

Habitats Regulations Review of the South Hampshire Strategy

HRA-lite
Non-Technical Summary

September 2012



LEPUS CONSULTING

LANDSCAPE ECOLOGY, PLANNING AND URBAN SUSTAINABILITY



Habitats Review of the South Hampshire Strategy

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 On behalf of the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH), Lepus Consulting has undertaken a process to help inform strategy making regarding European sites. This will not follow a statutory process as the South Hampshire Strategy (SHS) is a guidance document written by constituent authorities as they work together as a cooperative group. It has drawn on best practice from the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process to shape the approach. This process has been termed HRA-lite.
- 1.1.2 This report documents the HRA-lite process. PUSH have decided not to prepare a HRA for the SHS, but wish to apply the strategic principles of the process to inform statutory plan making at the local plan level. The report comprises an evidence gathering exercise to provide a baseline of designated sites within proximity to the strategy area and insight into possible issues which may arise from the development and implementation of the SHS. A thorough assessment of policies and their potential effects upon European sites has been undertaken, coupled with appropriate recommendations on avoidance and mitigation. This report represents a flagging exercise to alert plan makers to the issues relating to European sites. This report is focused at a strategic level; local level information and implementation will be investigated through the statutory channels of relevant local policies and allocations.
- 1.1.3 The third draft (March 2012) of the SHS was used in producing this document. During the ensuing months, some changes to the policies were made by PUSH in producing the final version of the SHS, which should be born in mind if reading this document alongside the published SHS.
- 1.1.4 The outputs of the report include information in relation to:
- The HRA-lite Assessment Process;
 - Partnership for Urban South Hampshire;
 - Methodology for HRA and how it is implemented in HRA-lite;
 - Evidence gathering in relation to European sites;
 - Determining the likely significant effects of the strategy;
 - The potential effects of the strategy and mitigation measures; and
 - Conclusions and further recommendations.

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- 1.1.5 A requirement of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, the UK's transposition of European Directive 92/43/EEC *on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora* (the Habitats Directive) is to assess any plan or project likely to have a significant effect upon a European site. PUSH does not consider that the SHS falls under the requirements of the Habitats Regulations. In the spirit of facilitating sustainable development, PUSH have drawn on the principles of the HRA process to prepare a strategic appraisal of the SHS and any effects it might have on designated international sites. As a result a HRA-lite process has been developed. This draws upon **best practice** and **relevant guidance** where appropriate to ensure an **effective assessment process** is applied.
- 1.1.6 European sites provide valuable ecological infrastructure for the protection of rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species of exceptional importance within the EU. These sites consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPA) designated under European Directive 2009/147/EC *on the conservation of wild birds* (the Birds Directive). Additionally, Government policy requires that sites designated under the Ramsar Convention (The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat) are treated as if they are fully designated European sites for the purpose of considering development proposals that may affect them. PUSH wants to ensure that these sites are fully taken into account through the development of the SHS.
- 1.1.7 The SHS will inform and guide partner local authorities with their plan making. The guidelines within the SHS have drawn upon former Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) South East Plan (SE Plan) and the results of the constituent LPAs Local Plans (LP).
- 1.1.8 The new 'Duty to Cooperate' as outlined in the Localism Act 2011 will require some form of cooperation between adjoining local authorities towards fulfilling this obligation. The nature of spatial coordination encouraged by the SHS can support individual local planning authorities. The duty will apply to local authorities and other public bodies involved in plan making.
- 1.1.9 This HRA-lite process is built upon HRA, however it must be clearly stated that HRA-lite is best practice and not a statutory process. PUSH member authorities will prepare statutory land-use plans in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Such Local Plans are subject to various statutory environmental appraisal processes, these include HRA. A number of partner authorities have completed their Core Strategies; the reader is directed to the relevant HRA work.

1.2 Background to the South Hampshire Strategy

- 1.2.1 The SHS is an emerging non-statutory document to inform on the preferred strategy to accompany the economic and developmental priorities for South Hampshire.

- 1.2.2 As a strategic guidance framework, quanta and figures cited are suggested on the basis that partner authorities believe them to be appropriate. All quantum and other content in the strategy are derived from constituent LPAs; all PUSH constituent member local plans are subject to statutory HRA. As a result, PUSH considers that in the spirit of sustainable development it is appropriate for the strategy to be subject to the same principles of assessment procedure as DPDs, hence the development of the HRA-lite process.
- 1.2.3 PUSH comprises ten adjoining Local Planning Authorities throughout South Hampshire. These LPAs include: Portsmouth and Southampton unitary authorities, district and borough authorities of Eastleigh, East Hampshire, Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Test Valley, and Winchester and the County Council. PUSH was formed in 2003 as a partnership towards the improvement of the local area through collaboration.

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2 Review of Habitats Regulations Assessment in the PUSH Sub-Region

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 PUSH comprises ten adjoining Local Planning Authorities throughout South Hampshire. PUSH was formed in 2003 as a partnership towards the improvement of the local area through collaboration in the development of strategy. The HRA-lite reviews the previous work on HRA undertaken by the LPAs to identify potential impacts on the integrity of European sites.

2.1.2 The local authorities reviewed included:

- East Hampshire;
- Eastleigh;
- Fareham;
- Gosport;
- Havant;
- Hampshire County Council
- Portsmouth;
- Southampton;
- Test Valley; and
- Winchester.

2.1.3 The review identified 13 European sites that had been screened out in previous HRA work undertaken within the PUSH sub-region. While these sites have been screened out in previous HRA work, they have been included for the purposes of the assessment. Information identified has been useful in determining any potential impacts and likely significant effects upon European sites.

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3 Methodology

3.1 HRA-lite Guidance and Best Practice

- 3.1.1 The HRA-lite process is based upon guidance documents for HRA. Guidance on HRA has been published in draft form by the Department of Communities and Local Government and Natural England; both draw in part on European Union guidance regarding the methodology for undertaking Appropriate Assessment of plans.
- 3.1.2 The guidance recognises that there is no statutory method for undertaking HRA and that the adopted method must be appropriate to its purpose under the Habitats Directive and Regulations. At the time of writing Natural England has suggested that the guidance on HRA “Guidance for Plan-Making Bodies in Scotland” (2010) published by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), prepared by David Tyldesley and Associates, can be used to assess development plans.

3.2 HRA-lite Methodology

- 3.2.1 The HRA-lite process draws on the HRA methodology prepared by David Tyldesley Associates for Scottish Natural Heritage (2010). This is described in E 3.1. Some aspects of this methodology have been adapted where appropriate due to the specific aspects of the South Hampshire Strategy; other aspects are not appropriate.

Table N 3.1: Stages of Habitats Regulations Assessment

Group	HRA Stages	HRA-lite Stages
A. Determination of Need and Compilation of Evidence Base	Stage 1: Determination of need	Stage 1: Determination of need
	Stage 2: Identification of European sites that should be considered in the appraisal	Stage 2: Identification of European sites that should be considered in the appraisal
	Stage 3: Gathering information on European sites	Stage 3: Gathering information on European sites
	Stage 4: Discretionary discussions on the method and scope of the appraisal	Stage 4: Discretionary discussions on the method and scope of the appraisal
B. Screen all aspects of strategy (Screening)	Stage 5: Screening the strategy	Stage 5: Screening the strategy
	Stage 6: Applying mitigation measures at screening stage to avoid likely significant effects	Stage 6: Applying mitigation measures at screening stage to avoid likely significant effects
	Stage 7: Rescreen the strategy and decide on the need for appropriate assessment	Stage 7: Rescreen the strategy and decide on the need for appropriate assessment
C. Appropriate Assessment (AA)	Stage 8: The AA – site integrity, conservation objectives and the precautionary principle	Stage 8: The AA – site integrity, conservation objectives and the precautionary principle
	Stage 9: Amending the strategy until there would be no adverse effects on site integrity	Stage 9: Amending the strategy until there would be no adverse effects on site integrity
D. Consultation of Draft	Stage 10: Preparing a draft of HRA	Not a statutory document, consultation not required
	Stage 11: Consultation	
	Stage 12: Proposed modifications	
	Stage 13: Modifying and completing HRA	

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4 Identification of European Sites

4.1 Scope of Assessment

- 4.1.1 European sites have their intrinsic qualities, besides the habitats or species for which it has been designated, that enables the site to support the ecosystems that it does. An important aspect of this is that the ecological integrity of each site can be vulnerable to change from natural and human induced activities in the surrounding environment. For example, sites can be affected by land use plans in a number of different ways, including the direct land take of new development, the type of use the land will be put to (for example, an extractive or noise emitting use), the pollution a development generates and the resources it uses (during construction and operation for instance).
- 4.1.2 An intrinsic quality of any European site is its functionality at the landscape ecology scale. This refers to how the site interacts with the zone of influence of its immediate surroundings, as well as the wider area. This is particularly the case where there is potential for developments resulting from the plan to generate water or air-borne pollutants, use water resources or otherwise affect water levels. Adverse effects may also occur via impacts to mobile species occurring outside of a designated site but which are qualifying features of the site. For example, there may be effects on protected birds that use land outside the designated site for foraging, feeding, roosting or loafing.
- 4.1.3 A 20km search area around the PUSH area was used to identify European sites. Sites beyond this zone were also included if an impact pathway was considered possible. In total 31 sites were identified. A wide range of site relevant information has been collected and collated into tables for each European site in **Appendix A** of the accompanying **Technical Document**.

Table N 4.1: European Sites in and around the PUSH area.

Site Name	Location	Type
Chichester & Langstone Harbour	In plan area	SPA/Ramsar
Emer Bog	In plan area	SAC
Portsmouth Harbour	In plan area	SPA/Ramsar
River Itchen	In plan area	SAC
Solent & Southampton Water	In plan area	SPA/Ramsar
Solent & Isle of Wight Lagoons	In plan area	SAC
Solent Maritime	In plan area	SAC
Avon Valley	Within 20km	SPA/Ramsar
Butser Hill	Within 20km	SAC
Briddlesford Copses	Within 20km	SAC
East Hampshire Hangers	Within 20km	SAC
Isle of Wight Downs	Within 20km	SAC
Kingley Vale	Within 20km	SAC
Mottisfont Bats	Within 20km	SAC
New Forest	Within 20km	SAC/SPA/Ramsar
Pagham Harbour	Within 20km	SPA/Ramsar
Porton Down	Within 20km	SPA
River Avon	Within 20km	SAC
Rook Clift	Within 20km	SAC
Singleton & Cocking Tunnels	Within 20km	SAC
South Wight Maritime	Within 20km	SAC
Wealden Heaths Phase II	Within 20km	SPA
Woolmer Forest	Within 20km	SAC
Arun Valley	Outside 20km	SPA/Ramsar
Dorset Heathlands	Outside 20km	SAC/SPA/Ramsar
Duncton to Bignor Escarpment	Outside 20km	SAC
Ebernoe Common	Outside 20km	SAC
Great Yews	Outside 20km	SAC
Salisbury Plain	Outside 20km	SAC/SPA
The Mens	Outside 20km	SAC
Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons	Outside 20km	SAC/SPA

4.1.4 The high-level nature of the HRA-lite approach and the large number of designated sites around South Hampshire has resulted in geographic grouping of European sites where they coincide with each other. Examples include the New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar and Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Ramsar.

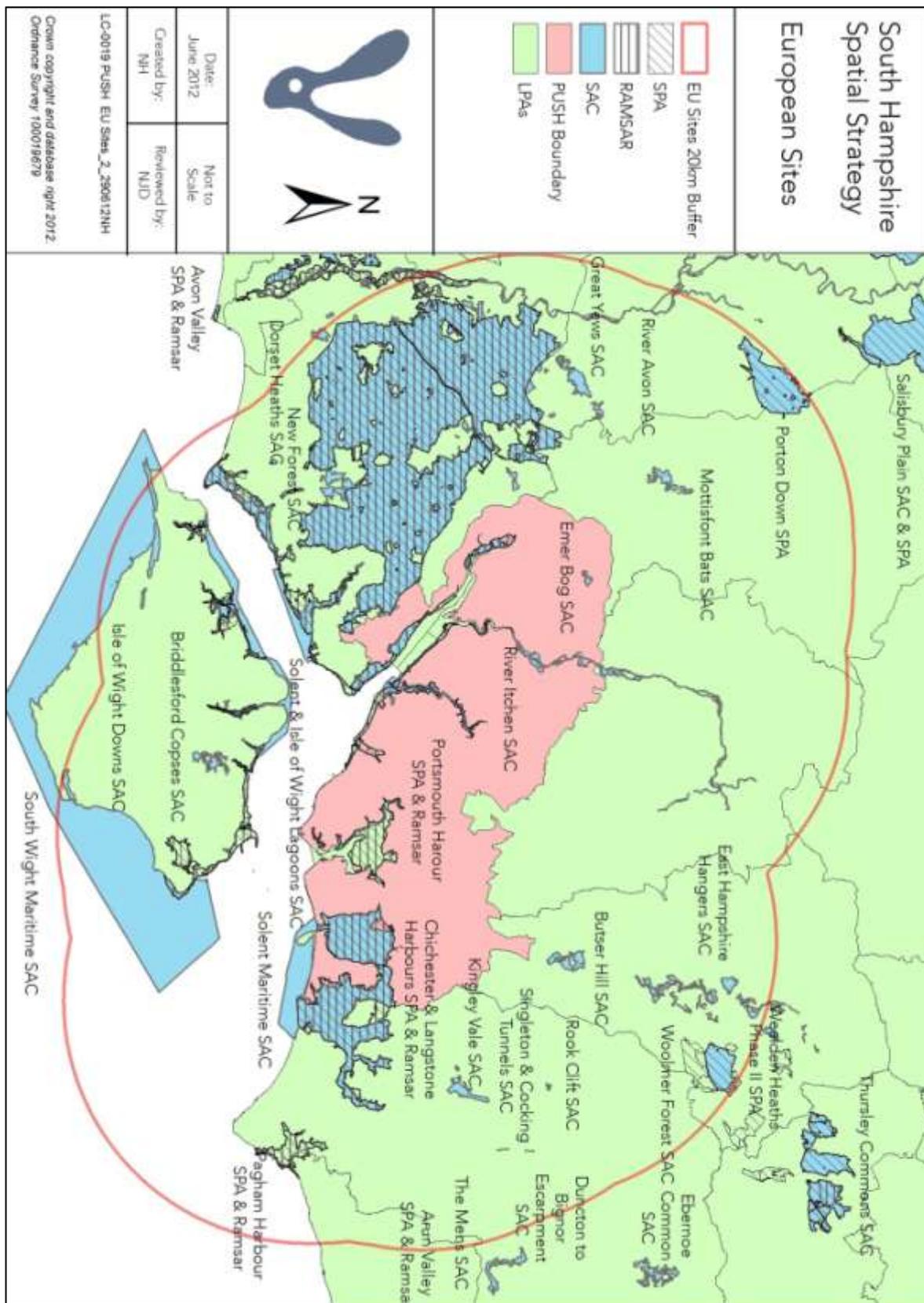


Figure N 4.1: European Sites in and around the PUSH Sub-Regional Area

4.2 Site Vulnerabilities and Impact Pathways

4.2.1 Site vulnerabilities have been compiled using relevant SAC, SPA and Ramsar data sheets produced by JNCC. This source may not represent the most up to date information. Additional vulnerabilities have been identified and compiled from supplementary evidence including local plan level HRA and supplementary technical reports; these are represented in **Table N 4.2**.

4.2.2 A range of potential impact pathways were identified and reviewed using a combination of technical reports, journal articles and relevant HRA assessments. The potential impacts identified included:

- Air Quality;
- Coastal Squeeze and Changes in Physical Processes;
- Land-take, Habitat Loss and Fragmentation;
- Noise;
- Recreational Pressures;
- Tall Buildings;
- Urbanisation;
- Water Resources; and
- Water Quality and Wastewater.

Table N 4.2: European sites and identified vulnerabilities

Site Name	Type	Vulnerabilities from JNCC site data form	Vulnerabilities identified from other relevant sources(including HRAs and technical documents)
Within Plan Area			
Chichester and Langstone Harbour	SPA	Recreational pressures, water quality and eutrophication, coastal squeeze, coastal defences, water abstraction.	Air quality, recreational pressures, coastal squeeze, degradation of supporting habitats, water abstraction, water quality, tall buildings, habitat loss and fragmentation.
	Ramsar	Erosion, eutrophication, water quality.	Air quality, recreational pressures, coastal squeeze degradation of supporting habitats, water abstraction, water quality, tall buildings, habitat loss and fragmentation.
Emer Bog	SAC	Adjacent land-use effecting hydrological processes, nutrient enrichment and adjacent potential development.	Air quality, recreational pressures.
Portsmouth Harbour	SPA	Land-take, habitat loss and fragmentation, coastal squeeze, adjacent development, water quality, recreational pressures.	Air quality, recreational pressures, wind energy generation, coastal squeeze, tall buildings, displacement (light pollution), habitat loss and fragmentation.
	Ramsar	Eutrophication, adjacent development, coastal defences.	Air quality, recreational pressures, wind energy generation, coastal squeeze, tall buildings, displacement (light pollution), habitat loss and fragmentation.
River Itchen	SAC	Decrease in flow velocities increasing siltation, water abstraction, nutrient enrichment.	Air quality, water quality, water abstraction, habitat loss and fragmentation.
Solent and Southampton Water	SPA	Land-take, coastal defences, coastal squeeze, water quality, recreational pressures.	Recreational pressures, coastal squeeze, tall buildings, water quality, water abstraction, habitat loss and fragmentation.
	Ramsar	Erosion.	Recreational pressures, coastal squeeze, tall buildings, water quality, water abstraction, habitat loss and fragmentation.
Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons	SAC	Water quality, sea-level rise/coastal squeeze, sea defences, water level management.	Coastal squeeze, water quality, recreational pressures, tall buildings, land-take and habitat loss and fragmentation, urbanisation.
Solent Maritime	SAC	Flood defences and coastal protection works, coastal squeeze and erosion, adjacent developmental pressures, water quality.	Air quality, coastal squeeze, water quality, water abstraction, habitat loss and fragmentation.
Outside Plan Area, within 20km			
Avon Valley	SPA	Water abstraction.	N/A
	Ramsar	Disturbance, drainage and land-take, siltation, water quality, eutrophication, recreational pressures, water abstraction.	N/A
Bridlesford Copses	SAC	Recreational pressures.	N/A
Butser Hill	SAC	Eutrophication and adjacent agricultural practises.	Air quality.
East Hampshire Hangers	SAC	Nutrient run-off and eutrophication, poor management.	N/A
Isle of Wight Downs	SAC	Reliance upon management practices, recreational pressures, sea defences/cliff stabilisation.	N/A
Kingley Vale	SAC	Inappropriate management.	N/A
Mottisfont Bats	SAC	Recreational pressures.	Habitat loss and fragmentation.

New Forest	SAC	Drainage of wetland, afforestation of heathland, reliance upon grazing in place, recreational pressures.	Recreational pressures, water quality, water abstraction, air quality.
	SPA	Recreational pressures and disturbance, reliance upon management, drainage, water abstraction.	Recreational pressures, water quality water abstraction, air quality.
	Ramsar	Drainage and land-take, inappropriate management, recreational pressures.	Recreational pressures, water quality water abstraction, air quality.
Pagham Harbour	SPA	Land drainage, water quality.	N/A
	Ramsar	N/A	N/A
Porton Downs	SPA	Disturbance from MoD.	N/A
River Avon	SAC	Water abstraction, land drainage, water quality, eutrophication, changes in physical processes.	N/A
Rook Clift	SAC	Inappropriate management.	N/A
Singleton & Cocking Tunnels	SAC	Disturbance.	N/A
South Wight Maritime	SAC	Coastal defences, coastal squeeze, water quality, habitat loss/landtake.	Coastal squeeze.
Wealden Heaths Phase II	SPA	Reliance on traditional management, adjacent development, military uses, recreational pressures.	Urbanisation, recreational pressures, air quality, water resources.
Woolmer Forest	SAC	Inappropriate management, military activities.	N/A
Outside 20km			
Arun Valley	SPA	Reliance upon management, adjacent agricultural practices, water abstraction and river maintenance.	N/A
	Ramsar	Water abstraction.	N/A
Dorset Heathlands	SAC	Habitat fragmentation, historical uses, recreational pressures, wildfires, inappropriate management.	N/A
	SPA	Land-take, habitat loss and fragmentation, recreational pressures.	N/A
	Ramsar	Air quality (acid rain).	N/A
Duncton to Bignor Escarpment	SAC	Recreational pressures, inappropriate management.	N/A
Ebernoe Common	SAC	Reliance upon traditional management, disturbance.	N/A
Great Yews	SAC	Recreational pressures, management practices.	N/A
Salisbury Plain	SAC	Lack of management practices, military uses.	N/A
	SPA	Inappropriate management practices, military practices.	N/A
The Mens	SAC	Inappropriate management practices, recreational pressures.	N/A
Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons	SAC	Reliance upon management, water abstraction, adjacent development, recreational pressures, military use.	N/A
	SPA	Lack of appropriate management, water abstraction.	Recreational pressures, water abstraction, air quality.

5 Screening: Initial Appraisal

5.1 Introduction to Screening

5.1.1 Screening is a term used to describe the initial stages of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal. The term is not used in the EC Habitats Directive or the Habitats Regulations. The purpose of screening is to identify the aspects of the SHS where it is not possible to rule out the risk of adverse significant effects on a European site, providing a clear scope for the aspects of the strategy which will require more detailed assessment. The purpose of the screening stage is to:

- Identify all aspects of the plan which would not be likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other aspects of the same plan or other plans/projects, to eliminate them from further consideration; and
- Identify the aspects of the plan where it is not possible to rule out the risk of significant effects on a European site, and thereby provide a clear scope for the parts of the plan that will require more detailed assessment.

5.1.2 The plan and its component policies are assessed to determine and identify any potential for 'likely significant effect' upon European sites: "A **likely** effect is one which cannot be ruled out on the basis of objective information. This is in regards to the 'likelihood' of effects rather than a 'certainty' of effects. Where a plan or project could undermine the site's conservation objectives, the effects on the site must be considered **significant**. The assessment of that risk must be made in the light, amongst other things, of the characteristics and specific environmental conditions of the site concerned."

5.1.3 The screening process aims to assess the policies of the South Hampshire Strategy into three key categories:

5.2 Category 1: General Policy Statements

5.2.1 This step aims to assess and screen out general policy statements from the SHS. These include policies which are (a) no more than general statements of policy or (b) general political aspirations. These can be screened out of the appraisal because they are unlikely to have a significant effect on site.

5.2.2 Of the 21 policies within the SHS five have been identified as general policy statements and can be screened out from further assessment;

- Policy 1: Overall Development Strategy;
- Policy 5: Quality Places;
- Policy 8: Suitability and safeguarding of employment sites;
- Policy 13: Infrastructure; and
- Policy 21: Corporate sustainability.

5.3 Category 2: Cross Referenced Policies

5.3.1 This step screens out any projects referred to in, but not proposed by a plan or programme. This includes but may not be limited to major infrastructure projects: roads, motorways and bridges, major transmission lines including gas and oil pipelines. The guidance (SNH & DTA, 2010) provides a useful test:

“Is the project provided for / proposed as part of another plan or programme, by another competent authority, and would it be likely to proceed under the other plan or programme irrespective of whether this plan is adopted?”

5.3.2 If the answer to the above is **‘yes’**, then it will normally be appropriate to screen the project out at this point.

5.3.3 None of the policies within the SHS were screened out in this way.

5.4 Category 3: No Significant Effect

5.4.1 Category 3 looks to screen out elements of the plan that could potentially have no significant effects on European sites. This stage has been split into five aspects:

a) Intended to protect the natural environment, including biodiversity, or to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment, where enhancement measures will not be likely to have any negative effect on a European site;

b) Which will not themselves lead to development or other change, e.g. because they relate to design or other qualitative criteria for development or other kinds of change;

c) Which make provision for change but which could have no conceivable effect on a European site, because there is no link or pathway between them and the qualifying interests, or any effect would be a positive effect, or would not otherwise undermine the conservation objectives for the site;

d) Which make provision for change but which could have no significant effect on a European site, because any potential effects would be trivial, or ‘de minimis’ or so restricted or remote from the site that they would not undermine the conservation objectives for the site; and

e) For which effects on any particular European site cannot be identified, because the proposal is too general, for example, it is not known where, when or how the proposal may be implemented, or where effects may occur, or which sites, if any, may be affected. These aspects of the plan may also be very similar to, or the same as, those screened out under screening step 1, relating to general policy statements.

5.4.2 Of the 21 policies a further six have been assessed as fulfilling the above criteria. In each case the policies meet sub categories 'a' or 'b'. The policies are as follows:

- Policy 9: Skills;
- Policy 12: Housing Type and Tenure;
- Policy 14: Green Infrastructure;
- Policy 15: Gaps;
- Policy 19: Building Construction; and
- Policy 20: Food Production.

5.5 Consideration of In-Combination Effects

5.5.1 The Habitats Directive states that an Appropriate Assessment of a plan should be undertaken if it would result in a likely significant effect upon a European site either individually or **"in combination with other plans or projects"**. It identifies that the effects of a single plan on its own could result in unlikely or insignificant impacts and recognises that other plans within the same geographical area or linked in a relevant way can result in a cumulative effect. On this basis an in-combination assessment was prepared to appraise the eleven screened-out policies with other policies within the plan. This confirmed the need to explore the remaining ten policies in more detail.

5.6 European Sites Screened Out

5.6.1 The following sites have been screened out from further assessment due to a number of factors including review of literature, site vulnerabilities and likely impacts. A number of the identified sites cover the same physical area and differentiate through the designation of important ecological features. While the sites are designated for different features they are intrinsically linked at the strategic landscape ecology level and have been assessed together.

5.6.2 Of the 31 sites identified, eight outside the 20km area of search were deemed to be too distant from the PUSH area and a lack of viable links by which impacts could be transferred. They are as follows:

- Arun Valley SPA and Ramsar;
- Dorset Heathlands SAC, SPA and Ramsar;
- Duncton to Bignor Escarpment SAC;
- Ebernoe Common SAC;
- Great Yews SAC;
- The Mens SAC;
- Thursley, Hankley and Frenshaw Common SAC and SPA; and
- Woolmer Forest SAC.

5.6.3 Following screening, a further 14 sites were screened out:

- Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar;

- Briddlesford Copses SAC;
- East Hampshire Hangers SAC;
- Isle of Wight Downs SAC;
- Kingley Vale SAC;
- Mottisfont Bats SAC;
- Pagham Harbour SPA and Ramsar;
- Porton Down SPA;
- River Avon SAC;
- Rook Clift SAC;
- Singleton and Cocking Tunnels SAC;
- South Wight Maritime SAC;
- Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA; and
- Woolmer Forest SAC.

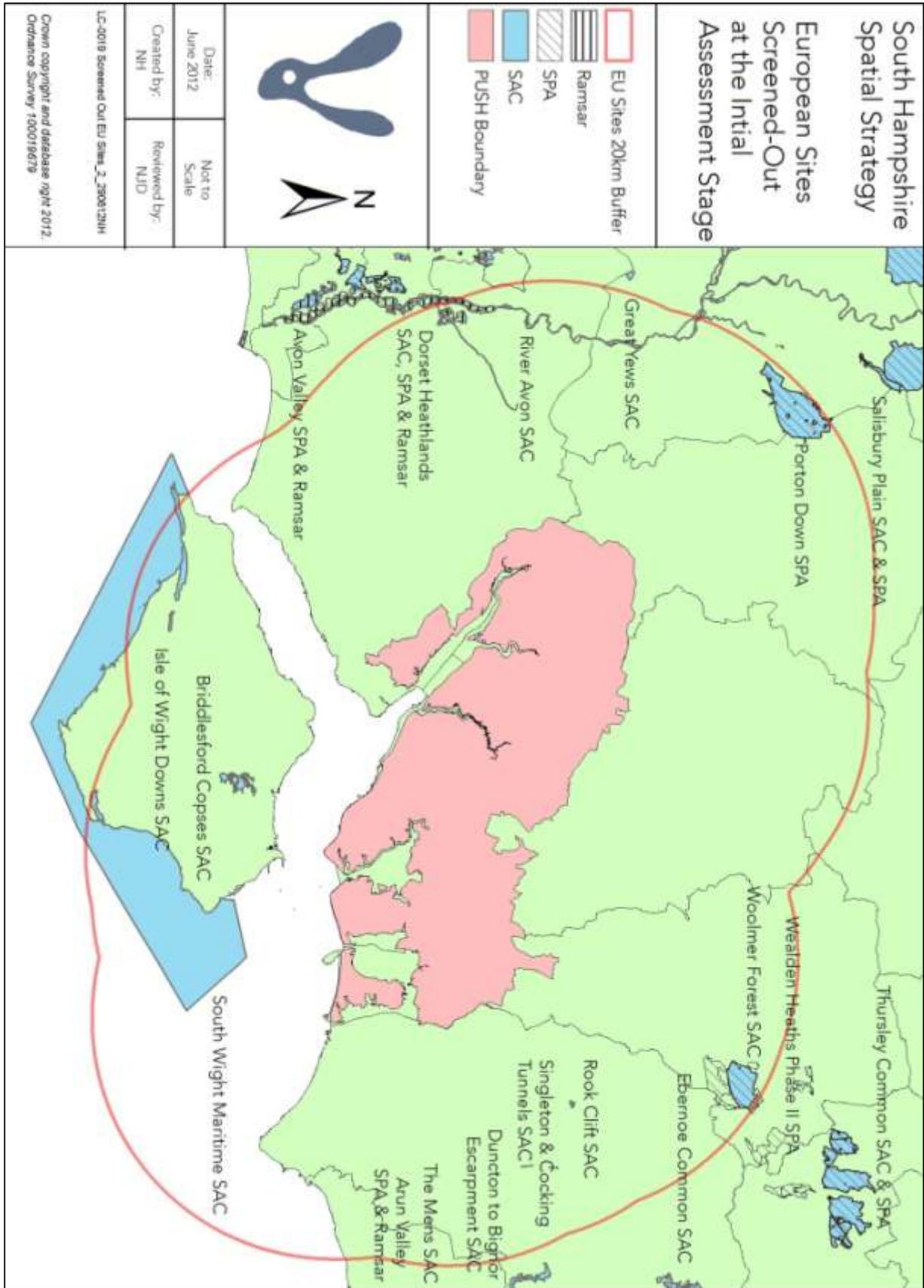


Figure N 5.1: European Sites Screened-Out

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6 Screening: Further Assessment and Mitigation

6.1 Policies Assessed

6.1.1 The following policies were unable to be screened out in the previous chapter and as such were subject to further assessment. .

- **Policy 2:** Urban Regeneration;
- **Policy 3:** North of Fareham SDA;
- **Policy 4** South Hampshire-wide provision for development;
- **Policy 6:** Provision for net new employment floor-space 2011-2026;
- **Policy 7:** Allocation of employment sites;
- **Policy 10:** retailing and city/town centres;
- **Policy 11:** Provision for net additional homes 2011-2026;
- **Policy 16:** Culture and tourism;
- **Policy 17:** Managing flood risk, water and wastewater; and
- **Policy 18:** Energy.

6.1.2 Each policy was assessed in the context of potential effects on the nine European sites deemed to be vulnerable.

6.2 Impacts of Policies

6.2.1 Each site has been assessed to be vulnerable to a range of impacts from the assessed policies:

Chichester and Langstone Harbour: The sites have been identified as potentially impacted through a variety of pressures including water resources, water quality, coastal squeeze and changes to the natural physical processes of the site, air quality, recreational pressures, tall buildings, urbanisation and habitat loss and fragmentation.

Butser Hill SAC: The following potential impacts upon site integrity have been identified upon the European site; air pollution impacts resulting in eutrophication and pressures upon adjacent habitats from land use.

Emer Bog SAC: The site has been assessed as potentially impacted through water resources, recreational pressures, air quality, land take and habitat loss

New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar: The site has been identified to be potentially impacted by a number of issues including recreational pressures, water abstraction, water quality, air quality, recreational pressures and habitat loss.

Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Ramsar: The following potential impacts upon site integrity have been identified upon the European site; water quality, coastal squeeze and changes in physical processes, air quality, recreational pressures, tall buildings, habitat loss and urbanisation.

River Itchen SAC: The site has been assessed to be potentially impacted from water resources, water quality and wastewater, air pollution and habitat loss/fragmentation.

Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC: The site has been assessed to be potentially impacted through water resources, water quality, coastal squeeze and changes in physical processes, recreational pressures, tall buildings, habitat loss and fragmentation and urbanisation.

Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar: Potential impacts have been assessed to include water resources, water quality, coastal squeeze and changes in physical processes recreational pressures, tall buildings, and habitat loss and fragmentation.

Solent Maritime SAC: Assessed potential impacts include water quality coastal squeeze and changes in physical and habitat loss and fragmentation.

6.3 Mitigation Measures

6.3.1 The following list of measures has been suggested to avoid and mitigate the impacts of the South Hampshire Strategy policies upon European sites.

- Use of Green Infrastructure to mitigate at source through development design such as green roofs, walls, appropriate planting schemes, street trees, sustainable transport;
- Multi-functional use of open space for both recreation and nature conservation where appropriate;
- Promotion and provision of attractive alternative sites (PUSH and local GI Strategies);
- Onsite mitigation including site wardens, public education, control of parking, local by-laws, zoning, strategic facility provision;
- Focus development on brownfield sites;
- Retain multifunctional open space;
- Improve quality (ecological enhancement) of existing open space (as in PUSH GI Strategy) for bird species;
- Local protection of supplementary bird feeding and roost sites;
- Behavioural measures and modal shift - reducing the amount of traffic overall;
- Traffic management - modifying traffic behaviour to control where emissions are generated;
- Emissions reduction at source - reducing the emissions level per vehicle;
- Roadside barriers - reducing the impact on the public of emissions;

-
- Integrated sustainable transport network;
 - Provision of public transport;
 - Mitigate at receptor through planting along transport corridors to absorb pollutants;
 - Ensure water supply provision is suitable before planning is granted;
 - Strategic location of infrastructure developments to meet existing/required needs;
 - Suitable development in water supply and wastewater treatment infrastructure to meet forecast demand;
 - Tall building mitigation including building lights of at night, decrease light pollution during migration, reduction in the "lighthouse effect" during bad weather;
 - Buildings should not be located within proximity to flight paths, existing feeding, roosting habitats and other sensitive areas;
 - Features to attract birds (green roofs/walls and other GI features) should not be used where bird strike is a potential issue;
 - Zones of constraint around designated sites to minimise the effects of urbanisation.
 - Sympathetic building design so sight lines are not adversely effected, stepped towards waterfront;
 - Locate away from flight paths so no interference with migrating and commuting routes;
 - Incorporation of GI to provide suitable bird habitat on buildings; and
 - Buffer zone away from vulnerable areas.

6.3.2 Where policies have been assessed to result in likely significant effects, the avoidance and mitigation measures suggested should be implemented or incorporated into the South Hampshire Strategy. This should assist in mitigating any likely significant effects to European sites.

6.3.3 Provided that the recommendations are incorporated, or alternatively, passed onto the PUSH LPAs, it is considered that the SHS will contain effective levels of mitigation to address the issues identified through the HRA-lite process. The recommendations should be understood in conjunction with the need for broader actions including integrated partnerships to manage natural resources and the implementation of strategic recommendations to ensure the integrity of European sites. This HRA-lite process does not preclude the need for further HRA work for other land-use plans at a lower level or project scale where the potential for any likely significant effects upon the integrity of European sites needs to be revisited.

- 6.3.4 If the plan can avoid or reduce likely significant effects through straightforward mitigation measures then these measures should be undertaken. Mitigation should be implemented when there are adverse effects upon European sites as a result of any of the policies of the South Hampshire Strategy. Any impacts and damage to internationally important sites should be avoided. The implementation of avoidance and subsequent mitigation measures should result in the minimising the potential impacts upon European sites.
- 6.3.5 The funding of the suggested mitigation measures is of key importance. It is essential to ensure the effectiveness of any and all mitigation. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or Section 106 Agreements have a significant role to play. CIL is a new levy which LPAs can choose to charge on new developments within their boundaries. The money raised should be used to invest in the development of infrastructure in the local area, this includes transport schemes, flood defences, schools, hospitals and other health and social care facilities, parks, green spaces and leisure centres.
- 6.3.6 The second method is through Section 106 (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The S106 allows the LPA to enter a legally binding agreement with a landowner in association with granting of planning permission. S106 agreements are a way of delivering or addressing matters that are necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms. They are increasingly used to support the provision of services and infrastructure, such as highways, recreational facilities, education, health and affordable housing (Local Government Improvement and Development 2001-2010). Both funding streams can be used to fund mitigation activities.

7 Conclusions and Limitations

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 This document sets out the assessment findings in relation to HRA-lite for the South Hampshire Strategy. It identifies potential issues and includes recommendations for some of the policies of the SHS.

7.2 Findings

7.2.1 At this final stage of the assessment process the appraisal has identified that the following policies can be screened out as having no likely significant effects upon European sites:

- **Policy 1:** Overall development strategy;
- **Policy 5:** Quality Places ;
- **Policy 8:** Suitability and safeguarding of employment sites;
- **Policy 9:** Skills;
- **Policy 12:** Housing type and tenure;
- **Policy 14:** Green infrastructure;
- **Policy 15:** Gaps;
- **Policy 19:** Building construction;
- **Policy 20:** Food production; and
- **Policy 21:** Corporate sustainability.

7.2.2 Of the 31 European sites identified 22 were discounted at the preliminary screening stage. Eight were deemed to be too distant from the PUSH area and lacked viable links by which impacts could be transferred. 14 were screened out following the assessment.

7.2.3 All screened out sites at initial screening were as follows:

- Arun Valley SPA and Ramsar;
- Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar;
- Briddlesford Copses SAC;
- Dorset Heathlands SAC, SPA and Ramsar;
- Dunton to Bignor Escarpment SAC;
- Ebernoe Common SAC;
- Great Yews SAC;
- Isle of Wight Downs SAC;
- Porton Downs SPA;
- River Avon SAC;
- Rook Clift SAC;
- Salisbury Plain SAC and SPA;

- Singleton & Cocking Tunnels SAC;
- South Wight Maritime SAC;
- The Mens SAC;
- Thursley, Hankley and Frenshaw Common SAC, SPA;
- Wealden Heaths Phase II SAC and SPA; and
- Woolmer Forest SAC.

7.2.4 While the policies may result in some effects upon the sites in all likelihood there will be no significant effects upon the integrity of European sites. The primary reasoning for discounting the 14 sites from further assessment was due to the distances from the PUSH area and lack of impact pathways (eg: hydrologically), the presence of alternative sites within closer proximity and the conclusions of previous HRA work.

7.2.5 The detailed further assessment of the remaining policies identified likely significant effects with the following ten policies:

- **Policy 2:** Urban Regeneration;
- **Policy 3:** North of Fareham Strategic Development Area;
- **Policy 4:** South Hampshire-wide provision for development;
- **Policy 6:** Provision for net new employment floor space 2011-2026
- **Policy 7:** Allocation of employment sites;
- **Policy 10:** Retailing and city/town centres;
- **Policy 11:** Provision for net additional homes 2011-2026;
- **Policy 13:** Infrastructure;
- **Policy 16:** Culture & Tourism;
- **Policy 17:** Managing flood risk, water and wastewater; and
- **Policy 18:** Energy.

7.2.6 The potential effects have been assessed in Chapter 7 of the technical report. Mitigation measures outlined should be implemented to prevent any significant adverse effects upon the integrity of European sites. If the recommendations as outlined in the in this assessment are adhered to then the SHS should result in no likely significant effects alone or in-combination with other plans or programmes.

7.2.7 Many of these recommendations are likely to be relevant to local plans in the PUSH area. As such it is recommended that this document is promoted to LPAs so that future HRA work can incorporate or be aware of the avoidance and mitigations proposals when delivering the content of the SHS.

7.3 Limitations

7.3.1 There are still a number of gaps in the baseline data. For example research which is due to report shortly such as Phase 3 of the Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project. This document has not been subject to consultation outside of PUSH. The assessment should be used to inform further assessment work.

7.3.2 It should be borne in mind that this report has not been undertaken as part of the statutory HRA process. It is designed to inform local and land use plans in the PUSH area through a spirit of cooperation amongst partner organisations. It is necessarily strategic and the findings take the form of recommendations. PUSH will share the findings amongst its partners. All findings and proposals can assist in guiding HRA at the local level. This report and the HRA-lite approach do not replace the need for statutory HRA at the local level.

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Lepus Consulting Ltd 206 Eagle Tower Montpellier Drive Cheltenham GL50 1TA
Tel: 01242 525222 www.lepusconsulting.com enquiries@lepusconsulting.com