

**Habitats Regulation Screening  
Report**

**ACP 2023-009**

**Lee-on-Solent RNP Procedures Proposal**

15 July 2024

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1.0	Initial Issue	15 July 2024	Initial Issue

## Executive Summary

This report relates to the Habitats Regulations Assessment scoping exercise conducted for the Airspace Change Proposal to the addition of Required Navigation Performance Instrument Approach Procedures to Solent Airport's Runway 05/23. It concludes that additional or enhanced assessment should not be determined for this part of the Airspace Change Proposal.

## Abbreviations

ACP	Airspace Change Proposal
GA	General Aviation
HRA	Habitats Regulation Assessment
IAP	Instrument Approach Procedure
KM	Kilometre
Ramsar	Wetlands of International Importance agreed under the Ramsar Convention
RNP	Required Navigation Performance
SCA	Special Areas of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Areas

## References

- [1] CAA (2023), Civil Aviation publication (CAP)1616 [www.caa.co.uk/our-work/publications/documents/content/cap1616i/](http://www.caa.co.uk/our-work/publications/documents/content/cap1616i/)
- [2] DEFRA (2024), MAGIC website <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>
- [3] DEFRA (2023), Habitats Regulations Assessments : protecting a European site;  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/habitats-regulations-assessments-protecting-a-european-site>

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# 1. Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening

## 1.1. Introduction

1.1.1. This report relates to the scoping exercise carried out to determine whether a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required for the Airspace Change Proposal (ACP) (ACP-2023-009) at Lee-on-Solent Airport.

1.1.2. The report begins with an overview of the Methodology adopted for the scoping exercise. The following section describes the findings of the scoping exercise to determine whether there are European sites within the proximity of the Airport. This is followed by a section related to the screening criteria detailed in CAP1616i<sup>1</sup>. The final section provides a conclusion.

## 1.2. Methodology

1.2.1. The Desktop scoping exercise used the Government's Magic mapping application<sup>2</sup>. For each of the European sites (as defined in Section 1.3 below), a map was created to show any category of area required to be assessed under HRA guidance. The Maps produced were evaluated and the findings reported in the following section. Once this data had been obtained, the HRA Early Screening Criteria questionnaire was addressed.

## 1.3. European Sites

1.3.1. According to Government guidance<sup>3</sup>, the following European sites are protected by the

- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/>
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs). <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/list-of-spas/>

1.3.2. Any proposals affecting the following sites would also require an HRA because they are protected by government policy:

- Proposed SACs.
- Potential SPAs.
- Ramsar sites - Wetlands of International Importance (both listed and proposed). <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/ramsar-sites/>
- Areas secured as sites compensating for damage to a European site.

1.3.3. A desktop scoping exercise was undertaken to identify European sites within 18KM of Solent Airport's Runway 05/23. Due to the scale, and for brevity, constructing a map from both ends of the runway would show no further appreciable detail and no additional sites would

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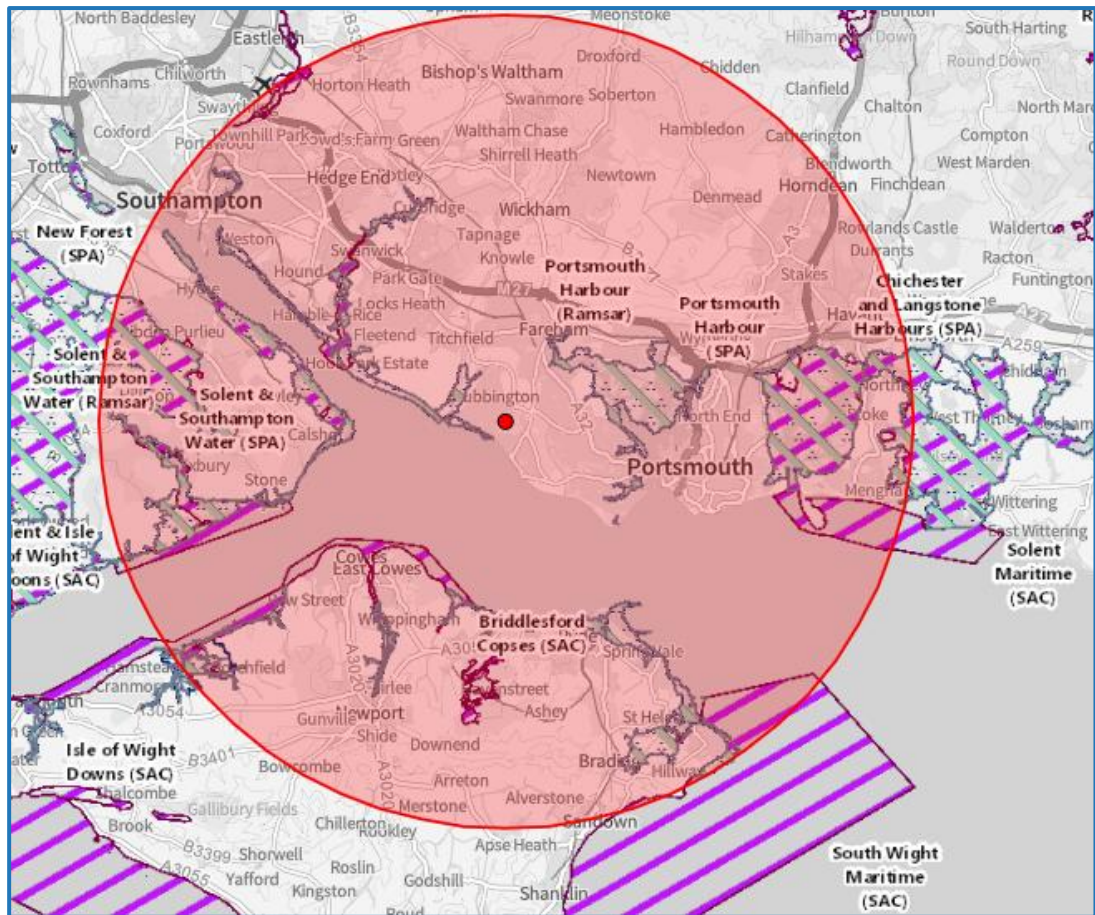
<sup>1</sup> [www.caa.co.uk/our-work/publications/documents/content/cap1616i/](http://www.caa.co.uk/our-work/publications/documents/content/cap1616i/)

<sup>2</sup> The MAGIC website provides geographic information about the natural environment from across government. It is presented in an interactive map which can be explored using various mapping tools that are included. <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/habitats-regulations-assessments-protecting-a-european-site>

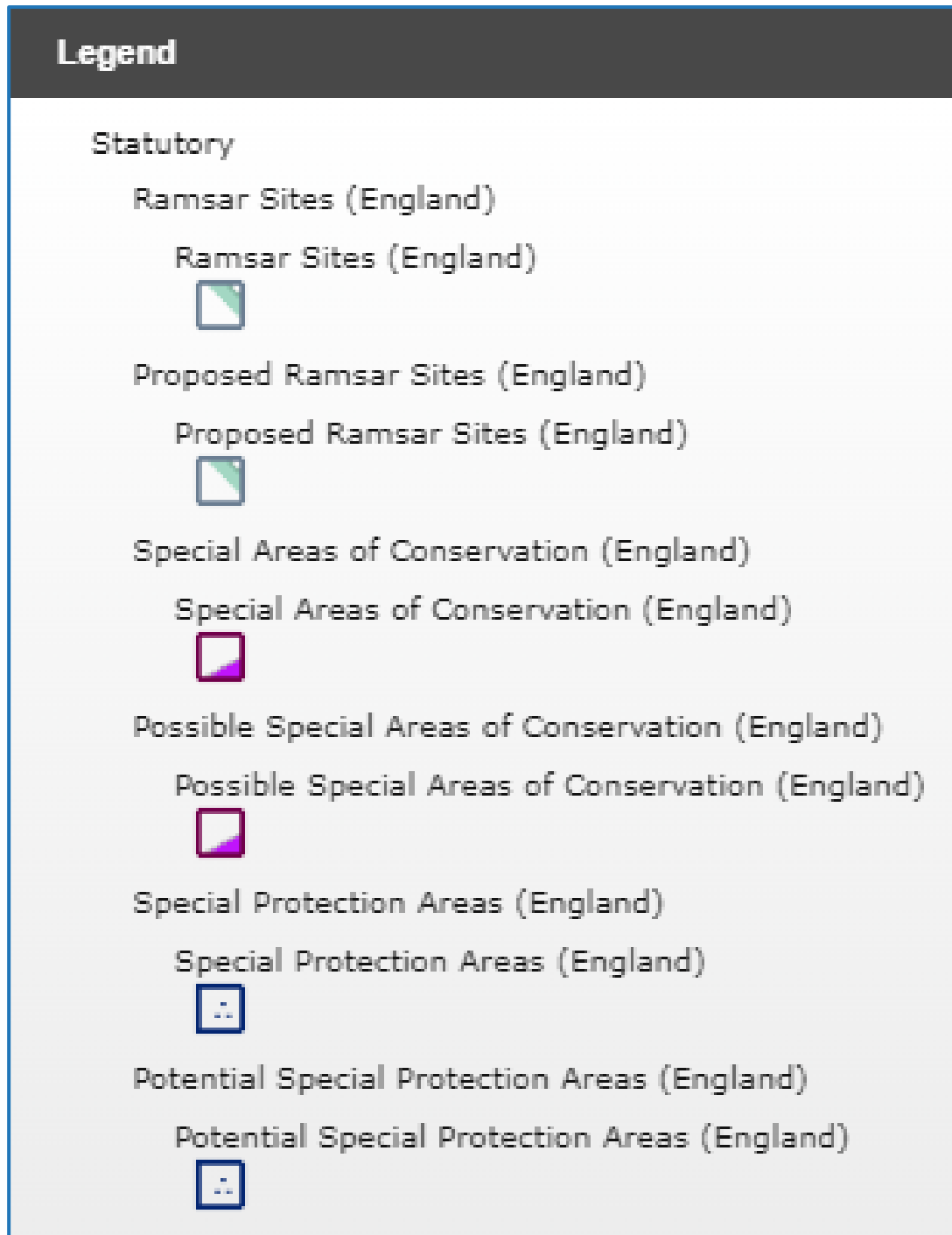
be covered. This included, as listed above, identifying any SACs (both existing and potential), SPAs (both existing and possible) and Ramsar sites.

- 1.3.4. SACs are designated protected areas in the European Union that are chosen for their ecological significance and conservation value. SACs are designated under the European Union's Habitats Directive and aim to protect habitats and species of European importance. The protection afforded to SACs remains unchanged following the UK European Exit. There appears to be three SACs within 18KM of the Airfield – two of which are Maritime areas. These are: Briddlesford Copses, the Solent Maritime and South Wight Maritime.
- 1.3.5. SPAs are designated protected areas in the European Union that are chosen for their importance as habitats for certain bird species. These areas are designated under the European Birds Directive and are intended to protect and conserve the habitats of wild birds, especially migratory and vulnerable species. The Protection afforded to SPAs remains unchanged following the UK European Exit. There also appears to be three SPAs within 18KM of the Airfield, namely, Portsmouth Harbour, Chichester and Langstone Harbours and, once again, Solent and Southampton Water.
- 1.3.6. Ramsar sites are designated wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, and they typically cover a wide range of wetland types, including lakes, rivers, marshes, and coastal areas. There are two Ramsar sites within 18KM of the Airfield; Portsmouth Harbour and Solent and Southampton Water.



© MAGIC Maps (DEFRA)

Figure 1: European Sites within 18KM of Lee-on-Solent Airfield



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**Figure 2: Site Designation Legend for Map at Figure 1.**

## 1.4. Early Screening Criteria<sup>4</sup>

- 1.4.1. In CAP1616H: *Guidance on ACP Process for Level 3 and Pre-Scaled ACPs*, it is stated that *'The Change Sponsor must complete the habitats regulations assessment early screening criteria form as given in CAP 1616i, Environmental Assessment Requirements and Guidance for ACPs. No further habitats regulations assessment will be required if the change sponsor can reasonably demonstrate that their ACP is unlikely to have a significant effect on a European site'*.
- 1.4.2. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) have noted that *'As part of the review of the CAP 1616 ACP, a new 'Level 3' category has been introduced for changes to the Notified Airspace Design that have the potential for low impact to both aviation and non-aviation stakeholders'*.
- 1.4.3. Therefore by reassigning this ACP to that of a Level 3 Assessment it is acknowledged that the ACP has potential for low impact to both aviation and non-aviation stakeholders. Non-aviation stakeholders would include the habitats which this report evaluates. Also, with this Level 3 ACP acknowledged as having the potential for low impact to non-aviation stakeholders, one must agree that it is reasonable to assume that the second part of the statement in 1.4.1 holds true – *'No further habitats regulations assessment will be required if the change sponsor can reasonably demonstrate that their airspace change proposal is unlikely to have a significant effect on a European site'*.
- 1.4.4. The HRA Early Screening Criteria Form was assessed and completed. However the first question is structured in such a way as to provide for the answering of the form to stop at that point with a negative response.

**Q1.** Are there any changes to air traffic patterns or number of movements expected below 3,000 feet due to the airspace change proposal?

*If the answer to Q1 is 'no' then habitats regulations assessment is no longer required.*

If the answer to Q1 is 'yes' then proceed to Q2 below.

Our answer to Question 1 was 'No'.

A justification for our answer was submitted with the questionnaire. Essentially, the promulgation of Required Navigation Performance (RNP) procedures to Runways 05 and 23 at Lee-on-Solent Airport will not change any pattern of traffic in the area. Aircraft departing or arriving at the airfield will fly in essentially the same areas that will encompass the procedures. Indeed, the Solent area as a whole is very busy as far as General Aviation (GA) traffic is concerned. These new Proposed Instrument Approach Procedures (IAPs) are not intended to be used in such a manner whereby aircraft are in holding stacks waiting to complete the procedures, but rather in a strictly-controlled way limiting the daily use of them. Thus, the promulgation of new IAPs at the Airfield will not appreciably increase the amount of air traffic at the airfield or it's vicinity.

Whilst the question uses the altitude of 3000 feet, much of the GA traffic in the area operates below this altitude presently, either constrained by airspace or due to sight-seeing, which by

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<sup>4</sup> Civil Aviation Publication (CAP)1616i

its nature, generally necessitates a lower altitude. Any perceived or actual impact to the sites highlighted by the 18KM circle is, in our opinion, highly unlikely to be impacted any more or less by the addition of two IAPs at the Airfield compared to the extant situation.

- 1.4.5. Therefore the conclusion is that, similar to the statement in 1.4.1, the Proposed procedures will be unlikely to affect the traffic patterns in the Solent area to any significant practical degree.

## 1.5. Conclusion

- 1.5.1. Given the findings of the scoping exercise and subsequent screening, it has been concluded that further or enhanced HRA should not be determined for the Airspace Change (ACP-2023-009). Whilst there quite obviously are European sites within the area dictated by the 18KM radius circle around Solent Airport these are existing sites which are in an area of substantial air traffic at the moment to which the addition of Instrument Approaches will make no additional measurable impact.



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