

## 2 European Sites

- 2.1 This chapter identifies European sites located in Greater Cambridge or within a 15km buffer, which have potential to be affected by proposed development within the GCLP and will be considered as part of the HRA process.

### Identification of European sites which may be affected by the Strategic Plan

- 2.2 In order to initiate the search of European sites that could potentially be affected by the GCLP, it is established practice in HRAs to consider European sites within the local planning authority areas covered by a Plan, and also within a buffer distance from the boundary of the Plan area.
- 2.3 A distance of 15km was used to identify European sites likely to be affected by impacts relating to development in Greater Cambridge. In addition to this, consideration was also given to European sites connected to the plan area beyond this distance, for example through hydrological pathways or recreational visits by residents of Greater Cambridge.
- 2.4 European sites identified for inclusion in the HRA are listed below in **Table 2.1** below and **Figure 2.1** in **Appendix 2**. Detailed information about each site is provided in **Appendix 3**:

**Table 2.1 European sites within Greater Cambridge and within 15km of the Greater Cambridge boundary**

| European Site                  | Closest Distance / Location from GCLP Area |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>SACs</b>                    |  |
| Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC | Within – in west of Greater Cambridge      |
| Ouse Washes SAC                | Adjacent to north                          |
| Portholme SAC                  | 4km / North West                           |
| Devils Dyke SAC                | 5.8km / North East                         |
| Fenland SAC                    | 1km / North East                           |
| <b>SPAs</b>                    |  |
| Ouse Washes SPA                | Adjacent to north                          |
| <b>Ramsar Sites</b>            |  |
| Ouse Washes Ramsar             | Adjacent to north                          |

| European Site         | Closest Distance / Location from GCLP Area |
|-----------------------|--|
| Wicken Fen Ramsar     | 1km / North East                           |
| Chippenham Fen Ramsar | 10.3km to North East                       |

### Ecological attributes of the European sites

- 2.5 The designated features and conservation objectives of the European sites, together with current pressures on and potential threats, was established using the Standard Data Forms for SACs and SPAs and the Information Sheets for Ramsar Wetlands published on the JNCC website<sup>15</sup> as well as Natural England's Site Improvement Plans<sup>16</sup> and the most recent conservation objectives published on the Natural England website (most were published in 2014)<sup>17</sup>.
- 2.6 An understanding of the designated features of each European site and the factors contributing to its integrity will inform the assessment of the potential likely significant effects of the JSP. This approach will be useful for informing the inter-dependencies of non-qualifying species and habitats which the qualifying species depend, as recently highlighted as a requirement by the 'Holohan' ruling.

<sup>15</sup> [www.jncc.defra.gov.uk](http://www.jncc.defra.gov.uk)

<sup>16</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/5458594975711232>

<sup>17</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/6490068894089216>