



Habitat Regulation Assessment Screening Assessment

Houses in Multiple Occupation Draft Supplementary Planning Document (March 2026)

1: Introduction

It is a requirement under the Habitats Directive to establish the potential effects of “plans or projects” on designated European sites, and therefore Ramsar sites. The first stage in the HRA process is to establish whether a “significant effect” is likely. This is referred to as the “screening stage”. If it is found that a significant effect is not likely, then no further action is required. If potential effects are identified and deemed to be significant then Appropriate Assessment is required and used as a tool to help modify the plan or project to ensure that impacts are removed, or if this is not possible mitigated to prevent an adverse effect upon the integrity of the site.

2: HRA screening assessment

The purpose of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of land use plans is to ensure that protection of the integrity of European sites is part of the planning process. The requirements for HRA of plans and projects is outlined in the European Communities (1992) Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora otherwise known as the Habitats Directive. The Habitats Directive requirement to carry out HRA for land use plans is primarily transposed into English law under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

European sites are Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar sites. The Borough of Stockton-on-Tees contains one designated site - the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA. The site has also been recognised as a wetland of international importance for nature conservation, under the Ramsar Convention. Other SPAs / SACs and Ramsar sites located within adjacent of more distant authorities include North York Moors SPA/SAC (approx. 9 km), Thrislington SAC (approx. 9 miles), Castle Eden Dene SAC (approx. 10 miles), Durham Coast SAC (approx. 10 miles), and Northumbria Coast SPA/Ramsar (approx. 10 miles).

3: HRA screening conclusions

The SPD does not propose any policies or allocations, instead offering clarity on the interpretation of policies within the Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan and sets out guidance and good practice for planning applicants to enable the delivery of better planning outcomes. The SPD will not result in any significant new development; it simply provides additional guidance on proposals for HMOs. The Houses in Multiple Occupation SPD is therefore not likely to have significant adverse effects on the integrity of European sites or Ramsar sites and further Appropriate Assessment is not required

It is important to note that this screening assessment is based on the consultation version of the SPD. Consequently, if the content or purpose of the SPD should materially change then the HRA screening will need to be re-assessed and updated.