

West Northamptonshire

Local Transport Plan

Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report

West Northamptonshire Council

July 2024

Version 3.0

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Executive Summary

This report presents the first stage (screening) of a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the draft West Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan in relation to relevant Habitats Sites (e.g. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar wetland sites). Natural England was consulted on 5th April 2024 requesting confirmation of relevant Habitat Sites to consider in the HRA. The sites were confirmed as the following in a response dated 16th April 2024:

- Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA;
- Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar;
- Chiltern Beechwoods SAC;
- Portholme SAC;
- Woodwalton Fen (Ramsar);
- Orton Pit SAC;
- Barnack Hills & Holes SAC;
- Ensor's Pools SAC;
- Oxford Meadows SAC;
- Cothill Fen SAC;
- Aston Rowant SAC; and
- Nene Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar.

Natural England suggested that the following site should also be considered within the HRA:

- Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC.

The draft West Northamptonshire LTP strategy and interventions have been screened to determine whether a Likely Significant Effect (LSE) on relevant Habitat Sites could exist.

The screening exercise has identified the potential for the draft West Northamptonshire LTP alone to result in LSEs on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA both alone and in combination in relation to:

- Development in areas with hydrological connectivity leading to water pollution;
- Development which potentially increases the amount of hard standing and affects the hydrological regime;
- Development leading to potential loss of supporting habitats, i.e. Functionally Linked Land (FLL);
- Development leading to potential fragmentation of supporting habitats, i.e. FLL;
- Increases in light pollution through construction, roads, railway, or introducing new paths with lighting;
- Increased recreational pressure due to improved access; and
- Increased disturbance through noise pollution.

The screening exercise has also identified the potential for the draft West Northamptonshire LTP in combination to result in LSEs on the Nene Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar both alone and in combination in relation to:

- Development which potentially increases the amount of hard standing and affects the hydrological regime.

As there is potential for the integrity of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and the Nene Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar to be affected by the interventions within the draft new West Northamptonshire Local Plan, the next stage of the HRA, Appropriate Assessment (AA), therefore needs to be undertaken. The AA will consider any mitigation provided by the LTP and elsewhere and will consider potential adverse effects from changes to hydrology, increased recreational pressure, increased disturbance, increased light pollution, loss and fragmentation of functionally linked land. The AA will also consider the potential for in combination effects with other plans and projects.

The findings of the HRA screening will be integrated into the parallel Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA).

Once the AA is complete, the WNC will consider any mitigation put forward within the HRA and may make changes to the draft new LTP. The ISA will also be updated. Consultation on the draft new LTP will take place and the HRA Report will accompany it along with the ISA Report. Natural England will be consulted on the HRA Report to seek their agreement and feedback.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

| Acronym/Abbreviation | Description |
|---|---|
| Appropriate Assessment (AA) | An assessment of the implications for a Habitats Site, in view of the site's conservation objectives (Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ¹) |
| Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) | An assessment in accordance with the Habitats Regulations (The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (SI No. 2010/490) as amended) to ascertain the significance of potential impacts of a plan on relevant European sites. The assessment determines whether the plan would adversely affect the integrity of the sites in terms of its nature conservation objectives. Where negative effects are identified, other options should be examined to avoid any potential for damaging effects. |
| Habitats Site | Any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites. |
| Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) | A systematic process required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 ² and incorporating the requirements of the SEA Directive, and other related assessments such as Health Impact Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment. It is aimed at appraising the social, environmental and economic effects of plans and ensuring that they accord with the objectives of sustainable development. |
| Likely Significant Effects (LSE) | A significant effect should be considered likely if it cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information and it might undermine a site's conservation objectives. A risk or a possibility of such an effect is enough to warrant the need for an Appropriate Assessment. |
| Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) | A process required by EU Directive 2001/42/EC ³ (known as the SEA Directive) and the SEA Regulations (Statutory Instrument No. 1633 ⁴) for the formal assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. |
| Local Transport Plan (LTP) | Local Transport Plans set out the transport needs and challenges in an area and highlight policies and interventions in order to alleviate these issues. |
| In Combination Effects | Where policies, plans or projects effecting the same area might affect Habitats Sites in combination with each other. |
| Special Area of Conservation (SAC) | Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are protected areas in the UK designated under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Designated sites make a significant contribution to conserving the habitats and species identified in Annexes I and II of EU Directive 92/43/EEC (known as the Habitats Directive). |
| Special Protection Area (SPA) | Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are protected areas for birds in the UK classified under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 in the UK offshore area. |

¹ [The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents>

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32001L0042>

⁴ [The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

| Acronym/Abbreviation | Description |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Ramsar Wetland Site | Ramsar Sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention. Sites proposed for selection are advised by the relevant statutory nature conservation body (or bodies) within the UK, or the relevant administration within each Overseas Territory or Crown Dependency. |
| West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) | The single unitary council covering the areas of Northampton, Daventry and South Northamptonshire responsible for preparing the Local Transport Plan. |

1. Introduction

Background

Steer consultants are currently preparing a replacement West Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) on behalf of West Northamptonshire Council (WNC). The LTP, when adopted, will replace the Northamptonshire Transport Plan 2012⁵. SLR has been commissioned to undertake the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the replacement LTP.

This Document

This document presents the HRA Stage 1 – screening findings of the draft West Northamptonshire LTP.

Habitat Regulations Assessment

The requirement for an Appropriate Assessment (AA) is set out within Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/ European Economic Community (EEC) of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, which was most recently transposed into British law by the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), also known as the 'Habitats Regulations'.

The Habitats Regulations afford protection to European sites and their interest features. Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) sets out the requirements for screening assessments, the circumstances under which an AA is required and the further implementation of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.

The UK left the European Union (Brexit) on Exit Day, 31st January 2020, followed by Completion Day on 31st December 2020. The EU Exit Regulations (2019) establish any EU Exit-related changes to the Habitats Regulations (2017), with these considered to have no material implications on the requirement or process for a HRA of the Plan. After Brexit, UK sites designated under the Habitats Regulations became part of the National Site Network (as defined in the interpretation sections of the Habitat Regulations (2017)), with a focus on maintaining ecological coherence throughout the UK.

In addition to the Habitats Regulations, UK Government policy (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Circular 06/2005) states that internationally important wetlands designated under the Convention on Wetlands 1971, called the Ramsar Convention (Ramsar sites) are afforded the same protection as SPAs and SACs for the purpose of considering development proposals that may affect them. The Government also affords the same level of protection to potential SPAs (pSPAs), possible SACs (pSACs) and proposed Ramsar sites and to sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on any of the above sites, through planning policy such as the National Planning Policy Framework⁶.

⁵ <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/roadworks-major-projects-plans-and-strategies/highways-plans-and-strategies>

⁶ Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (2023) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF_December_2023.pdf [Accessed: 27/6/24].

Paragraphs 187 and 188 relate to European sites (referred to as Habitats Sites) and state:

“The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and
- c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.”

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

HRA findings feed into the parallel Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) which incorporates Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), an integral part of the plan preparation process.

The West Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan

The new LTP will set out a strategy for a well-connected and sustainable West Northamptonshire, with a vision for making the area a great place to live, work, visit and thrive.

LTPs are a requirement of the Transport Act 2000, which states that plans must set out both overall strategy and plans for their implementation. The government has asked that all LTPs be updated by Summer 2024.

West Northamptonshire’s new LTP will cover the period from 2024 to 2045. The plan replaces and builds on the most recent LTP from Northampton County Council, which covered the period from 2012-2026 and was adopted in 2012. The draft new LTP builds on this work, information provided by the Department for Transport and best practice approaches based on lessons learned from other local transport authorities undertaking similar work around the world. The LTP will complement the West Northamptonshire Local Plan developed over the same period which sets out the future of planned development across West Northamptonshire, as well as a wide range of other plans and strategies developed by the Council. It has been written in line with current LTP guidance⁷.

⁷ English Nature (2006) draft Guidance – The Assessment of Regional Spatial Strategies and Sub-regional strategies under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations

The LTP Vision

The vision for transport in West Northamptonshire is:

“West Northamptonshire has moved rapidly to achieve a net zero emissions transport system by 2045. Working together with our communities we have made travel by active modes like walking and cycling the natural first choice for short trips, travel by public transport has become increasingly attractive and accessible, and communities are less dependent on private cars. Our transport system is both safer and cleaner, benefitting our health and the environment, and supporting the access needs of everyone in our community to foster social inclusion and wellbeing. More resilient infrastructure and services increase opportunities for people to live their best lives by facilitating vibrant town and local centres, and a thriving local economy.”

Overarching Strategy

The overarching strategy for transport in West Northamptonshire is:

- Embodying principles of sustainability – integrating economic, social and environmental goals rather than solely focussing on a single aim.
- Setting a vision for a future West Northamptonshire and working out how we get there, rather than assuming that past trends simply determine our future.
- Understanding the relationship between travel and accessibility with: spatial planning (e.g. Local Plan) of where housing, jobs, schools and other key services are provided; and digital connectivity (being able to access work, education and services remotely).
- Integrating different forms of travel – providing for safe, seamless, door-to-door journeys and providing a choice of travel options that are attractive, affordable, healthier alternatives to driving.
- Designing and delivering interventions and policies in collaboration with local communities and key stakeholders – planning for people and places and ensuring we really get the local context and the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.
- Preparing for the ‘new’ and the ‘uncertain’, by making sure the travel needs of our existing communities are supported and that we look after and make best use of our existing infrastructure and assets, so that new developments and supporting services and infrastructure can be integrated and enhance local areas.

Objectives

The objectives for of the LTP are grouped under three overarching themes:

CONNECTING PEOPLE BETTER

- **Objective 1:** Improve the accessibility of the public transport, walking and cycling networks, to promote a system that is fair and provides attractive travel alternatives to key destinations.
- **Objective 2:** Create thriving communities through local investment in a more resilient transport network, services and the public realm in urban and rural towns and villages across West Northamptonshire.

SHAPING HEALTHIER PLACES

- **Objective 3:** Improving road safety and reducing pollution, while expanding active travel networks and supporting infrastructure that facilitates public health outcomes.
- **Objective 4:** Enhance local environments and further reduce carbon emissions from transport by investing in low carbon and electric modes, without compromising local heritage.

MOBILITY ENABLING PROSPERITY

- **Objective 5:** Reducing inequalities through better transport connections to key employment and education opportunities, to support local socio-economic growth.
- **Objective 6:** Maximise the benefits to communities and businesses through use of technology and innovation.

The LTP consists of 16 policies and recommends a total of 135 interventions. 64 of these interventions are considered as 'short term' (to be undertaken by 2030). The policies and short term interventions are listed within the following LTP chapters:

- Connecting people better;
- Shaping healthier places; and
- Mobility enabling prosperity.

2. Approach to the HRA

The HRA Process

HRA is a staged process as shown in Figure 1 which sets out the overall HRA process in accordance with Communities and Local Government draft guidance⁸. Current best practice demonstrates that a blurring of the tasks in an iterative manner is the most effective method of assessing a plan as it develops.

Figure 1: The HRA Process

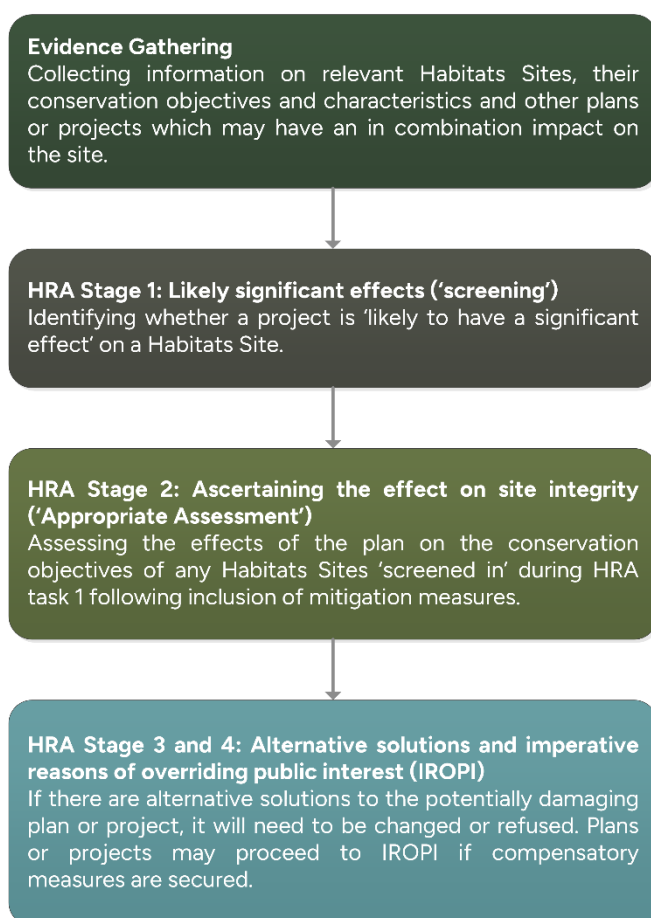


Figure 1 presents four linked boxes that describe the sequential key stages of the HRA process. The first box describes the process of evidence gathering. Each box is linked to the next by a one-way arrow. The second box describes the process for HRA Stage 1 (screening). The third box describes the process for HRA Stage 2 (Appropriate Assessment). The fourth box describes the process for HRA Stages 3 and 4 (IROPI).

⁸ English Nature (2006) draft Guidance – The Assessment of Regional Spatial Strategies and Sub-regional strategies under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations

The HRA process requires close working with Natural England in order to agree the process and outcomes and, if necessary, obtain information and agree mitigation proposals.

During screening, the 'Precautionary Principle' needs to be applied: if an effect cannot be ruled out based on objective information, it has been reported as "likely" or not possible to rule out. Furthermore, a judgement⁹ by the Court of Justice of the European Union (People Over Wind) ruled that Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive¹⁰ must be interpreted as meaning that mitigation measures (referred to in the judgment as measures which are intended to avoid or reduce effects on Habitats Sites) should be assessed within the framework of an AA and that it is not permissible to take account of measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the plan or project on a Habitats Site at the screening stage. The screening exercise must therefore consider elements of the plan without any proposed mitigation. Measures that reduce impacts on Habitats Sites but form an integral part of the plan and would have been provided even if there were no LSE on Habitats Sites, can still be included at the screening stage¹¹.

The following guidance has been referred to in undertaking the HRA to date:

- Scottish Natural Heritage (January 2015) Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Plans Guidance For Plan-Making Bodies In Scotland Version 3.0 originally prepared by David Tyldesley and Associates;
- Department for Communities and Local Government (August 2006) Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment. Guidance for Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents. Draft;
- European Commission (September 2021). Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;
- Government Guidance (July 2019) – Appropriate Assessment: Guidance on the use of Habitats Regulations (www.gov.uk/guidance/appropriate-assessment);
- Natural England (April, 2019). Habitats Regulations Assessment. Natural England Standard; and
- Tyldesley, D., and Chapman, C. (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, June 2024 editions UK:DTA Publications Limited.

⁹ <http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?docid=200970&doclang=EN>

¹⁰ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.

¹¹ Simpson, P. (2018) People Over Wind. Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook Journal. Issue 10. Page 25.

Evidence Gathering

The first task in undertaking HRA is to confirm the Habitats Sites to be considered and to collate information about those sites. Current guidance¹² suggests that the following Habitats Sites be included in the scope of assessment:

- All sites within the LTP boundary; and
- Other sites beyond the LTP boundary shown to be linked to activities resulting from the LTP through a potential 'pathway'¹³.

Pathways are routes by which a change in activity within the new West Northamptonshire LTP can lead to an effect upon a Habitats Site.

The LTP boundary is the same as the West Northamptonshire Council boundary. There is one Habitats Site which lies partly within the Council boundary which is proposed to be included within the scope of the assessment. This is:

- Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA).

In terms of other Habitats Sites outside of the LTP boundary, the following 12 sites have been identified which have the potential to be linked by an impact pathway to activities generated by the LTP:

- Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar;
- Chiltern Beechwoods SAC;
- Portholme SAC;
- Woodwalton Fen (Ramsar);
- Orton Pit SAC;
- Barnack Hills & Holes SAC;
- Ensor's Pools SAC;
- Oxford Meadows SAC;
- Cothill Fen SAC;
- Aston Rowant SAC; and
- Nene Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar.

¹² Scottish Natural Heritage (January 2015) Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Plans Guidance for Plan-Making Bodies in Scotland Version 3.0 – in the absence of a similar Government publication for HRA of plans in England, this guidance document provides useful and relevant guidance.

¹³ Pathways are routes by which a change in activity within the Local Plan Area can lead to an effect upon a European site.

Natural England was consulted on 5th April 2024, requesting confirmation that the above listed Habitats Sites should be considered in the HRA. A response was received from Natural England on 16th April 2024. The response from Natural England can be found in Appendix B. In their response, Natural England agreed with the list of sites proposed and also suggested that the following additional site should be considered at the early stages of the assessment, in relation to traffic/construction related impacts:

- Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC.

This site has therefore also been considered within the scope of the HRA, particularly in relation to the potential for the SAC to be affected by changes in road traffic and development resulting from the new West Northamptonshire LTP.

Figure 2 overleaf highlights the location of each Habitats Site in relation to the planning authority boundary for West Northamptonshire.

The Habitats Sites vulnerabilities and factors affecting their integrity are presented within the tables of information in Appendix A.

Figure 2: Habitats Sites with a Potential Impact Pathway with the LTP

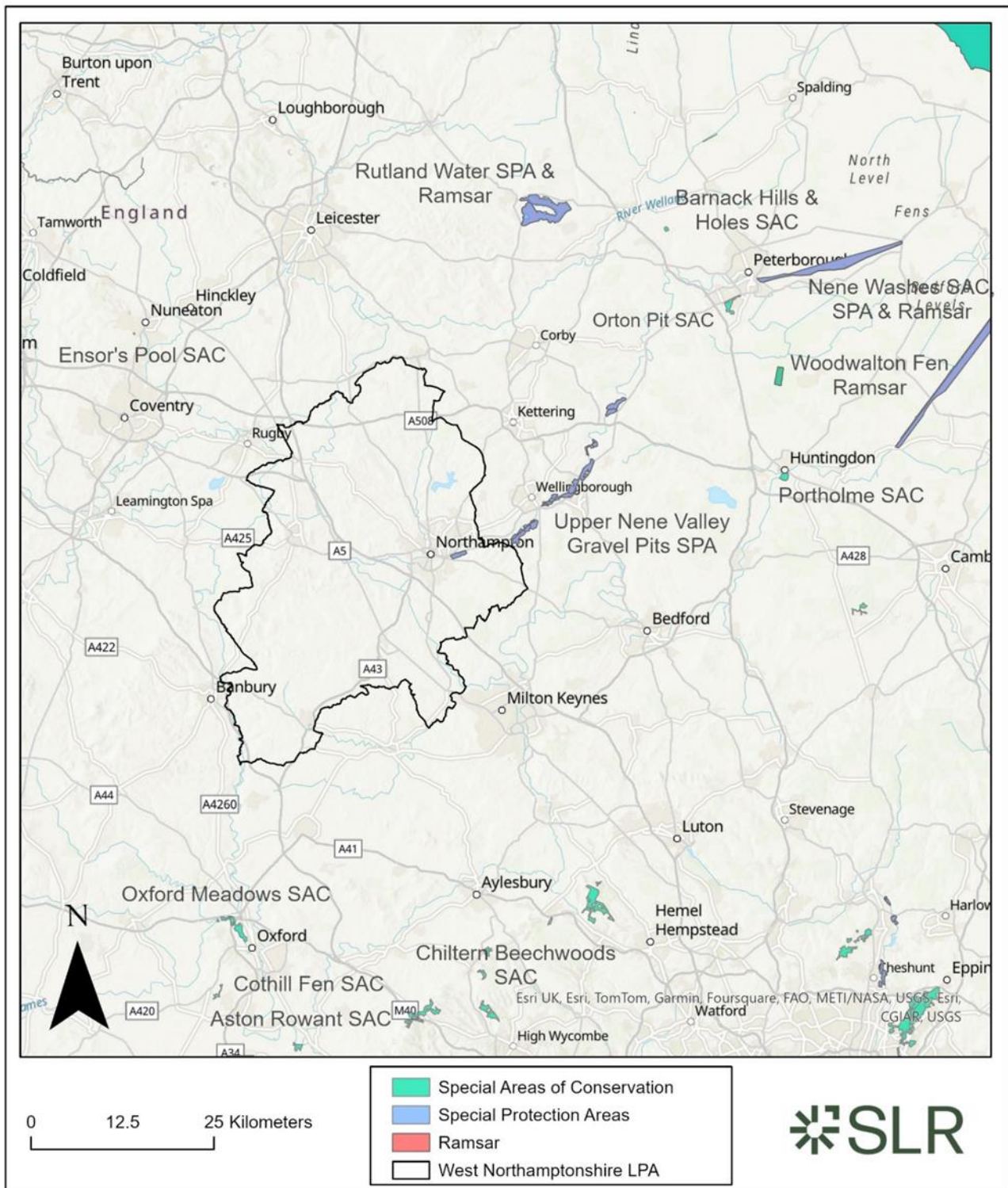


Figure 2 presents a map of the study area, including the West Northamptonshire boundary (shown on the map by a black line) and relevant Habitat Sites (Special Areas of Conservation are presented in green, Special Protection Areas are presented in blue and Ramsar sites are presented in red).

HRA Task 1: Screening

HRA screening should consider the potential effects both of the plan itself and the plan in combination with other plans or projects. The Competent Authority (WNC) is required to undertake a screening exercise to determine whether a plan covered by the Regulations is likely to have significant effects on a Habitats site or species, and therefore whether a full HRA is required. The HRA screening exercise within Section 3 of this HRA Report provides a screening determination on behalf of WNC. Screening has considered whether the key factors affecting the integrity and objectives to ensure favourable condition status of each Habitats Site are likely to be significantly affected by the new West Northamptonshire LTP either alone or in combination with other plans and strategies. In accordance with latest available guidance¹⁴, a set of screening criteria was developed which are presented in Table 2-1. These criteria were used to screen policies within the draft LTP.

Table 2-1: Screening Criteria

| Screening category | Description | Screening outcome |
|--------------------|--|--|
| A | General statement of policy / general aspiration | Screened out |
| B | Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability / sustainability of proposals | Screened out |
| C | Proposal referred to but not proposed by the plan | Screened out |
| D | General plan-wide environmental protection /site safeguarding / threshold policies | Screened out |
| E | Policies or proposals which steer change in such a way as to protect Habitats Sites from adverse effects. | Screened out |
| F | Policy that cannot lead to development or other change. | Screened out |
| G | Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site. | Screened out |
| H | Policy or proposal the (actual or theoretical) effects of which cannot undermine the conservation objectives (either alone or in combination with other aspects of this or other plans or projects). | Screened out |
| I | Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone. | Screened in |
| J | Policy or proposal with an effect on a site but unlikely to be significant alone, so need to check for likely significant effects in-combination. | Dependent on in-combination test |
| K | Policy or proposal unlikely to have a significant effect either alone or in-combination. | Screened out after the in-combination test |
| L | Policy or proposal which might be likely to have a significant effect in-combination. | Screened in after the in-combination test |
| M | Bespoke area, site or case-specific policies or proposals intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on a Habitats Site. | Screened in |

¹⁴ Scottish Natural Heritage (January 2015) Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Plans Guidance For Plan-Making Bodies In Scotland Version 3.0 originally prepared by David Tyldesley and Associates

A draft of the new LTP was provided to the consultant team on 2 May 2024 with updated versions subsequently provided on 21 June 2024 and 18 July 2024. The draft of the new LTP was subjected to HRA screening and updated in line with the updated versions. Clarifications were sought from the team at Steer to identify any further information available on the interventions included within the draft LTP. Each of the 16 policies were screened, followed by the 64 short term interventions. The policies are high level policy statements and do not include details of where actions or changes may take place. In most cases, the interventions provide more details of where changes may occur, which has informed screening. However, some interventions are also high level and may identify further studies and strategies to be undertaken.

Following the provision of the final draft of the new LTP on 18 July 2024, minor wording changes to policy measures and interventions were made. Two interventions were added to the LTP as a result of changes to existing interventions. These interventions have been screened and added to the screening table for the LTP interventions in Appendix C. These interventions include:

- LCWIP Interventions in Daventry (WNCLTPLL0415)
- Northampton Future Mass Transit Options Assessment (WNCLTPLL0387)

Three interventions that had previously been screened based on earlier drafts were removed also from the LTP, to be deferred for later study. These interventions include:

- A43 Dualling between Holcot/Sywell junction and Kettering (beyond Phase 3) (WNCLTPLL0065);
- Northampton Northern Orbital (WNCLTPLL0258); and
- A45 Wootton Interchange (WNCLTPLL0308).

An excel screening document was used to screen the policies and interventions within the LTP against the potential pressures / impact pathways identified in Appendix A. The potential impacts that have been considered are:

- Habitat loss and fragmentation;
- Physical habitat damage;
- Spread of disease and Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS);
- Water pollution due to hydrological connectivity;
- Alterations to hydrological regime due to increased amounts of hard standing;
- Air pollution;
- Loss of supporting habitats, i.e. Functionally Linked Land (FLL);
- Fragmentation of supporting habitats, i.e. FLL;
- Increases in light pollution through construction, roads, railway, or introducing new paths with lighting;
- Increased recreational pressure due to improved access; and
- Increased disturbance through noise pollution.

Impact pathways have been considered when determining if a policy or intervention has potential to lead to a significant effect. If no impact pathway is identified, then LSEs can be excluded and no further in-combination assessment is required. If one or more pathways are identified, then LSEs cannot be excluded, and the policy or intervention is screened in for further assessment.

Task 2: Appropriate Assessment

Where the potential for LSEs cannot be excluded, an AA of the implications of the plan is required. The potential for adverse effects and how they can be mitigated need to be considered within the AA stage.

Following consultation on the draft new West Northamptonshire LTP, modifications made by WNC will be screened and a further update to the HRA Report will be prepared if necessary.

Assessment Limitations

The West Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan is a strategic document containing policy considerations developed locally but also informed by other strategies and policies, such as those within the England's Economic Regional Transport Plan and its subsequent Connectivity Studies. The Local Transport Plan also contains an implementation plan containing interventions that will or may be led by West Northamptonshire Council, Network Rail and National Highways among others. Some interventions will also be delivered in partnership with bus operators, train operating companies, freight operating companies and Sustrans. Only the interventions being led by West Northamptonshire Council are in their direct control. All other interventions will be put forward, designed and developed by third parties, with West Northamptonshire Council having differing degrees of influence. This creates some constraints on the ability of West Northamptonshire Council to put in place avoidance and mitigation measures for any potential adverse effects identified as part of the HRA.

The interventions contained within the draft Local Transport Plan are at varying stages of development. As such, interventions closer to being delivered 'on the ground' are more certain to be implemented and more detail exists to inform their assessment. Other interventions in earlier study or initial design stages are less certain to be implemented within the plan period. Interventions at earlier stages of development are likely to have less exact or detailed information on routes, locations or activities involved. This uncertainty has also been reflected within the HRA screening and in some cases, assumptions have been made about what an intervention could involve.

3. Screening of West Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan Policies

Introduction

The LTP strategy and interventions have been screened for LSEs on the relevant Habitats Sites.

Screening has considered the potential ways in which the draft West Northamptonshire LTP could have an effect on Habitats Sites. The policies within the LTP strategy have been screened and potential impact pathways considered. Where a potential impact pathway and LSE could exist, or where there is uncertainty, a policy would be screened in for further consideration. A screening table for the LTP policies can be found in Appendix C.

Following policy screening, the interventions set out within the draft LTP Implementation Plan were screened. The available information about each intervention, including any locationally specific information, timing and progress (whether it will be studied, designed or delivered during the plan period) and the nature of any construction development required to implement it, has been considered in the screening process. Where little information is available about an intervention, assumptions have been made for ten of the interventions. Where there is too much uncertainty about an intervention and there is potential for an impact pathway with a designated site, the precautionary principle has been followed and an LSE has been identified. A screening table for the LTP interventions can also be found in Appendix C.

Screening Findings

One policy has been screened in, Policy 6: Active Travel Network, as this could increase recreational pressure on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA.

No other LSEs have been identified in relation to the draft LTP policies. Most of the draft policies have been screened out on the basis that they are a general statement of policy / general aspiration or that it could not have any conceivable effect on a site.

A number of potential impacts have been identified, which are outlined below:

- Development in areas with hydrological connectivity leading to water pollution;
- Development which potentially increases the amount of hard standing and affects the hydrological regime;
- Development leading to potential loss of supporting habitats, i.e. Functionally Linked Land (FLL);
- Development leading to potential fragmentation of supporting habitats, i.e. FLL;
- Increases in light pollution through construction, roads, railway, or introducing new paths with lighting;
- Increased recreational pressure due to improved access; and
- Increased disturbance through noise pollution.

The conclusions of the interventions screening are that the following Habitats Sites can be screened out from any further consideration because no impact pathways have been identified resulting from the draft new West Northamptonshire LTP:

- **Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar:** no impact pathways have been found in relation to the interventions (air pollution, hydrology, public access/disturbance, loss of or fragmentation of FLL, INNS);
- **Chiltern Beechwoods SAC:** no impact pathways have been found in relation to the interventions (air pollution, light pollution, hydrology, loss of or fragmentation of FLL, public access/disturbance, INNS, or disease);
- **Portholme SAC:** no impact pathways have been found in relation to the interventions (air pollution, hydrology, loss of or fragmentation of FLL);
- **Woodwalton Fen Ramsar site:** no impact pathways have been found in relation to the interventions (air pollution, or hydrology);
- **Orton Pit SAC:** no impact pathways have been found in relation to the interventions (air pollution, hydrological impact, loss of or fragmentation of FLL, or disease);
- **Barnack Hills & Holes SAC:** no impact pathways have been found in relation to the interventions (air pollution, public access/disturbance, or loss of or fragmentation of FLL);
- **Ensor's Pools SAC:** no impact pathways have been found in relation to the interventions (air pollution, hydrology, or public access/disturbance);
- **Oxford Meadows SAC:** no impact pathways have been found in relation to the interventions (air pollution, hydrology, public access/disturbance, or INNS);
- **Cothill Fen SAC:** no impact pathways have been found in relation to the interventions (air pollution, hydrology, public access/disturbance, or loss of or fragmentation of FLL);
- **Aston Rowant SAC:** no impact pathways have been found in relation to the interventions and any site sensitivities (air pollution, public access/disturbance, hydrology, or disease);
- **Eversden and Wimpole SAC:** no impact pathways have been found in relation to the interventions and any site sensitivities (air pollution, public access/disturbance, or hydrology).

The screening exercise has identified LSEs in relation to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA from the draft LTP alone in relation to all of the potential impacts noted above. The screening exercise has also identified the potential for the draft LTP in combination to result in LSEs on the Nene Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar in relation to:

- Development which potentially increases the amount of hard standing and affects the hydrological regime.

A summary of the screening findings for policies and interventions that have been screened in is provided in Table 3-1 over the page. As screening has identified LSEs it means that the next stage of the HRA, AA, needs to be undertaken.

Table 3-1: Summary of LSEs Identified in relation to Policies and Interventions

| Policy or Intervention | Reason for screening in | Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA | Nene Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Policy 6: Active Travel Network | Providing greater access to green spaces and water could increase recreational pressure. | ✓ | X |
| New Railway Station serving South Northampton (WNCLTPLL0225) | Unknown location. Development could be in hydrological connectivity with the Nene Catchment. Risk of water pollution and changes to water levels. Could result in loss of supporting sites to the SPA. | ✓ | ✓ |
| A43 Phase 3 Dualling Northampton to Holcot/Sywell junction (WNCLTPLL0044) | Unclear how close to the SPA development could be. Development could be in hydrological connectivity with the Nene Catchment. Risk of water pollution and changes to water levels. Potential disturbance from construction. | ✓ | ✓ |
| A45 Junction upgrades at the Brackmills and Great Billing Interchanges (WNCLTPLL0309) | Development could be in hydrological connectivity with the Nene Catchment. Risk of water pollution and changes to water levels. Potential disturbance from construction. | ✓ | ✓ |
| A45 Queen Eleanor Interchange (WNCLTPLL0313) | Development could be in hydrological connectivity with the Nene Catchment. Risk of water pollution and changes to water levels. Potential disturbance from construction. | ✓ | ✓ |
| Inter-Urban Active Travel Network (complements LCWIP interventions in named urban areas) – WNCLTPLL01241 | Development could be in hydrological connectivity with the Nene Catchment. Potential development in Nene Valley between Peterborough and Northampton. Risk of light pollution, water pollution and increasing recreational pressure. | ✓ | ✓ |
| New Active Travel Route between Wellingborough and Northampton (WNCLTPLL0088) | Potential development in Nene Valley. Development could be in hydrological connectivity with the Nene Catchment. Risk of light pollution, water pollution and increasing recreational pressure. | ✓ | ✓ |

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| Policy or Intervention | Reason for screening in | Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA | Nene Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Northamptonshire Mass Rapid Transport Scheme (WNCLTPLL0068) | Development could be in hydrological connectivity with the Nene Catchment. Risk of water pollution and changes to water levels, lighting, disturbance and fragmentation of supporting habitats. Could result in loss of supporting sites to the SPA. | ✓ | ✓ |
| Abington Area Active Travel scheme (WNCLTPLL0265) | Risk of light pollution and increasing recreational pressure. | ✓ | X |
| Electric bus fleet and infrastructure expansion (WNCLTPLL0282) | Development could be in hydrological connectivity with the Nene Catchment. Risk of water pollution and changes to water levels. | ✓ | ✓ |
| A43 Signal and safety improvements (WNCLTPLL0106) | Unclear how close to the SPA development could be or what it would entail. Development could be in hydrological connectivity with the Nene Catchment. Risk of water pollution and changes to water levels. Potential disturbance from construction. | ✓ | ✓ |
| LCWIP Interventions in Northampton (WNCLTPLL0272) | Potential development in Northampton increasing hard standing in Nene Catchment. Risk of water pollution and changes to water levels. | ✓ | ✓ |
| New Strategic Mobility Hub and Coach Interchange at M1 J15 (WNCLTPLL0267) | Development could be in hydrological connectivity with the Nene Catchment. Risk of water pollution and changes to water levels. Could result in loss of supporting site | ✓ | ✓ |
| New Strategic Mobility Hub at Northampton East Park and Ride (WNCLTPLL0385) | Unknown location. Development could be in hydrological connectivity with the Nene Catchment. Risk of water pollution and changes to water levels. Could result in loss of supporting sites to the SPA and functionally connected habitats. Could affect openness of surrounding land. | ✓ | ✓ |
| Hydrogen Vehicle Assistance Programme (WNCLTPLL0196) | Development could be in hydrological connectivity with the Nene Catchment. Risk of water pollution and changes to water levels. | ✓ | ✓ |

Potential In Combination Effects

The screening exercise has identified that the draft LTP could have potential to affect the Nene Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar in combination only (such as in combination with other development driven by a different plan or resulting from projects). The screening exercise also identified a potential for the draft LTP to affect the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA alone but it is necessary to consider whether other plans and projects could result in an in combination effect on Habitats Sites with the LTP on both sites. Table 3-2 below sets out plans which have so far been identified to have potential for in combination effects with the new West Northamptonshire LTP.

Table 3-2: Other Relevant Plans

| Plan Name | Plan Description |
|---|--|
| West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) and the Part 2 Local Plans (2014) ¹ and emerging West Northamptonshire Local Plan (to 2041) ² | <p>The Core Strategy is West Northamptonshire Council's central planning policy document for the for the former Daventry, Northampton and South Northamptonshire areas. It sets out the long-term spatial vision for West Northamptonshire and will guide development and change up to 2029. The emerging new Local Plan- to be adopted in 2025- will provide policies to shape places, plan, manage growth and guide development in West Northamptonshire until 2041.</p> <p>The LTP and IIA will need to reflect planned growth as well as emerging policy, including environmental policies. Growth will lead to development which could combine with the LSEs identified within the screening of the new LTP. This requires further consideration in the AA.</p> |
| Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2017) ³ | <p>The Minerals and Waste Local Plan aims to develop a 'network of well designed urban-focused waste management facilities and sensitively worked and restored mineral extraction sites' in order to support growth and development. The policies map shows that waste sites have been allocated in central Northampton, Daventry, Wellingborough, and Rushen.</p> <p>Development of new waste sites has the potential to combine with the LSEs identified within the screening of the new LTP. This requires further consideration in the AA.</p> |

4. Summary and Conclusions

Screening Results

The screening exercise has identified the potential for the draft West Northamptonshire LTP alone to result in LSEs on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA in relation to:

- Development in areas with hydrological connectivity leading to water pollution;
- Development which potentially increases the amount of hard standing and affects the hydrological regime
- Development leading to potential loss of supporting habitats, i.e. Functionally Linked Land (FLL);
- Development leading to potential fragmentation of supporting habitats, i.e. FLL;
- Increases in light pollution through construction, roads, railway, or introducing new paths with lighting;
- Increased recreational pressure due to improved access; and
- Increased disturbance through noise pollution.

The screening exercise has identified the potential for the draft West Northamptonshire LTP in combination to result in LSEs on the Nene Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar in relation to:

- Development which potentially increases the amount of hard standing and affects the hydrological regime.

As there is potential for the integrity of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and the Nene Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar to be affected by the interventions within the draft new West Northamptonshire Local Plan, the next stage of the HRA, AA, therefore needs to be undertaken. The AA will consider any mitigation provided by the LTP and elsewhere and will consider potential adverse effects from changes to hydrology, increased recreational pressure, increased disturbance, increased light pollution, loss and fragmentation of FLL. The AA will also consider the potential for in combination effects with other plans and projects.

5. Next Steps

The findings of the HRA screening will be integrated into the parallel Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA).

Once the AA is complete, WNC will consider any mitigation put forward within the HRA and may make changes to the draft new LTP. The ISA will also be updated. Consultation on the draft new LTP will take place and the HRA Report will accompany it along with the ISA Report. Natural England will be consulted on the HRA Report to seek their agreement and feedback.

Appendix A – Information about Habitats Sites

Tables A.1-A.12 provide key information about Habitats Sites. Site sensitivities relevant to the LTP are indicated in bold.

Table A.1: Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA

| Site Name | Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA (UK9020296) |
|---|--|
| Location with regards to the Plan Area | Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA is located within the county of West Northamptonshire and extends 30 km northeast, outside of the Plan Area. |
| Description of the Site | The site consists of a chain of exhausted sand and gravel pits extending for approximately 35km along the alluvial deposits of the River Nene in Northamptonshire. The pits form an extensive series of shallow and open waters which occur in association with a wide habitat including reed swamp, marsh, wet ditches, rough grassland and scattered woodland. |
| Reason(s) for designation: | <p>SPA:¹⁵</p> <p>Qualifying individual species listed in Annex I of the Wild Birds Directive (Article 4.1). During the non-breeding season the SPA regularly supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Bittern (<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>) – in 2011 the site represented at least 2.0% of the total British wintering population. When present in the SPA, Bitterns tend to roost at 3 main locations (Titchmarsh, Grendon, and Stanwick) • Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) – in 2011 the site represented at least 2.3% of the NW European population. Golden Plover use the SPA for roosting and loafing, favouring three main roost locations at Stanwick, Earls Barton (Summer Leys) and Northamptonshire Washlands. <p>Qualifying individual species not listed in Annex I of the Wild Birds Directive (Article 4.1). During the non-breeding season the SPA regularly supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>)- in 2011 the site represented at least 2.0% of the NW European population. Birds are distributed across evenly across the SPA and will be feeding on lakes which have a good supply of their preferred food sources – aquatic plants, seeds and invertebrates. <p>Qualifying assemblage of species (Article 4.2). During the non-breeding season the SPA regularly supports:</p> <p>An assemblage of waterfowl species numbering more than 20,000 birds, including Wigeon (<i>Anas Penelope</i>), Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>), Northern Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>), Pochard (<i>Aythya farina</i>), Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>), Great-crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>), Mute Swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>), Great cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>), Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>), and Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>).</p> |
| Component SSSI Sites | Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SSSI |

¹⁵ European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features. Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protected Area (SPA) [European Site Conservation Objectives for Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA - UK9020296 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](http://naturalengland.org.uk)

| Site Name | Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA (UK9020296) |
|---|--|
| Conservation Objectives¹⁶ | <p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely; • The population of each of the qualifying features; and • The distribution of the qualifying features within the site. <p>Supplementary advice highlights that these conservation objectives were identified for the following reasons¹⁷:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain population abundance and assemblage abundance; • Restore the species diversity of the assemblage; • Maintain the extent and distribution of supporting non-breeding habitat; • Maintain concentrations and deposition of air pollutants; • Maintain connectivity with supporting habitats; • Maintain management of conservation measures; • Restoring food availability within supporting habitat; • Maintain the number of open waterbodies of optimal size; • Maintain water quality/quantity and water depth; • Minimising disturbance caused by human activity; • Maintain the extent of wet ditches/pools with suitable profiles; • Maintain an open and unobstructed terrain; • Maintain the cover of scrub-free areas of reed bed; • Maintain areas of arable land and grassland. |
| Site Sensitivities¹⁸ | <p>Natural England data for the site dated December 2014 identified the following pressures associated with the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public access/ disturbance; • Planning permission; • Fisheries: freshwater; and • Change in land management. |

¹⁶ European Site Conservation Objectives for Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA [European Site Conservation Objectives for Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA - UK9020296 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-for-upper-nene-valley-gravel-pits-spa-uk9020296)

¹⁷ European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features for Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA [UK9020296 Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA Published 28 Mar 2024 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-supplementary-advice-on-conserving-and-restoring-site-features-for-upper-nene-valley-gravel-pits-spa-uk9020296)

¹⁸ Site Improvement Plan Nene Upper Valley Gravel Pits [Site Improvement Plan: Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits - SIP254 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/site-improvement-plan-upper-nene-valley-gravel-pits-sip254)

| Site Name | Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA (UK9020296) |
|--|--|
| Potential Pressures/ Impact Pathways with the LTP | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Air pollution;• Light pollution;• Connectivity with supporting habitats;• Maintaining an open and unobstructed terrain;• Hydrological impacts – water levels, hydrological connectivity to these sites, accidental pollution events, and road run off;• Increased levels of disturbance/access;• Potential for habitat loss and fragmentation of functionally linked land; and• Spread of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS). |

Table A.2: Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar

| Rutland Water SPA (UK9008051) and Ramsar Site (UK11062) | |
|--|---|
| Site Name | Rutland Water SPA (UK9008051) and Ramsar Site (UK11062) |
| Location with regards to the Plan Area | Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar is located within the county of Rutland, approximately 24 km northeast of West Northamptonshire. |
| Description of the Site | Rutland Water Ramsar site covers an area of 1,360.34 ha and is entirely overlapped by Rutland Water SPA and SSSI. The site is a large public water supply reservoir constructed in 1975. The reservoir is by area the largest water body in England and by capacity, the second largest. Since 1975, it has developed into a major wetland of international importance for waterbirds which are attracted to the large expanses of open water, lagoons, islands, mudflats, reed swamp, marsh, old meadows, pastures, scrub and mature woodland. |
| Reason(s) for designation: | <p>SPA:¹⁹ Qualifying individual species not listed in Annex I of the Wild Birds Directive (Article 4.1). During the non-breeding season the SPA regularly supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>) <p>Ramsar:²⁰ The information sheet on Ramsar Wetlands states the site qualified under the following criteria:</p> <p>Ramsar Criterion 5: The site supports assemblages of international importance, including waterfowl</p> <p>Ramsar Criterion 6: The site supports species/populations occurring at levels of international importance, including Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>) and Northern Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>). It also includes species/populations for possible future consideration, such as the Mute Swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>).</p> |
| Component SSSI Sites | Rutland Water SSSI |

¹⁹ European Site Conservation Objectives: supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features. Rutland Water Special Protection Area. [European Site Conservation Objectives for Rutland Water SPA - UK9008051 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

²⁰ Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands [untitled \(jncc.gov.uk\)](https://www.jncc.gov.uk)

| Site Name | Rutland Water SPA (UK9008051) and Ramsar Site (UK11062) |
|--|---|
| <p>Conservation Objectives²¹</p> | <p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained/restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining/restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely; • The population of each of the qualifying features; and • The distribution of the qualifying features within the site. <p>Supplementary advice highlights that these conservation objectives were identified for the following reasons²²:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain population abundance; • Maintain the ability of the feature's supporting habitats to adapt or evolve to wider environmental change; • Maintain the extent and distribution of supporting non-breeding habitat; • Maintain concentrations and deposition of air pollutants; • Maintain connectivity with supporting habitats; • Maintain management of conservation measures; • Restoring food availability within supporting habitat; • Maintain the number of open waterbodies of optimal size; • Maintain water quality/quantity and water depth; • Minimising disturbance caused by human activity; • Maintain an open and unobstructed terrain; • Maintain the vegetation characteristics on site. |
| <p>Site Sensitivities²³</p> | <p>Natural England data for the site dated December 2014 identified the following pressures associated with the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water abstraction; • Inappropriate water levels; • Direct impact from 3rd party; • Invasive species; • Water pollution; • Planning permission; • Public access/ disturbance; and • Fisheries: freshwater. |

²¹ European Site Conservation Objectives for Rutland Water Special Protection Area. [European Site Conservation Objectives for Rutland Water SPA - UK9008051 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-for-rutland-water-spa-uk9008051)

²² European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features for Rutland Water SPA [UK9008051 Rutland Water SPA Published 28 Mar 2024 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-supplementary-advice-on-conserving-and-restoring-site-features-for-rutland-water-spa-uk9008051)

²³ Site Improvement Plan Rutland Water [Site Improvement Plan: Rutland Water - SIP208 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/site-improvement-plan-rutland-water-sip208)

| Site Name | Rutland Water SPA (UK9008051) and Ramsar Site (UK11062) |
|--|---|
| Potential Pressures/ Impact Pathways with the LTP | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Air pollution;• Hydrological impacts – water levels, hydrological connectivity to this site, accidental pollution events, and road run off;• Increased levels of disturbance/access;• Maintaining an open and unobstructed terrain;• Connectivity with supporting habitats; and• Spread of INNS. |

Table A.3: Chilterns Beechwoods SAC

| Site Name | Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (UK0012724) |
|--|---|
| Location with regards to the Plan Area | Chilterns Beechwoods SAC is located within Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, and Hertfordshire counties. The nearest point of the SAC to West Northamptonshire is 30km southeast of the county boundary. |
| Description of the Site | The Chilterns Beechwoods SAC is set within the Chilterns National Character Area, an extensively wooded and farmed landscape underlain by chalk bedrock that rises up from the London Basin to form a north-west facing escarpment offering long views over the adjacent vales. It is made up of a number of component woodlands representing a range of semi-natural woodlands in which beech is a prominent or dominant canopy tree. The woodlands are in a variety of landscape settings, from extensive areas of the northern Chilterns scarp slope, to dry valley slopes and moderately sloping areas of the Chilterns plateau. |
| Reason(s) for designation: | <p>SAC:²⁴</p> <p>Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beech forests (<i>Asperulo-Fagetum</i>) ('Beech forests on neutral to rich soils') • Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>). ('Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone') <p>Qualifying species: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it supports important populations of the following species listed in Annex II:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stag beetle (<i>Lucanus cervus</i>) |
| Component SSSI Sites | Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI, Aston Rowant Woods SSSI, Bisham Woods SSSI, Bradenham Woods, Park Wood and the Coppice SSSI, Ellesborough and Kimble Warrens SSSI, Naphill Common SSSI, Hollowhill and Pullingshill Woods SSSI, Tring Woodlands SSSI, Windsor Hill SSSI. |

²⁴ European Site Conservation Objectives: supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features. Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation [European Site Conservation Objectives for Chilterns Beechwoods SAC - UK0012724 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk)

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Conservation Objectives²⁵</p> | <p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <p>The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species; • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely; • The populations of qualifying species; and • The distribution of qualifying species within the site. <p>Supplementary advice highlights that these conservation objectives were identified for the following reasons²⁶:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the extent and distribution of the feature within the site; • Maintain the ability of the feature's supporting habitats to adapt or evolve to wider environmental change; • Maintain the abundance of populations; • Maintain the extent and distribution of supporting habitat; • Maintain the abundance of key structural, influential and/or distinctive species; • Maintain the properties of soils, substrate and nutrient cycling; • Maintain concentrations and deposition of air pollutants; • Maintain management of conservation measures; • Maintain functional connectivity with wider landscape; • Maintain vegetation community composition and structure (canopy cover, dead wood, woodland edge, old growth, open space, age class); • Maintain the extent, quality and spatial configuration of supporting off-site habitat; • Maintain the frequency/cover of undesirable species; • Maintain the pattern of natural vegetation zonations/transitions; • Maintain the potential for sufficient natural regeneration of desirable trees and shrubs; • Maintain the soil structure within and around the root zones of ancient trees; • Maintain at least 3 age classes spread across the average life expectancy of the commonest trees • Maintain natural hydrological processes; |
|--|--|

| Site Name | Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (UK0012724) |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure artificial light is maintained to a level which is unlikely to affect natural phenological cycles and processes. |
| Site Sensitivities²⁷ | <p>Natural England data for the site dated March 2015 identified the following pressures associated with the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forestry and woodland management; • Deer; • Changes in species distribution; • Invasive species; • Disease; • Public access/disturbance; and • Air pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition. |
| Potential Pressures/ Impact Pathways with the LTP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air pollution; • Light pollution; • Hydrological connectivity; • Functional connectivity with wider landscape; • Supporting sites; • Increased levels of disturbance/access; • Spread of disease; and • Spread of INNS. |

²⁵ European Site Conservation Objectives for Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation [European Site Conservation Objectives for Chilterns Beechwoods SAC - UK0012724 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-for-chilterns-beechwoods-sac-uk0012724)

²⁶ European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features for Chilterns Beechwoods SAC [UK0012724 Chilterns Beechwoods SAC Published 28 Mar 2024 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-supplementary-advice-on-conserving-and-restoring-site-features-for-chilterns-beechwoods-sac-uk0012724)

²⁷ Site Improvement Plan Chilterns Beechwoods [Site Improvement Plan: Chilterns Beechwoods - SIP045 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/site-improvement-plan-chilterns-beechwoods-sip045)

Table A.4: Portholme SAC

| Site Name | Portholme Special Area of Conservation (UK0030054) |
|--|--|
| Location with regards to the Plan Area | Portholme SAC is located within the county of Cambridgeshire, 40km to the east of West Northamptonshire. |
| Description of the Site | The site is located in the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands National Character Area (88), adjacent to the River Great Ouse south of Huntingdon and north-west of Godmanchester. The River Great Ouse forms its southern and eastern boundaries, whilst its northern boundary is formed by the Alconbury Brook. A small ditch forms the western boundary. These waterbodies are important for dragonflies (<i>Odonata</i>) in particular the restricted dragonfly <i>Libellula fulva</i> . |
| Reason(s) for designation: | <p>SAC:²⁸</p> <p>Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) |
| Component SSSI Sites | Portholme SSSI |

²⁸ European Site Conservation Objectives: supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features. Portholme Special Area of Conservation [European Site Conservation Objectives for Portholme SAC - UK0030054 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/uk0030054)

| Site Name | Portholme Special Area of Conservation (UK0030054) |
|--|--|
| <p>Conservation Objectives²⁹</p> | <p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats; • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; and • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely. <p>Supplementary advice highlights that these conservation objectives were identified for the following reasons³⁰:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the extent of the feature within the site; • Maintain spatial distribution of the feature within the site; • Maintain the ability of the feature's supporting habitats to adapt or evolve to wider environmental change; • Maintain functional connectivity with wider landscape; • Restore natural hydrological processes to provide the conditions necessary to sustain the feature within the site; • Restore a hydrological regime; • Maintain the abundance of key structural, influential and/or distinctive species; • Maintain soils, substrate and nutrient cycling; • Ensure the component vegetation communities of the feature are referable; • Maintain the pattern of natural vegetation zonations/ transitions; • Maintain the frequency/cover of undesirable species; • Restore water quality and quantity to a standard which provides the necessary conditions to support the feature; • Maintain concentrations and deposition of air pollutants; • Maintain management of conservation measures. |

²⁹ European Site Conservation Objectives for Portholme Special Area of Conservation [European Site Conservation Objectives for Portholme SAC - UK0030054 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-for-portholme-sac-uk0030054)

³⁰ European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features for Portholme SAC [UK0030054 Portholme SAC Published 28 Mar 2024 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-supplementary-advice-on-conserving-and-restoring-site-features-for-portholme-sac-uk0030054)

| Site Name | Portholme Special Area of Conservation (UK0030054) |
|--|--|
| Site Sensitivities ³¹ | Natural England data for the site dated December 2014 identified the following pressures associated with the site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate water levels; and • Water pollution. |
| Potential Pressures/ Impact Pathways with the LTP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air pollution; • Hydrological impacts - accidental pollution events, road run off and hydrological connectivity to this site; • Functional connectivity with wider landscape; and • Supporting sites. |

³¹ Site Improvement Plan Portholme [Site Improvement Plan: Portholme - SIP177 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk)

Table A.5: Woodwalton Fen Ramsar

| Site Name | | Woodwalton Fen Ramsar Site (UK11078) |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| Location with regards to the Plan Area | Woodwalton Fen Ramsar is located within the county of Cambridgeshire, 41km to the northeast of West Northamptonshire. | |
| Description of the Site | The site consists of a range of wetland communities, once characteristic of large areas of the East Anglian fens but now restricted to a number of isolated sites. Due to past management the site now has several types of open fen and swamp communities. There is also a relict area of acid peat, some mixed fen and an important network of ditches. The site supports an appreciable assemblage of wetland plants and invertebrates. | |
| Reason(s) for designation: | <p>Ramsar:³²</p> <p>The information sheet on Ramsar Wetlands states the site qualified under the following criteria:</p> <p>Ramsar Criterion 1:</p> <p>The site is within an area that is one of the remaining parts of East Anglia which has not been drained. The fen is near natural and has developed where peat-digging took place in the 19th century. The site has several types of open fen and swamp communities.</p> <p>Ramsar Criterion 2:</p> <p>The site supports two species of British Red Data Book plants, fen violet (<i>Viola persicifolia</i>) and fen wood-rush (<i>Luzula pallidula</i>). Woodwalton also supports a large number of wetland invertebrates including 20 British Red Data Book species. Aquatic beetles, flies and moths are particularly well represented.</p> | |
| Component SSSI Sites | Woodwalton Fen SSSI | |
| Conservation Objectives | There are no conservation objectives in place for this Ramsar site. | |
| Site Sensitivities ³³ | <p>The following pressures were identified for the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetation succession; • Drainage/reclamation for agriculture; and • Eutrophication. | |
| Potential Pressures/ Impact Pathways with the LTP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air pollution; and • Hydrological impacts - accidental pollution events, road run off and hydrological connectivity to this site. | |

³² Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands [untitled \(jncc.gov.uk\)](#)

³³ Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands- Woodwalton Fen [Woodwalton Fen Final \(ramsar.org\)](#)

Table A.6: Orton Pit SAC

| Site Name | Orton Pit Special Area of Conservation (UK0030053) |
|--|---|
| Location with regards to the Plan Area | Orton Pit SAC is located within the county of Cambridgeshire, 40km to the northeast of West Northamptonshire. |
| Description of the Site | The site was created by workings from the brick industry in Peterborough. Clay extraction occurred from the 1940's to 1990's with the resulting workings forming a series of linear ridge and furrows which have developed into a network of ponds and associated habitats that contain a large population of great crested newts (<i>Triturus cristatus</i>) and stoneworts (<i>Chara spp</i>). The ponds are at various successional stages, and there is associated surrounding habitat consisting of grassland, scrub and woodland. |
| Reason(s) for designation: | <p>SAC³⁴:</p> <p>Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara spp</i>. ('Calcium rich nutrient poor lakes, lochs and pools'). <p>Qualifying species: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it supports important populations of the following species listed in Annex II:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great crested newt (<i>Triturus cristatus</i>) |
| Component SSSI Sites | Orton Pits SSSI |

³⁴ European Site Conservation Objectives: supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features. Orton Pit Special Area of Conservation [European Site Conservation Objectives for Orton Pit SAC - UK0030053 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/conservation-objectives/orton-pit-sac-uk0030053)

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Conservation Objectives³⁵</p> | <p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species; • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species; • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely; • The populations of qualifying species; and • The distribution of qualifying species within the site. <p>Supplementary advice highlights that these conservation objectives were identified for the following reasons³⁶:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the extent of the feature within the site; • Maintain fisheries; • Minimise invasive, non-native and/or introduced species; • Maintain the abundance of key structural, influential and/or distinctive species; • Maintain macrophyte community structure; • Maintain the character of the shoreline and the substrate of ponds; • Maintain concentrations and deposition of air pollutants; • Maintain the lack of connectivity of the water body to other water bodies; • Maintain natural hydrological processes; • Maintain the natural sediment load; • Maintain the extent, quality and spatial configuration of supporting off-site habitat; • Maintain water quality (acidity, algae, dissolved oxygen, nitrate, phosphate) and transparency; • Maintain the distribution and continuity of supporting habitat; • Maintain the presence and permanence of ponds; • Maintain the ability of the feature's supporting habitats to adapt or evolve to wider environmental change; • Maintain soils, substrate and nutrient cycling; • Restore water quality and quantity to a standard which provides the necessary conditions to support the feature; |
|--|--|

| Site Name | Orton Pit Special Area of Conservation (UK0030053) |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain management of conservation measures. |
| Site Sensitivities³⁷ | <p>Natural England data for the site dated December 2014 identified the following pressures associated with the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predation; • Inappropriate scrub control; • Inappropriate weed control; • Direct impact from 3rd party; and • Disease. |
| Potential Pressures/ Impact Pathways with the LTP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air pollution; • Spread of disease; • Supporting off-site habitat and • Hydrological impacts - accidental pollution events, road run off and hydrological connectivity to this site. |

³⁵ European Site Conservation Objectives for Orton Pit Special Area of Conservation [European Site Conservation Objectives for Orton Pit SAC - UK0030053 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-for-orton-pit-sac-uk0030053)

³⁶ European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features for Orton Pit SAC [UK0030053 Orton Pit SAC Published 28 Mar 2024 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-supplementary-advice-on-conserving-and-restoring-site-features-for-orton-pit-sac-uk0030053)

³⁷ Site Improvement Plan Orton Pit [Site Improvement Plan: Orton Pit - SIP159 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/site-improvement-plan-orton-pit-sip159)

Table A.7: Barnack Hills & Holes SAC

| Site Name | Barnack Hills & Holes Special Area of Conservation (UK0030031) |
|--|---|
| Location with regards to the Plan Area | Barnack Hills & Holes SAC is located within the county of Cambridgeshire, 37km to the northeast of West Northamptonshire. |
| Description of the Site | The site lies on the gently sloping plateau between the river valleys of the Nene and Welland at an elevation of 40m, within the Rockingham Forest National Character Area (NCA Profile 092). The underlying geology of the site consists entirely of Lower Lincolnshire Limestone, an Oolitic Limestone laid down in shallow subtropical seas during Jurassic times some 175 million years ago. The surface layers are much modified by former quarrying activity, with loose rubble of limestone spoil laying over the parent rock to a depth of 7m or more. Studies indicate typical soil pH values from 8.1 to 9.7 (very alkaline). |
| Reason(s) for designation: | <p>SAC:³⁸ Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) ('Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone, including important orchid sites')* priority feature |
| Component SSSI Sites | Barnack Hills & Holes SSSI |
| Conservation Objectives ³⁹ | <p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats; The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; and The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely. <p>Supplementary advice highlights that these conservation objectives were identified for the following reasons⁴⁰:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the extent of the feature within the site; Maintain spatial distribution of the feature within the site; Maintain the ability of the feature's supporting habitats to adapt or evolve to wider environmental change; Maintain functional connectivity with wider landscape; Maintain the abundance of key structural, influential and/or distinctive species; Maintain soils, substrate and nutrient cycling; Ensure the component vegetation communities of the feature are referable; Maintain the pattern of natural vegetation zonations/ transitions; Maintain the frequency/cover of undesirable species; Maintain concentrations and deposition of air pollutants; |

³⁸ European Site Conservation Objectives: supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features. Barnack Hills and Holes Special Area of Conservation [European Site Conservation Objectives for Barnack Hills & Holes SAC - UK0030031 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-for-barnack-hills-and-holes-sac-uk0030031)

³⁹ European Site Conservation Objectives for Barnack Hills and Holes Special Area of Conservation [European Site Conservation Objectives for Barnack Hills & Holes SAC - UK0030031 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-for-barnack-hills-and-holes-sac-uk0030031)

⁴⁰ European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features for Barnack Hills and Holes SAC [UK0030031 Barnack Hills & Holes SAC Published 28 Mar 2024 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-for-barnack-hills-and-holes-sac-uk0030031)

| Site Name | Barnack Hills & Holes Special Area of Conservation (UK0030031) |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain management of conservation measures. |
| Site Sensitivities⁴¹ | <p>Natural England data for the site dated November 2014 identified the following pressures associated with the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in species distribution; • Public access/disturbance; and • Air pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition. |
| Potential Pressures/ Impact Pathways with the LTP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air pollution; • Functional connectivity with wider landscape; and • Increased levels of disturbance/access. |

⁴¹ Site Improvement Plan Barnack Hills and Holes [Site Improvement Plan: Barnack Hills & Holes - SIP009 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

Table A.8: Ensor's Pool SAC

| Site Name | Ensor's Pool Special Area of Conservation (UK0012646) |
|--|--|
| Location with regards to the Plan Area | Ensor's Pool SAC is located within the county of Warwickshire, 23km to the northwest of West Northamptonshire. |
| Description of the Site | Ensor's Pool lies on the western edge of Nuneaton in the north of Warwickshire and formed in an abandoned clay pit. It is about 220 metres long, 50 metres wide with an average depth of eight metres and is fed by groundwater. The pool overlies Etruria Marl which was extracted for brickmaking earlier this century. |
| Reason(s) for designation | SAC: ⁴² Qualifying species: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it supports important populations of the following species listed in Annex II: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>) |
| Component SSSI Sites | Ensor's Pool SSSI |
| Conservation Objectives ⁴³ | Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species; The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species; The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely; The populations of qualifying species; and The distribution of qualifying species within the site. Supplementary advice highlights that these conservation objectives were identified for the following reasons ⁴⁴ : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure human activities within or around the site do not pose a significant risk; Maintain the frequency/cover of undesirable species; Maintain the distribution and extent of supporting habitat; Maintain the abundance of key structural, influential and/or distinctive species; Maintain the ability of the feature's supporting habitats to adapt or evolve to wider environmental change; Maintain water pH, quality and temperature; Maintain calcium, oxygen, nitrogen and ammonia levels; Maintain the current extent and diversity of shoreline refuges associated with the water body; Maintain management of conservation measures. |

⁴² European Site Conservation Objectives: supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features. Ensor's Pool Special Area of Conservation [European Site Conservation Objectives for Ensor's Pool SAC - UK0012646 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk)

⁴³ European Site Conservation Objectives for Ensor's Pool Special Area of Conservation [European Site Conservation Objectives for Ensor's Pool SAC - UK0012646 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk)

⁴⁴ European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features for Ensor's Pool SAC [UK0012646 Ensor's Pool SAC Published 28 Mar 2024 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk)

| Site Name | Ensor's Pool Special Area of Conservation (UK0012646) |
|--|---|
| Site Sensitivities⁴⁵ | Natural England data for the site dated November 2014 identified the following pressures associated with the site: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes in species distribution. |
| Potential Pressures/ Impact Pathways with the LTP | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Air pollution;• Hydrological impacts - accidental pollution events, road run off and hydrological connectivity to this site; and• Increased levels of disturbance/access. |

⁴⁵ Site Improvement Plan Ensor's Pool [Site Improvement Plan: Ensor's Pool - SIP075 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Information-and-Data/Information-and-Data-Search/Information-and-Data-Search-Results.aspx?Search=Site%20Improvement%20Plan%20Ensor's%20Pool)

Table A.9: Oxford Meadows SAC

| Site Name | Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (UK0012845) |
|---|--|
| Location with regards to the Plan Area | Oxford Meadows SAC is located within the county of Oxfordshire, 20km to the south of West Northamptonshire. |
| Description of the Site | The site is situated on the broad floodplain of the River Thames to the west and north-west of Oxford. The site is in the Upper Thames Clay Vales National Character Area (NCA Profile 108) and is set in a landscape which is typical of the middle reach of the River Thames. The landscape is characterised by a mixture of large and small grass fields bounded by tall hedges with frequent tall willows. There are broad vistas across the landscape to the 'dreaming spires' of Oxford and the wooded, higher ground dominated by Wytham Woods to the west. There are relatively low levels of intrusion on the surrounding landscape by built development, despite the presence of major roads, railways, gravel workings and settlements. The natural course of the River Thames has been altered as it passes through the complex by creating an additional channel known as the Wolvercote Mill Stream but the Thames is otherwise largely unmodified in this section and regularly floods the adjacent grasslands. |
| Reason(s) for designation: | <p>SAC:⁴⁶</p> <p>Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) |
| Component SSSI Sites | Pixey and Yarnton Meads SSSI, Port Meadow with Wolvercote Common and Green SSSI, Cassington Meadows SSSI, Wolvercote Meadows SSSI |

⁴⁶ European Site Conservation Objectives: supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features. Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation [European Site Conservation Objectives for Oxford Meadows SAC - UK0012845 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk)

| Site Name | Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (UK0012845) |
|--|---|
| <p>Conservation Objectives⁴⁷</p> | <p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species; • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species; • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely; • The populations of qualifying species; and • The distribution of qualifying species within the site. <p>Supplementary advice highlights that these conservation objectives were identified for the following reasons⁴⁸:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the extent of the feature within the site; • Maintain spatial distribution of the feature within the site; • Maintain the ability of the feature's supporting habitats to adapt or evolve to wider environmental change; • Maintain functional connectivity with wider landscape; • Maintain a hydrological regime; • Maintain the abundance of key structural, influential and/or distinctive species; • Maintain soils, substrate and nutrient cycling; • Maintain the distribution, extent, quality and spatial configuration of supporting off-site habitat; • Ensure the component vegetation communities of the feature are referable; • Maintain the pattern of natural vegetation zonations/transitions; • Maintain the frequency/cover of undesirable species; • Maintain water quality and quantity to a standard which provides the necessary conditions to support the feature; • Maintain concentrations and deposition of air pollutants; • Maintain management of conservation measures; • Maintain the area of occupancy; • Maintain a stable grazing regime. |

| Site Name | Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (UK0012845) |
|--|--|
| Site Sensitivities⁴⁹ | Natural England data for the site dated November 2014 identified the following pressures associated with the site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydrological changes; and • Invasive species. |
| Potential Pressures/ Impact Pathways with the LTP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air pollution; • Hydrological impacts – water levels, hydrological connectivity to these sites, accidental pollution events, and road run off; • Functional connectivity with wider landscape; • Increased levels of disturbance/access; and • Spread of INNS. |

⁴⁷ European Site Conservation Objectives for Oxford Meadows Area of Conservation [European Site Conservation Objectives for Oxford Meadows SAC - UK0012845 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#)

⁴⁸ European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features for Oxford Meadows SAC [UK0012845 Oxford Meadows SAC Published 28 Mar 2024 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#)

⁴⁹ Site Improvement Plan Oxford Meadows [Site Improvement Plan: Oxford Meadows - SIP163 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#)

Table A.10: Cothill Fen SAC

| Cothill Fen Special Area of Conservation (UK0012889) | |
|---|--|
| Site Name | Cothill Fen Special Area of Conservation (UK0012889) |
| Location with regards to the Plan Area | Cothill Fen SAC is located within the county of Oxfordshire, 30km to the south of West Northamptonshire. |
| Description of the Site | The site lies in the Vale of the White Horse between the Berkshire Downs and the River Thames in Oxfordshire, forming part of the Mid Vale Ridge National Character Area. Although close to Oxford and Abingdon, the surrounding area is largely rural. The site is screened by woodland, giving it a secluded feel. The site includes the Cothill National Nature Reserve. |
| Reason(s) for designation: | SAC: ⁵⁰ Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alkaline fens • Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) * Priority feature ('alder woodland on floodplains') |
| Component SSSI Sites | Cothill Fen SSSI |

⁵⁰ European Site Conservation Objectives: supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features. Cothill Fen Special Area of Conservation [European Site Conservation Objectives for Cothill Fen SAC - UK0012889 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](http://naturalengland.org.uk)

| Site Name | Cothill Fen Special Area of Conservation (UK0012889) |
|--|---|
| <p>Conservation Objectives⁵¹</p> | <p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats; • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; and • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely. <p>Supplementary advice highlights that these conservation objectives were identified for the following reasons⁵²:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the extent of the feature within the site; • Maintain spatial distribution of the feature within the site; • Maintain the ability of the feature's supporting habitats to adapt or evolve to wider environmental change; • Maintain the exposure of substrate; • Maintain functional connectivity with wider landscape; • Maintain a hydrological regime; • Maintain the abundance of key structural, influential and/or distinctive species; • Maintain the frequency/cover of undesirable species; • Maintain a low cover of woody species; • Ensure the component vegetation communities of the feature are referable; • Maintain the nutrient status of water bodies; • Maintain concentrations and deposition of air pollutants; • Maintain management of conservation measures; • Maintain the regeneration potential; • Maintain soils, substrate and nutrient cycling; • Maintain vegetation structure (canopy cover, dead wood, woodland edge); • Maintain the overall extent, quality and function of any supporting features within the wider landscape; • Maintain water quality and quantity to a standard which provides the necessary conditions to support the feature. |
| <p>Site Sensitivities⁵³</p> | <p>Natural England data for the site dated October 2014 identified the following pressures associated with the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water pollution; • Hydrological changes; and • Air pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition. |

⁵¹ European Site Conservation Objectives for Cothill Fen Special Area of Conservation [European Site Conservation Objectives for Cothill Fen SAC - UK0012889 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-for-cothill-fen-sac-uk0012889)

⁵² European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features for Cothill Fen SAC [UK0012889 Cothill Fen SAC Published 28 Mar 2024 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-supplementary-advice-on-conserving-and-restoring-site-features-for-cothill-fen-sac-uk0012889)

⁵³ Site Improvement Plan Cothill Fen [Site Improvement Plan: Cothill Fen - SIP047 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/site-improvement-plan-cothill-fen-sip047)

| Site Name | | Cothill Fen Special Area of Conservation (UK0012889) |
|---|---|--|
| Potential Pressures/ Impact Pathways with the LTP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air pollution; • Hydrological impacts – water levels, hydrological connectivity to these sites, accidental pollution events, and road run off; • Functional connectivity with wider landscape; and • Increased levels of disturbance/access. | |

Table A.11: Aston Rowant SAC

| Site Name | | Aston Rowant Special Area of Conservation (UK0030082) |
|--|---|---|
| Location with regards to the Plan Area | Aston Rowant SAC is located within the counties of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, 39km to the south of West Northamptonshire. | |
| Description of the Site | The site is situated in a prominent position on the scarp of the southern Chilterns National Character Area in Oxfordshire. The site has a wide range of habitats including species-rich chalk grassland, mixed chalk scrub and ash and beech woodland. | |
| Reason(s) for designation: | <p>SAC:⁵⁴</p> <p>Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands; Juniper on heaths or calcareous grasslands • <i>Asperulo-Fagetum</i> beech forests; Beech forests on neutral to rich soils | |
| Component SSSI Sites | Aston Rowant SSSI | |

⁵⁴ European Site Conservation Objectives: supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features. Cothill Fen Special Area of Conservation [European Site Conservation Objectives for Aston Rowant SAC - UK0030082 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](http://naturalengland.org.uk)

| Site Name | Aston Rowant Special Area of Conservation (UK0030082) |
|--|---|
| <p>Conservation Objectives⁵⁵</p> | <p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats; • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; and • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely. <p>Supplementary advice highlights that these conservation objectives were identified for the following reasons⁵⁶:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the extent of the feature within the site; • Maintain spatial distribution of the feature within the site; • Maintain the ability of the feature's supporting habitats to adapt or evolve to wider environmental change; • Maintain functional connectivity with wider landscape; • Maintain the abundance of key structural, influential and/or distinctive species; • Maintain the frequency/cover of undesirable species; • Maintain the pattern of natural vegetation zonations/ transitions; • Maintain regeneration potential (ground disturbance); • Maintain vegetation structure (canopy cover, age class, woodland edge, open space, old growth, dead wood); • Maintain concentrations and deposition of air pollutants; • Maintain management of conservation measures; • Maintain soils, substrate and nutrient cycling; • Maintain natural hydrological processes; • Ensure artificial light is maintained to a level which is unlikely to affect natural phenological cycles and processes. |
| <p>Site Sensitivities⁵⁷</p> | <p>Natural England data for the site dated October 2014 identified the following pressures associated with the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsustainable on-site population or habitat; • Changes in species distribution; • Deer; • Conflicting conservation objectives; • Disease; and • Air pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition. |

⁵⁵ European Site Conservation Objectives for Aston Rowant Special Area of Conservation [European Site Conservation Objectives for Aston Rowant SAC - UK0030082 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-for-aston-rowant-sac-uk0030082)

⁵⁶ European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features for Aston Rowant SAC [UK0030082 Aston Rowant SAC Published 28 Mar 2024 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-supplementary-advice-on-conserving-and-restoring-site-features-for-aston-rowant-sac-uk0030082)

⁵⁷ Site Improvement Aston Rowant SAC [Site Improvement Plan: Aston Rowant - SIP007 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/site-improvement-aston-rowant-sac)

| Site Name | Aston Rowant Special Area of Conservation (UK0030082) |
|--|---|
| Potential Pressures/ Impact Pathways with the LTP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air pollution; • Increased levels of disturbance/access; • Functional connectivity with wider landscape; • Hydrological processes; and • Spread of disease. |

Table A.12: Nene Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar

| Site Name | Nene Washes SAC (UK0030222), SPA (UK9008031) and Ramsar (UK11046) |
|---|---|
| Location with regards to the Plan Area | Nene Washes SAC and SPA is located within the county of Cambridgeshire, 45km to the northeast of West Northamptonshire. |
| Description of the Site | Covering a total area of approximately 88 hectares within the Fens National Character Area (NCA), the Nene Washes SAC lie north-west of the Ouse Washes. The Nene Washes are one of the country's few remaining areas of low-lying, periodically-inundated grassland (washland) habitat and this site is notable for the diversity of plant and associated animal life within its network of dykes. |

| Site Name | Nene Washes SAC (UK0030222), SPA (UK9008031) and Ramsar (UK11046) |
|----------------------------|---|
| Reason(s) for designation: | <p>SAC:⁵⁸ Qualifying species: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it supports important populations of the following species listed in Annex II:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spined Loach (<i>Cobitis taenia</i>) <p>SPA:⁵⁹ Qualifying individual species listed in Annex I of the Wild Birds Directive (Article 4.1). During the non-breeding season the SPA regularly supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>; Bewick's swan (Non-breeding). The site supported 1300 individuals at notification, more than 7% of the north-west European wintering population. <p>Qualifying individual species not listed in Annex I of the Wild Birds Directive (Article 4.1). During the breeding season the SPA regularly supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>) (Breeding) The site supported 25 breeding pairs at the time of SPA notification, 5% of the British population. • Garganey (<i>Anas querquedula</i>) (Breeding). The site supported 5 breeding pairs at the time of notification, 10% of the British population. • Northern shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) (Breeding). The site supported 36 breeding pairs at the time of notification, representing 3% of the British population. • Black-tailed godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) (Breeding). The site supported 16 breeding pairs at the time of notification, representing 30% of the British population. <p>Qualifying individual species not listed in Annex I of the Wild Birds Directive (Article 4.1). During the non-breeding season the SPA regularly supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eurasian wigeon (<i>Anas Penelope</i>) (Non-breeding) The site supported 3640 individuals at notification, 1% of the British population. • Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>) (Non-breeding) The site supported 95 individuals at notification, over 1% of the British population. • Eurasian teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) (Non-breeding). The site supported 980 individuals at notification, 1% of the British population. • Northern pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) (Non-breeding). The site supported 440 individuals at notification, over 1% of the British population. • Northern shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) (Non-breeding). The site supported 110 individuals at notification, over 1% of the British population. <p>Ramsar:⁶⁰ The information sheet on Ramsar Wetlands states the site qualified under the following criteria:</p> <p>Ramsar Criterion 2: The site supports an important assemblage of nationally rare breeding birds. In addition, a wide range of raptors occur through the year. The site also supports several nationally scarce plants, and two vulnerable and two rare British Red Data Book invertebrate species have been recorded.</p> <p>Ramsar Criterion 6: The site supports species/populations occurring at levels of international importance, including Tundra swan (<i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>). It also includes species/populations for possible future consideration, such as the Black-tailed godwit (<i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>) and Northern pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>).</p> |
| Component SSSI Sites | Nene Washes (Whittlesey) SSSI |

| Site Name | Nene Washes SAC (UK0030222), SPA (UK9008031) and Ramsar (UK11046) |
|--|---|
| <p>Conservation Objectives⁶¹</p> | <p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features; • The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely; • The population of each of the qualifying features; and <p>The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</p> <p>Supplementary advice highlights that these conservation objectives were identified for the following reasons^{62,63}:</p> <p>Maintain population abundance;</p> <p>Maintain juvenile densities;</p> <p>Maintain the extent and distribution of supporting non-breeding habitat;</p> <p>Maintain the distribution, connectivity and continuity of the feature and its supporting habitat;</p> <p>Maintain biological connectivity;</p> <p>Maintain cover of submerged macrophytes;</p> <p>Maintain a flow regime;</p> <p>Maintain the integrity of off-site habitats;</p> <p>Maintain sediment regime;</p> <p>Maintain the ability of the feature's supporting habitats to adapt or evolve to wider environmental change;</p> <p>Maintain food availability within supporting habitat;</p> <p>Maintain the frequency/cover of undesirable species;</p> <p>Minimise disturbance caused by human activity;</p> <p>Maintain open and unobstructed terrain;</p> <p>Maintain the extent and distribution of vegetation characteristics;</p> <p>Maintain concentrations and deposition of air pollutants;</p> <p>Maintain management of conservation measures;</p> <p>Maintain water quantity/quality (water area and depth);</p> <p>Maintain hydrological processes;</p> <p>Maintain the density of livestock/grazing animals;</p> <p>Reduce predation.</p> |

⁵⁸ European Site Conservation Objectives: supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features. Nene Washes Special Area of Conservation. [European Site Conservation Objectives for Nene Washes SAC - UK0030222 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-for-nene-washes-sac-uk0030222)

⁵⁹ European Site Conservation Objectives: supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features. Nene Washes Special Protection Area. [European Site Conservation Objectives for Nene Washes SPA - UK9008031 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-for-nene-washes-spa-uk9008031)

⁶⁰ Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands [untilted \(jncc.gov.uk\)](https://jncc.gov.uk/untilted)

⁶¹ European Site Conservation Objectives for Nene Washes Special Protection Area [European Site Conservation Objectives for Nene Washes SPA - UK9008031 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-for-nene-washes-spa-uk9008031)

⁶² European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features for Nene Washes SAC [UK0030222 Nene Washes SAC Published 28 Mar 2024 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-for-nene-washes-sac-uk0030222)

⁶³ European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features for Nene Washes SPA [UK9008031 Nene Washes SPA Published 28 Mar 2024 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-for-nene-washes-spa-uk9008031)

| Site Name | Nene Washes SAC (UK0030222), SPA (UK9008031) and Ramsar (UK11046) |
|--|---|
| Site Sensitivities⁶⁴ | Natural England data for the site dated October 2014 identified the following pressures associated with the site: Hydrological changes; and Water pollution. |
| Potential Pressures/ Impact Pathways with the LTP | Air pollution; Hydrological impacts - water levels, hydrological connectivity to this site, accidental pollution events, and road run off; Supporting habitats; Maintaining an open and unobstructed terrain; and Increased levels of disturbance/access. |

⁶⁴ Site Improvement Plan Nene Washes SPA [Site Improvement Plan: Nene Washes - SIP146 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#)

Table A.13: Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC

| Site Name | Eversden and Wimpole Woods Special Area of Conservation (UK0030331) |
|--|---|
| Location with regards to the Plan Area | Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC is located within the county of Cambridgeshire, 44km to the east of West Northamptonshire. |
| Description of the Site | The site comprises 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 <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i> 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 site. |
| Reason(s) for designation: | SAC⁶⁵: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following species listed in Annex II: Barbastelle bat (<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>) |
| Component SSSI Sites | Eversden and Wimpole Woods SSSI |

⁶⁵ European Site Conservation Objectives: supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features. Eversden and Wimpole Woods Special Area of Conservation. [European Site Conservation Objectives for Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC - UK0030331 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/eversden-and-wimpole-woods-sac-uk0030331)

| Site Name | Eversden and Wimpole Woods Special Area of Conservation (UK0030331) |
|---|---|
| <p>Conservation Objectives⁶⁶</p> | <p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species • The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely • The populations of qualifying species, and, • The distribution of qualifying species within the site. <p>Supplementary advice highlights that these conservation objectives were identified for the following reasons⁶⁷:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain population abundance; • Maintain spatial distribution and extent of the supporting habitat; • Maintain the ability of the feature's supporting habitats to adapt or evolve to wider environmental change; • Minimise disturbance from human activity; • Maintain concentrations and deposition of air pollutants; • Maintain management of conservation measures; and • Maintain water quality/quantity. |
| <p>Site Sensitivities⁶⁸</p> | <p>Natural England data for the site dated December 2015 identified the following pressures associated with the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feature location/ extent/ condition unknown • Offsite habitat availability/ management • Forestry and woodland management • Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition |
| <p>Potential Pressures/ Impact Pathways with the LTP</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air pollution; • Water quality/quantity; • Increased levels of disturbance/access. |

⁶⁶ European Site Conservation Objectives for Aston Rowant Special Area of Conservation [European Site Conservation Objectives for Aston Rowant SAC - UK0030082 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/conservation-objectives-for-aston-rowant-sac-uk0030082)

⁶⁷ European Site Conservation Objectives: Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features for Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC [UK0030331 Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC Published 28 Mar 2024 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/eversden-and-wimpole-woods-sac-published-28-mar-2024)

⁶⁸ Site Improvement Eversden and Wimpole Woods [Site Improvement Plan: Eversden and Wimpole Woods - SIP078 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/site-improvement-plan-eversden-and-wimpole-woods-sip078)

Appendix B – Response from Natural England

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 11:45 AM
To: [REDACTED]

Subject: FW: 2024-05-17 472015 West Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan - HRA Consultation

Dear [REDACTED],

Many thanks for attaching the HRA Consultation for West Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan, it appears to be a comprehensive appraisal and Natural England are in agreement with the proposed approach. In terms of the European Sites to be considered, of course the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA remains a priority due to its proximity to the proposed routes however, I would also consider Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC in the list and have attached citation to assist – Eversden and Wimpole being an important site for the protected Barbastelle Bat population locally, and importantly prone to construction/traffic impacts.

Hope this helps and we look forward to being consulted at the next stage of the Plan.

Best,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 5, 2024 9:31 AM
To: SM-NE-Consultations (NE) <consultations@naturalengland.org.uk>
Subject: Consultation on West Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan HRA

Dear Sir / Madam,

Please find attached information in relation to the proposed approach to the HRA of the West Northamptonshire LTP.

We would be grateful to receive feedback and responses to the questions posed in this letter within 6 weeks if possible.

Best Wishes,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **Lauren Jones**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Appendix C – Policy and Intervention Screening Tables

Screening Criteria

| Screening category | Description | Screening outcome |
|--------------------|--|--|
| A | General statement of policy / general aspiration | Screened out |
| B | Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability / sustainability of proposals | Screened out |
| C | Proposal referred to but not proposed by the plan | Screened out |
| D | General plan-wide environmental protection /site safeguarding / threshold policies | Screened out |
| E | Policies or proposals which steer change in such a way as to protect Habitats Sites from adverse effects. | Screened out |
| F | Policy that cannot lead to development or other change. | Screened out |
| G | Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site. | Screened out |
| H | Policy or proposal the (actual or theoretical) effects of which cannot undermine the conservation objectives (either alone or in combination with other aspects of this or other plans or projects). | Screened out |
| I | Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone. | Screened in |
| J | Policy or proposal with an effect on a site but unlikely to be significant alone, so need to check for likely significant effects in-combination. | Dependent on in-combination test |
| K | Policy or proposal unlikely to have a significant effect either alone or in-combination. | Screened out after the in-combination test |
| L | Policy or proposal which might be likely to have a significant effect in-combination. | Screened in after the in-combination test |
| M | Bespoke area, site or case-specific policies or proposals intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on a Habitats Site. | Screened in |

Findings of the LTP Policies Screening

| Policy Name | Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA | Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar | Chiltern Beechwoods SAC | Portholme SAC | Woodwalton Fen Ramsar | Orton Pit SAC | Barnack Hills & Holes SAC | Ensor's Pools SAC | Oxford Meadows SAC | Cothill Fen SAC | Aston Rowant SAC | Nene Washes SAC, SPA & Ramsar | Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC |
|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Sustainable Transport Hierarchy | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A |
| Connected and Accessible Networks | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A |
| Improved Interchanges and Mobility Hubs | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A |
| Bus, Coach and Mass Transit | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A |
| Rail Services and Stations | F | F | F | F | F | F | F | F | F | F | F | F | F |
| Active Travel Network | I | F | F | F | F | F | F | F | F | F | F | F | F |
| Network Operations and Maintenance | F | F | F | F | F | F | F | F | F | F | F | F | F |
| Road and Transport Safety | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A |
| Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A |
| Biodiversity and Access to Nature | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| Air and Noise Pollution | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A |
| Reducing Isolation and Improving Rural Access | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A |
| Supporting Business and Freight Movements | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A |
| Sustainable Developments and Embracing Technology | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A |

| Policy Name | Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA | Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar | Chiltern Beechwoods SAC | Portholme SAC | Woodwalton Fen Ramsar | Orton Pit SAC | Barnack Hills & Holes SAC | Ensor's Pools SAC | Oxford Meadows SAC | Cothill Fen SAC | Aston Rowant SAC | Nene Washes SAC, SPA & Ramsar | Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC |
|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Shared and On-demand Mobility Options | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A |
| Community Engagement and Collaboration | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A |

Findings of the LTP Interventions Screening

| Policy Name | Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA | Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar | Chiltern Beechwoods SAC | Portholme SAC | Woodwalton Fen Ramsar | Orton Pit SAC | Barnack Hills & Holes SAC | Ensor's Pools SAC | Oxford Meadows SAC | Cothill Fen SAC | Aston Rowant SAC | Nene Washes SAC, SPA & Ramsar | Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC |
|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Enhanced Bus Service between Daventry and West Coast Main Line (WNCLTPLL0188) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Enhanced Bus Service for Silverstone, Towcester and rural West Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire (WNCLTPLL0189) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Abington Square study to assess improvements to public realm and transport provision (WNCLTPLL0388) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Bus Priority Corridor Programme (WNCLTPLL0268) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Bus service improvements between Northampton, Wellingborough, Kettering and Corby (WNCLTPLL0384) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Bus Service Improvements: Buckingham to Silverstone (WNCLTPLL0072) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Car Club Assistance Programme (WNCLTPLL0413) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Extension of bus operating hours (WNCLTPLL0076) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Integrated Bus and Rail Ticketing and Timetables (WNCLTPLL0096) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Northampton – Market Harborough Connectivity Study (WNCLTPLL0046) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Northampton-Brackmills (including onward rail links to Bedford and Wellingborough) Rail Corridor Options | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |

| Policy Name | Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA | Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar | Chiltern Beechwoods SAC | Portholme SAC | Woodwalton Fen Ramsar | Orton Pit SAC | Barnack Hills & Holes SAC | Ensor's Pools SAC | Oxford Meadows SAC | Cothill Fen SAC | Aston Rowant SAC | Nene Washes SAC, SPA & Ramsar | Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC |
|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Assessment (WNCLTPLL0271) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Additional Northampton Loop services from Post-HS2 Timetable (WNCLTPLL0222) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Extend East West Rail Services between Oxford and Milton Keynes to Northampton via upgraded West Coast Main Line (WNCLTPLL0198) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Long Buckby Railway Station Access Improvements and Platform Lengthening (WNCLTPLL0213) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| New Active Travel Route between Aylesbury to Northampton via Buckingham (WNCLTPLL0217) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| New National Cycle Route Alongside HS2 (WNCLTPLL0221) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| New rail service connecting communities between Northampton, Aylesbury, Princess Risborough, High Wycombe, and Old Oak Common (WNCLTPLL0197) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| New Railway Station serving South Northampton (WNCLTPLL0225) | I | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | L | G |
| Northampton Loop Speed and Capacity Improvements (WNCLTPLL0237) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Northampton Strategic Bus, Coach, and Rail Integration (WNCLTPLL0238) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |

| Policy Name | Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA | Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar | Chiltern Beechwoods SAC | Portholme SAC | Woodwalton Fen Ramsar | Orton Pit SAC | Barnack Hills & Holes SAC | Ensor's Pools SAC | Oxford Meadows SAC | Cothill Fen SAC | Aston Rowant SAC | Nene Washes SAC, SPA & Ramsar | Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC |
|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Rail Capacity Enhancement between Bletchley and Milton Keynes (WNCLTPLL0239) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Weedon Fast Line Freight Loops on West Coast Main Line (WNCLTPLL0254) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| A43 Phase 3 Dualling Northampton to Holcot/Sywell junction (WNCLTPLL0044) | I | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | L | G |
| A43/A5 Towcester Roundabout Improvements (WNCLTPLL0063) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| A45 Junction upgrades at the Brackmills and Great Billing Interchanges (WNCLTPLL0309) | I | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | L | G |
| A45 Queen Eleanor Interchange (WNCLTPLL0313) | I | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | L | G |
| Inter-Urban Active Travel Network (complements LCWIP interventions in named urban areas) (WNCLTPLL0124) | I | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | L | G |
| Intra-urban bus service frequency improvements (WNCLTPLL0075) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| New Active Travel Route between Wellingborough and Northampton (WNCLTPLL0088) | I | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | L | G |
| New Rugby Parkway Railway Station (WNCLTPLL0055) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Northampton Bus and Coach Station Upgrade (WNCLTPLL0283) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Plough Junction Improvement (WNCLTPLL0303) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |

| Policy Name | Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA | Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar | Chiltern Beechwoods SAC | Portholme SAC | Woodwalton Fen Ramsar | Orton Pit SAC | Barnack Hills & Holes SAC | Ensor's Pools SAC | Oxford Meadows SAC | Cothill Fen SAC | Aston Rowant SAC | Nene Washes SAC, SPA & Ramsar | Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC |
|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| New Railway Station serving Weedon Bec and Daventry (WNCLTPLL0226) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| • Northampton Future Mass Transit Options Assessment (WNCLTPLL0387) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Northamptonshire Mass Rapid Transport Scheme (WNCLTPLL0068) | I | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | L | G |
| A422 Farthinghoe traffic mitigation scheme (WNCLTPLL0215A) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| LCWIP Interventions in Brackley (WNCLTPLL0208) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| LCWIP Interventions in Towcester (WNCLTPLL0212) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| A5 Towcester Relief Road Upgrade and A5 Watling Street Traffic Calming (WNCLTPLL0043) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| A5/B5385 Junction Improvement (WNCLTPLL0344) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Abington Area Active Travel scheme (WNCLTPLL0265) | I | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Access to bikes initiative (WNCLTPLL0396) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Electric bus fleet and infrastructure expansion (WNCLTPLL0282) | I | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | L | G |
| Electric Vehicle Assistance Programme and Charging in Car Parks (WNCLTPLL0278) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Town and Village Traffic Calming Programme (WNCLTPLL0031) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |

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|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A361 Byfield Village Traffic Calming (WNCLTPLL0414) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| A43 Signal and safety improvements (WNCLTPLL0106) | I | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | L | G |
| Brackley to Banbury Active travel link (WNCLTPLL0135) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| LCWIP Interventions in Northampton (WNCLTPLL0272) | I | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | L | G |
| LCWIP Interventions in Daventry (WNCLTPLL0415) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| New Strategic Mobility Hub and Coach Interchange at M1 J15 (WNCLTPLL0267) | I | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | L | G |
| New Strategic Mobility Hub at Northampton East Park and Ride (WNCLTPLL0385) | I | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | L | G |
| St Giles Street Public Realm (WNCLTPLL0374) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Hydrogen Vehicle Assistance Programme (WNCLTPLL0196) | I | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | L | G |
| Demand Responsive and Community Transport Assistance Programme (WNCLTPLL0192) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Local Logistic Partnerships for road and rail freight (WNCLTPLL0185) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| A45 Strategic Freight Corridor Options Assessment (WNCLTPLL0116) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Improved Bus Infrastructure and Access (WNCLTPLL0051) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |

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|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Mobility Hub Opportunity Assessment (WNCLTPLL0269) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| Reduced Local Bus Fares (WNCLTPLL0398) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| New Strategic Mobility Hub serving Brackley (WNCLTPLL0228) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| New Strategic Mobility Hub serving Daventry (WNCLTPLL0230) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| New Strategic Mobility Hub serving Silverstone (WNCLTPLL0232) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| New Strategic Mobility Hub serving Towcester (WNCLTPLL0235) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |
| A421 HGV lanes and signal priority (WNCLTPLL0133) | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G | G |