

## **Site Allocations Plan: Habitats Regulations Assessment**

The Site Allocations Plan proposes to allocate 21 small residential sites throughout the Milton Keynes urban area. The Plan has been prepared pursuant to the 2013 Core Strategy, which is the principal spatial plan and Development Plan Document in Milton Keynes Borough.

A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening of the Core Strategy has previously been undertaken. Milton Keynes lies in an area void of any Natura 2000 sites. The nearest European site is the Chiltern Beechwoods to the south of the Borough. Natural England are of the view that the site would not be affected by Milton Keynes planning policy due to the distance of the site from Milton Keynes and there being no obvious impact pathways.

However, in liaison with Natural England, the Council has identified two sites that could potentially be affected by the Core Strategy, and other Local Development Documents, due to the pathway provided by the River Great Ouse, which feeds in to Natura 2000 sites. These sites are: Ouse Washes Special Area of Conservation / Special Protection Areas and Portholme Special Area of Conservation.

As a result of the screening process, it was concluded that any effect on the flow of water and subsequent impact on the Natura 2000 sites from policies and proposals in the Milton Keynes Core Strategy and other 'in-combination' plans and projects is likely to be minimal and that the Core Strategy should not be subject to a full Appropriate Assessment. It is considered that these findings are still robust and have not become outdated by further information or developments and therefore there is no need to subject the Site Allocations Plan to a full Appropriate Assessment.