consideration of urbanisation effects.

- 3.7.4 The three Ouse Washes designations are all located within 400m of the Plan area, with a small portion of each site falling within the Plan area, to the east. The Spined Loach for which Ouse Washes SAC is designated is unlikely to be adversely impacted by urbanisation effects; therefore, the SAC will be scoped out of the HRA process in terms of urbanisation effects. Many birds are particularly sensitive to urbanisation effects, such as noise and light pollution which can disrupt breeding and nesting habits¹⁴⁸. As such, the Ouse Washes SPA and Ramsar will be scoped into the HRA process based upon the urbanisation effects impact pathway.
- 3.7.5 Orton Pit SAC is located approximately 550m from the Plan area's northern boundary. Great Crested Newts for which the SAC is designated have been known to travel approximately 500m from their breeding pond habitat during the terrestrial phase of their lifecycle¹⁴⁹. Newts forage, disperse and rest on land. Depending on the location of the ponds within the SAC, the terrestrial habitat of this species may include land outside the SAC boundary. Therefore, any development within 500m of this SAC has the potential for urbanisation effects. Whilst the SAC is not accessible to the public (see **paragraph 3.6.10**), it is vulnerable to illegal activities including off-roading, vandalism, arson and disturbance from dogs jumping into ponds¹⁵⁰. Given the proximity of the SAC to the Plan area, it will be scoped into the HRA process based upon the urbanisation effects impact pathway.
- 3.7.6 Fenland SAC is designated for its meadows and fen habitats, and species including the Spined Loach and Great Crested Newt. With the exception of the Spined Loach, these qualifying features, and functionally linked habitat which supports them, has the potential to be affected by urbanisation effects due to its location in the Plan area. Great Crested Newts may be vulnerable to urbanisation effects where habitat within 500m of a breeding pond is affected (as described above in **paragraph 3.7.5**). The meadow and fen qualifying habitats may be vulnerable to impacts such as fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour and littering. Fenland SAC is, therefore, scoped into the HRA process for further consideration of urbanisation effects.

¹⁴⁸ U.S. National Science Foundation (2020) Noise and light pollution affect breeding habits in birds. Available at: <https://www.nsf.gov/news/noise-light-pollution-affect-breeding-habits-birds> [Date accessed: 15/07/25]

¹⁴⁹ Langton, T.E.S.; Beckett, C. L.; Foster, J. P. (2001) Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook, Froglife, Halesworth. Available at: https://www.froglife.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/GCN-Conservation-Handbook_compressed.pdf [Date accessed: 15/07/25].

¹⁵⁰ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Orton Pit SAC (SIP159). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5570370673311744> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

- 3.7.7 Woodwalton Fen Ramsar, which has the same geographical location as Fenland SAC (where it is underpinned by Woodwalton SSSI and Woodwalton NNR), is designated for fen habitat, invertebrates and nationally scarce plants. Research by Ganguly and Candolin (2023)¹⁵¹ highlights the potential for artificial light at night (ALAN) to affect ecologically important invertebrates which are themselves responsible for providing key ecosystem functions. The invertebrates for which Woodwalton Fen Ramsar is designated may be adversely affected by illumination and fen habitat and plants affected by fly-tipping and littering as a result of development under the Local Plan. As such, Woodwalton Fen Ramsar is scoped into the HRA process based upon urbanisation effects. As set out in **Section 3.5**, consideration of the wider context of the Fenland SAC and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar will be of great importance during the next stages of the HRA process. These designations lie within the Great Fen area, which provides a range of habitats of significant ecological importance, and for which there are aspirations to restore and reconnect the wider landscape thorough the Great Fen Project¹⁵². It is important that urbanisation effects from the Local Plan do not compromise the aims of this project and maximise restoration to ensure functionally linked and supporting habitat plays a role in their long-term conservation.
- 3.7.8 The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar are not located within 400m of the Plan area; however, these designations must be considered on the basis of FLL. The SPA and Ramsar are designated for a breeding bird assemblage of lowland open waters and their margins, wintering waterbird species and an assemblage of over 20,000 waterbirds in the non-breeding season¹⁵³. Qualifying bird species of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar designations use a variety of habitats outside the SPA and Ramsar boundary for nocturnal and diurnal foraging and roosting. These areas of habitat are considered to be FLL. Golden Plover and Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)¹⁵⁴ are qualifying features of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar designations. These species often spend time feeding or roosting on grassland, wetland and arable land outside the designation boundaries. The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) Alert for the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA¹⁵⁵ reports that Golden Plover have shown a 76% decline since baseline analysis, (high alert, red). Lapwing, which are part of the waterbird assemblage, have shown a 45% decline since baseline analysis, and the waterbird assemblage a 26% decline (medium alert, amber).
- 3.7.9 There is limited information regarding the use of FLL by Golden Plover and Lapwing within surrounding area to the SPA. However, due to the continued decline in Golden Plover and Lapwing populations, NE has been involved in a partnership project with the Wildlife Trust in surveying and analysing potential FLL within 10km of the SPA. The mapping is based on field criteria for Golden Plover and Lapwing and historic biological records and will be progressively enhanced by additional records obtained from Golden Plover and Lapwing records in an ongoing manner¹⁵⁶.

¹⁵¹ Ganguly, A., Candolin, U. (2023) 'Impact of light pollution on aquatic invertebrates: Behavioural responses and ecological consequences', Behavioural Ecology and Sociobiology, 77(104), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00265-023-03381-z>

¹⁵² Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, Environment Agency, Natural England, and Huntingdonshire District Council (n.d.) About the Great Fen. Available at: <https://www.greatfen.org.uk/about-great-fen> [Date accessed: 16/07/25]

¹⁵³ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives for Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA (UK9020296). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5495529882517504> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹⁵⁴ Lapwing are part of the waterbird assemblage

¹⁵⁵ WeBS Report Online. Available at: <https://app.bto.org/webs-reporting/alerts.jsp> [Date accessed: 28/07/25]

¹⁵⁶ Natural England (2025) E-mail to Lepus Consulting, 25 July

- 3.7.10 The Plan area falls within 10km of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar sites. Therefore, both designated sites will be scoped into the HRA process due to potential urbanisation effects upon areas of FLL.
- 3.7.11 Whilst Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC is not located within 400m of the Plan area, urbanisation effects upon its qualifying species, the Barbastelle Bat, have been taken into consideration. Barbastelle bats are rare within the UK, with few breeding sites currently known¹⁵⁷. Maternity colonies use cracks and crevices within woodlands or buildings for breeding, with caves and underground structures used for hibernation. The majority of Barbastelles tend to forage up to 7km from their woodland roosts¹⁵⁸, however, they will travel up to 20km from roost sites to reach productive hunting grounds¹⁵⁹. As noted in **paragraph 3.6.7**, South Cambridgeshire District Council has published a Biodiversity SPD which identifies a key conservation area around the SAC of 5km and a 10km sustenance or wider conservation area. It is noted that the SSSI IRZs for this SAC are currently under review by NE¹⁶⁰.
- 3.7.12 Development set out in the Local Plan has the potential to disrupt FLL upon which bats rely for foraging or commuting. Potential impacts from development on FLL can include:
- Loss of / damage to roost sites;
 - Loss of flyways used for commuting/foraging;
 - Strategic loss or disruption of key flyways between different roosts;
 - Loss of/degradation to foraging habitat; and,
 - Artificial lighting and noise.
- 3.7.13 In addition to direct loss or degradation of habitat (designated or FLL), development has the potential to result in the fragmentation of connecting wildlife corridors which would hinder bat movements. Diverse habitat corridors of wetland, grassland, scrub, hedgerow and woodland habitats are also likely to provide an abundance of insects and prey upon which bats may feed. As well as being sensitive to development, bats are also vulnerable to impacts associated with renewable energy projects.
- 3.7.14 Core Sustenance Zones (CSZ), or core areas, are the defined areas surrounding bat roosts which link to connecting flightlines and foraging zones for bats¹⁶¹. The CSZ for Barbastelle Bats is 7km. Given the Plan area lies approximately 4km from Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC, urbanisation effects upon the SAC will be scoped in for further consideration in the HRA process.

¹⁵⁷ Bat Conservation Trust. Barbastelle Bat. Available at: <https://www.bats.org.uk/about-bats/what-are-bats/uk-bats/barbastelle> [Date accessed: 22/07/25]

¹⁵⁸ Cambridge Approaches (2020) Barbastelle bat. Available at: <https://cambridgeapproaches.org/barbastelle-bats-are-they-important-when-considering-ewr-route/#:~:text=Barbastelles%20forage%20on%20average%20up,afield%20within%20the%20surrounding%20countryside> [Date accessed: 22/07/25]

¹⁵⁹ Natural England (2024) Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for barbastelle bat Defining Favourable Conservation Status Project. Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5434520078385152#:~:text=Foraging%20requirements,and%20others%202009%2C%202012> [Date accessed: 23/07/25]

¹⁶⁰ Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (2022) Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document Adopted Final February 2022. Available at: <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/media/2504/gcsp-biodiversity-spd-final-copy-march-2022-1.pdf> [Date accessed: 23/07/25]

¹⁶¹ Bat Conservation Trust. Core Sustenance Zones. Available at: <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/landscapes-for-bats/core-sustenance-zones> [Date accessed: 22/07/25]

3.7.15 **Table 3.4** summarises European sites where urbanisation effects associated with the Local Plan, either at European sites or upon areas of FLL, will be considered further in the HRA process.

Table 3.4: Summary of urbanisation impact pathways for European sites within the influence of the Local Plan (approx 400m)

European sites within the influence of the Local Plan	Potential urbanisation LSEs	Will the European site be scoped in for further assessment in the HRA process?
Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC	Development set out in the Local Plan has the potential to have urbanisation effects upon areas of FLL associated with this SAC and it will therefore be scoped into the HRA process.	Yes
Fenland SAC	Given the location of this SAC within the Plan area urbanisation LSEs are possible, and it will therefore be scoped into the HRA process.	Yes
Orton Pit SAC	Whilst this SAC is not located within 400m of the Plan area, given its susceptibility to illicit activities it will be scoped into the HRA process.	Yes
Ouse Washes SAC	The qualifying features associated with the SAC are not vulnerable to urbanisation LSEs and this SAC will therefore be scoped out of the HRA process.	No
Ouse Washes SPA	The qualifying features of the SPA are vulnerable to urbanisation LSEs. Given its location within 400m of the Plan area this SPA will therefore be scoped into the HRA process.	Yes
Ouse Washes Ramsar	The qualifying features of the Ramsar are vulnerable to urbanisation LSEs. Given its location within 400m of the Plan area this Ramsar will therefore be scoped into the HRA process.	Yes
Portholme SAC	Given the location of Portholme SAC within the Plan area and the vulnerability of its features to urbanization impacts, this SAC will be scoped into the HRA process.	Yes
Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA	There is potential for FLL associated with this SPA designation to be present within the Plan area and therefore it will be scoped in for further consideration in the HRA process.	Yes
Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar	There is potential for FLL associated with this Ramsar designation to be present within the Plan area and therefore it will be scoped in for further consideration in the HRA process.	Yes
Woodwalton Fen Ramsar	Given the location of this Ramsar within the Plan area urbanisation LSEs are possible, and it will therefore be scoped into the HRA process.	Yes

3.8 European sites threats and pressures

3.8.1 The impact pathways with potential to affect European sites are summarised in **Table 3.5**. European sites identified as vulnerable to threats and pressures will form the basis of the HRA screening process and are mapped in **Figures 3.6** and **3.7**.

Table 3.5: Summary of impact pathways to European sites which may be associated with the Local Plan

European site name	Air Pollution Impact Pathway?	Water Quality and/or Quantity Impact Pathway?	Recreational Pressure Impact Pathway?	Urbanisation Effects Impact Pathway?
Barnack Hills & Holes SAC	No	No	Yes	No
Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC	No	No	Yes	Yes
Fenland SAC	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nene Washes SAC	No	Yes	No	No
Nene Washes SPA	No	Yes	Yes	No
Nene Washes Ramsar	No	Yes	Yes	No
Orton Pit SAC	No	Yes	No	Yes
Ouse Washes SAC	No	Yes	No	No
Ouse Washes SPA	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ouse Washes Ramsar	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Portholme SAC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rutland Water SPA	No	No	No	No
Rutland Water Ramsar	No	No	No	No
The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC	No	Yes	No	No
The Wash SPA	No	Yes	No	No
The Wash Ramsar	No	Yes	No	No
Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Woodwalton Fen Ramsar	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

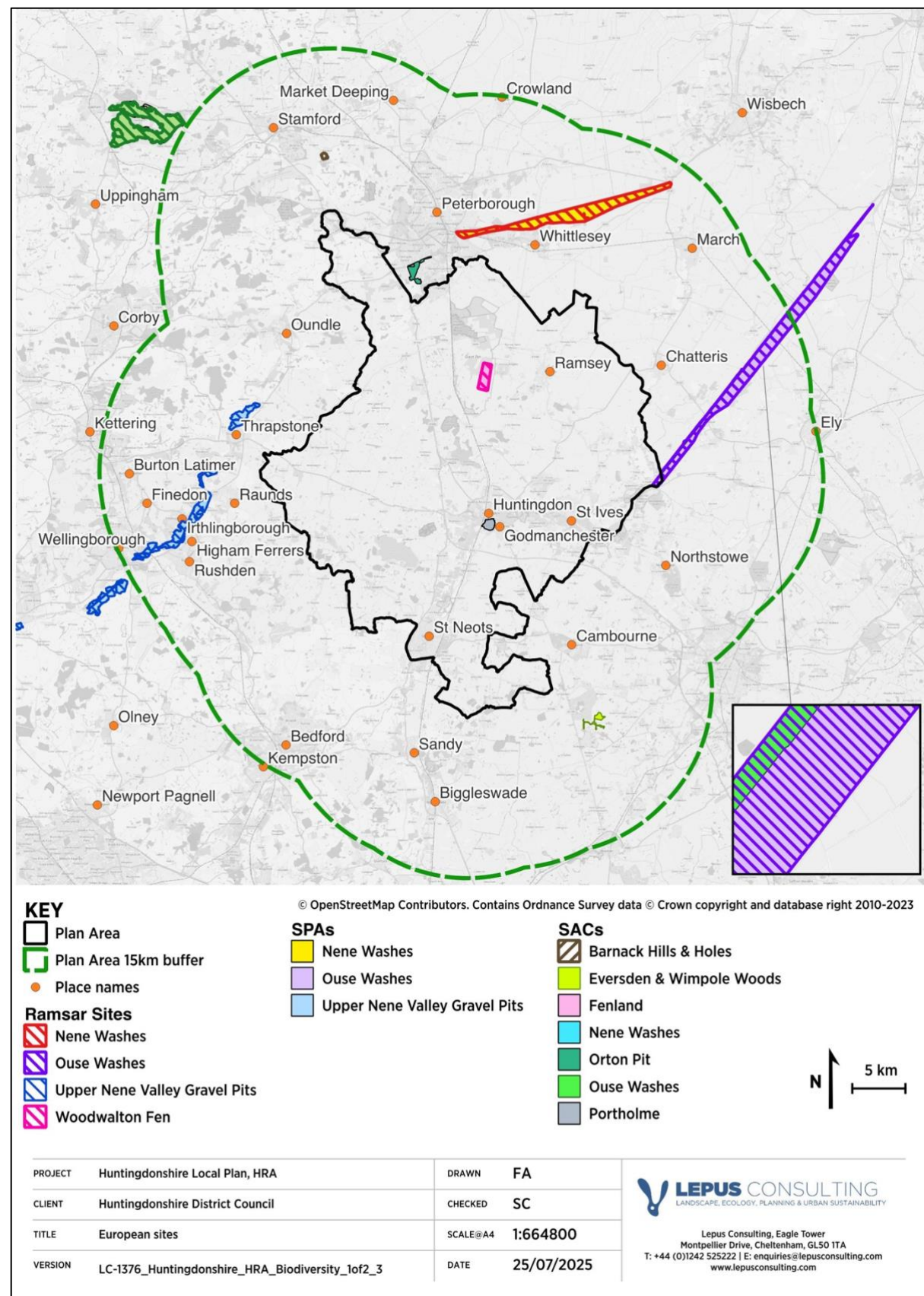


Figure 3.6: European sites scoped into the HRA process (1)

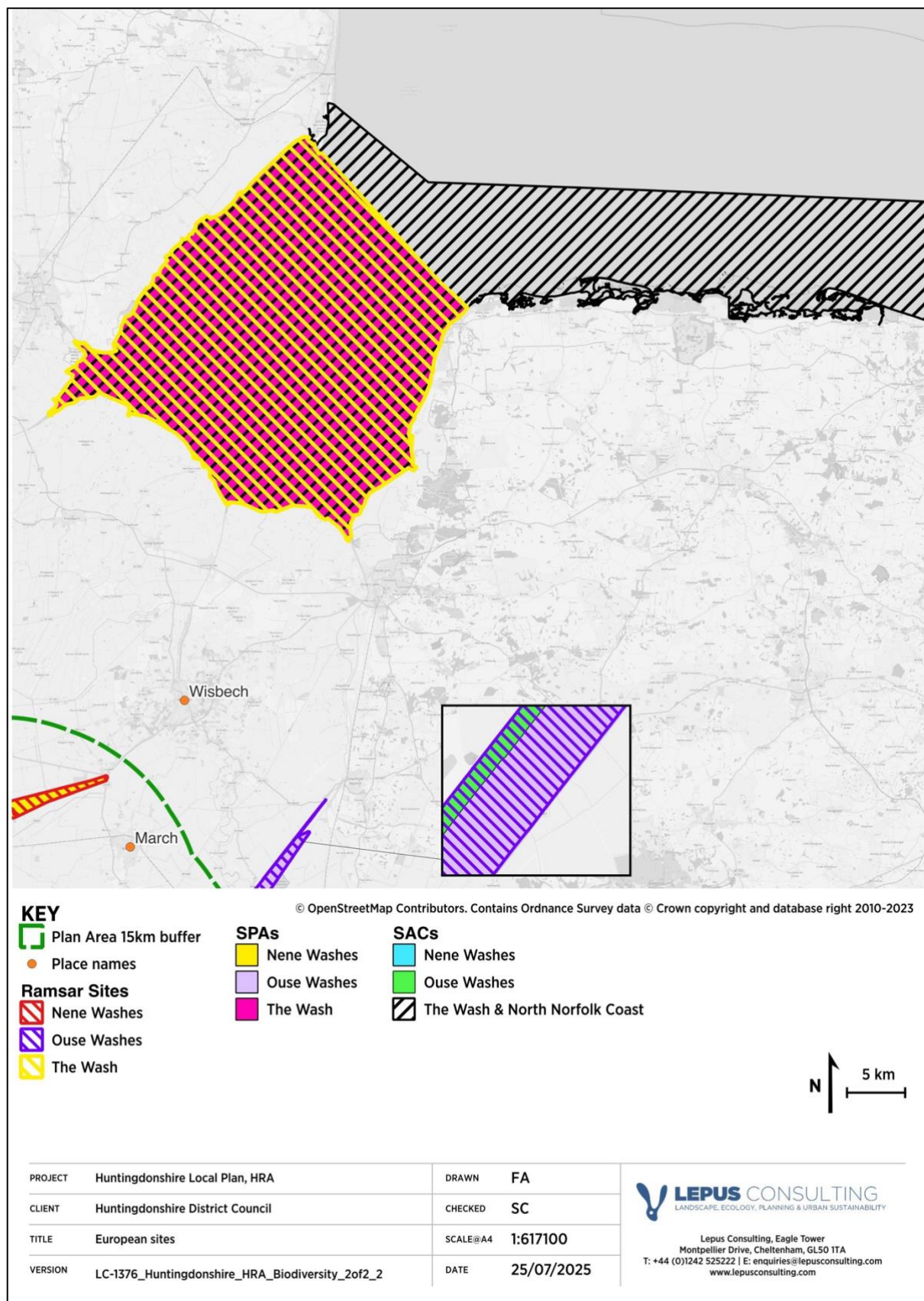


Figure 3.7: European sites scoped into the HRA process (2) to illustrate the location of The Wash SPA, The Wash Ramsar and The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC.

4 Screening of Preferred Options Local Plan

4.1 Policy and allocations screening

- 4.1.1 This section of the report screens the Preferred Options draft Local Plan to 2046 for LSEs at European sites. The draft Local Plan includes 54 draft policies and 67 site allocations. Each policy and allocation which forms the draft Local Plan was evaluated against the HRA screening criteria (see **Table 2.1**), taking into consideration case law and best practice (see **Section 2.2**). The screening assessment concluded LSEs in-combination at a number of European sites. **Appendix C** and **Appendix D** provide the output of this screening exercise which has informed the test of likely significance i.e. will the Local Plan have an LSE, alone or in-combination, at a European site.
- 4.1.2 It is concluded that LSEs, either from the Local Plan alone, or in-combination with other plans or projects, could be screened out for most policies. This is because the policies fall into the following categories (see **Table 2.1** for a description of each category):
- **Category A:** General statements of policy/general aspirations
 - **Category B:** Policies listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals
 - **Category D:** Environmental protection/site safeguarding
 - **Category F:** Policies or proposals that cannot lead to development or other change
 - **Category K:** Policies unlikely to have a significant effect either alone or in-combination
- 4.1.3 A number of policies were, however, considered likely to have an LSE as they fell into **Category L** – Policies or proposals which might be likely to have a significant effect in combination and **Category M** – Bespoke area, site or case-specific policies or proposals intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on a European site. All allocations were screened in under **Category L** because they had the potential for LSEs in combination.
- 4.1.4 The following policies (**Table 4.1**) and all allocations will, therefore, be explored in the AA (Stage 2 of the HRA process) in more detail.

Table 4.1: Summary of screened in policies

(Note: only policies screened into the HRA process have been included in the summary table below. The screening outcome for all policies is provided in **Appendix C**).

Policy Number	Policy Name
Draft Policy LP1	How much development do we expect?
Draft Policy LP2	Our strategy for change
Draft Policy LP6	Market Towns
Draft Policy LP7	Service Centres
Draft Policy LP8	Local Services Villages

Policy Number	Policy Name
Draft Policy LP9	Villages
Draft Policy LP10	Hamlets and the Countryside
Draft Policy LP15	Managing surface water
Draft Policy LP17	Approach to renewable energy schemes
Draft Policy LP32	Protecting and enhancing established employment areas
Draft Policy LP33	Expansion and diversification of rural businesses
Draft Policy LP34	Shaping businesses in the countryside
Draft Policy LP43	Shaping businesses in the countryside
Draft Policy LP35	Enabling key clusters and innovation-led growth
Draft Policy LP36	Enabling logistics and distribution
Draft Policy LP37	Helping tourism and recreation in the countryside
Draft Policy LP38	Defining our retail hierarchy
Draft Policy LP39	Promoting town centre vitality
Draft Policy LP40	Supporting local services and facilities
Draft policy LP48	Gypsies, travellers and travelling show people
Draft policy LP54	Water-related development

4.1.5 Whilst no site allocation falls within the 5.9km recreational ZOI associated with the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar, potential windfall developments within this zone over the Plan period must be considered. In addition, potential urbanisation LSEs within the wider 10km buffer zone surrounding these designations must also be assessed, particularly in relation to impacts of windfall and renewable energy schemes on Golden Plover and Lapwing habitat. Therefore, the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar will be screened into the HRA process.

4.1.6 Based on the location of site allocations outside an area with potential for recreation and urbanisation LSEs (impact risk areas are discussed in **sections 3.6** and **3.7**), a number of LSEs can be screened out of the HRA process. These include recreational LSEs at Barnack Hills & Holes SAC and urbanisation LSEs at Fenland SAC, Orton Pit SAC, Ouse Washes SPA and Ramsar and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar.

4.2 Screening Conclusion

4.2.1 The Preferred Options Local Plan is not directly connected with, or necessary, to the management of any European site. Therefore, as required under the Habitats Regulations, an assessment of LSEs of the Preferred Options Local Plan upon European sites has been undertaken. The screening checks (**Appendix C** and **Appendix D**) indicate that the Local Plan has the potential to have LSEs upon the following European sites:

- **Air quality:** Portholme SAC.

- **Water quality:** Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar.
- **Water quantity:** Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Orton Pit SAC; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar.
- **Recreational pressure:** Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC; Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar.
- **Urbanisation effects:** Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC; Portholme SAC; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar.

4.2.2 The screening assessment takes no account of mitigation measures that the Local Plan may incorporate to mitigate adverse impacts upon European sites. It is, therefore, concluded that the Local Plan will be screened into the HRA process. The next stage of the HRA process will be Stage 2, AA.

4.2.3 It is too early at this stage of the Plan making process to undertake a full AA as key pieces of evidence are in preparation, and these will inform the details within the Local Plan.

4.3 Information requirements to inform the AA

Air Quality

4.3.1 As set out in **Section 3.4**, Natural England has developed a standard methodology for the assessment of traffic related air quality impacts under the Habitats Regulations which is relevant to the HRA of land use plans¹⁶². In addition, the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM)¹⁶³ and the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)¹⁶⁴ have also prepared advice on the assessment of air quality impacts at designated sites. This guidance provides methodologies for Appropriate Assessment and ecological interpretation of air quality impacts at designated sites.

4.3.2 The screening assessment identifies one European site as being sensitive to air quality impacts associated with the Local Plan; Portholme SAC. In order to better define this impact, traffic modelling data is required to identify whether screening thresholds (1,000 AADT as discussed in **Section 3.4**) at roads within 200m of Portholme SAC will be exceeded for the Local Plan either alone or in-combination. These road links include the A1307, the B1514, the B1044 and the B1043.

¹⁶² Natural England (2018) Natural England's approach to advising competent authorities on the assessment of road traffic emissions under the Habitats Regulations (NEA001). Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4720542048845824> [Date Accessed: 03/10/25]

¹⁶³ Holman et al (2020). A guide to the assessment of air quality impacts on designated nature conservation sites – version 1.1, Institute of Air Quality Management, London.

¹⁶⁴ CIEEM (2021) Advice on Ecological Assessment of Air Quality Impacts. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. Winchester, UK.

- 4.3.3 Where exceedances of the 1,000 AADT threshold are identified these will be considered in an AA taking into consideration the outputs of potential air quality modelling (if required) in relation to habitat types and habitat responses, baseline data and future trends. Where adverse impacts on site integrity are identified, effective mitigation will need to be incorporated into policy wording. This information will be available as the Local Plan develops and will be presented in the Regulation 19 HRA report.
- 4.3.4 At this stage of the plan making process, a number of preliminary recommendations in relation to air quality impacts at European sites are made in **Box 4.1**. These recommendations will be developed and informed by the outputs of the AA at Regulation 19.

Box 4.1: Preliminary air quality recommendations

Air quality recommendations

It is recommended that the use of sustainable transport options, such as public transport and active travel, are maximised through site selection and policy requirements and adequate facilities are installed to encourage a shift to electric vehicles.

Policies which discourage commuting, such as working from home policies, are likely to further reduce air quality impacts upon European sites.

Air quality policy wording which secures air quality assessments for new development should require consideration to be given to adverse air quality impacts upon biodiversity and in particular designated sites.

It is recommended that policy wording reflects NE's guidance on assessing the implications of road traffic on European Sites¹⁶⁵ and includes reference to the Air Quality PPG as appropriate¹⁶⁶.

Water quality and quantity

- 4.3.5 The screening assessment identifies a number of European sites as being sensitive to water quality and quantity impacts associated with the Local Plan:
- Fenland SAC;
 - Nene Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar;
 - Orton Pit SAC;
 - Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar;
 - Portholme SAC;
 - The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC;
 - The Wash SPA and Ramsar;
 - The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar; and
 - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar.

¹⁶⁵ Natural England (2018) Natural England's approach to advising competent authorities on the assessment of road traffic emissions under the Habitats Regulations. Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5431868963160064> [Date accessed: 22/07/25]

¹⁶⁶ MHLG, MHCLG (2018 to 2021) and DLHC. Air quality. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/air-quality--3> [Date accessed: 22/07/25]

- 4.3.6 In order to better define these impacts, the outputs from the Phase 2 IWMS will be drawn upon. The IWMS will include water quality modelling at receptors downstream of WwTWs to enable a detailed assessment of water quality impacts from new growth due to discharges of treated wastewater. The IWMS water quality modelling will take into consideration the full volume of growth from the Local Plan and also the contribution of growth from neighbouring Local Planning Authority (LPA) areas within the catchments of affected WwTWs (i.e. the in-combination impact). This modelling will be applied to watercourses adjacent to, or as close as possible to, European sites with hydrological connectivity, including functionally linked watercourses. Outputs will be assessed to determine the significance of effect which will be indicated by a change in water quality of 10% or more, or a decrease in WFD class. In addition, there will be on-going consultation with Anglian Water and Cambridge Water in terms of water resource availability for future Local Plan growth. This workstream will feed into the Regulation 19 AA. Where necessary the AA will apply protective water quality policy wording from the Local Plan and draw on the wider protective framework for the water environment.
- 4.3.7 At this stage of the plan making process, a number of preliminary recommendations in relation to impacts associated with a change in water quality and quantity at European sites are made in **Box 4.2**. These recommendations will be developed and informed by the outputs of the AA at Regulation 19.

Box 4.2: Preliminary water quality and quantity recommendations

Water quality and quantity recommendations

Larger residential and commercial developments should consider the incorporation of greywater recycling and / or rainwater harvesting into their design to reduce water demand.

The outputs from the IWMS will inform further allocation specific requirements.

Recreational pressure

- 4.3.8 The screening assessment identifies a number of European sites as being sensitive to water quality and quantity impacts associated with the Local Plan:
- Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC;
 - Fenland SAC;
 - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar;
 - Ouse Washes SPA and Ramsar;
 - Portholme SAC;
 - The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar; and
 - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar.

- 4.3.9 With the exception of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar, survey work has not been undertaken at any of the above European sites to identify recreational impacts. It is therefore recommended that in the first instance a survey be commissioned to identify the nature and extent of visitor pressures and associated impacts on the ecological features of each European designation. This is likely to require both a desk-based review, consultation with key stakeholders and site visit. This site-specific evidence base is required to ensure that the nuances of each designation, and the different ecological/geographical factors and challenges faced, are captured and 'ground-truthed'. Where recreational impacts are identified, it may be necessary to follow this work up with visitor surveys to determine the area from which visitors originate and the scale and nature of visitor use. Such information is necessary to help inform the development and implementation of any mitigation that may be required.
- 4.3.10 At this stage of the plan making process, and in the absence of site-specific information on recreational pressures, a number of preliminary recommendations in relation to impacts from increased recreational pressure at European sites are made in **Box 4.3**. These recommendations will be developed and informed by the outputs of the AA at Regulation 19.

Box 4.3: Preliminary recreational impact recommendations

Recreational impact recommendations

It is recommended that the Local Plan include policies which protect and promote natural green space across the Plan area for the purposes of recreation, in order to reduce recreational pressure upon European sites.

New development should also seek to incorporate adequate levels of greenspace within their footprint.

The requirements for additional greenspace and mitigation specifically related to recreational impacts from the Local Plan at European sites will be explored further at subsequent stages of the HRA process when details on site selection are better understood.

A small proportion of the Plan area in the west falls within the 5.9km recreational ZOI associated with the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Whilst no allocations fall within this area, it is recommended that policy wording be included in the Local Plan to ensure consideration of recreational impacts upon these designations from windfall development.

Urbanisation effects

- 4.3.11 The screening assessment identifies the following European sites as being sensitive to urbanisation effects that may be associated with the Local Plan:
- Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC;
 - Portholme SAC; and
 - Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pit SPA and Ramsar.
- 4.3.12 With the exception of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar site, where survey work has identified a 10km zone within which urbanisation may impact functionally linked land (FLL) associated with Golden Plover and Lapwing habitat, no comparable urbanisation impact assessments have been undertaken for the other European sites listed above.

- 4.3.13 It is therefore recommended that, as a first step, an assessment be commissioned to determine the nature and extent of urbanisation pressures on the ecological features of each designated European site. This assessment should include a desk-based review, consultation with relevant stakeholders, and site visits. It could also be integrated with the recreational pressure surveys referenced in **paragraph 4.3.9**. Such information is essential to support the development and implementation of any mitigation measures that may be required.
- 4.3.14 At this stage of the plan making process, a number of preliminary recommendations in relation to impacts from urbanisation effects at European sites are made in **Box 4.4**. These recommendations will be developed and informed by the outputs of the AA at Regulation 19.

Box 4.4: Preliminary urbanisation impact recommendations

Urbanisation impact recommendations

It is recommended that development be avoided within 500m of any European site.

Where appropriate, policies should require new development to comply with lighting¹⁶⁷ and noise¹⁶⁸ standards, quiet construction techniques, and timing work to avoid sensitive seasons.

The requirement for such mitigation will be explored further at subsequent stages of the HRA process when details on site selection and location are better understood.

A small proportion of the western Plan area lies within the 10km buffer of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar where urbanisation effects upon FLL associated with Golden Plover and Lapwing are considered possible. One allocation falls within this area; Draft Allocation Bythorn 1: Land West of Warren Lane, Bythorn. In addition, windfall and / or renewable development may fall with this 10km buffer area. It is therefore recommended that policy wording be included in the Local Plan to ensure consideration of urbanisation impacts upon these designations. This may include the requirement to undertake overwintering bird surveys early in the planning process ahead of submitting an application.

¹⁶⁷ Guidance Note 08/18 'Bats and artificial lighting' by the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institution of Lighting Professionals (2018)

¹⁶⁸ BS 5228-1:2009+A1:2014: "Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites. Noise

5 Next steps

5.1 Conclusions

5.1.1 The purpose of this HRA Screening Report is to ensure that the HRA forms an integral element of the plan-making process and that best practice is followed throughout to avoid adverse effects upon European sites.

5.1.2 This HRA report provides an assessment of the Preferred Options version of the Local Plan. LSEs at the following European sites have been screened into the HRA process:

- **Air quality:** Portholme SAC.
- **Water quality:** Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar.
- **Water quantity:** Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Orton Pit SAC; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar.
- **Recreational pressure:** Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC; Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar.
- **Urbanisation effects:** Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC; Portholme SAC; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar.

5.1.3 This report also identifies information required to inform the AA at the Regulation 19 stage of the Plan making process and makes preliminary recommendations. No conclusions have been drawn at this stage in the process in terms of adverse impacts on the site integrity of any European site (alone or in-combination).

5.2 Next Steps

5.2.1 At Regulation 19 a full AA will be presented in support of the Publication version of the Local Plan which will allow the Council, as the Competent Authority, to make the Integrity Test. The Council will take into consideration representations from Natural England under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations.

This page is deliberately blank.

Appendix A: In-Combination Assessment

Plans and policies	Plan status	Summary of housing/employment – key elements of the Local Plan that could cause in-combination effects	Summary of HRA findings	Potential in-combination LSE
North Northamptonshire Local Plan ¹	The North Northamptonshire Local Plan (Joint Core Strategy) was adopted in July 2016. Work on a new Local Plan (which will cover the period up to 2045) is currently underway, with plans for the publication of the draft Regulation 18 plan for public consultation in early 2026.	The adopted Local Plan allows for the provision of 1,750 (rounded up to 2,000 when including a buffer as required by national policy) homes per annum from 2011-2031. The adopted Local Plan states that North Northamptonshire has an “ <i>over-supply of committed employment land</i> ”; hence, no further employment land was allocated, but a selection of new strategic sites were identified.	An HRA of the Local Plan was not available at the time of writing.	Yes. This plan will trigger change or development close to the Plan area. There is potential for in-combination air quality, hydrology, recreation and urbanisation LSEs on European sites and areas of functionally linked land (FLL). The HRA will take these in-combination impacts into consideration.
Peterborough Local Plan ²	The Peterborough Local Plan was adopted in July 2019. Work on a new Local Plan (which will cover the period up to 2044) is currently underway, with a Proposed Submission version of the Draft Local Plan published for public consultation in September 2025. The Proposed	The adopted Local Plan allows for the provision of 942 homes per annum from 2016 to 2021 (the first five years of the plan period), which then increases to 982 homes per annum from 2021 to 2036 (the remainder of the plan period), in line with the updated Standard Method. The adopted Plan allows for the provision of the 76ha of employment land from April 2015 to March 2036 “ <i>including land already committed with planning permission</i> ”. Further employment land is allocated under this Plan (amounting to	The screening stage of the HRA ⁴ process completed to inform the new, emerging Peterborough Local Plan (for the period up to 2044) concluded that LSEs are possible for Barnack Hills & Holes SAC; Nene Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar; Orton Pit SAC; and Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar. Hence, an	Yes. This plan will trigger change or development close to the Plan area. There is potential for in-combination air quality, hydrology, recreation and urbanisation LSEs on European sites and areas of FLL. The HRA will take these in-combination impacts into consideration.

¹ North Northamptonshire Council (2016) North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031. Available at: <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/planning-strategies-and-plans/north-northamptonshire-local-plan> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

² Peterborough City Council (2019) Peterborough Local Plan 2016 to 2036. Available at: <https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/council/planning-and-development/planning-policies/local-development-plan> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

⁴ Peterborough City Council (2025) Draft Peterborough Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment: Stage 1 Screening, Main Report (March 2025). Available at: <https://cccandpcc.sharepoint.com/sites/PCCPlanningPolicyPublicData/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FPCCPlanningPolicyPublicData%2FShared%20Documents%2FPlanning%20Policy%2FLocal%20Plan%20Evidence%2FSecondary%20Evidence&p=true&ga=1> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

Plans and policies	Plan status	Summary of housing/employment – key elements of the Local Plan that could cause in-combination effects	Summary of HRA findings	Potential in-combination LSE
	Submission version of the Local Plan is now in preparation, intended for public consultation in 2026.	“around 160ha”) to allow for losses, flexibility and job choice. The draft Local Plan review will allocate approximately 22,130 new dwellings over the plan period and 90ha of employment land ³ .	Appropriate Assessment (AA) is recommended.	
Fenland Local Plan ⁵	The Fenland Local Plan was adopted in May 2014. Work on a new Fenland Local Plan (which will cover the period up to 2040) is currently underway and informal/focused consultations were held from July-September 2025. The Publication Draft is currently in preparation.	The adopted Local Plan allows for the provision of 11,000 new homes over the plan period 2011-2031, at a delivery rate of approximately 550 new homes per annum. The adopted Plan also allows for the provision of 85 ha of employment land (B1/B2/B8 land for employment uses) during 2011 to 2031. The Local Plan review aims to allocate approximately 10,525 new dwellings over the Plan period and 215ha of employment land ⁶ .	The HRA ⁷ completed to inform the new, emerging Fenland Local Plan (for the period up to 2040) concluded no LSEs upon any European sites are anticipated as a result of the new plan.	Yes. This plan will trigger change or development close to the Plan area. There is potential for in-combination air quality, hydrology, recreation and urbanisation LSEs on European sites and areas of FLL. The HRA will take these in-combination impacts into consideration.
East Cambridgeshire District Local Plan	The East Cambridgeshire Local Plan was adopted in April 2015, with some minor changes then	Over the plan period (2011 to 2031) the Local Plan will allow for the provision of 5,400 new homes and at least 179 ha of employment land for B1/B2/B8 uses. The Local Plan will also	The HRA of the adopted Local Plan set out wording to strengthen policy wording to ensure no adverse impacts on	Yes. This plan will trigger change or development close to the Plan area. There is potential for in-combination

³ Peterborough City Council (2025) Local Plan Review. Available at: <https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/council/planning-and-development/planning-policies/local-plan-review> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

⁵ Fenland District Council (2014) Fenland Local Plan (Adopted May 2014). Available at: https://www.fenland.gov.uk/media/12064/Fenland-Local-Plan-Adopted-2014/pdf/Fenland_Local_Plan-Adopted_2014.pdf?m=1591111057500 [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

⁶ Fenland District Council (2022) Fenland Local Plan 2021-2040, Draft Local Plan Consultation, August 2022. Available at: https://www.fenland.gov.uk/media/18814/Draft-Local-Plan-August-2022/pdf/Draft_Local_Plan_for_Consultation_Aug_2022.pdf?m=1661177156537 [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

⁷ Fenland District Council (2022) Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Fenland Local Plan Consultation Draft (Regulation 18): Main Report. Available at: https://www.fenland.gov.uk/media/18819/CD07-1-Habitats-Regulation-Assessment-Screening-Main-Report/pdf/CD07-1a_Draft_Local_Plan_HRA_Main_Report_August_2022.pdf?m=1661248724390 [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

Plans and policies	Plan status	Summary of housing/employment – key elements of the Local Plan that could cause in-combination effects	Summary of HRA findings	Potential in-combination LSE
2015 (as amended 2023) ⁸	adopted in October 2023. The plan is now referred to as the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023). The preparation of the emerging Cambridgeshire Local Plan has been put on hold ⁹ .	allow for the provision of at least an additional 3,000m ² (net) of convenience and 10,000m ² (net) of comparison retail floorspace in the district from 2012 to 2031.	European sites. It reached a conclusion of no adverse impacts on site integrity at any European site ¹⁰ .	air quality, hydrology, recreation and urbanisation LSEs on European sites and areas of FLL. The HRA will take these in-combination impacts into consideration.
South Cambridgeshire District Local Plan ¹¹	The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan was adopted in September 2018. Work on the new joint Greater Cambridge Local Plan is currently underway.	Over the plan period (2011 to 2031) the adopted Local Plan will allow for the provision of 19,500 new homes, with an average delivery of 975 homes per annum. The Local Plan will also allow for the provision of at least the 143,000m ² of additional floorspaces or 43 ha of 'B' use employment land required over the plan period.	An HRA ¹³ was completed to inform the adopted Local Plan, which concluded no LSEs upon any European sites alone, or in-combination, as a result of the plan. An HRA ¹⁴ has also been recently completed to inform the emerging new joint Greater	Yes. This plan will trigger change or development close to the Plan area. There is potential for in-combination air quality, hydrology, recreation and urbanisation LSEs on European sites and areas of FLL. The HRA will take these in-combination impacts into consideration.

⁸ East Cambridgeshire District Council (2023) East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023). Available at: <https://eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-10/Local%20Plan%20adopted%2019%20October%202023%20-%20final%20with%20cover.pdf> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

⁹ East Cambridgeshire District Council (2025) Emerging Local Plan. Available at: <https://eastcambs.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-guidance/emerging-local-plan> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

¹⁰ East Cambridgeshire District Council (2018) Habitats Regulations Assessment. Available at: <https://eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-10/HRA%20Appropriate%20Assessment%20Post%20Submission%20Local%20Plan%20-%20published%2015.6.18.pdf> [Date accessed: 09/10/25].

¹¹ South Cambridgeshire District Council (2018) South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (Adopted September 2018). Available at: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/media/h0vjdqxj/south-cambridgeshire-adopted-local-plan-2018-1.pdf> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

¹³ ENVIRON (2014) South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Submission Habitats Regulations Assessment: Screening Report. Available at: https://www.scambs.gov.uk/media/214d5ryv/hra-screening_0.pdf [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

¹⁴ Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (2024) Draft Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document: Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report (November 2024). Available at: https://oc2.greatercambridgeplanning.org/docfiles/1313/Habitats_Regulations_Assessment_Screening_Report_Planning_Obligations_2024.pdf [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

Plans and policies	Plan status	Summary of housing/employment – key elements of the Local Plan that could cause in-combination effects	Summary of HRA findings	Potential in-combination LSE
		The new joint Greater Cambridge Local Plan proposes approximately 58,500 jobs and 44,400 new homes over the Plan period ¹² .	Cambridge Local Plan. This HRA also concluded no LSEs upon European sites alone, or in-combination.	
Central Bedfordshire Local Plan ¹⁵	The Central Bedfordshire Local Plan was adopted in July 2021. Work on a new Local Plan (to be adopted by December 2028) is currently underway and publication of a first draft (issues and options) for public consultation is scheduled for early 2026.	Over the plan period (2015 to 2035), the adopted Local Plan will allow for the provision of 44,756, delivered at a varying rate (with most homes expected to be delivered between 2017 and 2029). The Local Plan will also allow for the provision of 118 ha of employment land over the plan period.	An HRA ¹⁶ was completed to inform the adopted Local Plan. This HRA concluded that, due to mitigation provided through the comprehensive policies in the Local Plan, no LSEs were anticipated from the plan alone. Due to neighbouring authorities' mitigative efforts and proposed development locations, in-combination LSEs were also deemed unlikely.	Yes. This plan will trigger change or development close to the Plan area. There is potential for in-combination air quality, hydrology, recreation and urbanisation LSEs on European sites and areas of FLL. The HRA will take these in-combination impacts into consideration.

¹² Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (2021) First Proposals, Greater Cambridge Local Plan, Preferred Options (Regulation 18: Preferred Options 2021). Available at: <https://consultations.greatercambridgeplanning.org/sites/gcp/files/2021-10/First%20Proposals%20-%20FINAL%20FURTHER%20REVISED%2028.10.21-red.pdf> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

¹⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2021) Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035 (July 2021). Available at: <https://centralbedfordshirecouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/Communications/Website%20and%20intranet/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FCommunications%2FWebsite%20and%20intranet%2FWebsite%20Documents%2FPlanning%2FLocal%20Plan%2FLocal%20Plan%20Documents%2F15%5F%20Adoption%20documents%2F2%5F%20Central%20Bedfordshire%20Local%20Plan%202015%20-%20FINAL%20FURTHER%20REVISED%2028.10.21-red.pdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FCommunications%2FWebsite%20and%20intranet%2FWebsite%20Documents%2FPlanning%2FLocal%20Plan%2FLocal%20Plan%20Documents%2F15%5F%20Adoption%20documents%2F2%5F%20Central%20Bedfordshire%20Local%20Plan%202015%20-%20FINAL%20FURTHER%20REVISED%2028.10.21-red.pdf&p=true&ga=1> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

¹⁶ Enfusion (2017) Central Bedfordshire Council Draft Central Bedfordshire Local Plan: Pre-Submission Regulation 19 Consultation, Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report (December 2017). Available at: <https://centralbedfordshirecouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/Communications/Website%20and%20intranet/Website%20Documents/Planning/Local%20Plan/Local%20Plan%20Web%20update%20180502/Technical%20Reports/C33%20Habitats%20Regulation%20Assessment.pdf?CT=1751450510164&OR=ItemsView> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

Plans and policies	Plan status	Summary of housing/employment – key elements of the Local Plan that could cause in-combination effects	Summary of HRA findings	Potential in-combination LSE
Bedford Borough Local Plan ¹⁷	The Bedford Local Plan for the period up to 2040 is currently at Examination Stage.	Over the plan period (2020 to 2040) the Local Plan will allow for the provision of 27,100 new homes. The delivery of these homes will be stepped as follows: - For the period 2020/21 to 2024/25: 970 homes to be delivered per annum. - For the period 2025/26 to 2029/30: 1,050 homes to be delivered per annum - For the period 2030/31 to 2039/40: 1,700 homes to be delivered per annum. The Local Plan also allows for the provision of between 118 and 142 ha of employment land over the plan period.	An HRA ¹⁸ has been completed to inform the emerging Local Plan. This HRA concluded that the emerging Plan is anticipated to have no LSEs upon any European sites, either alone, or in-combination with other plans or projects.	Yes. This plan will trigger change or development close to the Plan area. There is potential for in-combination air quality, hydrology, recreation and urbanisation LSEs on European sites and areas of FLL. The HRA will take these in-combination impacts into consideration.
Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2031: Policies and Strategy ¹⁹	Published July 2015	Identifies eight key transport-related challenges that the county faces from 2011-2031 and sets out strategies for tackling each of these challenges. This document is complemented by the Long Term Transport Strategy ²⁰ (which outlines the changes required in relation to the county's services and transport infrastructure)	The Local Transport Plan was supported by an HRA ²² , which concluded that the Plan was anticipated to have no LSEs on European sites.	No. Policies set out in the Local Transport Plan are likely to encourage a modal shift from the private car and positive impacts upon air quality.

¹⁷ Bedford Borough Council (2022) Local Plan 2040: Plan for Submission (April 2022). Available at: <https://edrms.bedford.gov.uk/OpenDocument.aspx?id=xivh8bP%2bAJZXEaq26SnEFQ%3d%3d&name=PLAN%20FOR%20SUBMISSION.pdf> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

¹⁸ AECOM (2024) Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040: Habitats Regulations Assessment (April 2022). Available at: <https://edrms.bedford.gov.uk/OpenDocument.aspx?id=No1L4FLZTYpNCVf5ithsPQ%3d%3d&name=Bedford%20Local%20Plan%20HRA%20April%202022.pdf> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

¹⁹ Cambridgeshire County Council (2015) Third Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2031: Policies and Strategy. Available at: [https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/imported-assets/The_Local_Transport_Plan_3%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/imported-assets/The_Local_Transport_Plan_3%20(1).pdf) [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

²⁰ Cambridgeshire County Council (2015) Third Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2031: Long Term Transport Strategy. Available at: https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/imported-assets/R-TP-The_Long_Term_Transport_Strategy.pdf [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

²² Cambridgeshire County Council (2015) HRA Screening: Cambridgeshire LTP2 Refresh (October 2014). Available at: [https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/imported-assets/Final_HRA_Report%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/imported-assets/Final_HRA_Report%20(1).pdf) [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

Plans and policies	Plan status	Summary of housing/employment – key elements of the Local Plan that could cause in-combination effects	Summary of HRA findings	Potential in-combination LSE
		and Transport Delivery Plans ²¹ (which outline the transport schemes the county intends to deliver over two-to-three year periods).		
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2036 ²³	Adopted July 2021	Outlines 12 objectives for mineral and waste management in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough areas, for the period up to 2036. These objectives intend to guide sustainable waste management and the delivery of a <i>“steady, adequate but sustainable supply of minerals to meet current and projected future need”</i> .	An HRA was not available at the time of writing.	Yes. This plan has the potential to trigger in-combination air, water and urbanisation effects at European sites and upon areas of FLL. The HRA will take these in-combination impacts into consideration.
Anglian River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) ²⁴	The Anglian RBMP was updated in December 2022	The RBMP provides an overview of river basin planning in England for the Anglian River Basin District. It includes an assessment of the status of waterbodies in the River Basin District, objectives for these waterbodies and a summary of the measures necessary to reach these objectives.	The RBMP was supported by an HRA ²⁵ . This concluded that, at the strategic plan level, the RBMP is not likely to have any significant effects on any European sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.	The RBMP actions are focused on water bodies and the improvement of European sites that are water dependent. The achievement of these aims will be considered in the HRA process. Whilst development activities arising from Local Plans may inhibit the ability of the RBMP to achieve objectives relating to European sites, the overall effect of the RBMP is to promote

²¹ Cambridgeshire County Council (2015) Transport Delivery Plan. Available at: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/transport-plans-and-policies/transport-delivery-plan> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

²³ Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council (2021) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2036. Available at: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/planning-and-development/planning-policy/adopted-minerals-and-waste-plan> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

²⁴ Environment Agency (2022) Anglian river basin district river basin management plan: updated 2022. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/anglian-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan-updated-2022> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

²⁵ Environment Agency (2022) River basin management plan for the Anglian River Basin District: Habitats Regulations Assessment (September 2022). Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/635242f8e90e07768c1a73a0/Anglian_river_basin_management_plan_2022_HRA.pdf [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

Plans and policies	Plan status	Summary of housing/employment – key elements of the Local Plan that could cause in-combination effects	Summary of HRA findings	Potential in-combination LSE
				management towards Good Ecological Status (GES).
Anglian Water's Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) 2024 ²⁶	Published August 2023	The WRMP24 sets out how Anglian Water will maintain a sustainable and secure supply of safe drinking water over the plan period.	The WRMP was supported by an HRA ²⁷ . It concluded no adverse impacts on the integrity of any European sites either alone, or in-combination, so long as adjustments are made to the application of measures described in the individual assessments.	This plan aims to protect the water environment and takes account for future water demand. The achievement of these aims will be considered in the HRA process. It is unlikely that the WRMP will have alone or in-combination effects on the water environment.
Anglian Water Drought Plan ²⁸	Published April 2022	The Drought Plan outlines the operational steps that will be conducted if a drought occurs in the five-year period from 2022 to 2027. It describes how supplies will be enhanced, demands managed and environmental impacts minimised. It proposes ongoing leakage reduction measures, water efficiency, and monitoring and metering activities.	An HRA ²⁹ was prepared in support of the Drought Plan. It concluded no adverse impacts on the integrity of any European sites, either alone, or in-combination.	This plan aims to protect the water environment in times of drought. The achievement of these aims will be considered in the HRA process. It is unlikely that the Drought Plan will have alone, or in-combination, effects on the water environment.
Affinity Water (AW) Water Resource	Published October 2024	Whilst the Plan area is not located within the AW WRMP area, to increase resilience to	An HRA ³¹ was undertaken in support of the WRMP, which	This plan aims to protect the water environment and takes account for

²⁶ Anglian Water (2023) Our Water Resources Management Plan 2024. Available at: <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/siteassets/household/about-us/wrmp/revised-draft-wrmp24-main-report-v2.pdf> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

²⁷ Mott MacDonald (2023) Anglian Water Revised Draft Water Resource Management Plan 2024 Environmental Report Sub-Report A: Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). Available at: <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/SysSiteAssets/household/about-us/wrmp/revised-draft-wrmp24-environmental-report-sub-report-a---hra.pdf> [Date accessed: 09/10/25].

²⁸ Anglian Water (2022) Drought Plan 2022 Final Version. Available at: <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/siteassets/household/about-us/aws-drought-plan-2022.pdf> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

²⁹ Ricardo (2022) Anglian Water Drought Plan 2022: Habitat Regulations Assessment – Stage 1 Screening and Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment Report. Available at: <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/SysSiteAssets/household/about-us/aws-drought-plan-2022---hra.pdf> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

³¹ AECOM (2020) Technical Report: 4.12 Habitats Regulations Assessment Revised Draft Water Resources Management Plan 2020-2080. Available at: https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/docs/Water_Resources/Archives/4.12_Habitat_Regulations_Assessment_Final_WRMP19.pdf [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

Plans and policies	Plan status	Summary of housing/employment – key elements of the Local Plan that could cause in-combination effects	Summary of HRA findings	Potential in-combination LSE
Management Plan (WRMP) 2024 ³⁰		drought, water trading with AW is discussed within the Anglian WRMP. Within AW's WRMP there is a focus on climate change resilience, the implementation of smart meters and working towards better pipe connections to increase water availability.	set out a series of mitigation measures. The HRA concluded that, provided the mitigation measures are included in the WRMP, it would not result in an adverse effect on any European sites.	future water demand. The achievement of these aims will be considered in the HRA process. It is unlikely that the WRMP will have alone or in-combination effects on the water environment.
Cambridge Water's Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) 2024 ³²	Published March 2025	The WRMP outlines how Cambridge Water will maintain a sustainable and secure supply of safe drinking water over the plan period.	An HRA ³³ was prepared in support of the WRMP. It concluded that the WRMP will, alone, have LSEs upon the following three European sites: • Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar; • Fenland SAC; and, • Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC.	Yes. The HRA concluded that the plan would have LSEs upon three European sites: Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar; Fenland SAC; and Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC.
Cambridge Water Drought Plan ³⁴	Published April 2022	The Drought Plan outlines the intended actions of Cambridge Water before, during and after drought events, to ensure water demand needs	An HRA ³⁵ was prepared in support of the Drought Plan. It concluded no adverse impacts on the integrity of any	This plan aims to protect the water environment in times of drought. The achievement of these aims will be considered in the HRA process. It is unlikely that the Drought Plan will

³⁰ Affinity Water (2024) Water Resource Management Plan 2024. Available at: <https://affinitywater.uk/engagementhq.com/wrmp> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

³² Cambridge Water (2025) Final Water Resources Management Plan 2024. Available at: <https://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/media/zadnmcfe/cam-water-resources-management-plan-2024-final.pdf> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

³³ Ricardo (2023) Habitats Regulations Assessment: Draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024. Available at: <https://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/media/twqh2ovj/cambridge-water-draft-wrmp24-hra-issue-3.pdf> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

³⁴ Cambridge Water (2022) Cambridge Water drought plan. Available at: <https://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/media/udchgvd1/cambridge-water-final-drought-plan-2022.pdf> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

³⁵ APEM (2021) Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report: Cambridge Water's Draft Drought Plan 2022 (September 2021). Available at: <https://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/media/5yljwncu/appendix-f-habitats-regulation-asessment-screening-report-v1.pdf> [Date accessed: 09/10/25]

Plans and policies	Plan status	Summary of housing/employment – key elements of the Local Plan that could cause in-combination effects	Summary of HRA findings	Potential in-combination LSE
		and the needs of the environment both continue to be met.	European sites, either alone, or in-combination.	have alone, or in-combination, effects on the water environment.

Appendix B: European Site Conservation Objectives and Threats and Pressures

Barnack Hills & Holes SAC¹

Conservation objectives:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

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

Qualifying features:

H6210. Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco brometalia*) (important orchid sites); Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important Orchid sites – priority habitat)

Threats and Pressures at European site which may be affected by the Local Plan^{2,3}:

- Loss of/disconnection from supporting off-site habitat – impact of loss of, or disconnection from, nearby habitats that support or are functionally linked to the site;
- Air pollution – impact of changes to air quality, including atmospheric nitrogen deposition and acidification; and,
- Public access/disturbance.

Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC⁴

Conservation objectives:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

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

Qualifying features:

S1308. *Barbastella barbastellus*; Barbastelle Bat

Threats and Pressures at European site which may be affected by the Local Plan^{5,6}

- Loss of/disconnection from supporting off-site habitat – impact of loss of, or disconnection from, nearby habitats that support or are functionally linked to the site;
- Landscape-altering development – impact of development altering the landscape and causing the loss of/disruption to flight lines to and from the site;

¹ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for Barnack Hills & Holes SAC (UK0030031). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5111783597539328> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

² Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Barnack Hills & Holes SAC (SIP009). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4529218465562624> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

³ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features, Barnack Hills & Holes Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Site Code: UK0030031. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0030031.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

⁴ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC (UK0030331). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6736081810620416> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

⁵ Natural England (2015) Site Improvement Plan: Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC (SIP078). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5757354431741952> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

⁶ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features, Eversden and Wimpole Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Site Code: UK0030331. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0030331.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC⁴

- Disturbance from human activity – impact of tree management practices and nighttime light pollution;
- Air pollution – impact of changes to air quality, including atmospheric nitrogen deposition and acidification;
- Water pollution/water quality – impact of pollutants entering supporting water habitats (specifically nearby lakes and ponds); and,
- Hydrology/water quantity – impact of inappropriate water levels of supporting water habitats (specifically nearby lakes and ponds).

Fenland SAC (where it is underpinned by Woodwalton Fen SSSI)⁷

Conservation objectives:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

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

Qualifying features:

H6410. *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*); Purple moor-grass meadows

H7210. Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae*; Calcium-rich fen dominated by Great Fen-sedge (Saw-sedge) (priority habitat/species)

S1149. *Cobitis taenia*; Spined Loach

S1166. *Triturus cristatus*; Great Crested Newt

Threats and Pressures at European site which may be affected by the Local Plan^{8,9}

- Loss of/disconnection from supporting off-site habitat – impact of loss of, or disconnection from, nearby habitats that support or are functionally linked to the site;
- Air pollution – impact of changes to air quality, including atmospheric nitrogen deposition and acidification;
- Water pollution/water quality – impact of high nutrient levels, changes to water chemistry and other changes to water quality; and,
- Hydrology/water quantity – impact of disturbed water regimes (including the source, depth, duration, frequency, magnitude and timing of water supply), disturbed flooding regimes, changes to water levels, changes to water table height and other hydrological changes.

⁷ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for Fenland SAC (UK0014782). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6712672527581184> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

⁸ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Fenland SAC (SIP084). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6024783481274368> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

⁹ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features Fenland (SAC) Site Code: UK0014782. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0014782.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

Nene Washes SAC¹⁰.

Conservation objectives:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

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

Qualifying features:

S1149. *Cobitis taenia*; Spined Loach

Threats and Pressures at the European site which may be affected by the Local Plan^{11,12}.

- Loss of/disconnection from supporting off-site habitat – impact of loss of, or disconnection from, nearby habitats that support or are functionally linked to the site;
- Water pollution/water quality – impacts of high nutrient levels (including high levels of phosphorous) and other changes to water quality; and,
- Hydrology/water quantity – impacts of disturbed flow regimes, changes to water quantity and other hydrological changes.

¹⁰ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for Nene Washes SAC (UK0030222). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5559224163631104> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹¹ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Nene Washes (SIP146). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5376938197647360> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹² Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features, Nene Washes (SAC) Site Code: UK0030222. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0030222.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

Nene Washes SPA¹³,

Conservation objectives:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

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

Qualifying features:

A037. *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*; Bewick's Swan (Non-breeding)

A050. *Anas penelope*; Eurasian Wigeon (Non-breeding)

A051. *Anas strepera*; Gadwall (Breeding)

A051. *Anas strepera*; Gadwall (Non-breeding)

A052. *Anas crecca*; Eurasian Teal (Non-breeding)

A054. *Anas acuta*; Northern Pintail (Non-breeding)

A055. *Anas querquedula*; Garganey (Breeding)

A056. *Anas clypeata*; Northern Shoveler (Non-breeding)

A056. *Anas clypeata*; Northern Shoveler (Breeding)

A156a. *Limosa limosa limosa*; Black-tailed Godwit (Breeding)

Threats and Pressures at the European site which may be affected by the Local Plan^{14, 15}

- Disturbance caused by human activity – disturbance of visitors (including those visiting the site to engage in angling, wildfowling, bird watching and skating);
- Landscape-altering development – impact of development altering the landscape and causing the loss of unobstructed lines of sight within feeding or roosting habitat, which can limit the ability of birds to detect predators;
- Loss of/disconnection from supporting off-site habitat – impact of loss of, or disconnection from, nearby habitats that support or are functionally linked to the site;
- Water pollution/water quality – impacts of high nutrient levels (including high levels of phosphorous) and other changes to water quality; and,
- Hydrology/water quantity – impacts of disturbed flow regimes, changes to water supply, changes to water depth, changes to the area of waterbodies, changes to overall water quantity and other hydrological changes.

¹³ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives for Nene Washes SPA (UK9008031). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4894064390438912> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹⁴ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Nene Washes (SIP146). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5376938197647360> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

¹⁵ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features, Nene Washes (SPA) Site Code: UK9008031. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK9008031.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

Nene Washes Ramsar¹⁶

Conservation objectives:

Ramsar sites do not have Conservation Objectives in the same way as SPAs and SACs. Information regarding the designation of Ramsar sites is contained in JNCC Ramsar Information Sheets. Ramsar Criteria are the criteria for identifying Wetlands of International Importance. The relevant criteria and ways in which this site meets the criteria are presented in the table below.

Ramsar Criterion	Justification for the application of each criterion
2	The site supports an important assemblage of nationally rare breeding birds. In addition, a wide range of raptors occur through the year. The site also supports several nationally scarce plants, and two vulnerable and two rare British Red Data Book invertebrate species have been recorded.
6	Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation): Species with peak counts in winter: Tundra Swan, <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>, Northwest Europe 694 individuals, representing an average of 2.3% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3) Contemporary data and information on waterbird trends at this site and their regional (sub-national) and national contexts can be found in the annual Wetland Bird Survey report.

Threats and Pressures at European site which may be affected by the Local Plan¹⁷:

N/A

Orton Pit SAC¹⁸

Conservation objectives:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

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

Qualifying features:

H3140. Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of *Chara* spp.; Calcium-rich nutrient-poor lakes, lochs and pools

S1166. *Triturus cristatus*; Great Crested Newt

¹⁶ JNCC (1993) Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS): Nene Washes. Available at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11046.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for Orton Pit SAC (UK0030053). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5289941760212992> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

Orton Pit SAC¹⁸

Threats and Pressures at European site which may be affected by the Local Plan^{19,20}

- Loss of/disconnection from supporting off-site habitat – impact of loss of, or disconnection from, nearby habitats that support or are functionally linked to the site;
- Direct impact from third party – impact of illegal activities including off-roading, vandalism, arson and disturbance from dogs jumping into ponds;
- Water pollution/water quality – impact of acidification; and inappropriate levels of chlorophyll, dissolved oxygen, nitrogen, phosphate and other pollutants; and,
- Hydrology/water quantity – impact of disturbed water regimes, inappropriate water levels, and insufficient water transparency.

Ouse Washes SAC²¹

Conservation objectives:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

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

Qualifying features:

S1149. *Cobitis taenia*; Spined Loach

Threats and Pressures at European site which may be affected by the Local Plan^{22,23}

- Loss of/disconnection from supporting off-site habitat – impact of loss of, or disconnection from, nearby habitats that support or are functionally linked to the site;
- Water pollution/water quality – impacts of inappropriate levels of nutrients, organic pollutants and other pollutants (particularly pollution of groundwater); and,
- Hydrology/water quantity – impacts of inappropriate water levels and disturbed flow regimes.

¹⁹ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Orton Pit SAC (SIP159). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5570370673311744> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

²⁰ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features, Orton Pit Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Site Code: UK0030053. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0030053.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

²¹ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for Ouse Washes SAC (UK0013011). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4894882430713856> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

²² Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Ouse Washes (SIP160). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5354106084392960> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

²³ Natural England (2015) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features, Ouse Washes (SAC) Site Code: UK0013011. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0013011.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

Ouse Washes SPA²⁴

Conservation objectives:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

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

Qualifying features:

A037. *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*; Bewick's Swan (Non-breeding)

A038. *Cygnus cygnus*; Whooper Swan (Non-breeding)

A050. *Anas penelope*; Eurasian Wigeon (Non-breeding)

A051. *Anas strepera*; Gadwall (Breeding)

A052. *Anas crecca*; Eurasian Teal (Non-breeding)

A053. *Anas platyrhynchos*; Mallard (Breeding)

A054. *Anas acuta*; Northern Pintail (Non-breeding)

A055. *Anas querquedula*; Garganey (Breeding)

A056. *Anas clypeata*; Northern Shoveler (Non-breeding)

A056. *Anas clypeata*; Northern Shoveler (Breeding)

A082. *Circus cyaneus*; Hen Harrier (Non-breeding)

A151. *Philomachus pugnax*; Ruff (Breeding)

A156a. *Limosa limosa limosa*; Black-tailed Godwit (Breeding)

Waterbird assemblage

Breeding bird assemblage

Threats and Pressures at European site which may be affected by the Local Plan^{25,26}

- Loss of/disconnection from supporting off-site habitat – impact of loss of, or disconnection from, nearby habitats that support or are functionally linked to the site;
- Disturbance caused by human activity – impact of human activity in and around the site, including angling, wildfowling and walking/dog walking;
- Landscape- and landform-altering development – impact of development altering the landscape/nearby landforms and causing the loss of unobstructed lines of sight within feeding or roosting habitat, which can limit the ability of birds to detect predators;
- Water pollution/water quality – impact of inappropriate levels of nutrients, organic pollutants and other pollutants (particularly pollution of groundwater); and,
- Hydrology/water quantity – impact of disturbed flow regimes, changes to water supply, changes to water area/depth, and other changes to water quantity.

²⁴ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives for Ouse Washes SPA (UK9008041). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6636062256398336> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

²⁵ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Ouse Washes (SIP160). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5354106084392960> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

²⁶ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features, Ouse Washes (SPA) Site Code: UK9008041. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK9008041.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

Ouse Washes Ramsar²⁷

Conservation objectives:

Ramsar sites do not have Conservation Objectives in the same way as SPAs and SACs. Information regarding the designation of Ramsar sites is contained in JNCC Ramsar Information Sheets. Ramsar Criteria are the criteria for identifying Wetlands of International Importance. The relevant criteria and ways in which this site meets the criteria are presented in the table below.

Ramsar Criterion	Justification for the application of each criterion
1	The site is one of the most extensive areas of seasonally-flooding washland of its type in Britain.
2	The site supports several nationally scarce plants, including Small Water Pepper <i>Polygonum minus</i>, Whorled Water-Milfoil <i>Myriophyllum verticillatum</i>, Greater Water Parsnip <i>Sium latifolium</i>, River Waterdropwort <i>Oenanthe fluviatilis</i>, Fringed Water-lily <i>Nymphoides peltata</i>, Long-stalked Pondweed <i>Potamogeton praelongus</i>, Hair-like Pondweed <i>Potamogeton trichoides</i>, Grass-wrack Pondweed <i>Potamogeton compressus</i>, Tasteless Water-pepper <i>Polygonum mite</i> and Marsh Dock <i>Rumex palustris</i>. Invertebrate records indicate that the site holds relict fenland fauna, including the British Red Data Book species Large Darter Dragonfly <i>Libellula fulva</i> and the Rifle Beetle <i>Oulimnius major</i>. The site also supports a diverse assemblage of nationally rare breeding waterfowl associated with seasonally-flooding wet grassland.
5	Assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter: 59133 Waterfowl (five year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)
6	Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation): Species with peak counts in winter: - Tundra Swan, <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>, Northwest Europe 1140 individuals, representing an average of 3.9% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3) - Whooper Swan, <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>, Iceland/UK/Ireland 653 individuals, representing an average of 3.1% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3) - Eurasian Wigeon, <i>Anas penelope</i>, Northwest Europe 22630 individuals, representing an average of 1.5% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) - Gadwall, <i>Anas strepera strepera</i>, Northwest Europe 438 individuals, representing an average of 2.5% of the GB population (five year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3) - Eurasian Teal, <i>Anas crecca</i>, Northwest Europe 3384 individuals, representing an average of 1.7% of the GB population (five year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) - Northern Pintail, <i>Anas acuta</i>, Northwest Europe 2108 individuals, representing an average of 3.5% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) - Northern Shoveler, <i>Anas clypeata</i>, Northwest and central & Europe 627 individuals, representing an average of 1.5% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3) Contemporary data and information on waterbird trends at this site and their regional (sub-national) and national contexts can be found in the annual Wetland Bird Survey report.

²⁷ JNCC (1976) Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS): Ouse Washes. Available at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11051.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

Threats and Pressures at European site which may be affected by the Local Plan²⁸:

- Eutrophication – impact of high nutrient levels caused by sewage treatment works and agricultural runoff; and,
- Reservoir/barrage/dam impact: flooding – recent decades have seen an increase in occurrence of spring flooding and winter flood depths. These two factors have had an adverse impact on vegetation and bird features of the site.

Portholme SAC²⁹

Conservation objectives:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

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

Qualifying features:

H6510. Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*)

Threats and Pressures at European site which may be affected by the Local Plan^{30,31}

- Disturbance caused by recreation/visitors to the site – impact of unmanaged levels of site visitation and use of the site for recreation;
- Loss of/disconnection from supporting off-site habitat – impact of loss of, or disconnection from, nearby habitats that support or are functionally linked to the site;
- Air pollution – impact of changes to air quality, including atmospheric nitrogen deposition and acidification;
- Water pollution/water quality – impact of high nutrient levels arising from floodwaters from the River Ouse; and,
- Hydrology/water quantity – impact of disturbed water regimes, disturbed flooding regimes, and inappropriate water table levels.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for Portholme SAC (UK0030054). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4802651548024832> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

³⁰ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Portholme SAC (SIP177). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6533964571344896> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

³¹ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features Portholme Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Site Code: UK0030054. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0030054.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

Rutland Water SPA³²

Conservation objectives:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

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

Qualifying features:

A005. *Podiceps cristatus*; Great Crested Grebe (Non-breeding)

A036. *Cygnus olor*; Mute Swan (Non-breeding)

A050. *Anas penelope*; Eurasian Wigeon (Non-breeding)

A051. *Anas strepera*; Gadwall (Non-breeding)

A052. *Anas crecca*; Eurasian Teal (Non-breeding)

A056. *Anas clypeata*; Northern Shoveler (Non-breeding)

A061. *Aythya fuligula*; Tufted Duck (Non-breeding)

A067. *Bucephala clangula*; Common Goldeneye (Non-breeding)

A070. *Mergus merganser*; Goosander (Non-breeding)

A125. *Fulica atra*; Common Coot (Non-breeding)

Waterbird assemblage

Threats and Pressures at European site which may be affected by the Local Plan³³

- Public access/disturbance – impacts of recreational activities in and around the SPA, including regular activities such as water sports, fishing, cycling, birdwatching and walking, and infrequent large events held on the banks of the reservoir annually;
- Direct impact from third party – impact of activities such as private firework displays in adjacent properties, hot air balloon flights and private aircraft flights;
- Planning permission – impacts of increasing development around the SPA (including development of windfarms), directly harming waterfowl species as well as resulting in habitat loss and fragmentation;
- Water pollution/water quality – impact of inappropriate nutrient levels (from diffuse sources, such as agriculture, and point sources, such as regulated treated and unregulated untreated sewage discharge into the SPA) and other pollutants; and,
- Hydrology/water quantity – impacts of inappropriate water levels, through human-induced changes to hydraulic conditions, including deliberate water abstraction practices.

Rutland Water Ramsar³⁴

Conservation objectives:

Ramsar sites do not have Conservation Objectives in the same way as SPAs and SACs. Information regarding the designation of Ramsar sites is contained in JNCC Ramsar Information Sheets. Ramsar Criteria are the criteria for identifying Wetlands of International Importance. The relevant criteria and ways in which this site meets the criteria are presented in the table below.

³² Natural England (2023) European Site Conservation Objectives for Rutland Water SPA (UK9008051). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4978639963684864> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

³³ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Rutland Water SPA (SIP208). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5985520903520256> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

³⁴ JNCC (1991) Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS): Rutland Water. Available at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11062.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

Ramsar Criterion	Justification for the application of each criterion
5	Assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter: 19274 Waterfowl (five year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)
6	Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation): Species with peak counts in spring/autumn: - Gadwall, <i>Anas strepera strepera</i>, Northwest Europe 1014 individuals, representing an average of 1.6% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3) - Northern Shoveler, <i>Anas clypeata</i>, Northwest and central & Europe 619 individuals, representing an average of 1.5% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3) Contemporary data and information on waterbird trends at this site and their regional (sub-national) and national contexts can be found in the annual Wetland Bird Survey report.

Threats and Pressures at European site which may be affected by the Local Plan³⁵:

N/A

The Wash & Norfolk Coast SAC³⁶

Conservation objectives:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

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

Qualifying features:

H1110. Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time; Subtidal sandbanks

H1140. Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; Intertidal mudflats and sandflats

H1150. Coastal lagoons (priority habitat)

H1160. Large shallow inlets and bays

H1170. Reefs

H1310. *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand; Glasswort and other annuals colonising mud and sand

H1330. Atlantic salt meadows (*Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae*)

H1420. Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (*Sarcocornetea fruticosi*); Mediterranean

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC (UK0017075). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5950176598425600> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

The Wash & Norfolk Coast SAC³⁶

saltmarsh scrub

S1355. *Lutra lutra*; Otter

S1365. *Phoca vitulina*; Common Seal

Threats and Pressures at European site which may be affected by the Local Plan^{37,38}

- Public access/disturbance – impact of disturbance by visitors and recreational activity (including, but not limited to, boating, low altitude aircraft use, wildlife tours/watching, kiting, motorised vehicle use, biking, walking/dog walking, littering and barbecuing on the beach);
- Coastal squeeze – impact of sea level rise and coastal development (including erection and maintenance of coastal defences), which result in the loss of intertidal and coastal habitats;
- Loss of/disconnection from supporting off-site habitat – impact of loss of, or disconnection from, nearby habitats that support or are functionally linked to the site;
- Air pollution – impact of changes to air quality, including atmospheric nitrogen deposition and acidification;
- Water pollution/water quality – impacts (including increased turbidity) of inappropriate levels of nutrients, dissolved oxygen, toxic chemicals, and other pollutants and contaminants; and,
- Hydrology/water quantity – impacts of inappropriate water levels/depth, changes to water area, changes to water density, and changes to the source, depth, duration, frequency, magnitude and timing of water supply or flow, through human-induced changes to hydraulic conditions.

The Wash SPA³⁹

Conservation objectives:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

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

Qualifying features:

A037. *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*; Bewick's Swan (Non-breeding)

A040. *Anser brachyrhynchus*; Pink-footed Goose (Non-breeding)

A046a. *Branta bernicla bernicla*; Dark-bellied Brent Goose (Non-breeding)

A048. *Tadorna tadorna*; Common Shelduck (Non-breeding)

A050. *Anas penelope*; Eurasian Wigeon (Non-breeding)

A051. *Anas strepera*; Gadwall (Non-breeding)

A054. *Anas acuta*; Northern Pintail (Non-breeding)

A065. *Melanitta nigra*; Black (Common) Scoter (Non-breeding)

A067. *Bucephala clangula*; Common Goldeneye (Non-breeding)

A130. *Haematopus ostralegus*; Eurasian Oystercatcher (Non-breeding)

³⁷ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: The Wash and North Norfolk Coast (SIP245). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5327498292232192> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

³⁸ Natural England (2024) The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC, Supplementary Advice. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ConservationAdvice/SupplementaryAdvice.aspx?SiteCode=UK0017075&SiteName=the+wash+&SiteNameDisplay=The+Wash+and+North+Norfolk+Coast+SAC&countyCode=29&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=&NumMarineSeasonality=2> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

³⁹ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives for The Wash SPA (UK9008021). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5747661105790976> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

The Wash SPA³⁹

- A141. *Pluvialis squatarola*; Grey Plover (Non-breeding)
A143. *Calidris canutus*; Red Knot (Non-breeding)
A144. *Calidris alba*; Sanderling (Non-breeding)
A149. *Calidris alpina alpina*; Dunlin (Non-breeding)
A156. *Limosa limosa islandica*; Black-tailed Godwit (Non-breeding)
A157. *Limosa lapponica*; Bar-tailed Godwit (Non-breeding)
A160. *Numenius arquata*; Eurasian Curlew (Non-breeding)
A162. *Tringa totanus*; Common Redshank (Non-breeding)
A169. *Arenaria interpres*; Ruddy Turnstone (Non-breeding)
A193. *Sterna hirundo*; Common Tern (Breeding)
A195. *Sterna albifrons*; Little Tern (Breeding)

Waterbird assemblage

Breeding bird assemblage

Threats and Pressures at European site which may be affected by the Local Plan^{40,41}

- Public access/disturbance – impact of disturbance by visitors and recreational activity (including, but not limited to, boating, low altitude aircraft use, wildlife tours/watching, kiting, motorised vehicle use, biking, walking/dog walking, littering and barbecuing on the beach);
- Coastal squeeze – impact of sea level rise and coastal development (including erection and maintenance of coastal defences), which result in the loss of intertidal and coastal habitats;
- Landscape-altering development – impact of development altering the landscape and causing the loss of unobstructed lines of sight within feeding or roosting habitat, which can reduce predation detection by birds and fragment habitats;
- Loss of/disconnection from supporting off-site habitat – impact of loss of, or disconnection from, nearby habitats that support or are functionally linked to the site;
- Air pollution – impact of changes to air quality, including atmospheric nitrogen deposition and acidification;
- Water pollution/water quality – impacts (including increased turbidity) of inappropriate levels of nutrients, dissolved oxygen, toxic chemicals, and other pollutants and contaminants; and,
- Hydrology/water quantity – impacts of inappropriate water levels/depth, changes to water area, changes to water density, and changes to the source, depth, duration, frequency, magnitude and timing of water supply or flow, through human-induced changes to hydraulic conditions.

The Wash Ramsar⁴²

Conservation objectives:

Ramsar sites do not have Conservation Objectives in the same way as SPAs and SACs. Information regarding the designation of Ramsar sites is contained in JNCC Ramsar Information Sheets. Ramsar Criteria are the criteria for identifying Wetlands of International Importance. The relevant criteria and ways in which this site meets the criteria are presented in the table below.

⁴⁰ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: The Wash and North Norfolk Coast (SIP245). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5327498292232192> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

⁴¹ Natural England (2024) The Wash SPA, Supplementary Advice. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ConservationAdvice/SupplementaryAdvice.aspx?SiteCode=UK9008021&SiteName=the%20wash%20&SiteNameDisplay=The+Wash+SPA&countyCode=29&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=&NumMarineSeasonality=21> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

⁴² JNCC (1988) Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS): The Wash. Available at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/uk11072.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

Ramsar Criterion	Justification for the application of each criterion
1	The Wash is a large shallow bay comprising very extensive saltmarshes, major intertidal banks of sand and mud, shallow water and deep channels.
3	Qualifies because of the inter-relationship between its various components including saltmarshes, intertidal sand and mud flats and the estuarine waters. The saltmarshes and the plankton in the estuarine water provide a primary source of organic material which, together with other organic matter, forms the basis for the high productivity of the estuary.
5	Assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter: 292541 Waterfowl (five year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)
6	Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation): Species with peak counts in spring/autumn: - Eurasian Oystercatcher, <i>Haematopus ostralegus ostralegus</i>, Europe and northwest Africa (wintering) 15616 individuals, representing an average of 1.5% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) - Grey Plover, <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>, Eastern Atlantic/western Africa (wintering) 13129 individuals, representing an average of 5.3% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3 - spring peak) - Red Knot, <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i>, Western and southern Africa (wintering) 68987 individuals, representing an average of 15.3% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) - Sanderling, <i>Calidris alba</i>, Eastern Atlantic 3505 individuals, representing an average of 2.8% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) - Eurasian Curlew, <i>Numenius arquata arquata</i>, N. a. <i>arquata</i> Europe (breeding) 9438 individuals, representing an average of 2.2% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) - Common Redshank, <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>, 6373 individuals, representing an average of 2.5% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) - Ruddy Turnstone, <i>Arenaria interpres interpres</i>, Northeastern Canada, Greenland/western Europe and northwest Africa 888 individuals, representing an average of 1.7% of the GB population (five year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3) Species with peak counts in winter: - Pink-footed Goose, <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>, Greenland, Iceland/UK 29099 individuals, representing an average of 12.1% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) - Dark-bellied Brent Goose, <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>, 20861 individuals, representing an average of 9.7% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) - Common Shelduck, <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, Northwest Europe 9746 individuals, representing an average of 3.2% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) - Northern Pintail, <i>Anas acuta</i>, Northwest Europe 2108 individuals, representing an average of 3.5% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) - Dunlin, <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>, Western Siberia/western Europe 36600 individuals, representing an average of 2.7% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) - Bar-tailed Godwit, <i>Limosa lapponica lapponica</i>, Western Palearctic 16546 individuals, representing an average of 13.7% of the population (five year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) Contemporary data and information on waterbird trends at this site and their regional (sub-national) and national contexts can be found in the annual Wetland Bird Survey report.

Threats and Pressures at European site which may be affected by the Local Plan⁴³:

N/A

Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA⁴⁴

Conservation objectives:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

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

Qualifying features:

A021. *Botaurus stellaris*; Great Bittern (Non-breeding)

A051. *Anas strepera*; Gadwall (Non-breeding)

A140. *Pluvialis apricaria*; European Golden Plover (Non-breeding)

Waterbird assemblage

Threats and Pressures at European site which may be affected by the Local Plan^{45,46}

- Public access/disturbance – disturbance from recreation (particularly walkers and dog owners) and outdoor sports and leisure activities;
- Planning permission – impact of increasing built and recreational development within and around the SPA, resulting in habitat loss and fragmentation, and increased disturbance;
- Loss of/disconnection from supporting off-site habitat – impact of loss of, or disconnection from, nearby habitats that support or are functionally linked to the site;
- Landscape-altering development – impact of development altering the landscape and causing the loss of unobstructed lines of sight within feeding or roosting habitat, which can reduce predation detection by birds and fragment habitats;
- Water pollution/water quality – impacts of changes to water quality; and,
- Hydrology/water quantity – impacts of inappropriate water levels/depth, changes to water area, and other changes to water quantity.

Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar⁴⁷

Conservation objectives:

Ramsar sites do not have Conservation Objectives in the same way as SPAs and SACs. Information regarding the designation of Ramsar sites is contained in JNCC Ramsar Information Sheets. Ramsar Criteria are the criteria for identifying Wetlands of International Importance. The relevant criteria and ways in which this site meets the criteria are presented in the table below.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Natural England (2019) European Site Conservation Objectives for Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA (UK9020296). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5495529882517504> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

⁴⁵ Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA (SIP254). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6732225261338624> [Date accessed: 02/07/25]

⁴⁶ Natural England (2017) European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA) Site Code: UK9020296 Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK9020296.pdf> [Date accessed: 04/07/25]

⁴⁷ JNCC (2011) Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS): Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits. Available at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11083.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

Ramsar Criterion	Justification for the application of each criterion
5	The site regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds: In the non-breeding season, the site regularly supports 23,821 individual waterbirds (5 year peak mean 1999/2000 – 2003/04).
6	Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation): Species with peak counts in winter: • Mute Swan, <i>Cygnus olor</i>, 629 individuals, representing an average of 1.7% GB population (five year peak mean 1999/2000- 2003/4) • Gadwall, <i>Anas strepera strepera</i>, Northwest Europe 773 individuals, representing an average of 2.0% of the population (five year peak mean 1999/2000- 2003/4) Contemporary data and information on waterbird trends at this site and their regional (sub-national) and national contexts can be found in the annual Wetland Bird Survey report.

Threats and Pressures at European site which may be affected by the Local Plan⁴⁸:

- Unspecified development: urban use – activities connected with ongoing urban development can cause significant disturbance to wintering birds if unmanaged; and,
- Recreation/tourism disturbance – access by people and dogs both on and off of public rights of way is a significant cause of disturbance in some areas. The site is also subject to a variety of recreational activities including fishing and water sports. Demand for access and formal/informal recreational activities within the Nene Valley are increasing; development of facilities/opportunities is often in an uncoordinated manner.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Woodwalton Fen Ramsar⁴⁹

Conservation objectives:

Ramsar sites do not have Conservation Objectives in the same way as SPAs and SACs. Information regarding the designation of Ramsar sites is contained in JNCC Ramsar Information Sheets. Ramsar Criteria are the criteria for identifying Wetlands of International Importance. The relevant criteria and ways in which this site meets the criteria are presented in the table below.

Ramsar Criterion	Justification for the application of each criterion
1	The site is within an area that is one of the remaining parts of East Anglia which has not been drained. The fen is near natural and has developed where peat-digging took place in the 19th century. The site has several types of open fen and swamp communities.
2	The site supports two species of British Red Data Book plants, Fen Violet (<i>Viola persicifolia</i>) and Fen Wood-rush (<i>Luzula pallidula</i>). Woodwalton also supports a large number of wetland invertebrates including 20 British Red Data Book species. Aquatic beetles, flies and moths are particularly well represented.

Threats and Pressures at European site which may be affected by the Local Plan⁵⁰:

- Eutrophication; and,
- Drainage/land-claim for agriculture.

⁴⁹ JNCC (1995) Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS): Woodwalton Fen. Available at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11078.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/07/25]

⁵⁰ Ibid.

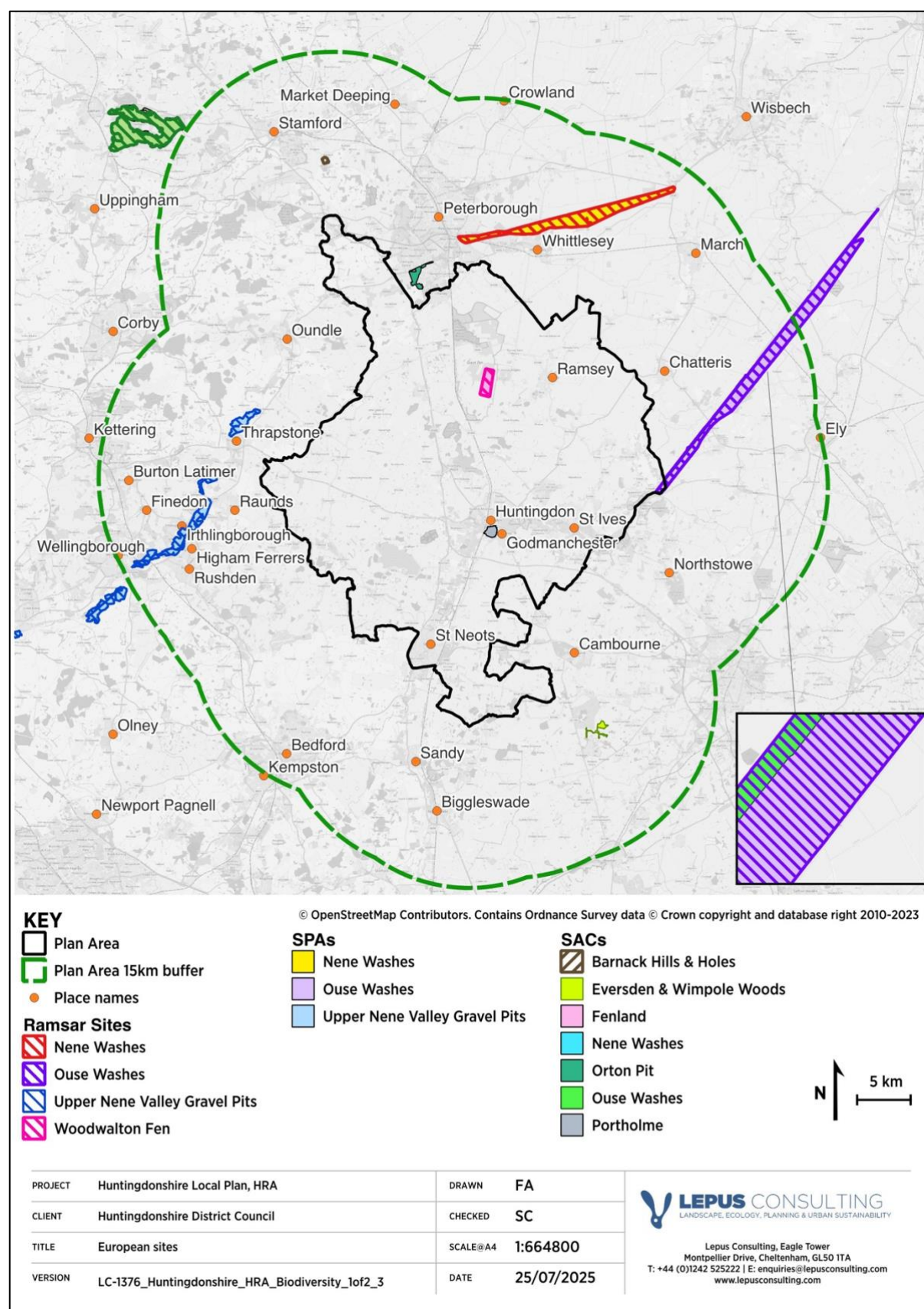


Figure B.1: European sites scoped into the HRA process (1)

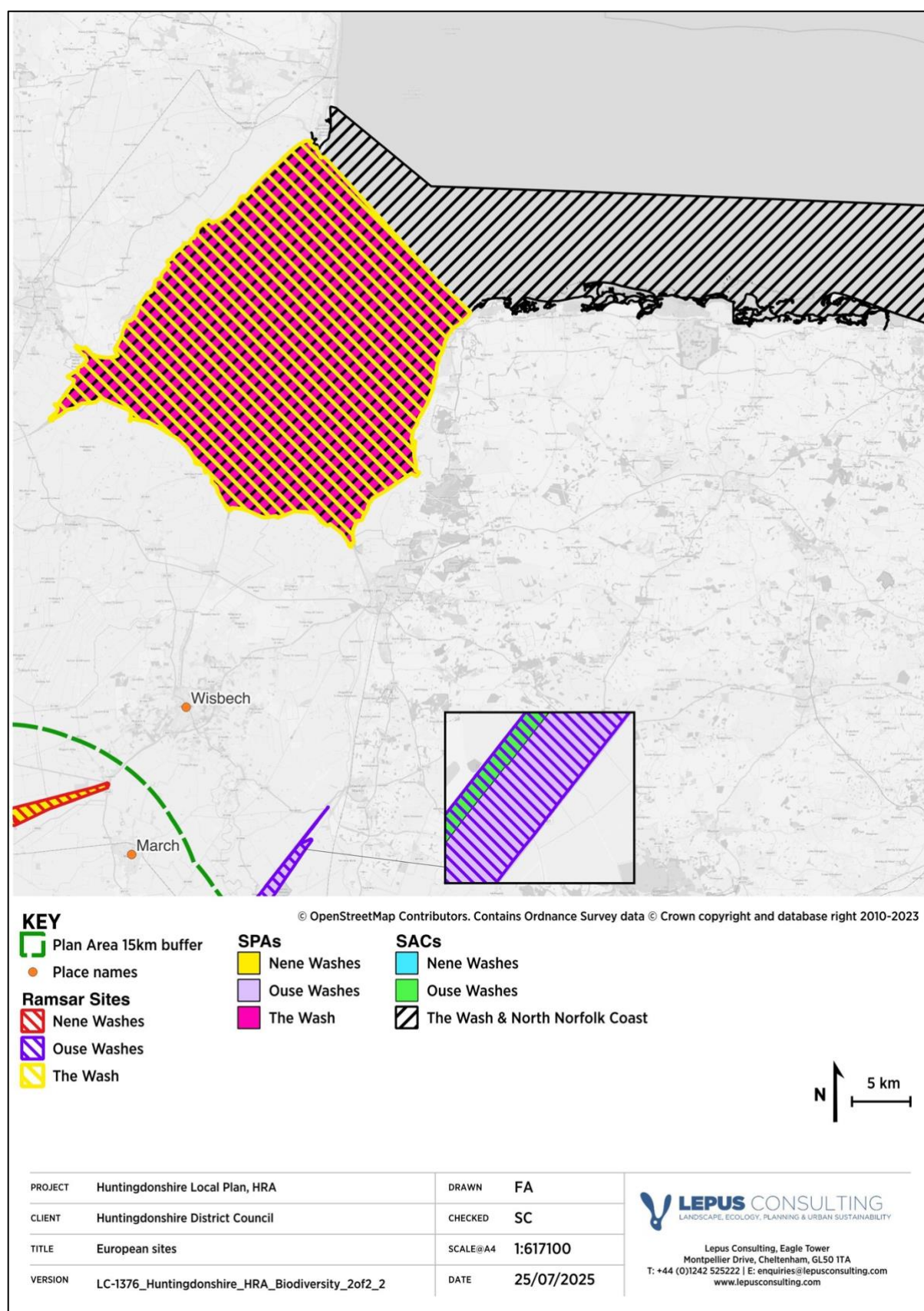


Figure B.2: European sites scoped into the HRA process (2) to illustrate the location of The Wash SPA, The Wash Ramsar and The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC.

Appendix C: Policies screening summary to inform test of likely significance

The Huntingdonshire Local Plan (HLP) policies and allocations have been screened using the DTA HRA pre-screening categories¹ presented in **Table C.1**.

Table C.1: Assessment and reasoning categories from Part F of the DTA Handbook

Screening evaluation and reasoning categories from Chapter F of the Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook (DTA Publications, 2013)	Screen in / Screen out
A. General statements of policy / general aspirations.	Screen Out
B. Policies listing general criteria for testing the acceptability / sustainability of proposals.	Screen Out
C. Proposal referred to but not proposed by the Plan.	Screen Out
D. General plan-wide environmental protection / designated site safeguarding / threshold policies.	Screen Out
E. Policies or proposals that steer change in such a way as to protect European sites from adverse effects.	Screen Out
F. Policies or proposals that cannot lead to development or other change.	Screen Out
G. Policies or proposals that could not have any conceivable or adverse effect on a site.	Screen Out
H. Policies or proposals the (actual or theoretical) effects of which cannot undermine the conservation objectives (either alone or in-combination with other aspects of this or other plans or projects).	Screen Out
I. Policies or proposals with a Likely Significant Effect on a site alone.	Screen In
J. Policies or proposals unlikely to have a significant effect alone.	Screen Out
K. Policies or proposals unlikely to have a significant effect either alone or in-combination.	Screen Out
L. Policies or proposals which might be likely to have a significant effect in-combination.	Screen In
M. Bespoke area, site or case-specific policies or proposals intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on a European site.	Screen In

¹ Tyldesley, D., and Chapman, C. (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook edition UK: DTA Publications Limited. Available at: www.dtapublications.co.uk [Date accessed: 10/09/25]

Section A: What is the Local Plan?

Chapters 1 - 2

Policy Reference	Policy name	Summary of Policy and Identification of LSEs	Screening category	Screening conclusion
n/a	Section A	Section A of the Local Plan is administrative text relating to the Plan and process for consultation.	Category A	Screen out

Section B: Our Strategy for Huntingdonshire

Chapter 3: Our Vision and Approach to Net Zero

Policy Reference	Policy name	Summary of Policy and Identification of LSEs	Screening category	Screening conclusion
n/a	Draft Vision	The draft vision sets out the strategic priorities for an inclusive, sustainable, and healthy Huntingdonshire achieving net zero while supporting thriving communities and local prosperity. It is high level and does not trigger development or change and would, therefore, not lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category A	Screen out
n/a	Draft Strategic Objectives	The draft strategic objectives define the aims of the HLP across a range of topics. They are high level and do not trigger development or change and would, therefore, not lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category A	Screen out
n/a	Huntingdonshire net carbon aspirations	These aspirations set out how Huntingdonshire aspires to contribute towards achieving the national target of being net zero by 2050. They are high level and do not trigger development or change and would, therefore, not lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category A	Screen out

Chapter 4: How will Huntingdonshire grow and change?

Policy Reference	Policy name	Summary of Policy and Identification of LSEs	Screening category	Screening conclusion
Draft Policy LP1	How much development do we expect?	This policy defines the extent of development needed to meet Huntingdonshire's future housing needs over the Plan period. Provision will be made for as follows: - At least 32,000 new homes across a range of tenures, and - About 14,400 additional jobs This policy therefore triggers development and has the potential for LSEs as follows: Air quality: Portholme SAC. Water quality and quantity: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Orton Pit SAC; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. Recreational pressure: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. Urbanisation effects: Portholme SAC, Eversdon & Wimpole Woods SAC	Category L	Screen in
Draft Policy LP2	Our strategy for change	This policy sets out the locations for distribution of housing need in Huntingdonshire. This policy therefore supports development and has the potential for LSEs as follows: Air quality: Portholme SAC. Water quality and quantity: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Orton Pit SAC; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. Recreational pressure: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. Urbanisation effects: Portholme SAC, Eversdon & Wimpole Woods SAC.	Category L	Screen in
Draft Policy LP3	How will infrastructure be provided?	This policy sets out a set of high-level criteria which development must meet to provide for the necessary on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure and facilities. It does not directly trigger development or change and would, therefore, not lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category B	Screen out

Policy Reference	Policy name	Summary of Policy and Identification of LSEs	Screening category	Screening conclusion
Draft Policy LP4	Securing Infrastructure Provision	This policy sets out the delivery of development, detailing conditions and planning obligations. It does not directly trigger development or change and would, therefore, not lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category F	Screen out
Draft Policy LP5	Settlement Hierarchy	This policy sets out the settlement hierarchy for Huntingdonshire. The policy will not trigger a change or development which could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category F	Screen out
Draft Policy LP6	Market Towns	This policy sets out the Council's approach for development proposals on sites in addition to those allocated in the HLP where they are within or adjacent to the designated Market Towns. This policy therefore supports development and has the potential for LSEs as follows: - Air quality: Portholme SAC. - Water quality and quantity: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Orton Pit SAC; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. - Recreational pressure: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. Urbanisation effects: Portholme SAC, Eversdon & Wimpole Woods SAC.	Category L	Screen in
Draft Policy LP7	Service Centres	This policy sets out the Council's approach for development proposals on sites in addition to those allocated in the HLP where they are within or adjacent to the designated Service Centres. This policy does not directly trigger development which could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category L	Screen in
Draft Policy LP8	Local Services Villages	This policy sets out the Council's approach for development proposals on sites in addition to those allocated in the HLP where they are within or adjacent to the designated Local Services Villages. This policy does not directly trigger development which could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category L	Screen in
Draft Policy LP9	Villages	This policy sets out the Council's approach for development proposals on unallocated sites in or adjacent to the designated Villages. This policy does not directly trigger development which could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category L	Screen in

Policy Reference	Policy name	Summary of Policy and Identification of LSEs	Screening category	Screening conclusion
Draft Policy LP10	Hamlets and the Countryside	This policy sets out the Council's approach for development proposals on unallocated sites within hamlets and the countryside. This policy therefore supports development and has the potential for LSEs as follows: - Air quality: Portholme SAC. - Water quality and quantity: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Orton Pit SAC; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. - Recreational pressure: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. Urbanisation effects: Portholme SAC, Eversdon & Wimpole Woods SAC.	Category L	Screen in
Draft Policy LP11	Health and well-being	This policy sets out criteria for major scale development involving residential or employment uses in the context of creating healthy, inclusive, accessible, safe places that support healthy lifestyles. It does not directly trigger development which could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category F	Screen out
Draft Policy LP12	Green and Blue Infrastructure	This policy outlines the criteria that all proposals are expected to support green and blue infrastructure, and highlights Priority Areas for their implementation. It does not directly trigger development which could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category D	Screen out
Draft Policy LP13	Managing flood risk	This policy sets out the criteria for addressing all forms of flood risk in proposals within the HLP. It is a plan wide environmental protection policy and does not directly trigger development which could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone or in combination.	Category D	Screen out
Draft Policy LP14	Managing wastewater	This policy sets out criteria for new developments to demonstrate that water quality is protected, wastewater is managed appropriately and sufficient capacity provided. It does not directly trigger development which could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone or in combination.	Category F	Screen out
Draft Policy LP15	Managing surface water	This policy sets out criteria for new developments to manage surface water flooding through design. It does not directly trigger development which could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone or in combination. This policy contains specific provisions relating to the protection of water quality at European sites (Orton Pits SAC, Fens SAC, Woodwalton Fens SAC, Portholme SAC and the Ouse Washes SPA, SAC	Category M	Screen in

Policy Reference	Policy name	Summary of Policy and Identification of LSEs	Screening category	Screening conclusion
		and Ramsar). It therefore provides bespoke topic specific mitigation and will be screened into the HRA process for consideration as mitigation through an Appropriate Assessment.		
Draft Policy LP16	Water efficiency	This policy sets out requirements for new development to demonstrate that it is designed to utilise no more than 90 litres per person per day of mains supplied/ potable water. It is a plan wide environmental protection policy and will not trigger development or other change which could lead to an LSE on any European site, either alone or in combination.	Category D	Screen out
Draft Policy LP17	Approach to renewable energy schemes	This policy supports renewable energy in the form of solar and wind energy in areas with technical potential identified on the Policies Map and where it is demonstrated that all potential adverse impacts including cumulative impacts are or can be made acceptable. This policy therefore has the potential for urbanisation effects upon the following European sites and areas of associated FLL: LSEs as follows: - Nene Washes SPA; - Nene Washes Ramsar; - Ouse Washes SPA; - Ouse Washes Ramsar; - Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA; - Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar. - Eversdon & Wimpole Woods SAC.	Category L	Screen in
Draft Policy LP18	Transport, travel and connectivity	This policy sets out criteria for development which generates additional movements to and from a building or site, including strategic transport improvements, assessment and mitigation of travel requirements, and digital connectivity. It does not directly trigger development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone or in combination.	Category F	Screen out

Section C: Our Development Management Policies

Chapter 5: How will we create well designed places?

Policy Reference	Policy name	Summary of Policy and Identification of LSEs	Screening category	Screening conclusion
Draft Policy LP19	Design context and character	This policy requires proposals for development to respond positively to its context, drawing inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings. It does not, therefore, lead to development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category F	Screen out

Policy Reference	Policy name	Summary of Policy and Identification of LSEs	Screening category	Screening conclusion
Draft Policy LP20	Creating high quality places and spaces	This policy sets out requirements for new developments and advertisements to incorporate key placemaking principles. It does not, therefore, lead to development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category F	Screen out
Draft Policy LP21	Placemaking for larger scale developments	This policy sets out criteria for large scale developments, including a masterplan, design code, and parameter plan. It does not, therefore, lead to development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category B	Screen out
Draft Policy LP22	Ensuring amenity for new buildings and neighbours	This policy sets out requirements for new development to provide a high standard of amenity for all users and occupiers. It does not, therefore, lead to development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category F	Screen out
Draft Policy LP23	Minimising embodied carbon in new buildings	This policy sets out requirements for new development to take opportunities to reduce total embodied carbon content. Modern Methods of Construction could also be utilised. It does not, therefore, lead to development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category F	Screen out
Draft Policy LP24	Minimising operational energy consumption in new buildings	This policy ensures all new homes are developed to at least the Future Homes Standard, and non-residential buildings must meet Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method standards. It does not, therefore, lead to development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category B	Screen out
Draft Policy LP25	Making existing buildings more energy efficient	This policy sets out requirements for new developments and redevelopments to consider opportunities to improve building energy efficiency. It does not, therefore, lead to development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category F	Screen out
Draft Policy LP26	Supporting carbon capture through nature	This policy sets out sustainability framework involving incorporating tree planting, soft landscaping, green roofs, green spaces, and sustainable drainage within a proposal to support carbon sequestration. This policy is in favour of protecting the natural environment, and will have no LSEs on European sites alone, or in combination.	Category D	Screen out
Draft Policy LP27	Supporting active and sustainable travel	This policy sets out requirements for new development to contribute to an enhanced transport network that supports an increasing proportion of journeys being undertaken by active and sustainable travel modes. It is unlikely to have a significant effect on European sites either alone, or in combination.	Category F	Screen out
Draft Policy LP28	Parking and vehicle Movement	This policy sets out requirements for appropriate provisioning for on-site servicing, movement, and parking of vehicles including commercial, service and emergency vehicles and incorporates appropriate	Category F	Screen out

Policy Reference	Policy name	Summary of Policy and Identification of LSEs	Screening category	Screening conclusion
		parking for cycles. It does not lead to development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.		
Draft Policy LP29	Electric vehicle charging points	This policy sets out requirements for new developments to make provision for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. It does not, therefore, lead to development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category F	Screen out
Draft Policy LP30	Preventing and reducing air pollution	This policy ensures proposals will be accompanied by an Air Quality Assessment and low emissions strategy in the case of significant adverse air quality effects. This policy is in favour of protecting the natural environment, and will have no LSEs on European sites alone, or in combination.	Category D	Screen out
Draft Policy LP31	Preventing and reducing ground contamination and groundwater pollution	This policy sets out criteria for investigation, risk assessment, and remediation in the context of a contaminated site or land due to previous uses. This policy is in favour of protecting the natural environment, and will have no LSEs on European sites alone, or in combination.	Category D	Screen out

Chapter 6: How will we support a strong local economy?

Policy Reference	Policy name	Summary of Policy and Identification of LSEs	Screening category	Screening conclusion
Draft Policy LP32	Protecting and enhancing established employment areas	This policy seeks to protect and enhance the viability, range, suitability, availability, and location of established employment areas. This policy supports employment development within these areas and therefore has the potential to trigger development with the potential for LSEs as follows: - Air quality: Portholme SAC. - Water quality and quantity: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Orton Pit SAC; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. - Urbanisation effects: Portholme SAC, Eversdon & Wimpole Woods SAC.	Category L	Screen in
Draft Policy LP33	Expansion and diversification of rural businesses	This policy outlines criteria for sustainable development relating to rural businesses / farm diversification. This policy supports employment development within these areas and therefore has the potential to trigger development with the potential for LSEs as follows:	Category L	Screen in

Policy Reference	Policy name	Summary of Policy and Identification of LSEs	Screening category	Screening conclusion
		- Air quality: Portholme SAC. - Water quality and quantity: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Orton Pit SAC; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. - Urbanisation effects: Portholme SAC, Eversdon & Wimpole Woods SAC.		
Draft Policy LP34	Shaping businesses in the countryside	This policy sets out the framework for new industry-specific business proposals in the countryside, which may only be supported when there are no suitable sites available on allocated employment sites. This policy supports employment development within these areas and therefore has the potential to trigger development with the potential for LSEs as follows: - Air quality: Portholme SAC. - Water quality and quantity: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Orton Pit SAC; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. - Urbanisation effects: Portholme SAC, Eversdon & Wimpole Woods SAC.	Category L	Screen in
Draft Policy LP35	Enabling key clusters and innovation-led growth	This policy outlines criteria for new strategic business clusters for advanced manufacturing, research and development, life sciences, digital tech, clean energy, creative industries, and agri-tech. This policy supports employment development under these criteria and therefore has the potential to trigger development with the potential for LSEs as follows: - Air quality: Portholme SAC. - Water quality and quantity: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Orton Pit SAC; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. - Urbanisation effects: Portholme SAC, Eversdon & Wimpole Woods SAC.	Category L	Screen in
Draft Policy LP36	Enabling logistics and distribution	This policy addresses the need for strategic logistics and distribution. It identifies sites where logistics and distribution will be supported. This policy supports development under these criteria and therefore has the potential to trigger development with the potential for LSEs as follows: - Air quality: Portholme SAC.	Category L	Screen in

Policy Reference	Policy name	Summary of Policy and Identification of LSEs	Screening category	Screening conclusion
		- Water quality and quantity: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Orton Pit SAC; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. - Urbanisation effects: Portholme SAC, Eversdon & Wimpole Woods SAC.		
Draft Policy LP37	Helping tourism and recreation in the countryside	This policy supports small-scale, sustainable tourism, sport, or leisure development where it is well-related to settlements. This policy supports development subject to a set of criteria and therefore has the potential to trigger development with the potential for LSEs as follows: - Air quality: Portholme SAC. - Water quality and quantity: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Orton Pit SAC; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. - Urbanisation effects: Portholme SAC, Eversdon & Wimpole Woods SAC.	Category L	Screen in
Draft Policy LP38	Defining our retail hierarchy	This policy sets out the retail hierarchy for Huntingdonshire. It supports development in these areas and therefore has the potential to trigger development with the potential for LSEs as follows: - Air quality: Portholme SAC. - Water quality and quantity: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Orton Pit SAC; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. - Urbanisation effects: Portholme SAC, Eversdon & Wimpole Woods SAC.	Category L	Screen in
Draft Policy LP39	Promoting town centre vitality	This policy identifies Town Centre a Primary Shopping Areas. It supports development in these areas and therefore has the potential to trigger development with the potential for LSEs as follows: - Air quality: Portholme SAC. - Water quality and quantity: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Orton Pit SAC; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. - Urbanisation effects: Portholme SAC, Eversdon & Wimpole Woods SAC.	Category L	Screen in

Policy Reference	Policy name	Summary of Policy and Identification of LSEs	Screening category	Screening conclusion
Draft Policy LP40	Supporting Local Services and Facilities	This policy identifies sets criteria for local services and facilities. It supports development in these areas subject to these criteria and therefore has the potential to trigger development with the potential for LSEs as follows: - Air quality: Portholme SAC. - Water quality and quantity: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Orton Pit SAC; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. - Urbanisation effects: Portholme SAC, Eversdon & Wimpole Woods SAC.	Category L	Screen in

Chapter 7: How will we support homes for all?

Policy Reference	Policy name	Summary of Policy and Identification of LSEs	Screening category	Screening conclusion
Draft Policy LP41	Providing affordable homes	This policy sets out requirements for affordable housing provision within development proposals. It does not trigger development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category F	Screen out
Draft Policy LP42	Promoting a mix of housing	This policy requires major housing developments to provide a mix of sizes, types and tenures reflecting identified local needs. It does not trigger development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category F	Screen out
Draft Policy LP43	Ensuring accessible and adaptable homes	This policy sets accessibility and adaptability standards for new homes in line with national building regulations. It does not trigger development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category F	Screen out
Draft Policy LP44	Facilitating self and custom build homes	This policy requires large developments to include a small proportion of plots for self or custom build housing, with marketing and design conditions. It does not trigger development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category F	Screen out
Draft Policy LP45	Supporting specialist housing	This policy supports specialist C3 and C2 housing in accessible locations with criteria ensuring integration, access to services, and high design standards. It does not trigger development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category F	Screen out

Policy Reference	Policy name	Summary of Policy and Identification of LSEs	Screening category	Screening conclusion
Draft Policy LP46	Supporting houses in multiple occupation	The policy supports C4 housing in multiple occupation with criteria ensuring sufficient size, safe and functional living conditions, high standards of amenity, and nationally required minimum room standards for HMOs.	Category F	Screen out
Draft Policy LP47	Promoting rural exceptions housing	This policy supports small-scale affordable housing on sites well related to existing settlements, where a local need is evidenced. Strict criteria limit site size, require affordable delivery in perpetuity, and ensure proposals are proportionate and sustainable. It does not trigger development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category F	Screen out
Draft Policy LP48	Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople	This policy identifies a requirement to provide 127 new pitches over the Plan period. Whilst specific locations for pitches have not been provided, development has the potential for LSEs as follows: - Air quality: Portholme SAC. - Water quality and quantity: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Orton Pit SAC; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. - Recreational pressure: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. - Urbanisation effects: Portholme SAC, Eversdon & Wimpole Woods SAC.	Category L	Screen in

Chapter 8: How will we conserve and enhance the environment?

Policy Reference	Policy name	Summary of Policy and Identification of LSEs	Screening category	Screening conclusion
Draft Policy LP49	Protecting our nature and conservation sites	This policy establishes a clear hierarchy of protection for international, national and local nature conservation designations. It is a plan wide environmental protection policy and will not trigger development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category D	Screen out
Draft Policy LP50	Enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity	This policy requires all proposals to achieve at least 20% biodiversity net gain (above statutory minimum) or no net loss if exempt. It ensures mitigation hierarchy is followed, and off-site contributions are secured where on-site delivery is not feasible, as well as supporting habitat connectivity and water	Category D	Screen out

Policy Reference	Policy name	Summary of Policy and Identification of LSEs	Screening category	Screening conclusion
		quality improvements. It is a plan wide environmental protection policy and will not trigger development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.		
Draft Policy LP51	Protecting our trees, woodlands, hedges and hedgerows	This policy seeks to conserve and enhance trees and hedgerows, requiring surveys, assessments, and mitigation. Loss is only permitted in exceptional circumstances and must be mitigated or compensated. It is a plan wide environmental protection policy and will not trigger development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category D	Screen out
Draft Policy LP52	Protecting our Open Spaces	This policy identifies open and greenspaces and protects them from development. It will not trigger development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category F	Screen out
N/A	Heritage Strategy for Huntingdonshire	The council will give great weight to the conservation of the historic environment in Huntingdonshire, seeking to protect non-designated assets and endorse the methodology and criteria for identifying non-designated heritage assets in Cambridgeshire.	Category D	Screen out
Draft Policy LP53	Heritage assets and their settings	This policy protects designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings. It requires assessment of impacts, justification of harm, and enhancement of local character, and focuses on cultural heritage rather than biodiversity. It is a plan wide environmental protection policy and will not trigger development or change that could lead to an LSE at any European site, either alone, or in combination.	Category D	Screen out
Draft Policy LP54	Water-related development	This policy sets strict criteria for water-based development ensuring protection of water quality, biodiversity, flood risk and navigation safety. Whilst specific locations for water development have not been provided, development has the potential for LSEs as follows: - Air quality: Portholme SAC. - Water quality and quantity: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Orton Pit SAC; Ouse Washes SAC; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC; The Wash SPA; The Wash Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. - Recreational pressure: Fenland SAC; Nene Washes SPA; Nene Washes Ramsar; Ouse Washes SPA; Ouse Washes Ramsar; Portholme SAC; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA; Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar; and Woodwalton Fen Ramsar. - Urbanisation effects: Portholme SAC, Eversdon & Wimpole Woods SAC.	Category L	Screen in

Appendix D: Screening of Local Plan Preferred Options Allocations

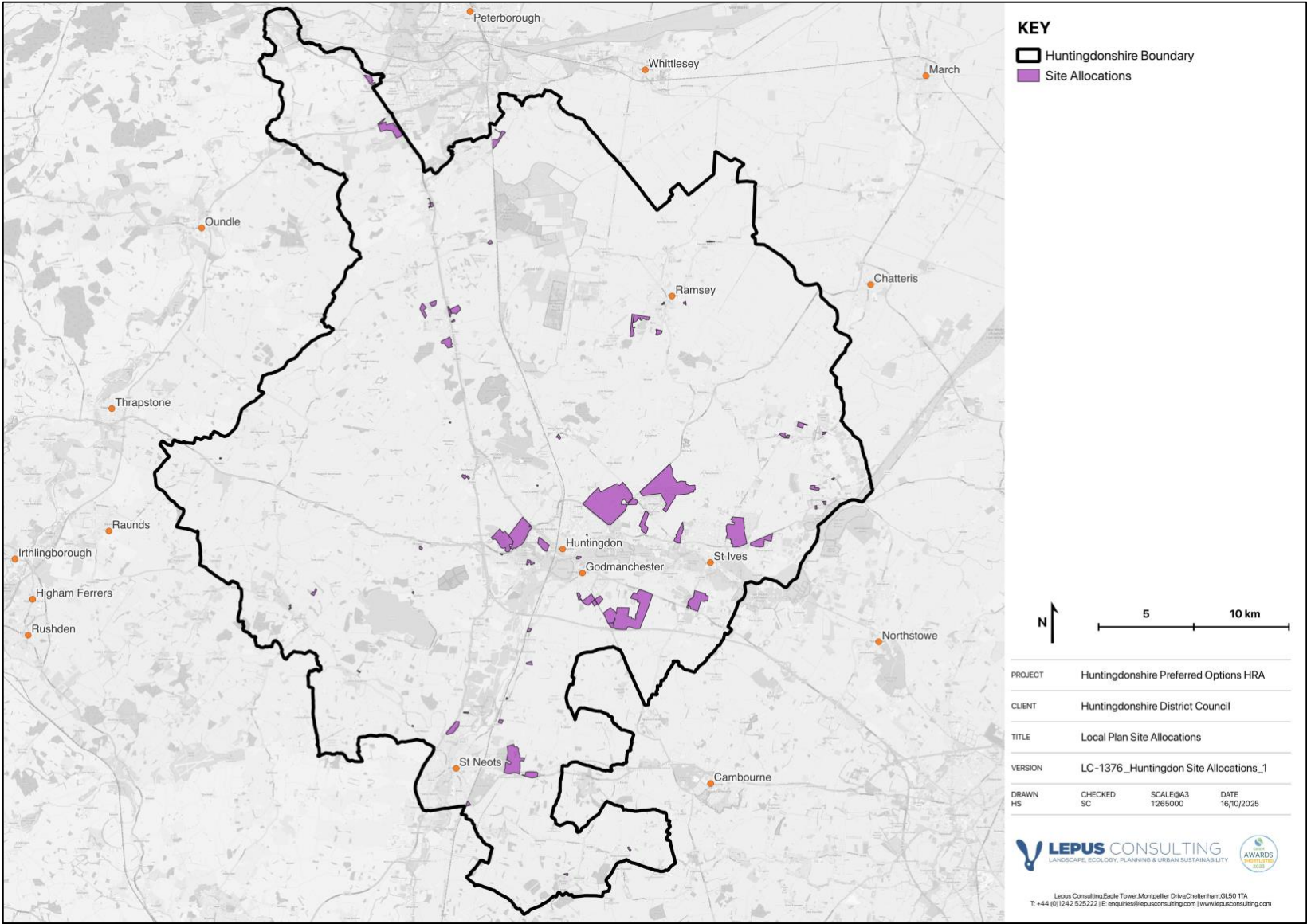


Figure D.1: Local Plan Site Allocations Map

Table Notes:

Air Quality LSEs: All site allocations set out in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (HLP) have the potential to act cumulatively to increase traffic flows on the local and wider road network. An increase in traffic related emissions has the potential to change air quality. Applying Natural England's screening thresholds, air quality likely significant effects (LSEs) are considered possible at those European sites listed in **Section 3.4** of the Preferred Options HRA report. Growth at all allocations (listed below) has the potential to contribute towards a change in air quality, in combination with other plans and projects (see **Appendix A**). All allocations below have therefore been screened in under Category L.

Water Quality and Quantity LSEs: All site allocations set out in the HLP (including those listed below) have the potential to act in combination with one another to increase the quantity of water required for treatment at Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTWs). This may result in the deterioration of downstream water quality. In addition, an increase in water demand from new development increase demand for water supply which may also affect water sensitive European sites. Taking a precautionary approach, hydrology impacts from the combined effect of all developments together, acting in-combination with other plans and projects (see **Appendix A**), have the potential to result in LSEs at hydrologically connected European sites listed in **Section 3.5** of the Preferred Options HRA report. Water quality and quantity impacts at all allocations listed below have therefore been screened in under Category L.

Recreational pressure LSEs: A recreational ZOI of 5.9km has been established through visitor surveys for the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar site. This ZOI has been applied in the following screening assessment.

Visitor surveys have not been undertaken to define a formal recreational ZOI for any other European site scoped into the HRA process at **Section 3.6** of the main HRA report. Nor have recreational impact assessments been undertaken.

The following screening assessment has therefore taken into consideration the location of each European site in relation to the Plan area, status of public access through PRoW / Open Access etc and visitor facilities (such as promoted routes, car parking, cafes and toilets) when screening recreational impacts at all other European sites set out in **Section 3.6** of the main HRA report. These sites include Barnack Hills & Holes SAC (a 5km buffer has been applied), Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC (a 10km buffer has been applied in line with the South Cambridgeshire SPD, relating to functionally linked bat habitat), Fenland SAC, Woodwalton Fen Ramsar and Portholme SAC (no buffer as all within the Plan area), Ouse Washes SPA and Ramsar (no buffer as adjacent to the Plan area) and Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar (no buffer as less than 2km from the Plan area).

Urbanisation effects LSEs: Urbanisation effects include impacts such as noise disturbance, lighting effects, cat predation, fly-tipping, wildfire, littering, vandalism and fragmentation of habitat. Impacts can directly affect a European site and also areas of Functionally Linked Land (FLL) outside a designation boundary. A precautionary buffer of 500m has been applied to identify potential urbanisation effects on all European sites. The assessment also takes into consideration urbanisation effects on areas of FLL associated with the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar site (10km buffer zone as set out in Section 3.7 of the main HRA report) and Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC (10km buffer zone as set out in **Section 3.7** of the main HRA report).

Table D.1 screens urbanisation and recreational LSEs for each potential allocation.

Table D.1: Screening summary for sites allocations

North Huntingdon Growth Corridor

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Draft Allocation North Huntingdon 1: Huntingdon Racecourse	72ha of land for mixed use development. This includes: - Continued use of the site for the racecourse, equine support facilities and Huntingdon Rugby Football Club - Complementary conference and events facilities, outdoor recreational and leisure facilities	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	Whilst the proposed development uses do not include residential development, they are likely to include hotel uses and parking associated with all uses. Given the allocation is not within easy walking distance of any European site, it is unlikely that development will result in a recreational LSE on any European site.
Draft Allocation North Huntingdon 2: North of A141 between the racecourse and A1307	103.5ha of land for industrial use. Light industrial and storage and distribution uses	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This site is not allocated for residential development and will therefore not result in recreational LSEs.

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Draft Allocation North Huntingdon 3: Lodge Farm, North of A141	317.7ha of land for new community and mixed use development - Approx. 4,900 homes - Approx. 8ha for employment - Approx. 6.5ha for a local centre - 19.3ha for schooling	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation North Huntingdon 4: Wyton Airfield	254.9ha of land for mixed use development - Approx. 4,000 homes - Approx. 15ha for employment use - Approx. 6.4ha for a local centre - 17.7ha for schooling	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.

Market Towns

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Draft Allocation Huntingdon 1: Hinchingbrooke Hospital	22ha of land for mixed use development including: - redevelopment of the hospital, including necessary enabling works - reprovision of the ambulance station - provision of key worker and medical/care student accommodation - car parking for staff, patients and visitors - other primary care uses - residential institutions (use class C2) to provide specialist residential accommodation including step down accommodation - strategic green infrastructure	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential accommodation which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Huntingdon 2: Amber Centre, 36 Mayfield Road, Huntingdon	0.35ha of land for residential development - - Approx. 12 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
			This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation St Neots 1: East of Loves Farm (Tithe Farm)	99.5ha of land for mixed use development - Approx. 1,100 homes - Approx. 3.7ha for employment use	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation St Neots 2: Land South West of Potton Road	3.9ha of land for residential development - Approx. 80 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
	23.9ha of land for mixed use development - Approx. 350 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites:

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Draft Allocation St Ives 1: North of Houghton Road	- 12ha for open space and landscaping	Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	- Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Bury 1: Bury Industrial Estate, Old Station Road, Bury	0.96ha of land for residential development - Approx. 30 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC and Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Bury 2: Off Cheveril Lane	6.4ha of Land for open space	This allocation is for the protection of open space and therefore there will be no urbanisation LSEs.	This site is not allocated for residential development and will therefore not result in recreational LSEs.

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Draft Allocation Bury 3; RAF Upwood – Phase 3, Bury	17.69ha for mixed use development - Approx. 170 homes - Approx. 1.5ha natural, green or open spaces	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC and Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Ramsey 1: RAF Upwood - Phase 4	14ha of land for mixed use development - Approx. 4.8ha for employment use - Approx. 9.2ha for natural, green or open spaces	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC and Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This site is not allocated for residential development and will therefore not result in recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Ramsey 2: North of Hollow Lane	1.7ha of land for residential development - Approx. 20 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Draft Allocation Ramsey 3: East of Wood Lane	8.3ha of land for mixed use development - Approx. 14 homes - 7.7ha of community open space	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC and Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.

Service Centres

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Draft Allocation Brampton 1: Wallis Land, Thrapston Road	0.7ha of land for mixed use development - Approx. 10 homes - 0.4ha of open space	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC and the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Brampton 2: Land off Huntingdon Road	5.97ha of land for mixed use development - Open space - Car parking facilities	This allocation is for open space and car parking facilities and therefore unlikely to lead to urbanisation LSEs.	Whilst this allocation does not allocate any residential development it does allocate car parking. This car parking is specifically for the Hinchingsbrooke County Park. This car parking is on the opposite side of the main railway line from Portholme SAC and therefore recreational pressure caused by increased parking close to a European site are unlikely.
Draft Allocation Fenstanton 1: Galley Hill	61ha of land for mixed use development - Commercial, business and industrial storage - 36ha of open space	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This site is not allocated for residential development and will therefore not result in recreational LSEs.

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Draft Allocation Godmanchester 1: Former RGE Engineering site and HDC Car Park, The Avenue	2.46ha of land for residential development - Approx. 85 homes	Portholme SAC is located approximately 276m to the south east of this allocation. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore likely, and this site is therefore screened in.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs. Of particular note is the close proximity of this allocation to Portholme SAC.
Draft Allocation Godmanchester 2: South of Godmanchester off the A1198	36.9ha of land for mixed use development - Approx. 520 homes - 5.1ha biodiversity net gain - 0.8ha cemetery extension	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs. Of particular note is the close proximity of this allocation to Portholme SAC.

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Draft Allocation Godmanchester 3:	5.2ha of land for commercial, business and industrial use	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This site is not allocated for residential development and will therefore not result in recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Kimbolton 1: Brittens Farm, Station Road	1.40ha of land for residential development - Approx. 25 homes Approx. 0.5ha of land for open space to safeguard against flooding	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Kimbolton 2: South East of South of Bicton Industrial Estate, Stow Road	4.8ha of land for commercial, business and industrial uses	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This site is not allocated for residential development and will therefore not result in recreational LSEs.

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Draft Allocation Little Paxton 1: North of St James Road, Little Paxton	1.3ha of land for residential development - Approx 35 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Little Paxton 2: West of Great North Road	20.4ha of land for residential development - Approx. 220 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Sawtry 1: West of Glatton Road	12.5ha of land for residential development - Approx. 330 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar;

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
	Approx. 2ha of open space to safeguard against flooding		- Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Sawtry 2: East of Glatton Road and North of Brookside Industrial estate	6.5ha of land for residential development - Approx. 170 homes Approx. 1ha of open space to safeguard against flooding	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Sawtry 3: West of Toll Bar Way and Green End Road	18.8ha of land for residential development - Approx. 330 homes Approx. 3ha of open space to safeguard against flooding	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Draft Allocation Sawtry 4: Off Old North Road	4ha of land for mixed use development - Approx. 1.5ha for electric vehicle charging - Approx. 1ha for industrial use - Approx. 1ha for open space use	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This site is not allocated for residential development and will therefore not result in recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Sawtry 5: Land at Little Common Farm	14.6ha of land for industrial use, and 2.5ha of open space to safeguard against flooding	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This site is not allocated for residential development and will therefore not result in recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Sawtry 6: North of Black Horse Industrial Estate	1.4ha of land for industrial and storage and distribution uses, 0.3ha of open space to safeguard against flooding	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This site is not allocated for residential development and will therefore not result in recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Somersham 1: College Farm, West of Parkhall Road	6.3ha of land for residential development - Approx 120 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
			This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Somersham 2: South of College Farm	5.6ha of land for residential development - Approx 140 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Somersham 3: Dews Bus and Coach Depot, Chatteris Road	2.2ha of land for residential development - Approx. 50 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Draft Allocation Somersham 4: College Farm, West of Newlands Industrial Estate	1.8ha of land for residential development - Approx. 45 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Yaxley 1: Eagle Business Park, phase 3, Broadway	16ha of land for commercial, business and industrial use	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This site is not allocated for residential development and will therefore not result in recreational LSEs.

Local Services Villages

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Draft Allocation Abbots Ripton 1: Home Farm South	2.83ha of land for mixed use development - Approx. 15 homes - Approx. 0.5ha for commercial use	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Alconbury 1: South of Great North Road	1.4ha of land for residential development - Approx. 30 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Draft Allocation Alconbury 2: East of Globe Lane	3.5ha of land for residential development - Approx. 60 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC and Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Bluntisham 1: Land to the South of Rectory Road	1.53ha of land for residential development - Approx. 20 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Bluntisham 2: Land off 18 Holliday's Road	2ha of land for residential development - Approx. 35 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar;

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
			- Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Bluntisham 3: Land to the West of Colne Road	7.8ha of land for mixed use development - Approx. 85 homes - Approx. 3ha of open space - 0.2ha primary school staff parking	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pit SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Great Gransden 1: South of Caxton Road	1.8ha of land for commercial, business, industrial and storage uses	This allocation is located approximately 6.3km to the north west of Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC, which is within the established 10km wider conservation area as set out in South Cambridgeshire's SPD. The SAC may therefore be susceptible to urbanisation LSEs from development at this allocation and it will therefore be screened in. The allocation is not located within 10km of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pit SPA or Ramsar.	This site is not allocated for residential development and will therefore not result in recreational LSEs.

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Draft Allocation Great Staughton 1: East of B661, The Green	0.90ha of land for residential development - Approx. 15 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Hemmingford Abbots 1: The Lattenburys	243ha of land for mixed use development - Approx. 3,800 homes - 6ha employment use - 10ha charity expansion - 26ha strategic green infrastructure	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Houghton and Wyton 1: Ruddles Lane	28ha of land for ground mounted solar panels	This site is allocated for solar voltaics. It therefore has the potential for LSEs upon the following European sites: - Nene Washes SPA; - Nene Washes Ramsar; - Ouse Washes SPA;	This site is not allocated for residential development and will therefore not result in recreational LSEs.

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
		- Ouse Washes Ramsar; Urbanisation effects will therefore be screened in. The allocation is not located within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pit SPA and Ramsar.	
Draft Allocation Needlingworth 1: Giffords Park, East of B1040	122ha of land for mixed use development - Approx. 1,750 homes - 0.5ha for a care home - 5ha of land for a local centre - 4.6ha commercial and employment use - 4ha for schooling - 3.3ha for a solar farm - 65.5ha of green infrastructure	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Needlingworth 2: South of A1123	35ha of land for mixed use development - Approx. 290 homes - Community retail facilities	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
			This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Offord D'Arcy 1: West of Graveley Road	4.1ha for residential development - Approx. 80 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Offord Cluny 1: West of High Street and North of Dunstall Close	2.8ha of land for residential development - Approx. 45 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Stilton 1: Rear of The Stilton	0.44ha of land for residential development	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites:

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Cheese Inn, 24 North Street	- Approx. 8 homes	Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	- Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Stilton 2: Rear of 16 to 58 North Street	3.18ha of land for residential development - Approx. 55 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.

Villages

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Draft Allocation Abbotsley 1: North of Wintringham Hall	19ha of land for office, research development, storage and distribution uses	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pit SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This site is not allocated for residential development and will therefore not result in recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Alwalton 1: North of 23 to 33 Oundle Road	12.9ha of land for mixed use development - 165 homes - 4ha of open space	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Bythorn 1: Land West of Warren Lane, Bythorn	0.5ha of land for residential development - Approx. 10 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC. This allocation is, however, located within the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pit SPA and Ramsar 10km buffer zone for FLL impacts upon Golden Plover and Lapwing habitat.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
		Urbanisation LSEs are therefore likely and this site is screened in.	- Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Colne 1: Land at Ramadie, Earith Road, Colne	0.85ha of land for residential development - Approx. 15 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Ellington 1: Old Sheds at Manor Farm, High Street	2ha of land for residential development - Approx. 35 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Draft Allocation Grafham 1: Adjacent to 24 Cedar Close	0.88ha of land for residential development - Approx. 20 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Great Paxton 1: West of High Street, Great Paxton	0.5ha of land for residential development - Approx. 10 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Great Paxton 2: North of Harley Industrial Park	3.6ha of land for general industrial uses	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pit SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This site is not allocated for residential development and will therefore not result in recreational LSEs.

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Draft Allocation Haddon 1: West of the A1 and South of Peterborough Motorway Services	48.2ha of land for light industrial, storage and distribution use	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This site is not allocated for residential development and will therefore not result in recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Hail Weston 1: Land West of High Street, Hail Weston	0.8ha of land for residential development - Approx. 8 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Holme 1: Land North of Station Road	3ha of land allocated for mixed use development - Approx. 50 homes - 0.3ha for local retail and health uses within the local community use class F2 or within the commercial, business or services use class E(e)	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
Draft Allocation Ramsey Forty Foot 1: Ramsey Forty Foot Village Rural Mooring	1.4ha of land is allocated for leisure moorings (not permanent), open space and land to safeguard against flooding.	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pit SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Great Stukeley 1: Land between 76 and 86 Owl End	0.30ha of land for residential development - Approx. 3 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Upton 1: South West of South Farm	0.39ha of land for residential development Approx. 7 homes	This allocation is not located within 500m of any European site, or within 10km of Eversden & Wimpole Woods SAC or the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pit SPA and Ramsar. Urbanisation LSEs are therefore unlikely.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar;

Site Name	Employment land (ha) / Net new homes	Potential for urbanisation or habitat loss / fragmentation LSEs.	Potential for an increase in recreational pressure
			- Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.
Draft Allocation Waresley 1: Land between West Lodge and Home Farm	1.6ha of land for residential development - Approx 10 custom and self build homes	This allocation is located approximately 8.8km to the north west of Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC, which is within the established 10km wider conservation area as set out in the South Cambridgeshire SPD. FLL bat habitat associated with this SAC may therefore be susceptible to urbanisation LSEs from development at this allocation and it will be screened in. The allocation is not located within 10km of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pit SPA or Ramsar.	This policy allocates residential dwellings which may increase recreational pressure at the following European sites: - Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC; - Fenland SAC; - Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar - Ouse; Washes SPA and Ramsar; - Portholme SAC; and - Woodwalton Fen Ramsar This policy is therefore screened into the HRA process in terms of recreational LSEs.

Habitats Regulations Assessments

Sustainability Appraisals

Strategic Environmental Assessments

Landscape Character Assessments

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments

Green Belt Reviews

Expert Witness

Ecological Impact Assessments

Habitat and Ecology Surveys

Biodiversity Net Gain



© Lepus Consulting Ltd

Eagle Tower

Montpellier Drive

Cheltenham

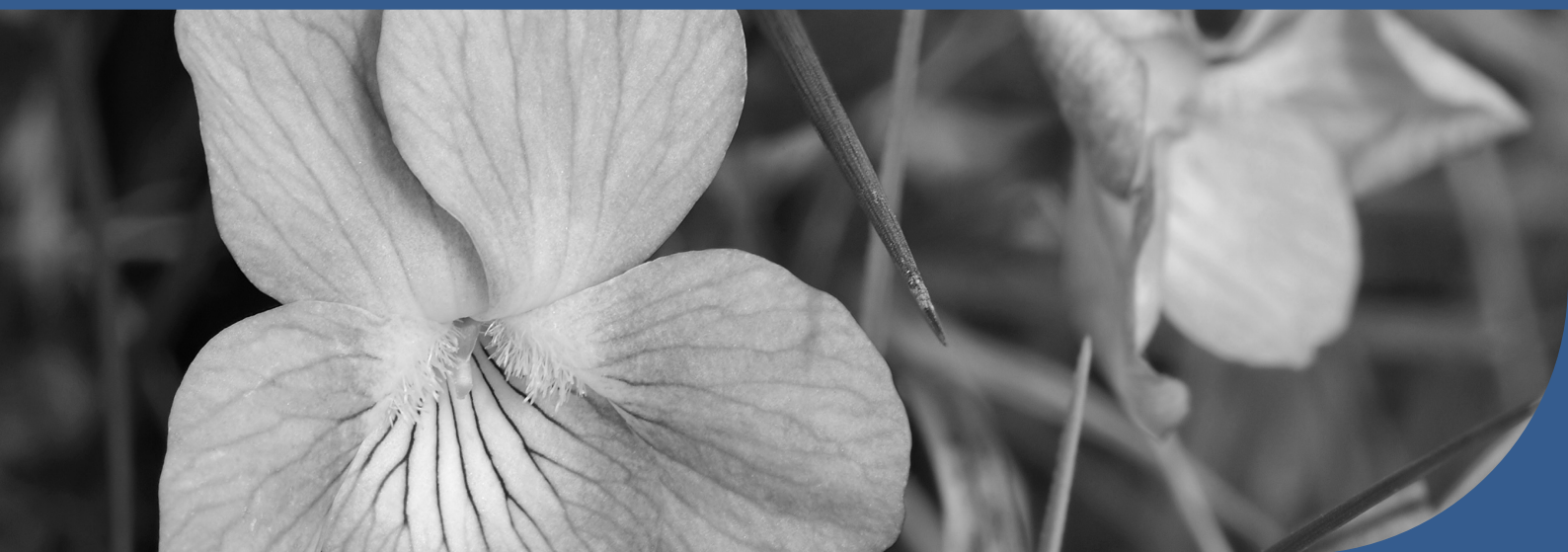
GL50 1TA

T: 01242 525222

E: enquiries@lepusconsulting.com

www.lepusconsulting.com

CHEL TENHAM



Lepus Consulting
1 Bath Street
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire GL50 1YE

t: 01242 525222
w: www.lepusconsulting.com
e: enquiries@lepusconsulting.com