South Cambridgeshire District Council

Local Development Framework

Biodiversity

Supplementary Planning Document

Habitats Regulations Assessment

South Cambridgeshire District Council

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an Assessment of the Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), to meet the requirements of the Habitats Directive. South Cambridgeshire District Council has prepared it, as the relevant competent authority.

The report provides a screening assessment to examine whether the Biodiversity SPD is likely to have any significant impacts on Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination with other projects and plans, in view of the sites' conservation objectives. The Assessment:

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

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

OUTCOME OF ASSESSMENT

It has been objectively concluded that the Biodiversity SPD is not likely to have any significant effects on any Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites. It is therefore concluded that there is no requirement to proceed to the next stage of an Appropriate Assessment.

INTRODUCTION

This report is an Assessment of the Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document, to meet the requirements of the Habitats Directive. It has been prepared by South Cambridgeshire District Council, as the relevant competent authority.

THE REQUIREMENT FOR HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

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

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

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

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

WHAT ARE NATURA 2000 SITES?

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

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

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

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

WHAT IS HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT?

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

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

First stage - Screening

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

Second stage - **Appropriate Assessment**

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

Third stage – Assessment of alternative solutions

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

Fourth stage – Compensatory measures

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

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

WHAT IS A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON A NATURA 2000 SITE?

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

The Precautionary Principle

Prudent action that avoids the possibility of irreversible environmental damage in situations where the scientific evidence is inconclusive but the potential damage could be significant.

STRUCTURE OF THE HRA REPORT

Section 1	Description of the Biodiversity SPD
Section 2	Description of the relevant plans and projects to be considered "in combination"
Section 3	HRA Screening Methodology, sets out the approach used and specific tasks undertaken
Section 4	Identification of the Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites that could be potentially affected by the Biodiversity SPD, including a description of the conservation objectives for each site and the potential sensitivities of the sites to adverse effects
Section 5	Screening Assessment to consider whether there are likely to be any significant effects of the Biodiversity SPD, alone or in combination with other relevant plans and projects, on Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites
Section 6	Consultations
Section 7	Conclusions, summarises the findings of the HRA Screening

SECTION 1: DESCRIPTION OF THE BIODIVERSITY SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Biodiversity SPD has been prepared by South Cambridgeshire District Council. It forms part of the Local Development Framework (LDF).

The SPD expands on district-wide policies in the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (DPD), adopted in July 2007, and policies in individual Area Action Plans for major developments that may vary from the district-wide policies. These policies seek to ensure that biodiversity is adequately protected and enhanced throughout the development process, and the SPD provides additional details on how these policies will be implemented.

The SPD builds on national policy in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1: Delivering Sustainable Development and PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. These promote sustainable, well-designed development. In addition, they seek to ensure that biodiversity and appropriate landscaping are fully integrated to new developments in order to create accessible green spaces for wildlife and people, to contribute to a high quality natural and built environment, and to contribute to a better quality of life.

The Biodiversity SPD is not directly connected to or necessary for the management of Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites.

OBJECTIVE OF THE SPD

The objective of this SPD is to assist the achievement of the Local Development Framework objectives for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and landscape character.

Specific objectives for this document are to:

- Assist applicants' understanding of the role of biodiversity within the wider environment and how biodiversity features should be incorporated within development proposals as part of a high quality design.
- Assist applicants to gain planning permission quickly by informing them of the level of information required to accompany planning applications.
- Explain terminology associated with biodiversity conservation.
- Ensure that development works are undertaken in an appropriate manner to avoid harm to biodiversity.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LDF POLICY

There are a number of policies within the Development Control Policies DPD and Area Action Plans, which relate to biodiversity. A full list of these policies is provided in Appendix 1 of the SPD. The two key LDF policies are Policy NE/6 Biodiversity and Policy NE/7 Sites of Biodiversity or Geological Importance

Policy NE/6 Biodiversity

1. **New development should aim to maintain, enhance, restore or add to biodiversity. Opportunities should be taken to achieve positive gain through the form and design of development. Where appropriate, measures may include creating, enhancing and managing wildlife habitats and natural landscape. The built environment should be viewed as an opportunity to fully integrate biodiversity within new development through innovation. Priority for habitat creation should be given to sites which assist in achieving targets in the Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs).**

2. **The District Council will refuse development that would have an adverse significant impact on the population or conservation status of protected species or priority species or habitat unless the impact can be adequately mitigated or compensated for by measures secured by planning conditions or obligations.**

3. **Where there are grounds to believe that a proposal may affect a protected species or priority species or habitat, applicants will be expected to provide an adequate level of survey information to establish the extent of the potential impact together with possible alternatives to the development, mitigation schemes and / or compensation measures.**

4. **New development will have regard to the impact, either direct or indirect, of a proposal on people's opportunity to enjoy and experience nature on a site together with opportunities to improve public access to nature in addition to understanding local environmental characteristics.**

5. **Previously developed land will not be considered to be devoid of biodiversity. The re-use of such sites must be undertaken carefully with regard to existing features of biodiversity interest. Development proposals will be expected to include measures that maintain and enhance important features whilst incorporating them within any development of the site.**

6. **Exceptionally, where the economic or social benefits of a proposal outweigh harm to an important site or species, the approach will be first to avoid or minimise the harm, then to seek mitigation of the impact, and finally to secure appropriate compensation for any**

residual impact in order to ensure no net loss of biodiversity. Planning conditions and obligations will be used as appropriate to secure this.

7. **Planning permission will not be granted for development which would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the biodiversity of the Natural Areas shown on Figure 7.1 (of the LDF).**

Policy NE/7 Sites of Biodiversity or Geological Importance

1. **Planning permission will not be given for proposals that may have an unacceptable adverse impact, either directly or indirectly, on a Site of Biodiversity or Geological Importance.**

2. **In determining any planning application affecting international, national or non-statutorily protected sites the District Council will ensure that the intrinsic natural features of particular interest are safeguarded or enhanced having regard to:**

    a. **The nature and quality of the site's features, including its rarity value;**

    b. **The extent of any adverse impacts on the features of interest;**

    c. **The likely effectiveness of any proposed mitigation with respect to the protection of the features of interest;**

    d. **The need for compensatory measures in order to protect and enhance remaining features or to recreate habitats on or off the site;**

    e. **The status and designation of the site.**

3. **Where appropriate the District Council will ensure the effective management of designated sites through the imposition of planning conditions or Section 106 agreements as appropriate.**

The key themes arising from all policies, at a national or local level, can be summarised as follows:

- Conserve and enhance biodiversity.

- Undertake full surveys of existing biodiversity features and conserve the environmental aspects of the site.

- Include high quality landscaping.

- Achieve a net increase in biodiversity.

- Not to permit proposals where there will be an unacceptable impact on the countryside, landscape character or biodiversity.

- The major development locations are also required to include early provision of landscaping and biodiversity features on site.

SECTION 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE RELEVANT PLANS AND STRATEGIES TO BE CONSIDERED "IN COMBINATION"

The Biodiversity SPD seeks to expand on policies in the Development Control DPD and policies in individual Area Action Plans for major developments that may vary from the district-wide policies. These policies seek to ensure that biodiversity is adequately protected and enhanced throughout the development process, and the Biodiversity SPD provides additional details on how these policies will be implemented. It sits within a wider policy context provided by the plans of the Council.

A Local Plans

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

- Core Strategy DPD – adopted January 2007
- Development Control Policies DPD – adopted July 2007
- Northstowe AAP – adopted July 2007
- Cambridge East Area Action Plan (AAP) (being prepared jointly with Cambridge City Council) – adopted February 2008.
- Cambridge Southern Fringe AAP – adopted February 2008.
- Site Specific Policies DPD – examination held in December 2007 and January 2008. Further hearings to be held during 2009.
- North West Cambridge Area Action Plan (AAP) (being prepared jointly with Cambridge City Council) – examinations held in November and December 2008. Further hearings to be held during 2009. .

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

The Core Strategy 2007 sets the overall level of growth and the broad spatial locations for development, with 20,000 new homes required between 1999 and 2016. The Strategy is one of concentrating development on Cambridge through a number of urban extensions to the city, including land in South Cambridgeshire, and at the new town of Northstowe. These major developments are addressed in a series of Area Action Plans. They include development that will continue beyond 2016. The strategy also allows for limited development to meet local needs in Rural Centres and

other villages. New development will be accompanied by the necessary employment, community and recreation space to support the development of sustainable communities.

The Core Strategy, Development Control Policies DPD and Northstowe, Cambridge Southern Fringe, Cambridge East and North West Cambridge Area Action Plans have also been subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment, and were found to have no likely significant effects on any Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites.

The Gypsy and Traveller DPD is currently the only document being prepared by the Council that is at the Regulation 25 stage.

Various Supplementary Planning Documents are proposed to amplify the policies of the LDF, as set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme. The Biodiversity SPD is one of these.

The Local Development Frameworks of the Council:

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

B. Regional Plans

South Cambridgeshire's Core Strategy 2007 plans for the development proposed in Regional Planning Guidance 6 (RPG6, 2000), and subsequently the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003.

The East of England Plan (RSS) was published in May 2008. It incorporates and carries forward the requirements of RPG6 and the Structure Plan for the Cambridge Sub-Region for the period to 2016. This plan was subject to an initial Habitats Regulations Assessment, which concluded that the plan will not have a likely significant effect on Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites, and hence Appropriate Assessment is not required for any of the policies in the RSS. This initial HRA states that the reasons for this include:

- That the policies will not result in any development;
- The policies make provision for development, but the exact location is to be selected following the consideration of options in lower tier plans (i.e. by local development plans, programmes and strategies);

- The policy concentrates the development in urban areas away from Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites;

- That the policies specifically state that development should avoid any adverse effects on the integrity of Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites;

- Policy ENV3 states that local planning authorities should 'ensure that...development does not have adverse effects on the integrity of sites of European or international importance'; and

- Generic provisions have been made within the policies in the RSS (e.g. Policy ENV3) supported by more specific provisions to ensure that the integrity of Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites are not adversely affected by development (Policies SS9, E7, C2, and WAT2).

In the light of objections raised that challenge the findings of the HRA, the Government Office commissioned a new HRA of the Plan, which was published in October 2007. This review placed greater emphasis on an evidence-based assessment of risk of effects (applying the precautionary principle) than may have been the case in the previous work. It resulted in some sections within the RSS being subject to an Appropriate Assessment. As a result of this HRA further changes were proposed to the East of England Plan such that the current published RSS is now considered not likely to have any significant effect on Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites as a result its policies or the RSS itself in combination with other plans.

However, the RSS is a higher order spatial plan. At a lower level of plan making the Development Control Policies DPD for South Cambridgeshire has been subject to a HRA and found to have no significant effect on Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites. The Biodiversity SPD is at a lower tier.

C. Other Plans

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

Countywide plans affecting South Cambridgeshire:

- Cambridgeshire Waste Local Plan 2003
- Cambridgeshire Aggregates (minerals) Local Plan 1991
- Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste Development Plan Preferred Options 2 2008
- Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011

Other Plans for Areas Outside the Area Action Plan area:

- Cambridge City Core Strategy (DPD) – Issues and Options (Reg 25) , 2007
- Cambridge Local Plan 2004
- Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995
- Huntingdonshire Core Strategy Submission Draft 2008 & Development Control Policies DPD Issues & Options Report, 2007
- East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2000 and Core Strategy Submission Draft 2008
- Fenland Local Plan 1993; Core Strategy Preferred Options 2006 and Preferred Options 2 2007
- Uttlesford Core Strategy – Preferred Options 2007
- North Herts Local Plan 1996 and Core Strategy & Development Policies Preferred Options 2007
- Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan 2005 & Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD Preferred Options 2007
- Forest Heath Local Plan 1995 and Core Strategy & Development Policies Preferred Options Report October 2006 and Site Specific Policies and Allocations DPD Issues & Options Report 2006
- St. Edmundsbury Local Plan 2006; Core Strategy and Policies DPD – Issues and options 2008.
- King's Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan 1998 and Core Strategy- Issues and Options 2 2008 DC Policies Preferred Options 2007
- Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2005
- Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals Core Strategy and Site Allocation Plan – Issues and Options (Jan 2006); Issues and Options 2 2008; Waste DPD – Core Strategy and Site Allocation Plan 2006
- Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 1998 (and review adopted 2007)
- Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan 1998
- Hertfordshire Minerals & Waste DPDs Issues & Options & Waste Core Strategy Preferred Options Report, June 2007
- Suffolk Minerals Local Plan 1999 & Minerals Core Strategy Submission 2007 & Minerals Specific Site Allocations DPD, April 2007
- Suffolk Waste Local Plan 2006; Waste Issues Report 2007
- Bedford Borough Local Plan 2006 and Bedford Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan Adopted 2008
- Milton Keynes Local Plan 2005; Core Strategy – Preferred options 2007
- Buckinghamshire County Council Waste Local Plan 1997; Buckinghamshire Minerals DPD – Preferred options 2007; Buckinghamshire Waste DPD – Preferred options 2007
- Milton Keynes Waste DPD Submission 2007
- Milton Keynes Minerals Local Plan 2006; Minerals DPD – preferred options 2007
- Norfolk Waste Local Plan 2000
- Norfolk Minerals Local Plan 2004
- Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and Development Control Document –preferred options stage 2008

SECTION 3: HRA SCREENING METHODOLOGY SETS OUT THE APPROACH USED AND SPECIFIC TASKS UNDERTAKEN

The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Biodiversity SPD, has been undertaken in line with the European Commission's guidance on the 'Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Nature 2000 sites', and seeks to meet the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

The Development Control Policies DPD was assessed under the Habitats Directive in March 2007 and it was concluded that the policies in this DPD are unlikely to have significant impacts upon European Sites located within and in the vicinity of the District and that an Appropriate Assessment was therefore not required for this DPD. The Biodiversity SPD expands on policies contained within this DPD and does not propose any development. It should therefore be noted that it is highly unlikely that this SPD will have any impact significant or otherwise upon European sites. The Council has nevertheless carried out a comprehensive assessment screening report.

The tasks undertaken in preparing this Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report are:

Task 1: Identification of the Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites, which may be affected by the Biodiversity SPD and the factors contributing to and defining the integrity of these sites

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

Task 2: Completion of the Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Matrix for the Biodiversity SPD, including 'Assessment of Significance of Effects"

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

potential ‘in-combination’ effects of the Biodiversity SPD and other plans and projects.

SECTION 4: NATURA 2000 AND RAMSAR SITES POTENTIALLY AFFECTED BY THE BIODIVERSITY SPD

There is one Natura 2000 site within South Cambridgeshire District, which has been considered as part of this assessment:

- Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION 5: SCREENING ASSESSMENT OF THE BIODIVERSITY SPD.

There are a wide range of potential impacts of development plans on designated sites, but the impacts examined can be summarised as:

- Land take by developments;
- Impact on protected species found within but which travel outside the protected sites may be relevant where development could result in effects on qualifying interest species within the Natura 2000 or Ramsar site, for example through the loss of feeding grounds for an identified species.
- Increased disturbance, for example from recreational use resulting from new housing development and / or improved access due to transport infrastructure projects;
- Changes in water availability, or water quality as a result of development and increased demands for water treatment, and changes in groundwater regimes due to increased impermeable areas;
- Changes in atmospheric pollution levels due to increased traffic, waste management facilities etc. Pollution discharges from developments such as industrial Developments, quarries and waste management facilities.

An HRA Screening Matrix, including an ‘Assessment of Significance of Effects”, is contained at Appendix 4, which assesses the potential impacts of the Biodiversity SPD as set out above on the conservation interests of European sites, taking account of the policy elements of the plan.

The Development Control Policies DPD was assessed using this methodology in March 2007 and found to have no significant impact on the European sites. Given that the Biodiversity SPD does not propose any development it was not expected that as a result of the screening that this SPD would have a significant impact since none was found with the assessment of the higher tier plan.

SECTION 6: CONSULTATIONS

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

'We have reviewed the screening matrix and accompanying documentation and consider that the assessment has been well prepared and we conclude that South Cambridgeshire District Council has undertaken the screening process in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations. Natural England supports the conclusion of this HRA that the Biodiversity SPD is unlikely to have a significant effect on any Natura 2000 or Ramsar site and Appropriate Assessment is not required for this plan.'

SECTION 7: CONCLUSIONS

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

The HRA has:

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

It has been objectively concluded that the Biodiversity SPD is not likely to have any significant effects on any Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites. There is therefore no requirement to proceed to the next stage of an Appropriate Assessment.

APPENDIX 1

Summary of other relevant plans and strategies.

SUMMARY OF OTHER RELEVANT PLANS AND STRATEGIES

OTHER RELEVANT PLANS AND STRATEGIES	SUMMARY
County-wide Plans affecting South Cambridgeshire:	
Cambridgeshire Waste Local Plan 2003	Aims to provide a sustainable strategy and policy framework for waste management in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Includes site specific proposals for waste management facilities.
Cambridgeshire Aggregates (minerals) Local Plan 1991	Sets policies for working minerals and safeguarding mineral deposits.
Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste DPD Preferred Options 2006	(1) A draft Core Strategy DPD to guide the spatial strategy vision for the future of mineral extraction and the delivery of high quality sustainable waste management facilities. (2) A draft Site Allocations DPD with proposed allocations for waste management facilities and minerals workings. The documents have been subject to initial appropriate assessment, which found there were likely to be no significant effects that could not be overcome by mitigation measures through policies in the plan.
Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste DPD Preferred Options 2 2008	A revised draft Core Strategy DPD and revised Site Allocations DPD. As a result of the screening at this stage a number of allocations and policies are identified as having the potential to have an impact on European Sites of Importance and therefore must be assessed as part of a full Appropriate Assessment. Whilst it is not expected these will adversely affect a European Site it is needed to be assessed using the precautionary principle.
Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2006 - 2011	The Local Transport Plan 2006 -11 for Cambridgeshire sets out how Government capital funding allocated for transport will be spent, and how this will be used to meet local and national targets.
Other Plans for Areas Outside the Plan area:	
Cambridge Local Plan 2004	The land use strategy up to 2016 focuses growth in Cambridge on the Station area and four urban extensions comprising mixed use centres to the north, south, west and east of the City as a focus for future employment and residential expansion, connected to each other and to the City Centre by high quality public transport (includes sites

OTHER RELEVANT PLANS AND STRATEGIES	SUMMARY
	that extend into South Cambridgeshire).
Cambridge Core Strategy – Issues and Options 2007	The Core Strategy Issues and Options considers growth within Cambridge up to 2021.
Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995	The Local Plan 1995 provided for development up to 2006, and focused development onto larger settlements.
Huntingdonshire Core Strategy Submission Draft 2008 & Development Control Policies DPD Issues & Options Report, 2007	The Core Strategy will set the framework for how Huntingdonshire will develop up to 2026. It will contain strategic policies to manage growth and guide new development. The Development Control Policies DPD will set out local policies for managing development in Huntingdonshire. The policies in this document will be used to assess and determining applications for development in the district and cover topic areas including climate change, housing, economic development, quality of life and the environment.
East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2000 and Core Strategy Submission Draft 2008.	The Local Plan 2000 concentrates growth in housing, employment and service provision within Ely, Soham and Littleport, including the reuse of previously developed sites. Elsewhere within the District, growth will be limited and is likely to take the form of meeting existing commitments and allocations and, where appropriate, the infilling or redevelopment of sites within the built framework. The Core Strategy aims to provide for growth in a sustainable manner, planning for 8,600 dwellings between 2001 and 2021
Fenland Local Plan 1993 and Core Strategy Preferred Options 2006; Preferred Options 2 2007	The Local Plan 1993 concentrates growth in housing, employment and service provision within existing centres, an aim, which is continued in the Core Strategy. 11,000 dwellings will be required in Fenland by 2021.
Uttlesford Core Strategy – Preferred Options 2007	Housing is to be concentrated in a limited number of settlements. 8,000 dwellings are to be planned for by 2021.
North Herts Local Plan 1996 and Core Strategy & Development Policies Preferred Options 2007	The local plan 1996 seeks to restrain development pressures, maintain the existing pattern of settlements and countryside, and enhance the character of existing land uses in urban and rural areas.
Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan 2005 & Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD Preferred Options 2007	The local plan directs housing and economic development to within and adjoining the main urban areas, and in the strategic transportation corridors South West of Bedford and in East Bedfordshire. The Core Strategy issues and options explores how housing and jobs required in the area should be accommodated.
Forest Heath Local Plan 1995 and Core Strategy &	The Local Plan and the LDF Preferred Options focus development on existing towns. The Site Specific Policies

OTHER RELEVANT PLANS AND STRATEGIES	SUMMARY
Development Policies Preferred Options Report October 2006 & Site Specific Policies & Allocations DPD Issues & Options Report 2006	and Allocations DPD will determine development boundaries for towns and villages and allocate sites for the required range of land-use and scale of development outlined in the Core Strategy.
St. Edmundsbury Local Plan 2006; Core Strategy and Policies DPD – Issues and options 2008	The Local Plan 1993 concentrates growth in housing, employment and service provision within existing urban areas. The Council has to make provision for 10,000 dwellings up to 2021.
King's Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan 1998 and Core Strategy Issues and Options 2 2008; DC Policies Preferred Options 2007	The Borough has to accommodate growth of 12,000 houses to be built up to 2021. The issues and options document aims to accommodate this development sustainably and is closely linked to the Sustainable Community Strategy.
Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2005;	Sets policies regarding proposals for minerals extraction and waste sites, and allocates sites.
Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals DPD - Core Strategy and Site Allocation Plan – Issues and Options (Jan 2006); issues and options 2 2008; Waste DPD – Core Strategy and Site Allocation Plan	Sets policies regarding proposals for minerals extraction and waste sites, and allocates sites.
Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 1998 (and review adopted 2007)	Sets policies regarding proposals for minerals extraction, and allocates sites.
Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan 1998	Sets policies regarding proposals for waste sites, and allocates sites.
Hertfordshire Minerals & Waste DPDs Issues & Options & Waste Core Strategy Preferred Options Report, June 2007	Sets policies regarding proposals for minerals extraction and waste sites, and allocates sites. The Waste Core Strategy sets out the spatial vision and strategic objectives for waste planning in the county. This will contain core policies needed to implement the overall objectives and covers the period to 2020.
Suffolk Minerals Local Plan 1999 & Minerals Core Strategy Submission 2007 & Minerals Specific Site Allocations DPD, April 2007	Sets policies regarding proposals for minerals extraction, and allocates sites. The Core Strategy sets out the key elements of minerals planning framework for the county based on an agreed vision followed by aims and strategic objectives. The document also contains a suite of generic development control policies. The site allocations document

OTHER RELEVANT PLANS AND STRATEGIES	SUMMARY
	looks at 25 potential sites for new minerals and waste developments.
Suffolk Waste Local Plan 2006; Waste Issues Report 2007	Sets policies regarding proposals for waste, and allocates sites.
Bedford Borough Local Plan 2006 and Bedford Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan Adopted 2008	The local plan plans for 6349 new dwellings as well as other development. LDF provides a strategy for future development, principally in urban areas of key growth areas.
Milton Keynes Local Plan 2005; Core Strategy – preferred options 2007	Includes new development on the edge of Milton Keynes.
Buckinghamshire County Council Waste Local Plan 1997	Sets policies regarding proposals for waste, and allocates sites.
Buckinghamshire Minerals DPD – Preferred options 2007	Providing policies for planning for minerals
Buckinghamshire Waste DPD – Preferred options 2007	Providing policies for planning for waste.
Milton Keynes Waste DPD Submission 2007	Sets policies regarding proposals for waste.
Milton Keynes Minerals Local Plan 2006; Minerals DPD – preferred options 2007	Sets policies regarding proposals for minerals extraction, and allocates sites.
Norfolk Waste Local Plan 2000	Sets policies regarding proposals for waste, and allocates sites.
Norfolk Minerals Local Plan 2004	Sets policies regarding proposals for minerals extraction, and allocates sites.
Norfolk Mineral and Waste Core Strategy and Development Control Document -Preferred options stage 2008	Sets out policies for both minerals and waste planning

APPENDIX 2

Information on the Natura 2000 sites

INFORMATION ON THE NATURA 2000 SITES

NAME: EVERSDEN AND WIMPOLE WOODS

Designation and Code
Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – UK0030331
SSSI boundary is the same as the SAC

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

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

Primary reason for selection of the site
Presence of colony of Barbastelle bats *Barbastella barbastellus* for which it is considered to be one of the best areas in UK.

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

General Site characteristics
Broadleaved deciduous woodland (100%)
Soil and geology – Basic, Clay
Geomorphology and Landscape – Lowland

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

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

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

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

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

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

Management and ownership

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

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

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

Access

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

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

Current condition

Natural England compiled a conditions report on Eversden and Wimpole Wood SSSI in 2008 (April report) and found that the site is meeting 100% of its PSA targets.[1] The area is 100% favourable.[2]

Barbastelle bats require minimal disturbance within 2 km of their roost. They can forage up to 20km from their roosts but more typically venture around 6-8km. Barbastelle bats' foraging routes radiate out from their roosting sites using a limited number of main routes, which split into major limbs and then into small branches.[3] The main area of importance for them is shown on proposals map 1 in the

[1] PSA target – the Government's Public Service agreement (PSA) target to have 95% of the SSSI area in favourable or recovering condition by 2010.
[2] Favourable condition means that the SSSI land is being adequately conserved and is meeting its conservation objectives.
[3] Greenaway F (2004) Advice for the management of flightlines and foraging habitats of the barbastelle Bat *Barbastella barbastellus*, English Nature Research Report 657.

Biodiversity Strategy published by South Cambridgeshire District Council in August 2006. It reflects the landscape and habitat of known value to bats, and also where survey effort has been deployed to date.

Vulnerability

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

NAME: DEVIL'S DYKE

Designation and Code
Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – UK0030037

Location
The site is located in East Cambridgeshire district and also extends into Forest Heath district in Suffolk.

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

Primary reason for selection of the site
Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco- Brometalia*). (important orchid sites)

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

General site characteristics
Dry grassland. Steppes (100%)
Soil and geology – Basic, Limestone.
Geomorphology and landscape – Lowland

Species
CG3 *Bromopsis erecta*
CG5 *Bromopsis erecta – Brachypodium pinnatum* calcareous grasslands
Himantoglossum hircinum – lizard orchid
Pulsatilla vulgaris - Pasque flower

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

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

Management and ownership
The dyke is in private ownership. There is a Devil's Dyke Restoration Project set up which is a partnership scheme involving Natural England, English Heritage, Cambridgshire Wildlife Trust and the Cambridgshire County Council working with landowners and managers and local people. The aim of the project is to restore the dyke and there is an agreed management plan. The species rich calcareous

grassland requires active management without which it rapidly becomes dominated by rank grasses which leads to the encroachment of scrub over time. Traditional management is by grazing.

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

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

Current condition
As grazing declined in the early part of the twentieth century scrub has encroached onto many areas of the dyke. In the SAC area there had been some scrub encroachment on the southern part of the site and some clearance work has been undertaken. Surveys have been carried out by Natural England of the Dyke - the latest being in July 2008 and a report compiled in December 2008 concluded that the dyke is in a favourable condition. However in May 2002 the site was meeting 100% of its PSA targets and this has now reduced to 86% of its targets.

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

NAME: FENLAND

Designation and Code
Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – UK 0014782
There are three fens that together form the Fenland SAC

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

Each site is also a Ramsar site.

Location
Wicken Fen and Chippenham Fen are in East Cambridgeshire District; Woodwalton Fen is in Huntingdonshire District.

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

Area: 618.64 ha.

Primary reason for selection of site for SAC
Molinia meadows on calcareous peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae)* – considered to be one of the best areas in UK.

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

Conservation objective
To maintain in favourable condition:

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

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

General site characteristics
Bog. Marshes. Water fringed vegetation. Fens (70%)
Broadleaved deciduous woodland (20%)
Inland water body (standing water, running water) (5%)
Other arable land (5%)

Soil and geology – Basic, peat
Geomorphology – Floodplain, Lowland

Species
Molinion caeruleae
Cladium mariscus

Caricion davallianae
Cobitis taenia (Spined loach)
Triturus cristatus (Great crested newt)

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

DESCRIPTION OF EACH SITE THAT TOGETHER FORMS THE FENLAND SAC

1. WICKEN FEN

Location
This site is in East Cambridgeshire District.

Area: 254 ha.

Reason for Ramsar allocation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Current conditions
Natural England has compiled a report about the condition of the SSSI (December 2008). Only 36% of the site is meeting PSA targets. 53% is unfavourable declining.

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

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

2. CHIPPENHAM FEN

Location
This site is in East Cambridgeshire District Council.

Area: 112 ha.

Reason for Ramsar allocation

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

Criterion 2 – The invertebrate fauna is very rich partly due to its transitional position between Fenland and Breckland. The species list is very long, including many rare and scarce invertebrates characteristics of ancient fenland sites in GB.
Criterion 3 – The site supports diverse vegetation types, rare and scarce plants. The site is the stronghold of Cambridge milk parsley *Selinum carvifolia*

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

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

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

The water level is controlled within a series of ditches.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Vulnerability
There is considerable pressure in the region from the water abstraction that may affect the local springs and aquifer. Persistent drought is a potential threat as seven of nine years in the recent past have received well below average rainfall for the regions (Report dated 2002).

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

3. WOODWALTON FEN

Location
This fen is in Huntingdonshire District.

Area: 229.7 ha.

Reason for Ramsar allocation

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

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

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

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

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

Management and ownership

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

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

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

Access

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

Current condition

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

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

Vulnerability

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

NAME: OUSE WASHES

Designation and Code
Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site – UK0013011.
The boundaries of the Ramsar site as extended are coincident with those of the Ouse Washes SSSI.

Location
This site is located in East Cambridgeshire, Fenland and West Norfolk Districts.

Grid reference: TL 498895

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

Primary reason for selection of this site as SAC
Spined loach *Cobitis taenia* – This site is only one of four known outstanding localities in the UK.

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

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

General site characteristics
Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (50%)
Bogs Marshes. Water fringed vegetation. Fens (20%)
Improved grassland (30%)

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

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

Reasons for identification as a Ramsar Site
The Ouse Washes Ramsar site and its proposed extension is a wetland of major international importance comprising seasonally flooded washlands, which are

agriculturally managed in a traditional manner. It provides breeding and winter habitats for important assemblages of wetland bird species, particularly wildfowl and waders.

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

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

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

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

Ramsar Criterion 6 - The Ouse Washes also qualifies by supporting, in winter, internationally important populations of the following species (figures given are average peak counts for the five winter period 1986/87 - 1990/91): 4,980 Bewick's swan *Cygnus columbarius bewicki* (29% of the north-west European wintering population); 590 whooper swans *Cygnus Cygnus* (3% of the

international population); 38,000 wigeon *Anas penelope* (5% of the north-west European population); 4,100 teal *A. crecca* (1% of NW European); 1,450 pintail *Anas acuta* (2% NW European); and 750 shoveler *Anas clypeata* (2% of NW European). Also notable are the following nationally important wintering populations: 270 cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* (2% of the British wintering population); 490 mute swan *Cygnus olor* (3% of British); 320 gadwall *Anas strepera* (5% of British); 2,100 pochard Aythya *ferina* (4% of British); 860 tufted duck *Aythya fuligula* (1 % of British); and 2,320 coot *Fulica atra*.

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

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

Reasons for identification as a Special Protection Area

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Management and ownership

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

optimum level for the plant and animal community. All the habitats are highly sensitive to inorganic fertilisers and pesticides.

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

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

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

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

Water quality is a major issue of concern. Increases in two plant nutrients - nitrogen and particularly phosphorus (thought to be derived from sewage treatment works) - are leading to changes in the macrophyte communities, shown by a decline in species diversity and the loss of species together with an increase in species tolerant of eutrophic conditions. This is particularly apparent in the inner river. There is evidence that agricultural inputs are a minor component. In addition, blanket-weed (aquatic algae) poses problems to navigation and angling, leading to issues of timing and frequency of aquatic weed-cutting. Water quality issues are currently the subject of debate between the Environment Agency and Natural England. Three sewage treatment works in the Great Ouse will be covered by the Urban Waste Water Directive, but there remain more than 90 smaller works. These will be subject to the Review of Consents to be undertaken by the Environment Agency within the next four years. A case could be prepared and submitted to OFWAT and the Water Industries AMP 4 Programme commencing 2005, in order to strip phosphates from all relevant sewage treatment works in the system.

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

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

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

NAME: PORTHOLME

Designation and Code
Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – UK0030054.

Location
This site is within Huntingdonshire District.

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

Primary reason for selection of this site
Lowland hay meadows MG4*Alopecurus pratensis Sanguisorba officinalis* – considered to be one of the best areas in UK.

Conservation objectives
To maintain in favourable condition the lowland hay meadow.

General site characteristics
Humid grassland (100%)
Soil and geology – Alluvial, Neutral
Geomorphology and landscape – Floodplain, Lowland.

Species
Alopecurus pratensis
Sanguisorba officinalis
Fritillaria meleagris
Libellula fulva.

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

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

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

Large flocks of waders use this site in winter.

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

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

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

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

In the past MAFF had sponsored dipwell monitoring of the meadows. Water table levels are vital to the management of this site. Currently no monitoring is being carried out. Anglian Water Services (AWS) is required to produce a statutory water company drought plan under the requirements of the new s39B of the Water Industry Act 1991 as introduced by the Water Act 2003. For each site, potential changes arising from the drought actions have been identified and the existence and adequacy of current monitoring programmes has been provisionally assessed. For the most part, existing monitoring are adequate for monitoring the effects of the drought actions. In relation to Portholme it recommends in the 2006 Drought Plan the following:

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

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

Current condition
The units of the site were assessed in June 2005 and 2006 and it was found to have inappropriate cutting / mowing regimes and inappropriate weed control. The site was not meeting the PSA target at all. 90.92% of the area was seen to be in unfavourable but remaining unchanged i.e. not in decline. Overall the sward composition and structure were well within the criteria recommended for MG4 grassland however the unit failed on the frequency of *Rumex crispus.*

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

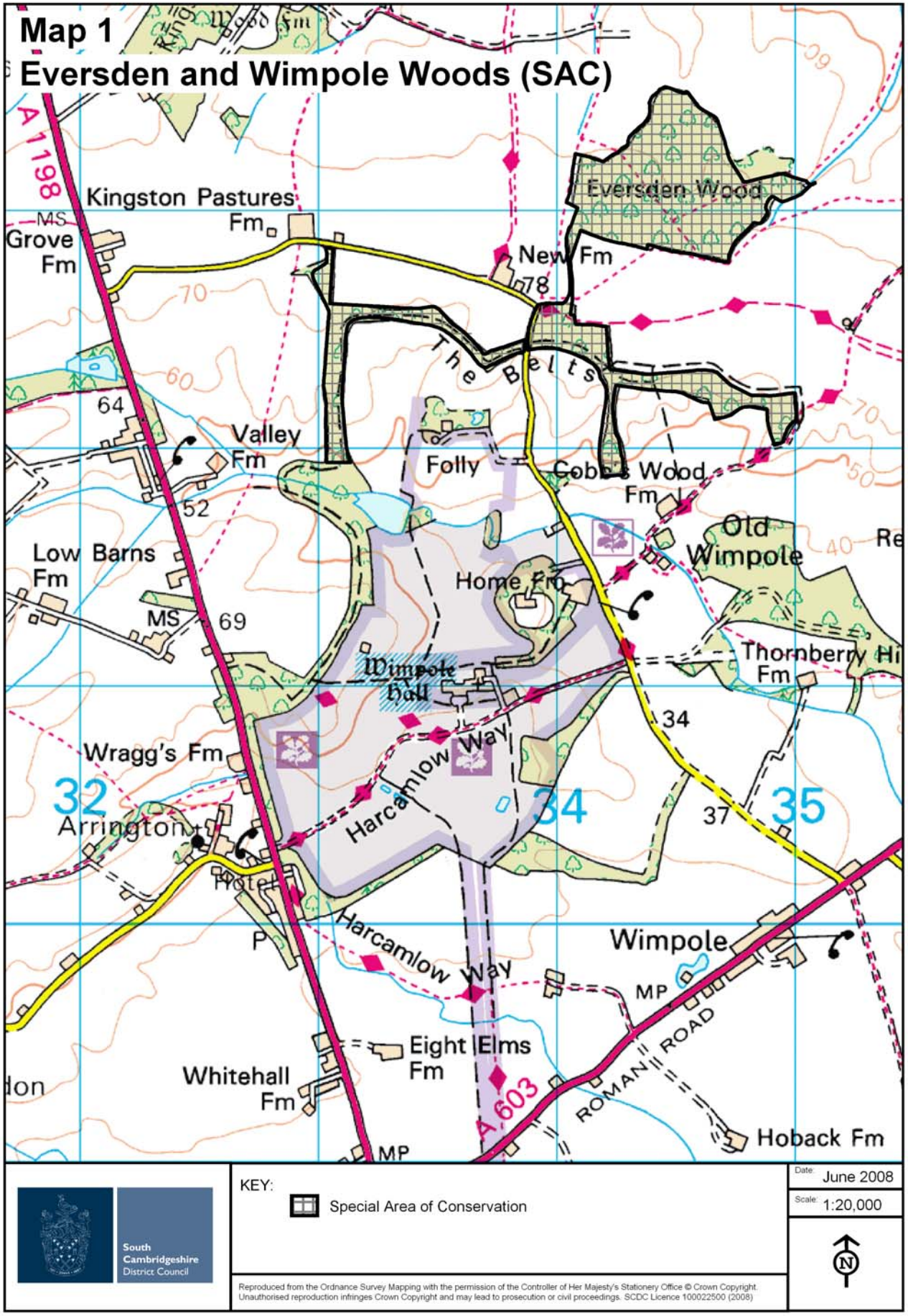
APPENDIX 3

Maps

MAPS

CONTENTS

Site maps for each Natura 2000 site


Map 1
Eversden and Wimpole Woods (SAC)
A1198
Kingston Pastures Fm
Grove Fm
Eversden Wood
New Fm
The Belts
Valley Fm
Folly
Gobbs Wood Fm
Old Wimpole
Low Barns Fm
Home Fm
Thornberry Fm
Wimpole Hall
Wragg's Fm
Harcamlow Way
32
34
35
Arrington
Hotel
Wimpole
Eight Elms Fm
Whitehall Fm
A603
ROMAN ROAD
Hoback Fm
KEY:
Special Area of Conservation
South Cambridgeshire District Council
Date: June 2008
Scale: 1:20,000
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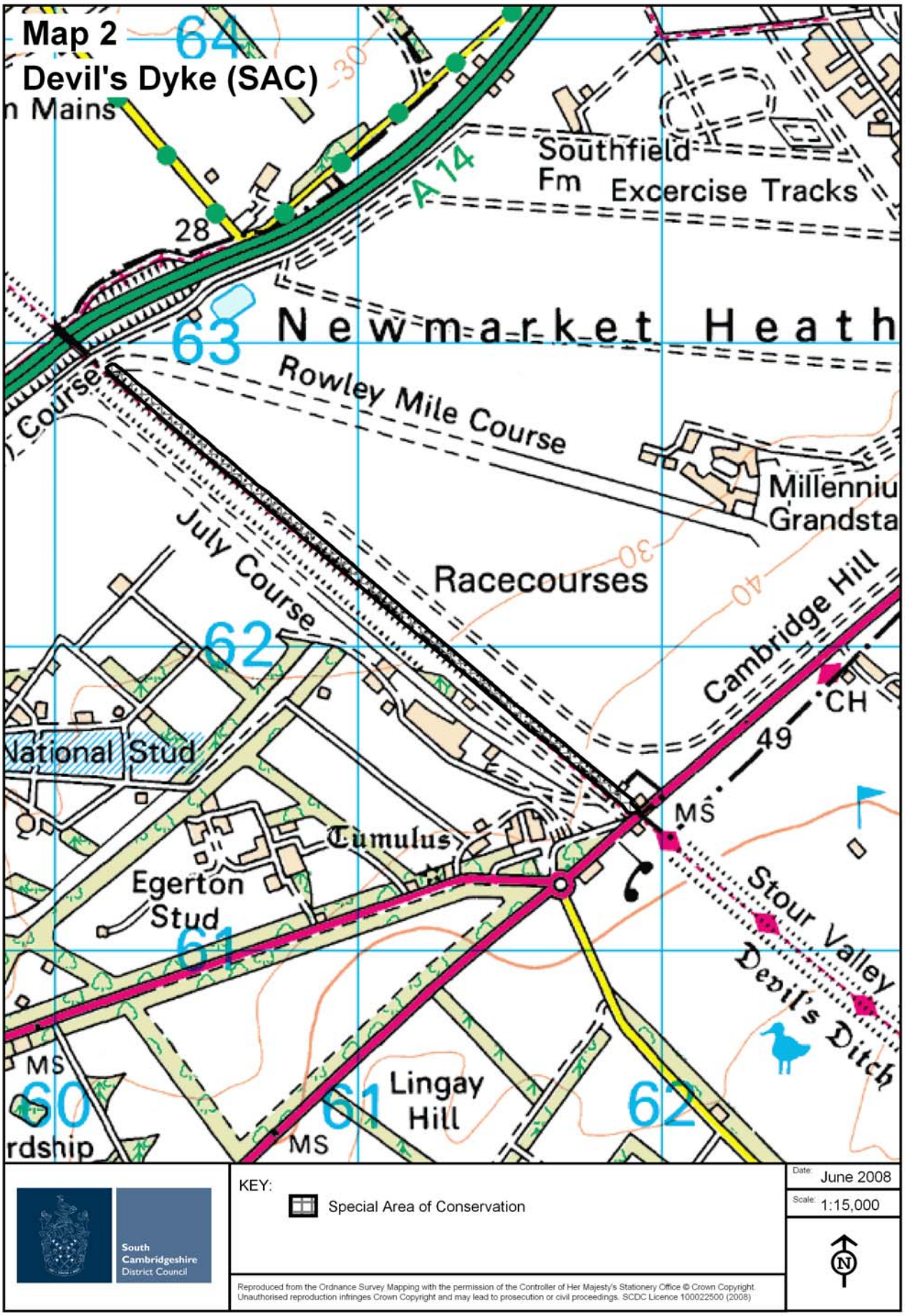
Map 2
Devil's Dyke (SAC)
64
n Mains
30
A14
Southfield
Fm
Excercise Tracks
28
63
Newmarket Heath
Rowley Mile Course
Course
Millenniu
Grandsta
July Course
Racecourses
30
40
Cambridge Hill
62
CH
49
National Stud
MS
Tumulus
Egerton
Stud
Stour Valley
Devil's Ditch
61
MS
60
61
Lingay
Hill
62
rdship
MS
KEY:
Special Area of Conservation
Date: June 2008
Scale: 1:15,000
South
Cambridgeshire
District Council
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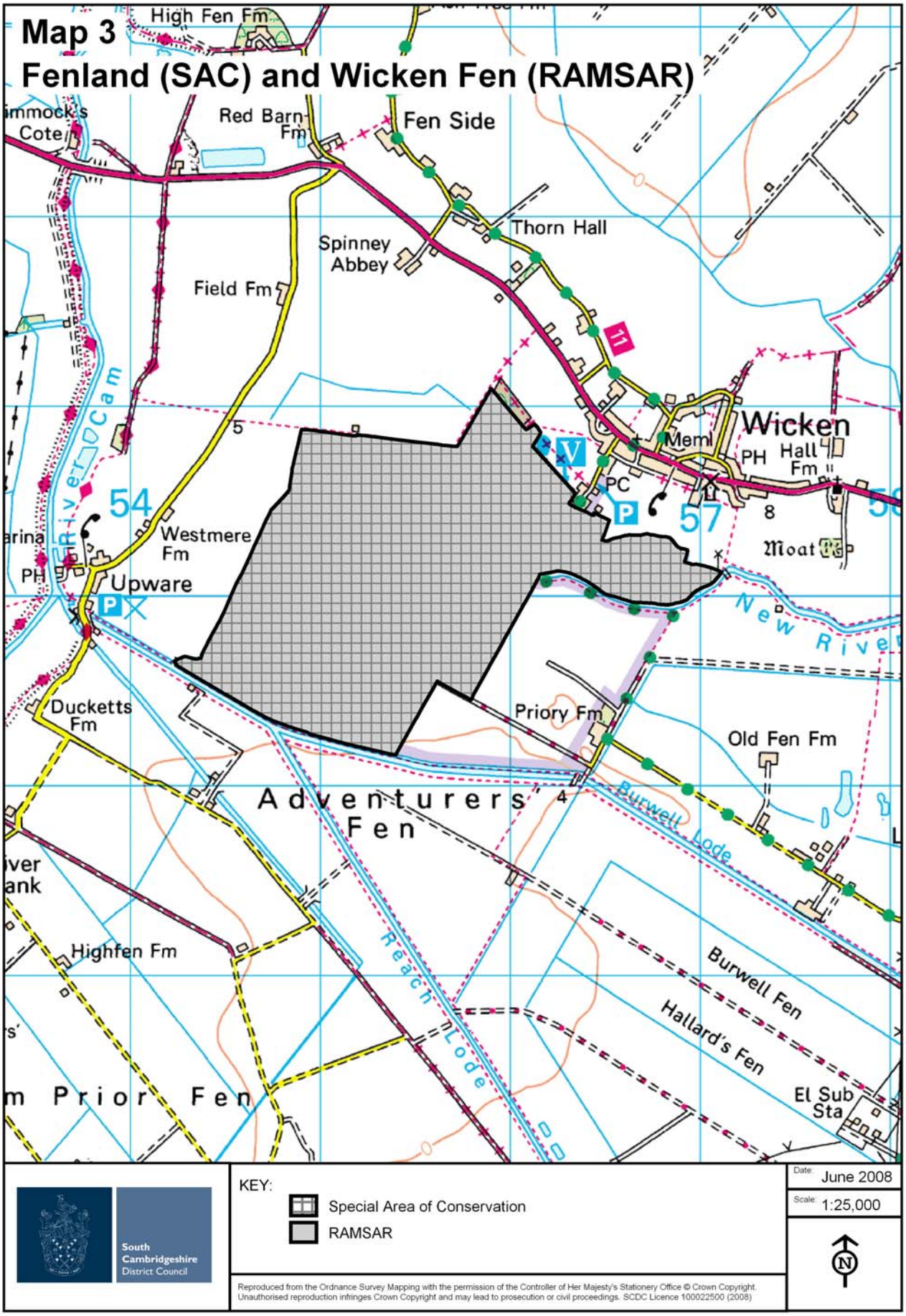
Map 3
Fenland (SAC) and Wicken Fen (RAMSAR)
High Fen Fm
Red Barn Fm
Fen Side
Thorn Hall
Spinney Abbey
Field Fm
River Cam
Wicken
Mem
PH
Hall Fm
PC
Moat
Westmere Fm
Upware
Ducketts Fm
Priory Fm
Old Fen Fm
New River
Adventurers' Fen
Burwell Lode
Reach Lode
Highfen Fm
Burwell Fen
Hallard's Fen
El Sub Sta
Prior Fen
KEY:
Special Area of Conservation
RAMSAR
Date: June 2008
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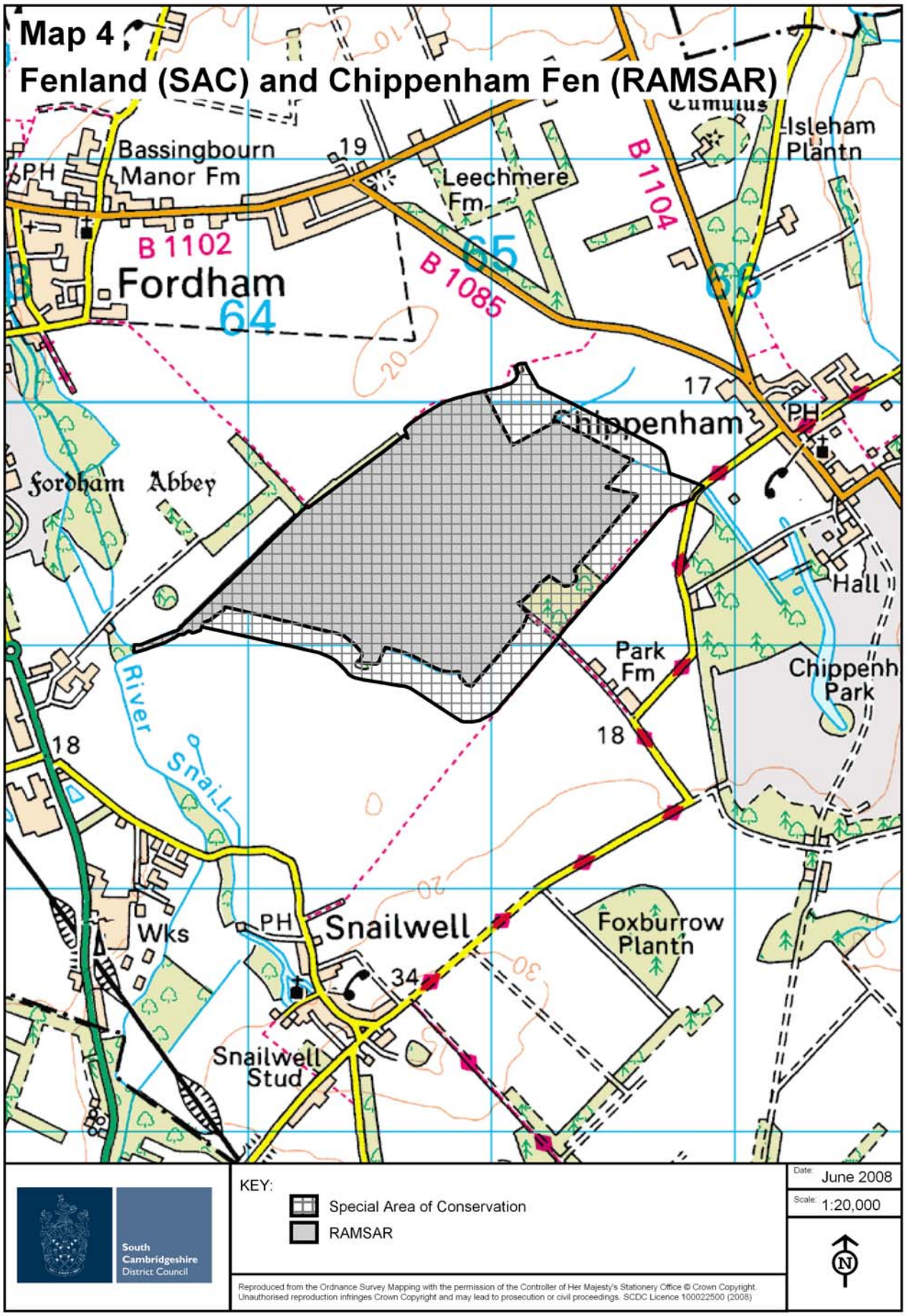
Map 4
Fenland (SAC) and Chippenham Fen (RAMSAR)
Bassingbourn
Manor Fm
PH
19
Leechmere
Fm
B 1104
Isleham
Plantn
B 1102
Fordham
64
65
B 1085
66
17
Chippenham
PH
Fordham Abbey
Hall
Park
Fm
Chippenh
Park
River
Snail
18
18
Wks
PH
Snailwell
34
Foxburrow
Plantn
Snailwell
Stud
KEY:
Special Area of Conservation
RAMSAR
Date: June 2008
Scale: 1:20,000
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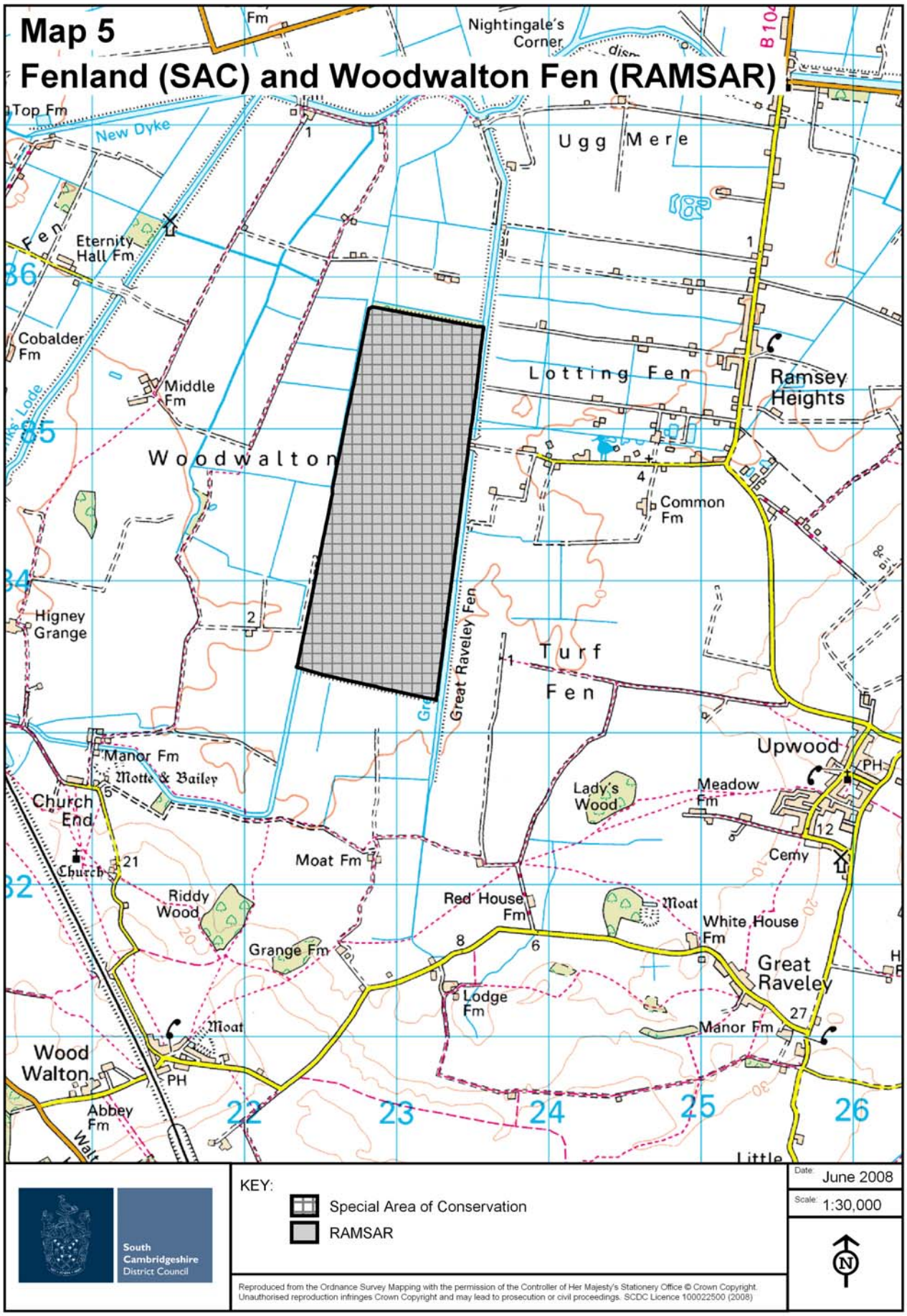
Map 5
Fenland (SAC) and Woodwalton Fen (RAMSAR)
Nightingale's Corner
Top Fm
New Dyke
Ugg Mere
Eternity Hall Fm
Cobalder Fm
Middle Fm
Lotting Fen
Ramsey Heights
Woodwalton
Common Fm
Higney Grange
Great Raveley Fen
Turf Fen
Manor Fm
Motte & Bailey
Church End
Church
Upwood
PH
Lady's Wood
Meadow Fm
Cemy
Moat Fm
Riddy Wood
Red House Fm
Moat
White House Fm
Grange Fm
Great Raveley
Lodge Fm
Manor Fm
Wood Walton
PH
Abbey Fm
Little
KEY:
Special Area of Conservation
RAMSAR
South Cambridgeshire District Council
Date: June 2008
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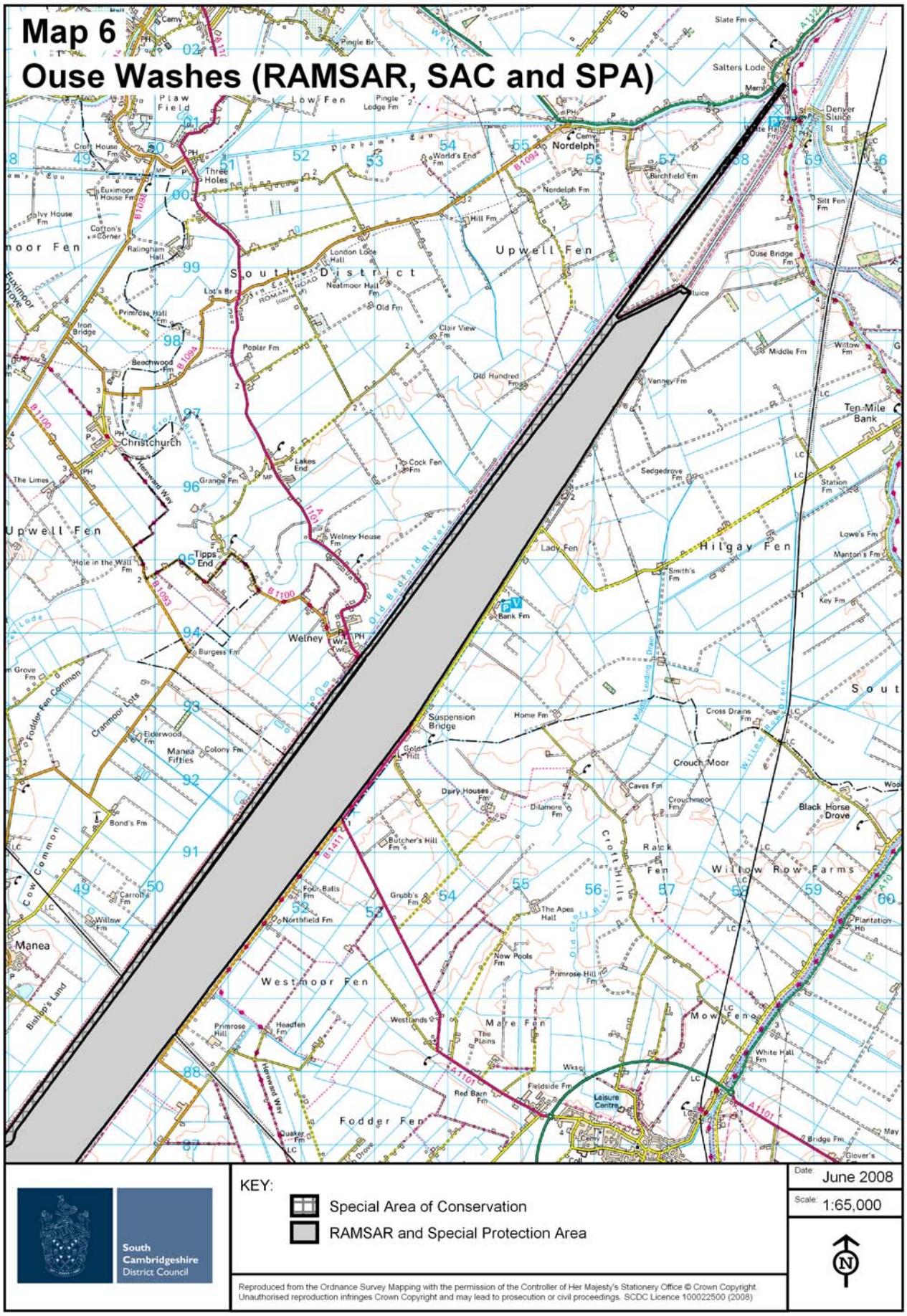


KEY:

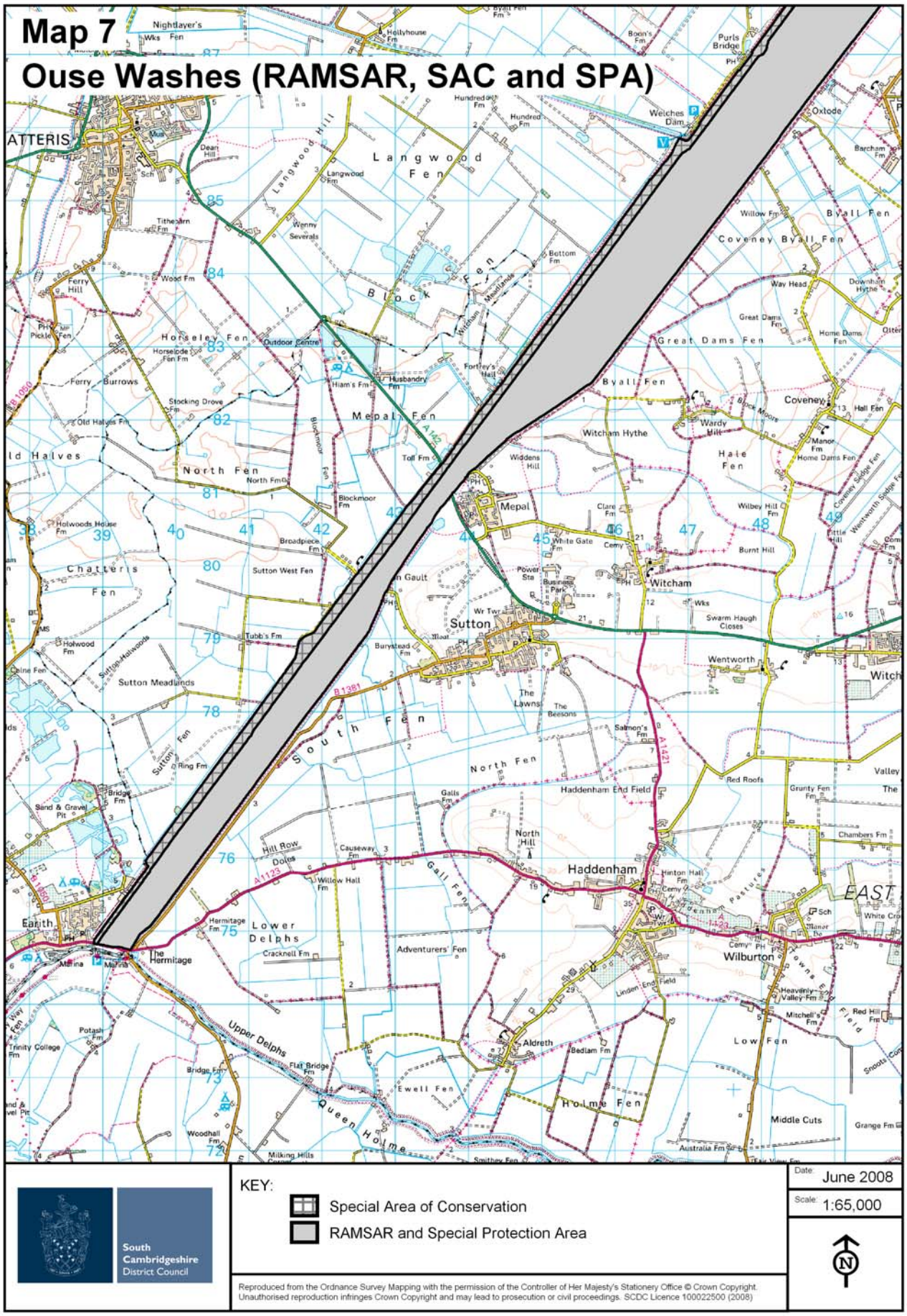
Special Area of Conservation

RAMSAR and Special Protection Area

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Date: June 2008

Scale: 1:65,000


Map 7
Ouse Washes (RAMSAR, SAC and SPA)
ATTERIS
Langwood Fen
Block Fen
Horseley Fen
Mepal Fen
North Fen
Chatteris Fen
Sutton West Fen
Sutton Meadlands
South Fen
Lower Delphs
Upper Delphs
Queen Holme
Adventurers' Fen
Haddenham End Field
Coveney Byall Fen
Great Dams Fen
Byall Fen
Hale Fen
Low Fen
Holme Fen
Mepal
Witcham
Sutton
Wentworth
Haddenham
Wilburton
Aldreth
Earith
The Hermitage
Coveney
EAST
A142
A1421
A1123
B1381
B1050
KEY:
Special Area of Conservation
RAMSAR and Special Protection Area
South Cambridgeshire District Council
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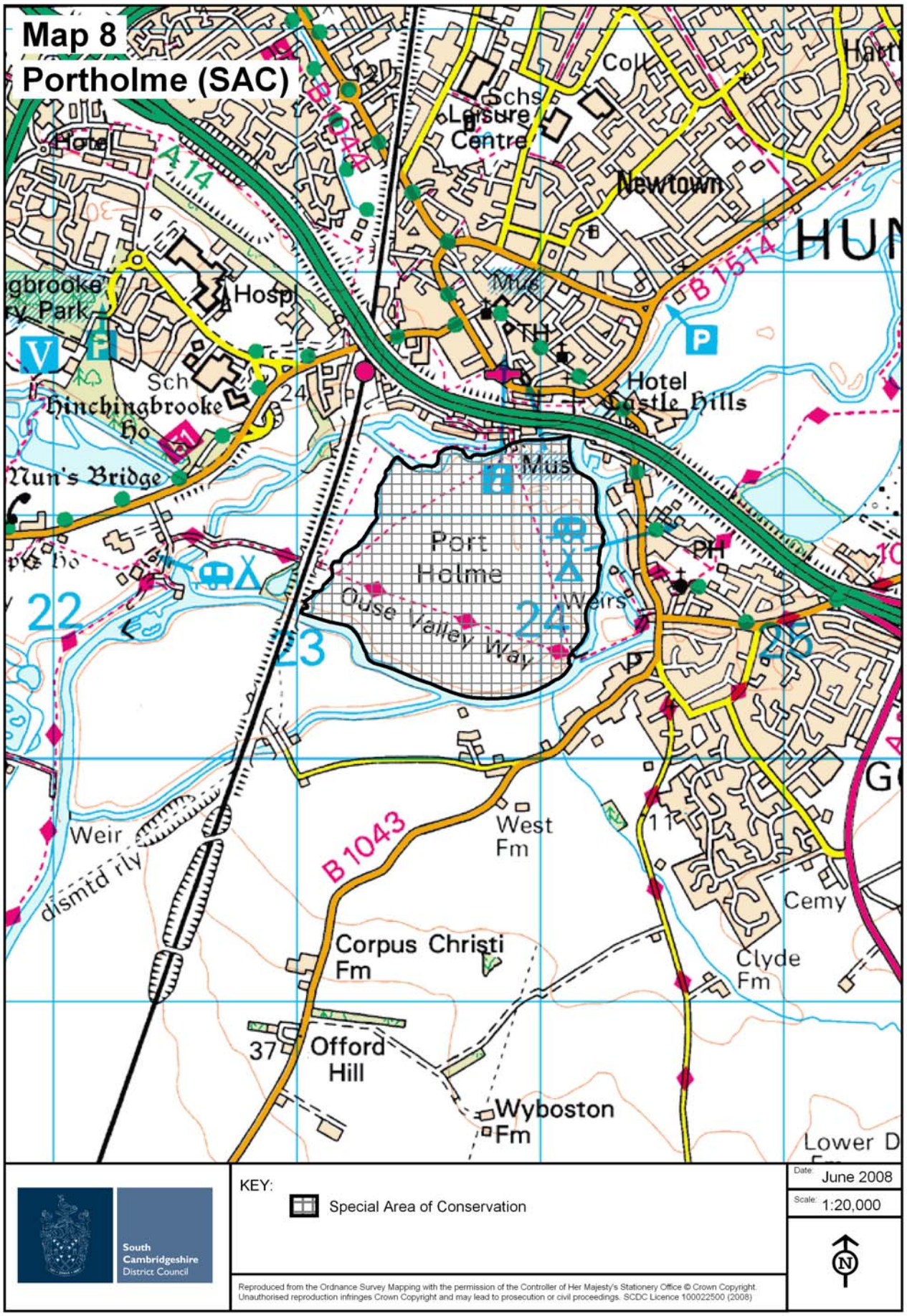
Map 8
Portholme (SAC)
Newtown
Leisure Centre
Hotel
Hospl
Hinchingbrooke
Nun's Bridge
Castle Hills
Port Holme
Ouse Valley Way
Weirs
B 1043
B 1514
West Fm
Corpus Christi Fm
Offord Hill
Wyboston Fm
Clyde Fm
Cemy
Weir
dismtd rly
Lower D
KEY:
Special Area of Conservation
Date: June 2008
Scale: 1:20,000
South Cambridgeshire District Council
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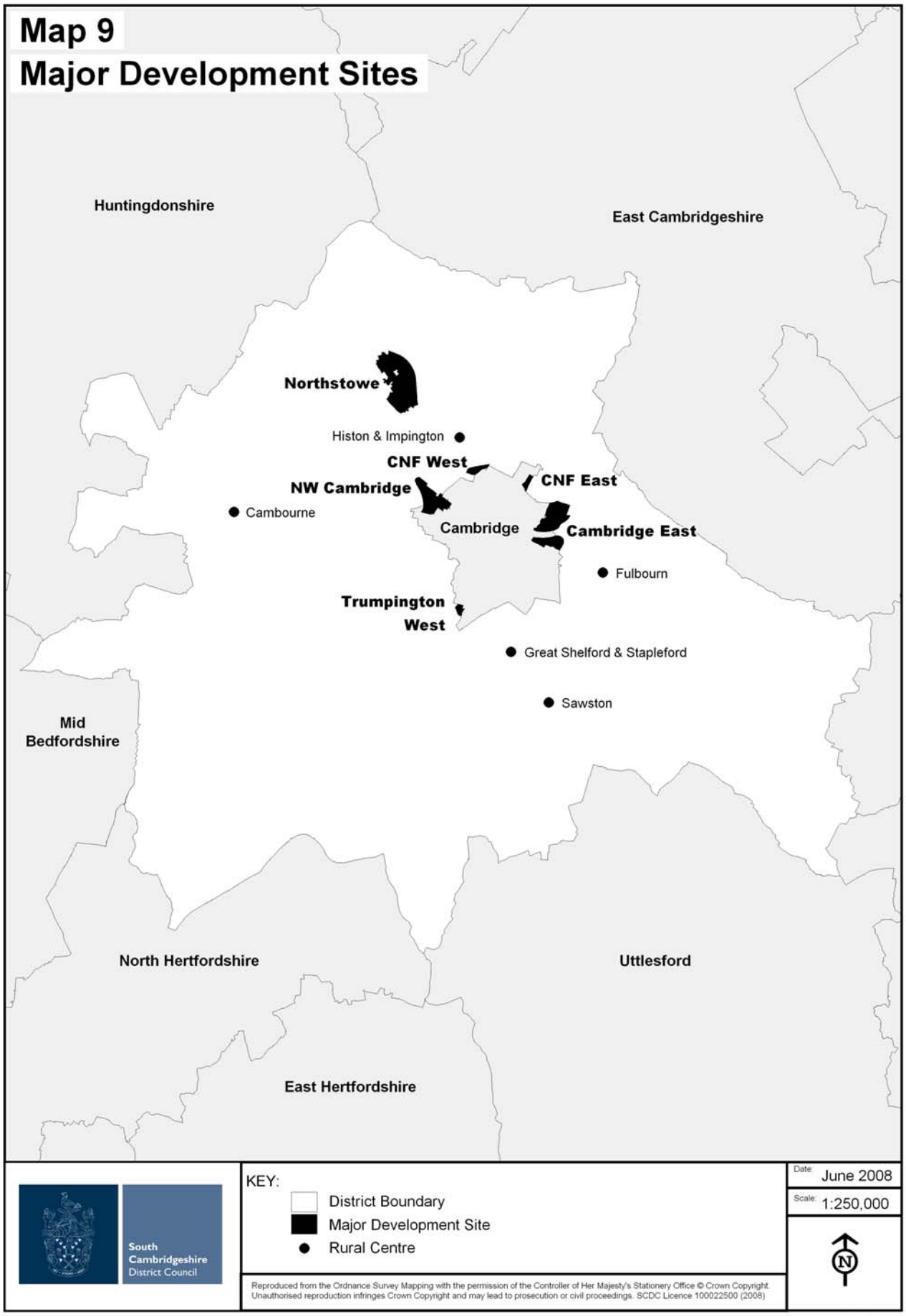
Map 9
Major Development Sites
Huntingdonshire
East Cambridgeshire
Northstowe
Histon & Impington
CNF West
CNF East
NW Cambridge
Cambourne
Cambridge
Cambridge East
Fulbourn
Trumpington West
Great Shelford & Stapleford
Sawston
Mid Bedfordshire
North Hertfordshire
Uttlesford
East Hertfordshire
South Cambridgeshire District Council
KEY:
District Boundary
Major Development Site
Rural Centre
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Scale: 1:250,000
N

APPENDIX 4

Habitats Directive Assessment Screening Matrix

APPENDIX 4 - HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT SCREENING MATRIX

SCREENING MATRIX For Eversden and Wimpole Wood SAC

Name, location and summary of conservation objectives of Natura 2000 site	**Eversden and Wimpole Woods** (grid location TL 340526) ***Reason for designation as SAC*** – Presence of colony of Barbastelle bats (*Barbastella barbastellus*) These woods comprise a mixture of ancient coppice woodland (Eversden Wood) and high forest woods likely to be of more recent origin (Wimpole Woods). A colony of barbastelle bats is associated with the trees in Wimpole Woods. These trees are used as a summer maternity roost where the female bats gather to give birth and rear their young. Most of the roost sites are within tree crevices. The bats also use the site as foraging area. Some of the woodland is also used as a flight path when bats forage outside the site. This is one of the UK's rarest mammals. This site is located in South Cambridgeshire District.
Are there other projects or plans that together with the Biodiversity SPD could affect Eversden and Wimpole Wood?	The Biodiversity SPD seeks to ensure that Biodiversity is adequately protected and enhanced throughout the development process. The South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy provides the overall spatial strategy for development in South Cambridgeshire. There are other plans in the South Cambridgeshire LDF, including various Area Action Plans for urban extensions to Cambridge, one AAP for a new settlement at Northstowe and the Site Specific DPD, which could theoretically indirectly affect the site. These plans provide detail to the framework provided in the Core Strategy, including allocations of land for development.

	Other relevant plans: • Cambridge City Core Strategy (DPD) – Issues and Options (Reg 25), 2007 • Cambridge Local Plan 2004 • Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 • Huntingdonshire Core Strategy Submission Draft 2008 & Development Control Policies DPD Issues & Options Report, 2007 • Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan Preferred Options 2 –September 2008. • Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2005 • Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals Core Strategy and Site Allocation Plan – Issues and Options (Jan 2006); Issues and Options 2 2008; Waste DPD – Core Strategy and Site Allocation Plan 2006 • Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 1998 (and review adopted 2007) • Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan 1998 • Hertfordshire Minerals & Waste DPDs Issues & Options & Waste Core Strategy Preferred Options Report, June 2007 • Bedford Borough Local Plan 2006 and Bedford Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan Adopted 2008

The assessment of significance of effects:

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
Land Take by	The Biodiversity SPD does not propose any development	There are no policies in the Biodiversity SPD or

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
Development	that will take land from Wimpole and Eversden Woods, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats. No other plans propose development that would take land from this site.	other plans which directly impact on the woods by proposing development.
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	Eversden and Wimpole Woods are home to the Barbastelle Bat. The bats can forage up to 20km from their roosts but more typically venture around 6-8km. Barbastelle bats require minimal disturbance within 2 km of their roost. The main 'area of importance' for the bats has been examined in the South Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Strategy, and is shown on map 1 attached. This map is included in the SPD. The Biodiversity SPD does not contain proposals that would negatively impact on the bats and in fact has specific proposals to protect the bats and their foraging area. The area of importance for the bats is considered in the SPD and the bats identified as priority species to be protected Looking at the Biodiversity SPD in combination with other plans, none of the major developments identified in the Core Strategy fall within either the area of minimal disturbance or the main 'area of importance'. . The draft Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste Development Plan Preferred Options 2 (Sept 2008) proposes an extension to Barrington Quarry, which lies within the 'area of importance'. The initial screening showed that there was a remote possibility that the mineral extraction would impact on the bats habitat and therefore the County is intending to carry out a full Appropriate Assessment (AA). Whilst it is not expected this policy with site allocation will adversely	The woods are relatively isolated, and not located near to any of the locations for major development identified in the Core Strategy DPD. The closest major development will be one of the urban extensions proposed to Cambridge. These are not specified in the Core Strategy, but the Structure Plan identifies the Cambridge southern fringe and northwest Cambridge as two locations for development. An Area Action Plan has been adopted for the former and is at the Submission stage for the latter. These are over 8 km distant. The new town of Northstowe is over 13 km distant. These are some distance from the 'area of importance' identified in the South Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Strategy2006 and now included in the Biodiversity SPD. The woods are also some distance from any villages where small-scale windfall development could take place under the rural settlement policies of the Core Strategy. However, any such development would be within village frameworks and would not involve the use of greenfield land in the countryside. The mineral extraction proposed at Barrington has a remote possibility of affecting the bats

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
	affect the site it needs to be assessed using the precautionary principle. Following on from the full AA the Development Plan will be revised by the County Council to ensure that the Plan does not have an adverse impact on any European site prior to its submission to the Secretary of State. Although outside the 'area of importance', the closest area of new development identified by the Core Strategy is at Cambourne, which is a previously planned new settlement of 3,300 dwellings that is 6km from the woods and had outline planning permission in 1993. More than 2,000 dwellings have already been completed. The Core Strategy proposes that the village is built out at current minimum densities of 30dph, which would generate an additional 700 dwellings within the existing planned footprint.	habitat. However as the County Council intend to ensure that their Plan does not have an adverse affect on any European sites in the submission version of the Plan it has been considered that this is not of significance to this screening. Development proposed at Cambourne will take place within the existing planned footprint, which also lies outside the 'area of importance' identified in the South Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Strategy, and therefore there will be no additional impact.
Recreational Pressure and Disturbance	The Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any development. . However, increasing the dwelling stock in the district by 20,000 dwellings as required by the Core Strategy DPD could increase demand for countryside recreation. No major proposals in the Core Strategy or any other plan are within 5km of the site. Notwithstanding this, Wimpole Woods, and even more so Eversden Woods, does not attract a large number of visitors. Its remoteness, relative to major centres of population (existing and proposed), limits its attractiveness compared to other available rural locations. The closest major development location is over 8 km distant and the	The East of England Regional Spatial Strategy Habitats Directive Assessment states that in drawing up local development plans, consideration should be given to carry out screening where Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites fall within a 5km radius of any proposed new residential developments to reduce the risk of recreational disturbance effects to Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites from walkers, dogs, cats and other recreational uses that can result from additional housing and associated development. There are not likely to be any significant effects using this test as no development is within this distance.

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
	closest development is at Cambourne, which is 6 km away. The recreation role of the woods is as part of a country walk of some distance, using footpaths passing through the woods as part of the wider countryside footpath network. By virtue of their form and character, together with their relative inaccessibility from car parking or public transport facilities, they are not areas that people would be likely to make a visit for picnics or informal play. Access to the sites is mainly from the car park at Wimpole Hall. Whilst the start of path through Wimpole Wood is only around 1km as the crow files from the car park, a walking route is likely to be nearer double this, which, taking account uneven terrain, is likely to be more than a half hour walk. The majority of visitors to Wimpole Hall are likely to focus their visit on the Hall, model farm, and the landscaped parkland, which includes attractive features such as two lakes, a Chinese Bridge and a hilltop folly, rather than this peripheral woodland walk. This applies to an even greater extent to Eversden Wood, which is not shown on the Wimpole Walks leaflet produced by the National Trust. A walk of around 3km from the NT car park is likely to be required to reach the woods. There is very limited parking available on the roadside near to Eversden Wood (perhaps one or two cars). This is still over 700m from the main part of the wood. Even though due to the nature and distance of the site from the new developments it is not anticipated that there will be increased usage as a result of the Biodiversity SPD there	Notwithstanding, according to the Natura 2000 Data, the current use of the woods, including public access, is considered compatible with the barbastelle bats' interest and should not affect the barbastelle population or their roosts. The existing rights of way through the woods allow for some limited access to the woods but the bats roost in the trees, foraging at sunset/night so are not disturbed by day visitors and numbers will continue to be limited due to the woods relative inaccessibility both from centres of population and from car parking close to the woods. In view of the limited additional recreational use that will occur of the woods, there are not considered to be any likely significant effects.

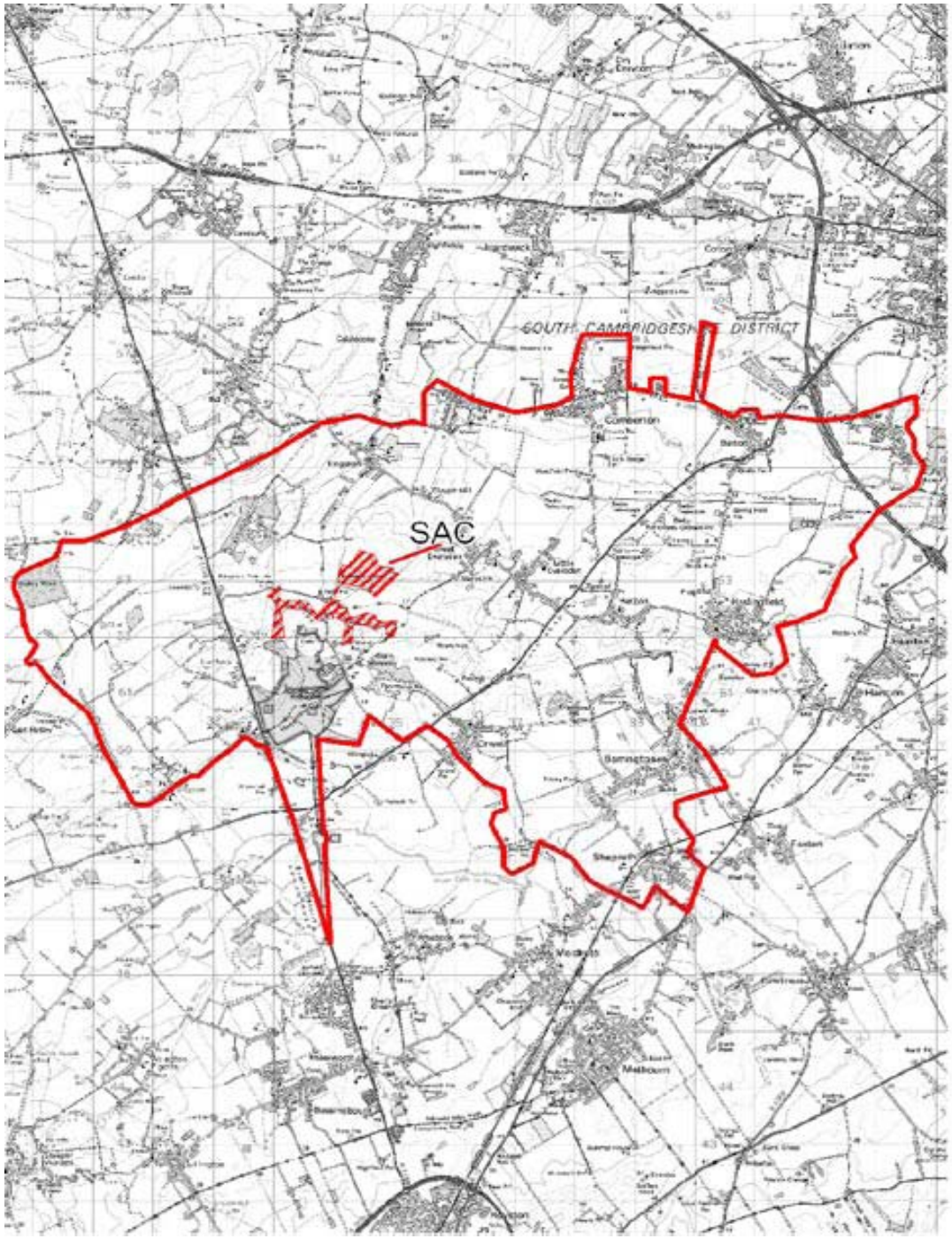
Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
	are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations to the major centres of population. These are specifically designed to provide a countryside recreation experience, and will continue to be the focus for that use by existing and new communities, rather than more remote locations such as Wimpole and Eversden Woods. This is particularly demonstrated by the Cambridgeshire Horizons Green Infrastructure Strategy, and the South Cambridgeshire Recreation Study, which take forward the proposals of the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan. It is not considered that the level of public use of the woods will increase greatly as a result of the Biodiversity SPD, alone or in combination with other plans.	
Water Quantity and Quality	Not relevant for the conservation objectives of this site.	Not relevant.
Changes in Pollution Levels	The South Cambridgeshire Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any development. However, increasing the dwelling stock in the district by 20,000 dwellings as required by the Core Strategy DPD could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated The Biodiversity SPD will not result in a change in pollution levels. The Core Strategy focuses development onto Cambridge and areas accessible by public transport, providing access to jobs and services by means other than the car. This will	There are policy requirements that development does not harm the identified European Sites and to address air quality. The proposed mineral extraction at Barrington is not likely to have a significant affect on the woods due to the fact that the County Council intend to mitigate against any adverse impacts of the proposals As the site is not in close proximity to the major developments proposed by the Core Strategy or major transport routes, it is not considered that

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
	help to minimise levels of car use and corresponding pollution. Whilst the actual impact of the Core Strategy on air quality alone or in combination with other plans is difficult to quantify, the location of the site is not in close proximity to the major developments proposed or major transport routes. The draft Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste Development Plan Preferred Options 2 (Sept 2008) proposes an extension to Barrington Quarry, some 4 km from the site. The Initial screening of that plan indicates that a full Appropriate Assessment (AA) must be carried out on this allocation policy using the precautionary principles. However the County Council has stated that it will ensure the policies in the final submission version of the Minerals Plan will take into account the results of the AA. The County will revise the plan to ensure that its policies do not have any adverse impact on any European Sites. This will be assisted by the quarry being downwind of the SAC in terms of the prevailing winds, which are from the southwest. Preferred Option CS29 Air Quality proposes that new minerals and waste development will be permitted where emissions will be minimised. Preferred Option CS32 (Biodiversity) proposes that new minerals and waste development will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that there will be no likely significant adverse impacts on sites of nature conservation importance.	there is likely to be any significant impact on their nature conservation objectives.

Agencies consulted	Natural England

Response to Consultation	Natural England support the conclusion that policies in the Biodiversity SPD are unlikely to have significant impacts upon the European Sites located within and in the vicinity of the District.

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



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

SCREENING MATRIX For Devil's Dyke SAC

Name, location and summary of conservation objectives of Natura 2000 site	**Devil's Dyke** (Grid Ref TL611622) ***Reasons for designation as SAC*** – Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia)* Devil's Dyke consists of a mosaic of calcareous grasslands (CG3 *Bromus erectus* and CG5 *Bromus erectus – Brachypodium pinnatum*.) It is the only known UK semi-natural dry grassland site for lizard orchid (*Himantoglossum hircinum*.) This site is located in East Cambridgeshire District outside the district of South Cambridgeshire.
Are there other projects or plans that together with the Biodiversity SPD could affect Devil's Dyke?	The Biodiversity SPD seeks to ensure that Biodiversity is adequately protected and enhanced throughout the development process. The South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy provides the overall spatial strategy for development in South Cambridgeshire. There are other plans in the South Cambridgeshire LDF, including various Area Action Plans for the urban extensions to Cambridge, one AAP for a new settlement at Northstowe and the Site Specific DPD, which could theoretically indirectly affect the site. These plans provide detail to the framework provided in the Core Strategy, including allocations of land for development. Other relevant plans: • Cambridge City Core Strategy (DPD) – Issues and Options (Reg 25), 2007 • Cambridge Local Plan 2004 • East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2000 and Core Strategy Submission Draft 2008

	• Forest Heath Local Plan 1995 and Core Strategy & Development Policies Preferred Options Report October 2006 and Site Specific Policies and Allocations DPD Issues & Options Report 2006 • Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan Preferred Options 2 –September 2008. • Suffolk Minerals Local Plan 1999 & Minerals Core Strategy Submission 2007 & Minerals Specific Site Allocations DPD, April 2007 • Suffolk Waste Local Plan 2006; Waste Issues Report 2007

The assessment of significance of effects:

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
Land Take by Development	The Biodiversity SPD does not propose any development that will take land from Devil's Dyke, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats. No other plans propose development that would take land from this site.	There are no policies in the Biodiversity SPD or other plans which directly impact on the Devil's Dyke.
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	The conservation objectives relate to species of plant within the grassland. Therefore there are no species listed as important to the integrity of the site that travel to forage outside the site.	Due to the distance of the site from the District and as there are no species listed as important to the integrity of the site that travel to forage outside the site there is not likely to be any significant effect.
Recreational	The Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any	The East of England Regional Spatial Strategy

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
Pressure and Disturbance	development. . However, increasing the dwelling stock in the district by 20,000 dwellings as required by the Core Strategy DPD could increase demand for countryside recreation. That growth will be regulated by policies in the Development Control Policies DPD, unless specified in an Area Action Plan. However, no major proposals in the Core Strategy or any other plan are within 5km of the site. Devils Dyke is accessed via a long distance footpath that runs the length of the dyke. There is parking available at the July Race course, Newmarket. The site is over 10km from the development proposed at Cambridge East. It is not considered that the level of public use of the Devil's Dyke footpaths will increase greatly as a result of the Biodiversity SPD in combination with the Core Strategy or other plans. Even though due to the nature and distance of the site from the new developments it is not anticipated that there will be increased usage as a result of the Biodiversity SPD there are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations to the major centres of population. These are specifically designed to provide a countryside recreation experience, and will continue to be the focus for that use by existing and new communities, rather than more remote locations such as the Devil's Dyke. This is particularly demonstrated by the Cambridgeshire Horizons Green Infrastructure Strategy, and the South Cambridgeshire Recreation Study, which take forward the proposals of the Cambridgeshire Structure	Habitats Directive Assessment states that in drawing up local development plans, consideration should be given to carry out screening where Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites fall within a 5km radius of the any proposed new residential development to reduce the risk of recreational disturbance effects to Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites from walkers, dogs, cats and other recreational uses that can result from additional housing and associated development. There are not likely to be any significant effects using this test as no development is within this distance. Notwithstanding, the impact of public access is not listed in the vulnerabilities relating to the site. In view of the limited additional recreational use that will occur of the site, as a result of the Biodiversity SPD alone or in combination with other plans there are not considered to be any likely significant effects.

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
	Plan. It is not considered that the level of public use of the dyke will increase greatly as a result of the Biodiversity SPD, alone or in combination with other plans.	
Water Quantity and Quality	Not relevant for the conservation objectives of this site.	Not relevant.
Changes in Pollution Levels	The Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any development. However, increasing the dwelling stock in the district by 20,000 dwellings as required by the Core Strategy DPD could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated. That growth will be guided by policies in the Development Control Policies DPD, unless specified in an Area Action Plan. The Biodiversity SPD will not result in a change in pollution levels. The Core Strategy focuses development onto Cambridge and areas accessible by public transport, providing access to jobs and services by means other than the car. This will help to minimise levels of car use and corresponding pollution. Whilst the actual impact of the Core Strategy on air quality alone or in combination with other plans is difficult to quantify, the location of the site is not in close proximity to the major developments proposed. It is adjacent to the A14, but this is at roughly right angles to	There are policy requirements that development does not harm the identified European Sites, and to address air quality. There are not likely to be any significant impacts from additional traffic using the part of the A14 crossing the site as a result of the Biodiversity SPD in combination with other plans.

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
	the road and therefore only a limited part of the dyke is close to a major transport route. The policies of the Core Strategy endeavour to limit traffic as part of development proposals and the overall strategy has the objective of reducing commuting to Cambridge from outside by focusing major development in and on the edge of Cambridge and in the new town of Northstowe to the north west of Cambridge. As such, it is considered that there are not likely to be any significant increases in traffic using this part of the A14 in this location as a result of Biodiversity SPD, in combination with other plans.	

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

SCREENING MATRIX For Fenland SAC and Ramsar Sites

Name, location and summary of conservation objectives of Natura 2000 site	**Fenland – comprises 3 sites:** • **Wicken Fen** • **Chippenham Fen** • **Woodwalton Fen** ***Reason for designation as SAC*** **–** a) *Molinia* meadow on calcareous, peaty or clayey silt laden soils (*Molinion caerulae*) b) Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of *Caricion davallianae* c) Significant presence of Spined loach (*Cobitis taenia)* *d)* Presence of Great Crested Newts *(Triturus cristatus)* Fenland contains, particularly at Chippenham Fen, one of the most extensive examples of the tall herb-rich East Anglian type of fen-meadow (*Molinia caerulea – Cirsium dissectum)*. It is important for the conservation of the geographical and ecological range of the habitat type, as this type of fen-meadow is rare and ecologically distinctive in East Anglia. The individual sites within Fenland each hold large areas of calcareous fens, with a long and well-documented history of regular management. There is a full range from species-poor *Cladium*-dominated fen to species-rich fen with a lower proportion of *Cladium* and containing such species as black bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta*)and meadow thistle(*Cirsium dissectum)*. There are good transitions to purple moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea)* and rush pastures, all set within a mosaic of reed beds and wet pastures. The fens also support a significant presence of spined loach (*Cobitis taenia*) and great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus).*

	The three separate Fenland sites are some distance apart. Each site is therefore assessed separately. Each site is also a Ramsar site and the summary of conservation objectives of each site under this designation is given below.

(a) Fenland – Wicken Fen - <u>SAC and Ramsar site</u>

Name, location and summary of conservation objectives of Ramsar site	**<u>Wicken Fen</u>** - Grid Reference: TL 555700 ***Reason for designation as Ramsar site -*** One of the most outstanding remnants of East Anglian peat fens. Supports one species of British Red Data Book plant fen violet *Viola persicifolia*, which survives at only two other sites in Britain. It contains eight nationally scarce plants and 121 British Red Data invertebrates. This is located in East Cambridgeshire District.
Are there other projects or plans that together with the Biodiversity SPD could affect Wicken Fen?	The Biodiversity SPD seeks to ensure that Biodiversity is adequately protected and enhanced throughout the development process. The South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy provides the overall spatial strategy for development in South Cambridgeshire. There are other plans in the South Cambridgeshire LDF, including various Area Action Plans for the urban extensions to Cambridge, one AAP for a new settlement at Northstowe and the Site Specific DPD, which could theoretically indirectly affect the site. These plans provide detail to the framework provided in the Core Strategy, including allocations of land for development. Other relevant plans: • Cambridge City Core Strategy (DPD) – Issues and Options

	(Reg 25), 2007 • Cambridge Local Plan 2004 • East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2000 and Core Strategy Submission Draft 2008 • Fenland Local Plan 1993; Core Strategy Preferred Options 2006 and Preferred Options 2 2007 • Forest Heath Local Plan 1995 and Core Strategy & Development Policies Preferred Options Report October 2006 and Site Specific Policies and Allocations DPD Issues & Options Report 2006. • Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan Preferred Options 2 –September 2008. • Suffolk Minerals Local Plan 1999 & Minerals Core Strategy Submission 2007 & Minerals Specific Site Allocations DPD, April 2007 • Suffolk Waste Local Plan 2006; Waste Issues Report 2007

The assessment of significance of effects:		
Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
Land Take by Development	The Biodiversity SPD does not propose any development that will take land from Wicken Fen, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats. No other plans propose development that would take land from this site.	There are no policies in the Biodiversity SPD or other plans, which directly impact on Wicken Fen.

The assessment of significance of effects:		
Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	The conservation objectives relate to species of plant within the fen, and species of invertebrates. The Biodiversity SPD will not have a significant adverse impact on species listed as important to the integrity of the site since the site is outside of the district of South Cambs.	Due to the distance of the site from the District it is not considered that there is likely to be a significant effect from the plan, alone or in combination with other plans.
Recreational Pressure and Disturbance	The Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any development. However, increasing the dwelling stock in the district by 20,000 dwellings as required by the Core Strategy DPD could increase demand for countryside recreation. That growth will be regulated by policies in the Development Control Policies DPD, unless specified in an Area Action Plan. However, no major proposals in the policy elements of the Core Strategy or any other plan are within 5km of the site. It is not considered that the level of public use of Wicken Fen will increase greatly as a result of the Biodiversity SPD, alone or in combination with other plans. In any event, access away from public rights of way is by permit only and can therefore be controlled. Even though due to the nature and distance of the site from the new developments it is not anticipated that there will be increased usage as a result of the Biodiversity SPD there are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations to the	The East of England Regional Spatial Strategy Habitats Directive Assessment states that in drawing up local development plans, consideration should be given to carry out screening where Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites fall within a 5km radius of the any proposed new residential development to reduce the risk of recreational disturbance effects to Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites from walkers, dogs, cats and other recreational uses that can result from additional housing and associated development. There are not likely to be any significant effects using this test as no development is within this distance. Notwithstanding, the National Trust manages public access to Wicken Fen. There is a visitor centre and shop, nature trails, three hides and 16km of walking routes. Entry is by permit only to help control visitor numbers. Visitors are also managed by ‘zoning ‘ parts of the Fen near the entrance, leaving the more remote parts of the site relatively undisturbed. The site is over 12km

The assessment of significance of effects:		
Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
	major centres of population. These are specifically designed to provide a countryside recreation experience, and will continue to be the focus for that use by existing and new communities, rather than more remote locations such as Wicken Fen. This is particularly demonstrated by the Cambridgeshire Horizons Green Infrastructure Strategy, and the South Cambridgeshire Recreation Study, which take forward the proposals of the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan It is not considered that the level of public use of the fen will increase greatly as a result of the Biodiversity SPD, alone or in combination with other plans.	from the nearest major development proposed by the Core Strategy, at Northstowe. The impact of public access is not listed in the vulnerabilities relating to the site.

Water Quantity and Quality	Development could theoretically have an impact on water quantity, through run off from development sites, or water use. It could also have an impact on water quality, through additional waste products produced. The Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any development and will not affect water quality in the area. The Cambridge Water Cycle Strategy is currently being prepared by Cambridgeshire Horizons. Phase 1 of the project has recently been completed and it aims to ensure sustainable management of water resources (supply and disposal) as the area is developed, including ensuring	The Biodiversity SPD in combination with other plans appropriately addresses water issues, and is not likely to result in significant impacts on the nature conservation objectives.

	protection of internationally designated conservation sites. The Development Control Policies DPD includes a suite of policies to address the impact of development on water quantity and quality.	
Changes in Pollution Levels	The Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any development. However, increasing the dwelling stock in the district by 20,000 dwellings as required by the Core Strategy DPD could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated. That growth will be regulated by policies in the Development Control Policies DPD, unless specified in an Area Action Plan. The Development Control Polices DPD includes policies to protect European biodiversity sites, and to address air quality. The SPD looks to further the protection of these sites. The Biodiversity SPD will not create a change in pollution levels to the fen.	There are policy requirements that development does not harm the identified European Sites, and to address air quality. As the site is not in close proximity to major proposed developments, there are likely to be no significant impacts on their nature conservation objectives.

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

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

(b) Fenland- Chippenham Fen- <u>SAC and Ramsar site</u>

Name, location and summary of conservation objectives of Ramsar site	**<u>Chippenham Fen</u>** – (Grid Ref TL 648697) ***Reason for designation as Ramsar site -*** A spring–fed calcareous basin mire with a long history of management, which is partly reflected in the diversity of the present-day vegetation. The invertebrate fauna is very rich partly due to its transitional position between Fenland and Breckland. The species list is very long, including many rare and scarce invertebrates characteristics of ancient fenland sites in GB. The site supports diverse vegetation types, rare and scarce plants. The site is the stronghold of Cambridge milk parsley *Selinum carvifolia.* This is located in East Cambridgeshire District.
Are there other projects or plans that together with the Biodiversity SPD could affect Chippenham Fen?	The Biodiversity SPD seeks to ensure that Biodiversity is adequately protected and enhanced throughout the development process. The South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy provides the overall spatial strategy for development in South Cambridgeshire. There are other plans in the South Cambridgeshire LDF, including various Area Action Plans for the urban extensions to Cambridge, one AAP for a new settlement at Northstowe and the Site Specific DPD, which could theoretically indirectly affect the site. These plans provide detail to the framework provided in the Core Strategy, including allocations of land for development. Other relevant plans: • Cambridge City Core Strategy (DPD) – Issues and Options (Reg 25), 2007

	• Cambridge Local Plan 2004 • East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2000 and Core Strategy Submission Draft 2008 • Fenland Local Plan 1993; Core Strategy Preferred Options 2006 and Preferred Options 2 2007 • St. Edmundsbury Local Plan 2006; Core Strategy and Policies DPD – Issues and options 2008. • Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan Preferred Options 2 –September 2008. • Suffolk Minerals Local Plan 1999 & Minerals Core Strategy Submission 2007 & Minerals Specific Site Allocations DPD, April 2007 • Suffolk Waste Local Plan 2006; Waste Issues Report 2007

The assessment of significance of effects:

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
Land Take by Development	The Biodiversity SPD does not propose any development that will take land from Chippenham Fen, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats. No other plans propose development that would take land from this site.	There are no policies in the Biodiversity SPD or other plans which directly impact on Chippenham Fen.
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	The conservation objectives relate to species of plant within the fen, and species of invertebrates. Due to the distance of the site from the District there is likely to be no effect.	Due to the distance from the District, it is not considered there will be any impact on breeding bird species associated with the fen. Therefore, the Biodiversity SPD alone or in combination with other plans is not likely to have a significant impact on specifies listed as important to the integrity of the site.

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
Recreational Pressure and Disturbance	The Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any development. However, increasing the dwelling stock in the district by 20,000 dwellings as required by the Core Strategy DPD could increase demand for countryside recreation. That growth will be regulated by policies in the Development Control Policies DPD, unless specified in an Area Action Plan. However, no major proposals in the policy elements of the Core Strategy or any other plan are within 5km of the site. Both the fen and surrounding areas are privately owned. Part of the site is under unspecified tenure. The site is mainly used for nature conservation. There are rights of way across the site. Access away from the paths is by permit only. The nearest car parking is in the villages of Fordham or Chippenham. There is a low level of usage by local inhabitants using the rights of way through the middle of the site according to the Ramsar information sheet. Few people apply for permits for recreational purposes, they are mainly requested by naturalists. Even though due to the nature and distance of the site from the new developments it is not anticipated that there will be increased usage as a result of the Biodiversity SPD there are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations to the major centres of population. These are specifically designed to provide a countryside recreation experience, and will continue to be the focus for that use by existing and new communities, rather than more remote locations such as Chippenham Fen. This is particularly demonstrated by	It is not considered that the level of public use of Chippenham Fen will increase greatly as a result of the Biodiversity SPD alone or in combination with other plans and that there will therefore be no likely significant effects on the site.

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
	the Cambridgeshire Horizons Green Infrastructure Strategy, and the South Cambridgeshire Recreation Study, which take forward the proposals of the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan It is not considered that the level of public use of the fen will increase greatly as a result of the Biodiversity SPD, alone or in combination with other plans.	
Water Quantity and Quality	Development could theoretically have an impact on water quantity, through run off from development sites, or water use. It could also have an impact on water quality, through additional waste products produced. The Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any development. The Cambridge Water Cycle Strategy is currently being prepared by Cambridgeshire Horizons. Phase 1 of the project has recently been completed and it aims to ensure sustainable management of water resources (supply and disposal) as the area is developed, including ensuring protection of internationally designated conservation sites. The Development Control Policies DPD includes a suite of policies to address the impact of development on water quantity and quality.	The Biodiversity SPD in combination with other plans appropriately addresses water issues, and is not likely to result in significant impacts on the nature conservation objectives.
Changes in Pollution Levels	The Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any development. However, increasing the dwelling stock in the district by 20,000 dwellings as required by the Core Strategy DPD could result in increased levels of	There are policy requirements that development does not harm the identified European Sites, and to address air quality.

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
	atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated. That growth will be regulated by policies in the Development Control Policies DPD, unless specified in an Area Action Plan. The Development Control Polices DPD includes policies to protect European biodiversity sites, and to address air quality. The SPD looks to further the protection of these sites. The Biodiversity SPD will not create a change in pollution levels.	As the site is not in close proximity to major proposed developments, there are likely to be no significant impacts on their nature conservation objectives.

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

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

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

Name, location and summary of conservation objectives of Ramsar site	**Woodwalton Fen -** (Grid Ref TL 230840) ***Reason for designation as Ramsar site -*** The site is within an area of one of the remaining parts of East Anglia, which has not been drained. The site supports two species of British Red Data Book plants- fen violet and fen wood rush. This is located in Huntingdonshire District.
Are there other projects or plans that together with the Biodiversity SPD could affect Woodwalton Fen?	The Biodiversity SPD seeks to ensure that Biodiversity is adequately protected and enhanced throughout the development process. The South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy provides the overall spatial strategy for development in South Cambridgeshire. There are other plans in the South Cambridgeshire LDF, including various Area Action Plans for the urban extensions to Cambridge, one AAP for a new settlement at Northstowe and the Site Specific DPD, which could theoretically indirectly affect the site. These plans provide detail to the framework provided in the Core Strategy, including allocations of land for development. Other relevant plans: • Cambridge City Core Strategy (DPD) – Issues and Options (Reg 25), 2007 • Cambridge Local Plan 2004 • Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 • Huntingdonshire Core Strategy Submission Draft 2008 & Development Control Policies DPD Issues & Options Report, 2007 • Fenland Local Plan 1993; Core Strategy Preferred Options

	2006 and Preferred Options 2 2007 • Uttlesford Core Strategy – Preferred Options 2007 • St. Edmundsbury Local Plan 2006; Core Strategy and Policies DPD – Issues and options 2008. • Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan Preferred Options 2 –September 2008. • Suffolk Minerals Local Plan 1999 & Minerals Core Strategy Submission 2007 & Minerals Specific Site Allocations DPD, April 2007 • Suffolk Waste Local Plan 2006; Waste Issues Report 2007

The assessment of significance of effects:

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
Land Take by Development	The Biodiversity SPD does not propose any development that will take land from Woodwalton Fen, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats. No other plans propose development that would take land from this site.	There are no policies in the Biodiversity SPD or other plans which directly impact on Woodwalton Fen.
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	The conservation objectives relate to species of plant within the fen. Due to the distance of the site from the District it is likely that there will be no effect.	The Biodiversity SPD alone or in combination with other plans will not be likely to have a significant impact on species listed as important to the integrity of the site.
Recreational Pressure and Disturbance	The Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any development. However, increasing the dwelling stock in the district by	It is not considered that the level of public use of Woodwalton Fen will increase greatly as a result of the Biodiversity SPD alone or in combination with other plans and that there will therefore be no

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
	20,000 dwellings as required by the Core Strategy DPD could increase demand for countryside recreation. That growth will be regulated by policies in the Development Control Policies DPD, unless specified in an Area Action Plan. However, no major proposals in the Core Strategy or any other plan are within 5km of the site. Parking is limited at Woodwalton Fen – some being available alongside the Great Raveley Drain. There are three marked trails around the fen following the rides. There are no public rights of way across the reserve but visitors are allowed access to the site although some areas are restricted. Even though due to the nature and distance of the site from the new developments it is not anticipated that there will be increased usage as a result of the Biodiversity SPD there are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations to the major centres of population. These are specifically designed to provide a countryside recreation experience, and will continue to be the focus for that use by existing and new communities, rather than more remote locations such as Woodwalton Fen. This is particularly demonstrated by the Cambridgeshire Horizons Green Infrastructure Strategy, and the South Cambridgeshire Recreation Study, which take forward the proposals of the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan It is not considered that the level of public use of the fen will increase greatly as a result of the Biodiversity SPD, alone or in combination with other plans.	likely significant effects on the site. Notwithstanding, public access to the site is controlled and is restricted in some areas. The impact of public access is not listed in the vulnerabilities relating to the site.

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
Water Quantity and Quality	Development could theoretically have an impact on water quantity, through run off from development sites, or water use. It could also have an impact on water quality, through additional waste products produced. The Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any development and will not create a change in water quality. The Cambridge Water Cycle Strategy is currently being prepared by Cambridgeshire Horizons. Phase 1 of the project has recently been completed and it aims to ensure sustainable management of water resources (supply and disposal) as the area is developed, including ensuring protection of internationally designated conservation sites. The Development Control Policies DPD includes a suite of policies to address the impact of development on water quantity and quality:	Given the policy requirements Biodiversity SPD, taken together with the requirements of other legislation, alone or in combination with other plans, the plan is not likely to result in significant impacts on the site.
Changes in Pollution Levels	The Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any development. However, increasing the dwelling stock in the district by 20,000 dwellings as required by the Core Strategy DPD could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated. That growth will be regulated by policies in the Development Control Policies DPD, unless specified in an Area Action Plan. The Biodiversity SPD will not create changes to the pollution levels.	There are policy requirements that development does not harm the identified European Sites, and to address air quality. As the site is not in close proximity to major proposed developments, there are likely to be no significant impacts on their nature conservation objectives.

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
	The Development Control Polices DPD includes policies to protect European biodiversity sites, and to address air quality. The SPD looks to further the protection of these sites.	

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

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

SCREENING MATRIX For Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and RAMSAR site

Name, location and summary of conservation objectives of Natura 2000 and Ramsar site	**<u>The Ouse Washes</u>** (Grid Ref TL498895) The Ouse Washes is a wetland of major international importance comprising seasonally flooded washlands, which are agriculturally managed in a traditional manner. It provides breeding and winter habitats for important assemblages of wetland bird species, particularly wildfowl and waders. ***Reason for designation as a SAC -*** Significant presence of spined loach *(Cobitis taenia**)*** populations within the River Ouse catchment. The Counter Drain, with its clear water and abundant macrophytes, is particularly important, and a healthy population of spined loach is known to occur. ***Reason for designation as SPA -*** The Ouse Washes is a wetland of major international importance comprising seasonally flooded washlands, which are agriculturally managed in a traditional manner. It provides breeding and winter habitats for important assemblages of wetland bird species, particularly wildfowl and waders. ***Reason for designation as Ramsar site -*** a) Particularly good example of a natural or near-natural wetland characteristic of its biogeographical region. b) The site supports a number of rare species of plants and animals c) The site supports a diverse collection of rare breeding waterfowl associated with seasonally flooding wet grassland. d) The Washes are of international importance by virtue of regularly supporting over 20,000 waterfowl. e) The Washes are important internationally for supporting in winter certain species.

	The boundaries of the SPA and Ramsar site varies slightly from those of the Ouse Washes SAC. The Ouse Washes are primarily located in East Cambridgeshire District, and King's Lynn and West Norfolk District.
Are there other projects or plans that together with the Biodiversity SPD could affect the Ouse Washes?	The Biodiversity SPD seeks to ensure that Biodiversity is adequately protected and enhanced throughout the development process. The South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy provides the overall spatial strategy for development in South Cambridgeshire. There are other plans in the South Cambridgeshire LDF, including various Area Action Plans for the urban extensions to Cambridge, one AAP for a new settlement at Northstowe and the Site Specific DPD, which could theoretically indirectly affect the site. These plans provide detail to the framework provided in the Core Strategy, including allocations of land for development. Other relevant plans: • Cambridge City Core Strategy (DPD) – Issues and Options (Reg 25), 2007 • Cambridge Local Plan 2004 • Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 • Huntingdonshire Core Strategy Submission Draft 2008 & Development Control Policies DPD Issues & Options Report, 2007 • East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2000 and Core Strategy Submission Draft 2008 • Fenland Local Plan 1993; Core Strategy Preferred Options 2006 and Preferred Options 2 2007 • Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan 2005 & Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD Preferred Options

	2007 • Forest Heath Local Plan 1995 and Core Strategy & Development Policies Preferred Options Report October 2006 and Site Specific Policies and Allocations DPD Issues & Options Report 2006 • King's Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan 1998 and Core Strategy- Issues and Options 2 2008 DC Policies Preferred Options 2007 • Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan Preferred Options 2 –September 2008. • Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2005 • Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals Core Strategy and Site Allocation Plan – Issues and Options (Jan 2006); Issues and Options 2 2008; Waste DPD – Core Strategy and Site Allocation Plan 2006 • Bedford Borough Local Plan 2006 and Bedford Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan Adopted 2008 • Milton Keynes Local Plan 2005; Core Strategy – Preferred options 2007 • Buckinghamshire County Council Waste Local Plan 1997; Buckinghamshire Minerals DPD – Preferred options 2007; Buckinghamshire Waste DPD – Preferred options 2007 • Milton Keynes Waste DPD Submission 2007 • Milton Keynes Minerals Local Plan 2006; Minerals DPD – preferred options 2007 • Norfolk Waste Local Plan 2000 • Norfolk Minerals Local Plan 2004 • Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and Development Control Document –preferred options stage 2008

The assessment of significance of effects:

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
Land Take by Development	The Biodiversity SPD does not propose any development that will take land from the Ouse Washes, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats. No other plans propose development that would take land from this site.	There are no policies in the Biodiversity SPD, which alone or in combination with other plans directly impact on the Ouse Washes.
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	The Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any development and will not directly affect the protected species from this site. The SPD does contain proposals to positively protect and enhance protected species and therefore could enhance the Washes by providing additional habitats.	The Biodiversity SPD, alone or in combination with other plans will not be likely to have a significant impact on species listed as important to the integrity of the site.
Recreational Pressure and Disturbance	The Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any development. However, increasing the dwelling stock in the district by 20,000 dwellings as required by the Core Strategy DPD could increase demand for countryside recreation. That growth will be regulated by policies in the Development Control Policies DPD, unless specified in an Area Action Plan. However, no major proposals in the policy elements of the Core Strategy or any other plan are within 5km of the site.	It is not considered that the level of public use of the Ouse Washes will increase greatly as a result of the Biodiversity SPD alone or in combination with other plans and that there will therefore be no likely significant effects on the site. Notwithstanding, the impact of public access is not listed in the vulnerabilities relating to the site. The proposals contained within the Minerals and Waste Development Plan are not likely to have a significant affect on the Washes due to the fact

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
	There is a network of public rights of way in the Washes. The RSPB manage a nature reserve at Welches Dam where there is a visitor centre and a number of bird hides. The WWT manage a nature reserve at Welney, Norfolk also with a centre and hides. Even though due to the nature and distance of the site from the new developments it is not anticipated that there will be increased usage as a result of the Biodiversity SPD there are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations to the major centres of population. These are specifically designed to provide a countryside recreation experience, and will continue to be the focus for that use by existing and new communities, rather than more remote locations such as the Ouse Washes. This is particularly demonstrated by the Cambridgeshire Horizons Green Infrastructure Strategy, and the South Cambridgeshire Recreation Study, which take forward the proposals of the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan. It is not considered that the level of public use of the Ouse Washes will increase greatly as a result of the Biodiversity SPD, alone or in combination with other plans. The draft Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste Development Plan Preferred Options 2 (Sept 2008) proposes an Earith / Mepal Action Area Plan, strategic allocations for sand and gravel extraction at Cottenham as well as an allocation at Needingworth and extensive minerals safeguarding areas across the District. All these	that the County Council intend to mitigate against any adverse impacts of these proposals.

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
	proposals could have an impact through noise of traffic and operation of plant and therefore create a potential disturbance. However, after the initial screening of the plan the County has stated a full Assessment Appropriate will be carried out on the plan and that the County will ensure that the final submission version of the plan will not contain policies that have an adverse affect on any European Sites.	
Water Quantity and Quality	Development could theoretically have an impact on water quantity, through run off from development sites, or water use. It could also have an impact on water quality, through additional waste products produced. The Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any development and will not create a change in water quality. The Cambridge Water Cycle Strategy is currently being prepared by Cambridgeshire Horizons. Phase 1 of the project has recently been completed and it aims to ensure sustainable management of water resources (supply and disposal) as the area is developed, including ensuring protection of internationally designated conservation sites. The Development Control Policies DPD includes a suite of policies to address the impact of development on water quantity and quality. The draft Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste Development Plan Preferred Options 2 (Sept 2008) proposes an Earith / Mepal Action Area Plan, strategic allocations for sand and gravel extraction at Cottenham as well as an allocation at Needingworth and extensive	Given the policy requirements Biodiversity SPD, taken together with the requirements of other legislation, alone or in combination with other plans, the plan is not likely to result in significant impacts on the site. The proposals contained within the Minerals and Waste Development Plan are not likely to have a significant affect on the Washes due to the fact that the County Council intend to mitigate against any adverse impacts of these proposals.

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
	minerals safeguarding areas across the District, which could have an impact on hydrology and water resources. However, after the initial screening of the plan the County has stated a full Assessment Appropriate will be carried out on the plan and that the County will ensure that the final submission version of the plan will not contain policies that have an adverse affect on any European Sites	
Changes in Pollution Levels	The Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any development. However, increasing the dwelling stock in the district by 20,000 dwellings as required by the Core Strategy DPD could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated. That growth will be regulated by policies in the Development Control Policies DPD, unless specified in an Area Action Plan. The Development Control Polices DPD includes policies to protect European biodiversity sites, and to address air quality. The SPD looks to further the protection of these sites. The draft Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste Development Plan Preferred Options 2 (Sept 2008) proposes an Earith / Mepal Action Area Plan, strategic allocations for sand and gravel extraction at Cottenham as well as an allocation at Needingworth and extensive minerals safeguarding areas across the District, which could have an impact on emissions. However, after the initial screening of the plan the County has stated a full Assessment Appropriate will be carried out on the plan and	There are policy requirements that development does not harm the identified European Sites, and to address air quality. As the site is not in close proximity to major proposed developments, there are likely to be no significant impacts on their nature conservation objectives. The proposals contained within the Minerals and Waste Development Plan are not likely to have a significant affect on the Washes due to the fact that the County Council intend to mitigate against any adverse impacts of these proposals.

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
	that the County will ensure that the final submission version of the plan will not contain policies that have an adverse affect on any European Sites	

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

Overall Conclusions
The Biodiversity SPD, alone and in combination with other DPDs in the LDF and other relevant plans, was assessed for its impact on the Ouse Washes and it was concluded that there are no likely significant effects on the conservation objectives of the site.

SCREENING MATRIX For Portholme SAC

Name, location and summary of conservation objectives of Natura 2000 site	**<u>Portholme</u>** (Grid ref TL237708) ***Reason for designation as SAC -*** Best example of lowland hay meadows in eastern England.*(Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis)* This site is over 90 hectares in size. It is the largest surviving traditionally managed meadow in the UK of alluvial flood meadow (7% of the total UK resource). There has been a long history of favourable management and very little of the site has suffered from agricultural improvement, and so it demonstrates good conservation of structure and function. It supports a small population of fritillary (*Fritillaria meleagris)*. The site is located in Huntingdonshire District.
Are there other projects or plans that together with the Biodiversity SPD could affect Portholme?	The Biodiversity SPD seeks to ensure that Biodiversity is adequately protected and enhanced throughout the development process. The South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy provides the overall spatial strategy for development in South Cambridgeshire. There are other plans in the South Cambridgeshire LDF, including various Area Action Plans for the urban extensions to Cambridge, an AAP for the new settlement of Northstowe and the Site Specific DPD, which could theoretically indirectly affect the site. These plans provide detail to the framework provided in the Core Strategy, including allocations of land for development. Other relevant plans: • Cambridge City Core Strategy (DPD) – Issues and Options (Reg 25), 2007 • Cambridge Local Plan 2004 • Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995

	• Huntingdonshire Core Strategy Submission Draft 2008 & Development Control Policies DPD Issues & Options Report, 2007 • Fenland Local Plan 1993; Core Strategy Preferred Options 2006 and Preferred Options 2 2007 • North Herts Local Plan 1996 and Core Strategy & Development Policies Preferred Options 2007 • Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan 2005 & Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD Preferred Options 2007 • King's Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan 1998 and Core Strategy- Issues and Options 2 2008 DC Policies Preferred Options 2007 • Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 1998 (and review adopted 2007) • Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan 1998 • Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan Preferred Options 2 –September 2008. • Hertfordshire Minerals & Waste DPDs Issues & Options & Waste Core Strategy Preferred Options Report, June 2007 • Bedford Borough Local Plan 2006 and Bedford Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan Adopted 2008 • Milton Keynes Local Plan 2005; Core Strategy – Preferred options 2007 • Buckinghamshire County Council Waste Local Plan 1997; Buckinghamshire Minerals DPD – Preferred options 2007; Buckinghamshire Waste DPD – Preferred options 2007 • Milton Keynes Waste DPD Submission 2007 • Milton Keynes Minerals Local Plan 2006; Minerals DPD – preferred options 2007 • Norfolk Waste Local Plan 2000 • Norfolk Minerals Local Plan 2004 • Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and

	Development Control Document –preferred options stage 2008

The assessment of significance of effects:

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
Land Take by Development	The Biodiversity SPD does not propose any development that will take land from Portholme, and will not result in the direct fragmentation of habitats. No other plans propose development that would take land from this site.	There are no policies in the Biodiversity SPD or other plans which directly impact on Portholme.
Impact on protected species outside the protected sites	The Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any development. The conservation objectives relate to species of plant within the hay meadow. Due to the distance of the site from the District there will be no effect.	The Biodiversity SPD alone or in combination with other plans will not be likely to have a significant impact on species listed as important to the integrity of the site.
Recreational Pressure and Disturbance	The Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any development. However, increasing the dwelling stock in the district by 20,000 dwellings as required by the Core Strategy DPD could increase demand for countryside recreation. That growth will be regulated by policies in the Development Control Policies DPD, unless specified in an Area Action Plan. However, no major proposals in the policy elements of the Core Strategy or any other plan are within 5km of the site. Even though due to the nature and distance of the site from the new developments it is not anticipated that there will be increased usage as a result of the Biodiversity SPD there	It is not considered that the level of public use of Portholme will increase greatly as a result of the Biodiversity SPD, alone or in combination with other plans. Also, the impact of public access is not listed in the vulnerabilities relating to the site.

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
	are other countryside access opportunities, existing or proposed, available in more accessible locations to the major centres of population. These are specifically designed to provide a countryside recreation experience, and will continue to be the focus for that use by existing and new communities, rather than more remote locations such as Portholme. This is particularly demonstrated by the Cambridgeshire Horizons Green Infrastructure Strategy, and the South Cambridgeshire Recreation Study, which take forward the proposals of the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan. It is not considered that the level of public use of the hay meadows will increase greatly as a result of the Biodiversity SPD, alone or in combination with other plans.	
Water Quantity and Quality	Development could theoretically have an impact on water quantity, through run off from the sites, or water use. It could also have an impact on water quality, through additional waste products produced. However, the impact of the plan, alone or in combination with other plans is not considered significant. The Cambridge Water Cycle Strategy is currently being prepared by Cambridgeshire Horizons. Phase 1 of the project has recently been completed and it aims to ensure sustainable management of water resources (supply and disposal) as the area is developed, including ensuring protection of internationally designated conservation sites.	New development proposed in the district is located too far to be likely to have significant effects on the hay meadows and is located down stream on the River Ouse catchment.
Changes in Pollution Levels	The Biodiversity SPD does not itself propose any development. However, increasing the dwelling stock in the	There are policy requirements that development does not harm the identified European Sites, and

Nature of potential impact	***How the Biodiversity SPD (alone or in combination with other plans) is likely to affect the European site***	***Why these effects are not considered significant***
	district by 20,000 dwellings as required by the Core Strategy DPD could result in increased levels of atmospheric pollution, through the emissions created by development, or from the car journeys generated. That growth will be regulated by policies in the Development Control Policies DPD, unless specified in an Area Action Plan. The Development Control Polices DPD includes policies to protect European biodiversity sites, and to address air quality. The SPD looks to further the protection of these sites.	to address air quality. As the site is not in close proximity to major proposed developments, there are likely to be no significant impacts on their nature conservation objectives.

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

DATA COLLECTED TO CARRY OUT THE ASSESSMENT.

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