

**HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT FOR AN APPLICATION  
UNDER THE PLANNING ACT 2008**

**Gatwick Airport Northern Runway**

**21 September 2025**

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## Annex

Annex 1: Conservation Objectives

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **Background**

- 1.1 This document (“the HRA Report”) is a record of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (“HRA”) that the Secretary of State for Transport (“the Secretary of State”) has undertaken under regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (“the Habitats Regulations”) in respect of the Development Consent Order (“DCO”), for the proposed ‘Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Project’ (“the Proposed Development”). The HRA Report includes an appropriate assessment for the purposes of regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations.
- 1.2 The Habitats Regulations were amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (“the 2019 Regulations”) and the amendments were taken into account in the preparation of this HRA Report. Reference to the Habitats Regulations in this HRA Report are therefore to the latest amended version, unless otherwise stated.
- 1.3 Gatwick Airport Limited (“the Applicant”) submitted an application for development consent (“the Application”) to the Planning Inspectorate (“the Inspectorate”) which was received in full on 6 July 2023. The Application was made under section 37(2) of the Planning Act 2008 (“PA 2008”) [ER 1.1.1]. The Proposed Development to which the Application relates is described in more detail in Section 2 of this HRA Report.
- 1.4 The Proposed Development meets the definition of a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (“NSIP”) as set out in section 14(1)(h) and (i) of the PA2008. It comprises both highway development and airport related development, within sections 22(1)(b), (3) and (4) and 23(1)(b), (4), (5) and (6) of the PA2008 and so requires development consent under section 31 of the PA2008 [ER 1.1.4 and 1.1.5].
- 1.5 The Application was accepted for Examination by the Inspectorate (under the delegated authority of the Secretary of State) on 3 August 2023 [ER 1.1.1]. The Examination began on 27 February 2024 and concluded on 27 August 2024 [ER 1.5.3].
- 1.6 The Examining Authority (“ExA”) submitted the Recommendation Report to the Secretary of State on 27 November 2024.
- 1.7 The Secretary of State’s conclusions in relation to European sites have been informed by the Recommendation Report, documents and representation submitted during the Examination and further clarifications that were requested from the ExA insofar as these have any bearing on the effects of the Proposed Development on European sites.

## **Habitats Regulations Assessment (“HRA”)**

- 1.8 The Habitats Regulations provide for the designation of sites for the protection of certain species and habitats. These are collectively termed “European sites” and form part of a network of protected sites across the UK known as the “national site network”. The UK Government is also a signatory to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance 1971 (“the Ramsar Convention”). The Ramsar Convention

provides for the listing of wetlands of international importance. UK Government policy is to give sites listed under this convention (“Ramsar sites”) the same protection as European sites.

- 1.9 For the purposes of this HRA Report, in line with the Habitats Regulations and relevant Government policy<sup>1</sup>, the term “European sites” includes Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), candidate SACs, possible SACs, Special Protection Areas (SPA), potential SPAs, Sites of Community Importance, listed and proposed Ramsar sites and sites identified or required as compensatory measures for adverse effects on any of these sites.
- 1.10 Regulation 63(1) of the Habitats Regulations requires that:
- “(1) A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which-*
- (a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and*
- (b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site,*
- must make an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan or project for that site in view of that site’s conservation objectives...”*
- 1.11 The Development is not connected with or necessary to the management of any European sites. Accordingly, the Secretary of State for Transport, as the competent authority for the purposes of Transport NSIPs under the PA2008, has undertaken an assessment in line with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations. This HRA Report (Sections 1 to 5) is the record of the appropriate assessment for the purposes of regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations.

**The Report on the Implications for European Sites (“RIES”) and consultation with the appropriate nature conservation body**

- 1.12 The ExA, with support from the Inspectorate’s Environmental Services Team, produced a Report on the Implications for European Sites (“the RIES”) [PD-026]. The purpose of the RIES was to compile, document and signpost information submitted by the Applicant and Interested Parties (“IPs”) during the Examination up to and including Deadline 7 of the Examination (15 July 2024). The RIES was issued to set out the ExA’s understanding on HRA relevant information and the position of IPs, including Natural England (“NE”), in relation to the effects of the Development on European sites at that point in time. The consultation on the RIES ran between 25 July and 21 August 2024. The Applicant [REP8-122] and NE [REP9-162] submitted their comments on the RIES by Deadline 9 (21 August 2024) and these comments were taken into account in producing the ExA’s HRA assessment [ER 19.1.6].
- 1.13 Regulation 63(3) of the Habitats Regulations requires competent authorities (in this case the Secretary of State), if they undertake an appropriate assessment, to consult the appropriate nature conservation body and have regard to any representations made by that body.

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024.

- 1.14 The ExA's recommendation is that the RIES, and consultation on it, may be relied upon as an appropriate body of information to enable the Secretary of State to fulfil their duties of consultation under regulation 63(3) of the Habitats Regulations, should the Secretary of State wish to do so [ER 19.1.7].
- 1.15 Therefore, the Secretary of State is satisfied that NE, as the appropriate nature conservation body in respect of the Application for the Proposed Development, had been formally consulted on Habitats Regulations matters during the Examination.

### **Changes to the Application during Examination**

- 1.16 The Applicant requested three changes to the Proposed Development to which the Application relates during the Examination, as set out in Section 1.6 of the ExA Recommendation Report. The Secretary of State understands that all changes have been consolidated within one document [REP10-020] [ER 1.6.3]. The ExA considered that all changes were non-material and could be accepted into the Examination and would not lead to the Proposed Development being different in nature or substance to that which was originally applied for in July 2023 [ER 1.6.14]. The ExA issued PD-027 on 14 August 2024 to accept the proposed change request into the Examination [ER 1.6.16]. The Secretary of State agrees that no relevant HRA matters have arisen from these change requests that would alter the conclusions of the HRA Report [ER 19.1.13 and RIES paragraph 1.3.2].

### **Documents referred to in this HRA Report**

- 1.17 This HRA Report has taken account of and should be read in conjunction with the documents produced as part of the Application and Examination available on the Planning Inspectorate website.
- 1.18 The Applicant submitted with the DCO Application:
- Environmental Statement (ES) Appendix 9.9.1 Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (Part 1) [APP-134] updated at Deadline 3 [REP3-043] and ES Appendix 9.9.1 Habitats Regulations Assessment Report Part 2 [APP-135] updated at Deadline 3 [REP3-045] (referred to as the "the Applicant's HRA") [ER 19.1.11];
- 1.19 The Applicant's HRA is supported by the following ES Chapters [ER 19.1.12]:
- ES Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation [APP-034];
  - ES Chapter 12: Traffic and Transport [APP-037] updated 14 November 2023 [AS-076] and at Deadline 3 [REP3-016];
  - ES Chapter 13: Air Quality [APP-038] updated at Deadline 3 [REP3-018];
  - ES Chapter 20: Cumulative Effects and Inter-relationships [APP-045];
  - ES Appendix 9.3.1: Summary of Stakeholder Scoping Responses – Ecology and Nature Conservation [APP-120]; and
  - ES Appendix 20.4.1: Cumulative Effects Assessment Long and Short List [APP-216].

- 1.20 The ExA has set out records of examination procedure, evidence and reasoning to support their HRA conclusion in the RIES [PD-026].

### **Structure of this HRA Report**

- 1.21 The remainder of this HRA Report is presented as follows:
- Section 2 provides a general description of the Proposed Development.
  - Section 3 describes the location of the Proposed Development and its relationship with European sites.
  - Section 4 identifies the European sites and qualifying features subject to likely significant effects, alone or in combination with other plans or project (HRA Stage 1).
  - Section 5 considers adverse effects on the integrity of European sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects and summarises the Secretary of State's appropriate assessment and conclusions (HRA Stage 2).
  - Section 6 summarises the Secretary of State's conclusion in respect of HRA Stages 1 and 2.

## **2. DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 A description of the Proposed Development is set out in the Application form [APP-002], and Chapter 5 of the ES [APP-030] which was subsequently updated at Deadline 10 to reflect all amendments to the ES throughout the Examination [REP10-020]. The description is summarised in Chapter 1 of the Recommendation Report, and set out below.
- 2.2 The Proposed Development involves alterations to the existing northern runway which, together with the lifting of the current restrictions on its use, would enable dual runway operations [ER 1.3.9].
- 2.3 Dual runway operations would create the following changes to runway operations:
- all arriving flights would use the existing main runway;
  - departing flights would be shared between the existing main runway and the northern runway, with the northern runway being used mainly for smaller aircraft; and
  - there would be controlled dependency between the two runways to enable safe crossing of the northern runway by arrival flights [ER 1.3.10].
- 2.4 The Proposed Development also includes enhancements to the taxiway system and parking stands [ER 1.3.11]. Other components of the Proposed Development include airport support facilities, works to the north and south terminals, surface access works, hotels, offices and car parking [ER 1.3.12].
- 2.5 The Proposed Development works comprise the following Work Numbers (Nos.) [AS-004] [ER 1.3.13]:

### ***Airfield Works***

Work No. 1 – Works to reposition the northern runway 12 metres to the north;  
Work No. 2 – Works to construct a runway access track between the repositioned northern runway and the main runway, running east to west;  
Work No. 3 – Works to convert three existing aircraft stands to overnight parking/remote aircraft stands;  
Work No. 4 – Works relating to the runways and taxiways;  
Work No. 5 – Works to the Aircraft Holding Area (Charlie Box);  
Work No. 6 – Works to construct a new pier (Pier 7);  
Work No. 7 – Works to construct the Oscar Area;

### ***Airport Support Facilities***

Work No. 8 – Works to remove the airside support facilities;  
Work No. 9 – Works to construct the replacement Central Area Recycling Enclosure (CARE) facility;  
Work No. 10 – Works to construct the replacement motor transport facilities;  
Work No. 11 – Works to construct the replacement grounds maintenance facilities;  
Work No. 12 – Works to construct the replacement airfield surface transport facilities;  
Work No. 13 – Works to construct the replacement Rendezvous Point North;  
Work No. 14 – Works to remove and construct the replacement fire training ground;  
Work No. 15 – Works to construct the satellite airport fire service facility;  
Work No. 16 – Works to construct a new aircraft hangar;  
Work No. 17 – Works to relocate the Hangar 7 support structures;  
Work No. 18 – Works to remove and replace the western noise mitigation bund;  
Work No. 19 – Works to construct pumping station 2a;  
Work No. 20 – Works to realign Larkins Road;

### ***Terminal Works***

Work No. 22 – Works associated with the North Terminal building;  
Work No. 23 – Works associated with the South Terminal building;  
Work No. 24 – Works to upgrade the North Terminal forecourt;  
Work No. 25 – Works to upgrade the South Terminal forecourt;

### ***Hotels, Offices and Car Parking***

Work No. 26 – Works to construct a hotel north of multi-storey car park 3;  
Work No. 27 – Works to construct a hotel on the car rental site;  
Work No. 28 – Works associated with the Car Park H Site;  
Work No. 29 – Works to convert the existing Destination Place office into a hotel;  
Work No. 30 – Works to construct Car Park Y;  
Work No. 31 – Works associated with Car Park X;  
Work No. 32 – Works to remove existing car parking at North Terminal Long Stay car park and construct a decked car parking structure;  
Work No. 33 – Works associated with the existing Purple Parking car park;  
Work No. 34 – Works to remove Car Park B South, Car Park B North, and deliver replacement open space;

### ***Surface Access Works***

Work No. 35 – Works associated with the South Terminal Junction improvements;

Work No. 36 – Works associated with the North Terminal Junction improvements;  
Work No. 37 – Work associated with the Longbridge Roundabout Junction improvements;

### ***Miscellaneous***

Work No. 38 – Works to construct the habitat enhancement area and flood compensation area at Museum Field;

Work No. 39 – Works associated with the River Mole;

Work No. 40 – Works associated with land to the north east of Longbridge Roundabout;

Work No. 41 – Works to create an ecological area at Pentagon Field;

Work No. 42 – Works to establish a habitat enhancement area along Perimeter Road East and Perimeter Road South, and works to construct a weir and a fish pass; and

Work No. 43 – Works to construct water treatment works.

Work No. 44 – Works to remove existing surface car parking and associated structures and construct wastewater treatment works.

- 2.6 The construction phase of the Proposed Development is expected to take place from 2024 – 2038, with operational phases expected to occur from 2029 which is the assumed opening year for dual runway operations. By 2032 it is anticipated that surface access works will be complete and fully operational, with the year 2038 selected as the year in which the Proposed Development will be fully operational [REP3-043, Appendix 9.9.1 Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (Part 1), paragraphs 2.2.13 to 2.2.16].
- 2.7 As such, 2032 and 2038 have been selected as assessment years in relation to air quality impacts as they are the anticipated worst-case scenario with respect to operational emissions from the Development [REP3-043, paragraph 2.2.17].

## **3. LOCATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND RELATIONSHIP WITH EUROPEAN SITES**

### **Location and existing land use**

- 3.1 The Proposed Development lies largely within the administrative area of Crawley Borough Council. Small parts of the site lie within the administrative areas of Mole Valley District Council to the north-west, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council to the north and Tandridge District Council to the north-east. The majority of the site is within the administrative area of West Sussex County Council, with small parts in the north being located in the administrative area of Surrey County Council [ER 1.3.3].
- 3.2 The Proposed Development site is within proximity to several other local authorities [ER 1.3.4]:
- Kent County Council to the east/ north-east;
  - East Sussex County Council to the east/ south-east;
  - Horsham District Council to the south-west;
  - Mid Sussex District Council to the south-east;
  - Wealden District Council to the south-east; and
  - Sevenoaks District Council to the east/ north-east.



- 3.3 The Applicant's Design and Access Statement [AS-154] provides a description of the existing Gatwick Airport site. In summary, the site is characterised by its own distinctive and well defined urban townscape, including:
- 3.4 flat and open land within the Development site, occupied by runways, taxiways, stands, surface car parking, and mown grassland;
- 3.5 the North and South Terminal clusters, which provide the main built form;
- 3.6 several large aircraft hangars, a cargo hall, hotels, multi-storey car parks, and control towers;
- 3.7 the M23 spur, which forms the main road transport route into the airport from the east, linking the M23 to the South Terminal and the A23 to the North Terminal and surrounding settlements; and
- 3.8 rail infrastructure situated immediately to the east of the Gatwick Airport site [ER 1.3.6].

### **European sites potentially affected by the Development**

- 3.9 The Proposed Development is not connected with or necessary to the management for nature conservation of any of the European sites considered within the Applicant's HRA [RIES, paragraph 2.1.1].
- 3.10 The Proposed Development does not lie within the boundary of any designated site.
- 3.11 The Applicant considered the potential for likely significant effects ("LSE") on seven European sites [ER 19.2.2]. Table 1 below presents the proximity of the sites to the Proposed Development and lists the designated features assessed.

**Table 1 European sites and qualifying features screened for potential LSE by the Applicant**

<b>Name of European Site</b>	<b>Distance from the Development boundary (km)</b>	<b>Designated features</b>
Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC UK0012804	9.22	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <p>3.12 5110 Stable xerothermophilous formations with Buxus sempervirens on rock slopes (Berberidion p.p.)</p> <p>3.13 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates *important orchid sites</p>

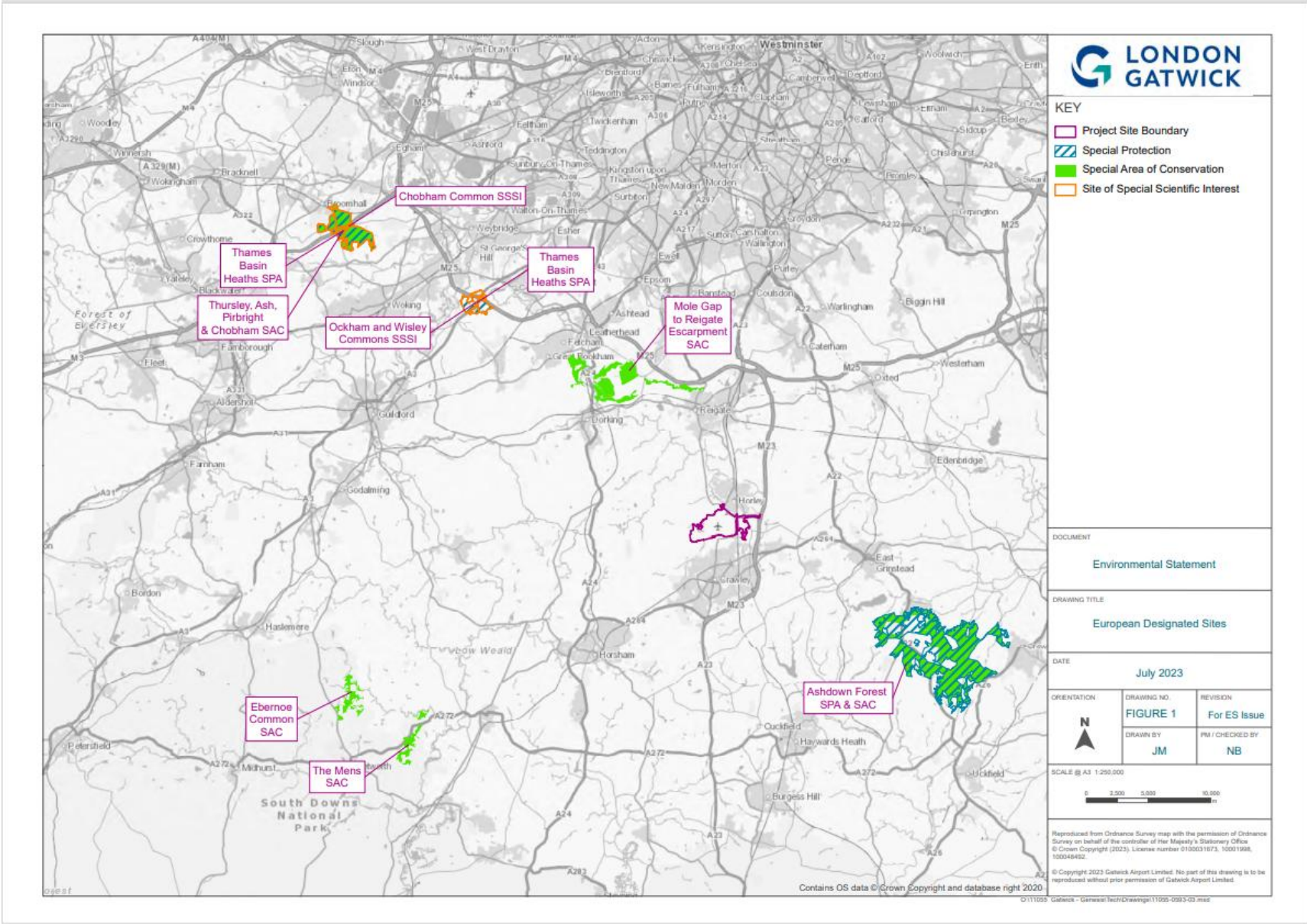
Name of European Site	Distance from the Development boundary (km)	Designated features
		<p>3.14 91J0 Taxus baccata woods of the British Isles *priority feature</p> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4030 European dry heaths</li> <li>• 9130 Asperulofagetum beech forests</li> </ul> <p>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1166 Great crested newt</li> <li>• 1323 Bechstein's bat</li> </ul>
Ashdown Forest SAC UK0030080	11.96	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix</li> <li>• 4030 European dry heaths</li> </ul> <p>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1166 Great crested newt</li> </ul>
Ashdown Forest SPA UK9012181	11.96	<p>A302 <i>Sylvia undata</i> - Dartford Warbler</p> <p>A224 <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> - Nightjar</p>
Thames Basin Heath SPA (Ockham and Wisley Site of Special Scientific Interest)	23.6	<p>A224 <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> - Nightjar</p>

Name of European Site	Distance from the Development boundary (km)	Designated features
("SSSI") and Chobham Common SSSI components only) UK9012141		A246 <i>Lullula arborea</i> - Woodlark  A302 <i>Sylvia undata</i> - Dartford Warbler
The Mens SAC UK0012716	25.09	Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9120 Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with Ilex and sometimes also Taxus in the shrub layer</li> </ul> Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1308 Barbastelle bat</li> </ul>
Ebernoe Commons SAC UK0012715	29	Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9120 Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with Ilex and sometimes also Taxus in the shrub layer (or Ilici-Fagenion)</li> </ul> Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1308 Barbastelle bat</li> <li>1323 Bechstein's bat</li> </ul>
Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC (Chobham Common SSSI component only)	33.8	Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7150 Depressions on peat substrates</li> </ul>

Name of European Site	Distance from the Development boundary (km)	Designated features
UK0012793		of the Rhynchosporion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix</li> <li>• 4030 European dry heaths</li> </ul>

- 3.15 Plans showing the European sites identified in the Applicant's HRA and their location relative to the Proposed Development are shown in Part 2, figure 1 of the Applicant's HRA [REP3-045]. Plans from the report are reproduced as Figure 1 below.
- 3.16 Section 4.2-4.9 of the Applicant's HRA [REP3-043] detail the potential impacts from the Proposed Development, along with the potential geographical extent of effects. Annex 1 to that Report entitled "Screening Matrices", lists the sites and qualifying features and the impact pathways which could affect them [RIES, paragraph 2.2.1].
- 3.17 The Applicant's HRA sets out the methodology, including how pathways of effects, was considered to determine which sites to include in the assessment. This included identifying sites within 200m of major roads where there would be an increase in traffic flows. It also includes those sites designated for bats within the potential range of the species [ER 19.2.4].
- 3.18 The Secretary of State notes that NE agreed [REP1-037] that all relevant European sites and qualifying features had been identified by the Applicant and the ExA noted that no other sites or qualifying species were identified by IPs which could be affected by the Proposed Development [ER 19.2.5].

**Figure 1 Location of the Development in relation to European sites potentially affected.**



## 4. STAGE 1: ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS (LSE)

### Potential effects from the Development

- 4.1 The Applicant sets out in its HRA [REP3-043, paragraph 1.3.5]: *‘The scope of sites considered in the assessment is based on whether there is a pathway for a potential effect. In this case such pathways are in relation to species for which the site is designated or habitats where the site is near to a road that may encounter increases in traffic flow as a result of the Project.’* This included designated sites that are within 200m of major roads where there would be increases in traffic flows and those designated for the presence of bats within the potential range of these mobile species.
- 4.2 The Applicant states in its HRA Report (REP-043, paragraph 2.2.5) that it considered the ruling of the European Court of Justice (“ECJ”) in *People Over Wind, Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta* (C-323/17) (“the People Over Wind judgment”)<sup>2</sup> in its assessment of LSE to ensure that no mitigation or avoidance measures were taken into account in reaching the HRA screening conclusion. Matters which are properly characterised as integral features or characteristics of the project which incidentally have the effect of avoiding or reducing some or all of the potentially adverse effects of a proposal should reasonably be included in an HRA screening decision.
- 4.3 In this HRA Report, the Secretary of State has also had due regard to the requirement that assessments of LSE at Stage 1 are to be based on no reasonable scientific doubt remaining in accordance with the ruling of the ECJ in *Landelijke Vereniging tot Behoud van de Waddenzee v Staatssecretaris van Landbouw* (C-127/02) (“the Waddenzee judgement”)<sup>3</sup>, as well as the ‘Wealden Judgement’<sup>4</sup> which prompted Natural England to make public their own internal guidance on assessing the effects of road traffic emissions on European Sites<sup>5</sup>. That guidance provides further information on the in combination assessment at screening stage with regard to air quality effects.
- 4.4 The Applicant’s HRA assesses the potential impacts during construction, operation and maintenance; it did not assess impacts during the decommissioning phase. This is explained in ES Chapter 6, paragraph 6.2.14; the Proposed Development is anticipated to function as an integral part of Gatwick Airport on a permanent basis

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<sup>2</sup> ECJ case reference C-323/17, available: <http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?docid=200970&doclang=EN> (Accessed 17/04/2025)

<sup>3</sup> Case no: C-127/02. [EUR-Lex - 62002CJ0127 - EN - EUR-Lex](#) (Accessed 06/06/2025)

<sup>4</sup> Case no: CO/3943/2016 [Wealden District Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Others Natural England \(Interested Party\) - vLex United Kingdom](#) (Accessed 30/05/2025)

<sup>5</sup> [Natural England’s approach to advising competent authorities on the assessment of road traffic emissions under the Habitats Regulations - NEA001](#) (Accessed 30/05/2025)

and decommissioning effects are subsequently scoped out of the ES and HRA [RIES, paragraph 2.2.2].

- 4.5 Tables A1.1 to A1.7 in Annex 1 of the RIES detail the potential impact pathways considered in the Applicant's HRA [REP3-043] for European sites and their qualifying features [RIES, paragraph 2.2.3]. The Tables consider the following potential impact pathways associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed Development as having the potential to give rise to LSE on European sites:
- Land take;
  - Habitat fragmentation;
  - Aerial emissions;
  - Aqueous emissions/discharges;
  - Noise and vibration; and
  - Lighting
- 4.6 The Secretary of State notes that Natural England guidance<sup>6</sup> has been taken into account when considering the potential effect aerial emissions may have on a designated site. The threshold used for consideration of a potential effect is where a modelled change in a pollution as a result of the change in Annual Average Daily Traffic between the Do Something (future baseline with the project)/Do minimum (future baseline without the project) and/or the project in combination scenarios is >1% of the qualifying features critical level/critical load [REP3-043 paragraph 4.5.21]. Paragraph 4.5.10 – 4.5.29 of the Applicant's HRA [REP3-043] set out a further explanation of the Applicant's approach to the operational traffic assessment and critical levels and critical loads.
- 4.7 The Secretary of State is not aware of any evidence that was presented during the Examination that the Proposed Development was likely to give rise to any other effects on European sites [ER 19.2.5].
- 4.8 The Secretary of State has reviewed the information within the Recommendation Report and the final version of the Applicant's HRA [REP3-043, REP3-045] to summarise the impact pathways identified and the LSEs on the relevant qualifying features of the seven European designated sites screened below in Table 2. The Secretary of State has obtained this information from Annex 1: Screening Matrices of the HRA and Section 4 [REP3-043].
- 4.9 Non-UK European sites in the European Economic Area States were considered in the Applicant's assessment, however, The Applicant did not identify any LSEs (REP-043 paragraph 1.3.8). No IPs raised concerns over transboundary effects during the Examination [ER 19.1.16].

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<sup>6</sup> [Natural England's approach to advising competent authorities on the assessment of road traffic emissions under the Habitats Regulations - NEA001](#)

**Table 2 European sites and qualifying features - summary of the Applicant's screening matrices set out in Annex 1 [REP3-043]**

<b>European site</b>	<b>Pathway of effect (from Construction and Operation, unless otherwise stated)</b>	<b>LSE identified either alone or in combination (Y/N)</b>	<b>Qualifying feature(s) affected</b>
Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC UK0012804	Land take	N	
	Habitat fragmentation	N	
	Aerial emissions	N	
	Aqueous emissions/discharges	N	
	Noise and vibration	N	
	Lighting	N	
Ashdown Forest SAC UK0030080	Land take	N	
	Habitat fragmentation	N	
	Aerial emissions	Y (operation only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix</li> <li>• European dry heaths</li> <li>• Great crested newt</li> </ul>
	Aqueous emissions/discharges	N	
	Noise and vibration	N	
	Lighting	N	
Ashdown Forest SPA UK9012181	Land take	N	
	Habitat fragmentation	N	
	Aerial emissions	Y (operation only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dartford Warbler</li> <li>• Nightjar</li> </ul>
	Aqueous emissions/discharges	N	
	Noise and vibration	N	
	Lighting	N	
Thames Basin Heaths SPA	Land take	N	



European site	Pathway of effect (from Construction and Operation, unless otherwise stated)	LSE identified either alone or in combination (Y/N)	Qualifying feature(s) affected
(Ockham and Wisley SSSI and Chobham Common SSSI components only) UK9012141	Habitat fragmentation	N	
	Aerial emissions	Y (operation only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dartford Warbler</li> <li>• Nightjar</li> <li>• Woodlark</li> </ul>
	Aqueous emissions/discharges	N	
	Noise and vibration;	N	
	Lighting	N	
The Mens SAC UK0012716	Land take	N	
	Habitat fragmentation	N	
	Aerial emissions	N	
	Aqueous emissions/discharges	N	
	Noise and vibration;	N	
	Lighting	N	
Ebernoe Commons SAC UK0012715	Land take	N	
	Habitat fragmentation	N	
	Aerial emissions	N	
	Aqueous emissions/discharges	N	
	Noise and vibration;	N	
	Lighting	N	
Thursley, Pirbright and Chobham Common SSSI component only) UK0012793	Land take	N	
	Habitat fragmentation	N	
	Aerial emissions	Y (operation only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion</li> <li>• Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix</li> <li>• European dry heaths</li> </ul>

European site	Pathway of effect (from Construction and Operation, unless otherwise stated)	LSE identified either alone or in combination (Y/N)	Qualifying feature(s) affected
	Aqueous emissions/discharges	N	
	Noise and vibration; and	N	
	Lighting	N	

### Conclusion of LSE from the Development alone

- 4.10 The Applicant has assessed the changes in traffic flows due to the Proposed Development 'alone' by taking the 'Do something' (future baseline with the project) away from the 'Do minimum' (future baseline without the project) [paragraph 4.5.15 REP3-043].
- 4.11 The Applicant has identified LSE of the Proposed Development alone, as set out in Section 4 paragraph 4.5.47 of its HRA Report, on Thames Basin Heaths SPA (Ockham & Wisley Commons SSSI Component) for the assessment year 2032 and 2038 [REP3-045] [ER 19.2.6]:
- 4.12 Thames Basin Heaths SPA (**Ockham and Wisley Common SSSI component**)
- 4.13 Dartford Warbler – aerial emissions during operation on supporting habitat;
- 4.14 Nightjar – aerial emissions during operation on supporting habitat; and
- 4.15 Woodlark – aerial emissions during operation on supporting habitat [ER 19.2.7].

### Likely Significant Effects from the Development in combination

- 4.16 The Applicant's in combination assessment was described in Section 2 of the HRA [REP3-043 paragraphs 2.2.6 – 2.2.9]. The methodology and list of projects included in the in combination assessment are detailed in ES Chapter 20 Cumulative Effects [APP-045] and their locations relevant to the Proposed Development on HRA Figures 20.4.2 to 20.4.4 in the Cumulative Effects and Inter-Relationship Figures [APP-051] [ER 19.2.8]. No IPs raised concerns regarding the methodology used or projects selected for the in combination assessment during the Examination [RIES paragraph 2.3.2].
- 4.17 The Applicant has assessed the changes in traffic flows due to the Proposed Development 'in combination' by taking the 'Do something' (future baseline with the project) away from the 'Do minimum HRA' (HRA baseline) [REP3-043, paragraph 4.5.15]. LSE in combination has been identified for four European Sites in relation to air quality (nitrogen deposition, NO<sub>x</sub> and NH<sub>3</sub>) as set out in section 4 of the Applicant's HRA [REP3-043 paragraph 4.5.50 – 4.5.64] [RIES paragraph 2.3.6].
- 4.18 As set out above the threshold for the consideration of a LSE on a designated site from nitrogen deposition and gaseous pollutants is where a modelled change as a result of the process contribution (alone or in combination with other plans or projects) scenarios is >1% of the designated features critical load or critical level

following Natural England's guidance (Natural England, 2018) [REP3-043 paragraph 4.5.21].

- 4.19 The Applicant's HRA [REP3-043] identified LSE in combination arising from operational air quality from increased road traffic on:
- 4.20 Thames Basin Heaths SPA (Chobham Common SSSI and Ockham & Wisley Commons SSSI Component). Assessment year 2032 and 2038.
  - 4.21 Dartford Warbler – aerial emissions during operation on supporting habitat;
  - 4.22 Nightjar – aerial emissions during operation on supporting habitat; and
  - 4.23 Woodlark – aerial emissions during operation on supporting habitat.
- 4.24 Ashdown Forest SAC. Assessment year 2038.
- 4.25 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix - aerial emissions during operation on qualifying feature;
- 4.26 European dry heaths – aerial emissions during operation on qualifying feature; and
- 4.27 Great crested newt – aerial emissions during operation on supporting habitat
- 4.28 Ashdown Forest SPA. Assessment year 2038.
- 4.29 Dartford Warbler – aerial emissions during operation on supporting habitat; and
- 4.30 Nightjar – aerial emissions during operation on supporting habitat.
- 4.31 Thursley, Ash Pirbright and Chobham SAC. Assessment year 2032 and 2038.
- 4.32 Depressions on peat substates of the Rhynchosporion – aerial emissions during operation on qualifying feature;
- 4.33 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix – aerial emissions during operation on qualifying feature; and
- 4.34 European Dry heaths – aerial emissions during operation on qualifying feature [ER 19.2.10].
- 4.35 The Applicant has summarised its conclusion in Table 4.9.1 of the HRA REP3-043.
- 4.36 Air quality assessments are inherently cumulative, particularly with respect to traffic emissions. The traffic data used in the assessment of future years includes all planned growth in the with and without Project scenarios. Cumulative effects from other sources which affect the background ambient concentrations are taken into account from the Defra modelled background data used in the assessment (Defra, 2018<sup>7</sup>). All sources which could have a material impact are included [REP3-018, ES Chapter 13, paragraph 13.11.2] as well as those identified in the Applicant's cumulative assessment [APP-045].

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<sup>7</sup> [Background Mapping data for local authorities - 2018 - DEFRA UK Air - GOV.UK](#)

### **Sites for which the Applicant concluded no LSE on all qualifying features**

- 4.37 As summarised in Table 2 above the Applicant concluded that the Proposed Development would not be likely to give rise to significant effects, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, on all qualifying features of the following European sites [RIES, paragraph 2.3.4]:
- The Mens SAC;
  - Ebernoe Common SAC; and
  - Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC.
- 4.38 The Secretary of State notes that NE confirmed it agreed with the Applicant's conclusion of no LSEs in respect of the above European sites [RR-3223, paragraph 2.1] [RIES, 2.3.5].

### **Sites for which the Applicant concluded LSE on some or all qualifying features**

- 4.39 The Applicant concluded that the Proposed Development would be likely to give rise to significant effects, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, on one or more of the qualifying features of:
- Thames Basin Heaths SPA (Ockham and Wisley Common SSSI as a component);
  - Thames Basin Heaths SPA (Chobham Common SSSI as a component);
  - Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC (Chobham Common SSSI component only);
  - Ashdown Forest SPA; and
  - Ashdown Forest SAC [RIES, paragraph 2.3.6].
- 4.40 NE agreed with these conclusions at [REP1-037, Table 2.8.1] [ER 19.2.12] and the conclusions were not disputed by IPs or NE throughout the Examination [ER 19.2.15].

## 5. STAGE 2: APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 As LSE cannot be excluded, the Secretary of State as the competent authority is required to undertake an appropriate assessment to determine the implications for the conservation objectives of the affected European sites. In line with the requirements of regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations:

*“(5)...the competent authority may agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site”; and*

*“(6) In considering whether a plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of the site, the competent authority must have regard to the manner in which it is proposed to be carried out or to any conditions or restrictions subject to which it proposes that the consent, permission or other authorisation should be given”.*

### Conservation objectives

- 5.2 As mentioned in paragraph 1.10 above, where an appropriate assessment is required in respect of a European site, regulation 63(1) of the Habitats Regulations requires that it be an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan or project for the site in view of its conservation objectives. Government guidance<sup>8</sup> also recommends that in carrying out the stage one assessment (screening), applicants must check if the proposal could have a significant effect on a European site that could affect its conservation objectives.
- 5.3 The conservation objectives relevant to this HRA Report, as published by NE, are set out in Annex 1.
- 5.4 The Applicant has set out the conservation objectives in section 3 of REP3-043, and the RIES has set them out in Annex 1 Tables A1.1 to A1.7 [RIES, paragraph 2.3.7].
- 5.5 The Applicant's HRA [REP3-043] sets out the following in relation to the conservation status for those sites screened in for LSE:
- Thames Basin Heaths SPA: there are 14 SSSIs that underpin the SPA, but paragraph 1.3.5 states that **Ockham and Wisley Common SSSI and Chobham Common SSSI** are the only SSSIs relevant to the assessment. Paragraph 3.7.1 states that the “majority of units within the 14 SSSIs are in favourable condition with areas that are in unfavourable recovering condition” but does not identify the status of units for Ockham and Wisley Common and Chobham Common SSSIs;
  - Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC: paragraph 1.3.5 indicates that **Chobham Common SSSI** is the only SSSI component relevant to the assessment. No conservation status is provided (beyond the general commentary in paragraph 3.7.1) but it is stated that the Site Improvement Plan covers Thames Basin Heaths SPA and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC;
  - Ashdown Forest SAC – “The majority of Ashdown Forest has been identified as unfavourable recovering, with some areas of unfavourable declining and favourable condition” (paragraph 3.3.3); and

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/habitats-regulations-assessments-protecting-a-european-site> (Accessed 07/05/2025)

- Ashdown Forest SPA – no conservation status is provided but it is stated that the Site Improvement Plan is the same as for Ashdown Forest SAC (paragraph 3.4.5).
- 5.6 In the RIES, the ExA sought clarification on the information provided in relation to the conservation objectives in the Applicant's HRA and whether the information was clear and detailed enough to inform the assessment for each site. The Applicant confirmed that the information was correct [REP8-122] and that NE [REP8-162] did not raise any issues on the level of information [ER 19.3.3].

## **Air Quality**

### *Thames Basin Heaths SPA (Ockham and Wisley commons SSSI component)*

- 5.7 Although LSE in relation to air quality were identified for this site, alone and in combination, Adverse Effects on Integrity ("AEol") were ruled out as the area of the SSSI does not comprise supporting heathland habitat for qualifying bird features of the SPA. The SSSI is formed of woodland which acts as a buffer between the heathland and the M25/A3 that does not support the qualifying bird species, and any effects of increased nitrogen deposition due to increases in traffic emissions would not impact supporting habitat within the SPA. The Secretary of State is content to agree with this conclusion of no AEol [ER 19.4.9]. This is in line with survey results undertaken by the Applicant, and the conclusions drawn within the M25 J10 DCO, that concluded that the woodland buffers were not managed in a way that formed supporting habitat for any qualifying bird species (Section: *Habitat degradation due to changes in air quality*, paragraph 5.48-5.86 or the Secretary of State HRA for the M25 J10 DCO, 2022<sup>9</sup>).

### *Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA*

- 5.8 In combination effects with other plans or projects due to increased nitrogen deposition has been identified, but AEol ruled out as the areas of habitat immediately adjacent to the A22 where impacts are predicted does not constitute SAC habitat or supporting SPA habitat [ER 19.4.10]. The area within the 10 m buffer immediately adjacent to the SAC and SPA is formed of bracken and bramble and no heathland occurs in this area currently. The closest area of supporting heathland habitat is over 20 m from the road edge, which is double the distance from the road that the exceedance of the 1% occurs [REP3-043, paragraphs 5.3.11 and 5.3.18]. In relation to great crested newt, there is no supporting pond habitats within 100 m of the roadside, making it unlikely that great crested newt would be utilising the impacted areas identified in the air quality assessment [REP3-043, paragraph 5.3.14]. The Secretary of State accepts this conclusion.

### *Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC*

- 5.9 LSE were identified in relation to air quality in that the NO<sub>x</sub> concentration and nitrogen deposition was predicted to exceed 1% of the relevant critical level/load within 20 m of the M3 in both assessment years in the cumulative scenario [REP3-

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<sup>9</sup> Habitats Regulations Assessment for an Application Under the Planning Act 2008 – M25 Junction 10/A3 Wisley Interchange. [TR010030-001499-FINAL HRA.pdf](#) (accessed from the Planning Inspectorate website 29.06.2025).

043, paragraph 5.3.24]. This area is managed grassland that acts as a fire break between the heathland/gorse scrub of the Common proper and the M3 [REP3-043, paragraph 5.3.25]. As such, and confirmed through habitat surveys undertaken by the Applicant, none of the habitat features of the SAC (depressions on peat substrates, northern Atlantic wet heaths, European dry heaths) occur within the area covered by the 1% exceedance threshold [REP3-043, paragraph 5.3.28]. This is unlikely to change given the management of this area to maintain the firebreak between the heathland and the motorway [REP3-043, paragraph 5.3.31]. Therefore, the Secretary of State is content to agree no AEol for this location in relation to air quality. One location where the exceedance threshold has been breached comprises birch-dominated woodlands, that act as buffers between Windsor Road and the qualifying habitat features, and as it is highly unlikely to be restored to heathland AEol can be ruled out [REP3-043, paragraph 5.3.37].

- 5.10 In relation to ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) the Applicant has recorded that the range of impact is more extensive than that associated with nitrogen deposition, [REP3-043, paragraph 5.3.40] occurring up to 230 metres from the M3 in relation to critical level used to assess the impacts on lichen and bryophyte populations that form an integral component of the interest feature heathland habitats [REP3-043, paragraph 5.3.41]. They were only found to infrequently occur to the east of Windsor Road around areas of dry heaths in between woodland and mown areas [REP3-043, paragraph 5.3.45]. More diverse populations of lichens were found in these areas where more open ground is present, but exposure to the same levels of ammonia is experienced [REP3-043, paragraph 5.4.36]. From this information, the Applicant's HRA concluded that in combination AEol could be ruled out in areas directly adjacent to the M3, which is comprised of purple moor grass thatch and is managed as a fire break as heathland is unlikely to form in this area due to the management regime present [REP3-043, paragraph 5.3.47] and given the structure of the habitat, no assemblage of lichen/bryophytes are likely to colonise meaning there can be no effect from changes in ammonia concentration [REP3-043, paragraph 5.3.45]. The Secretary of State sees no reason to disagree with this conclusion.

*Thames Basin Heaths SPA (Chobham Common SSSI)*

- 5.11 Similar to the scenario described above for the Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC [REP3-043, paragraph 5.3.24] LSE were identified in relation to air quality within 20 m of the M3 in both assessment years in the cumulative scenario. As has been set out above, supporting habitat for the qualifying bird species is not found in these areas [REP3-043, paragraph 5.3.52], and in addition, it is unlikely that these areas would ever be restored to support bird features that rely on heathland habitats due to proximity to the road and the management routine in place [REP3-043, paragraph 5.3.53]. This is supported by bird survey data collected within the SPA for various projects [REP3-043, paragraph 5.3.55] that do not show population of qualifying bird species within 300 m of the roadside.
- 5.12 In addition to the impact of nitrogen on the heathland habitats, it is also relevant to consider the spatial extent of habitat that the exceedance occurs over. In 2032, circa 0.3 ha is potentially impacted out of total resource of 8,200 ha of heathland within the SPA – 0.0036% of the total resource. In 2038, the area is slightly larger 0.8 ha, but still very small as a percentage (0.0097%). Therefore, even if the upper-end of

the cumulative contribution is realised, such a change would still be very small and have no effect on site integrity [REP3-043, paragraph 5.3.62].

### **Further matters considered in relation to the appropriate assessment**

- 5.13 The Secretary of State notes that although not relied upon to conclude no adverse effects on integrity, management regimes present within the SSSIs that underpin the European sites could aid in reducing nitrogen deposition. Lowland heathland requires maintenance to prevent succession into woodland, and such management has been found to remove nitrogen from heathland ecosystems. The active management of the Ockham and Wisley Commons SSSI by the Surrey Wildlife Trust will therefore aid in existing any future nitrogen deposition pressures [REP3-043, paragraph 5.3.70].
- 5.14 The Secretary of State notes the studies of the effect of small incremental additions of nitrogen into habitats that already exceed the critical load. The impacts on species richness, reduction in cover and resulting changes in broad habitat structure for heathlands. Habitats displayed a curvilinear relationship with nitrogen dose so that the rate of change in the parameters for a given increase in nitrogen deposition was not constant over the range of depositions studied [REP3-043, paragraph 5.3.67]. As such, no detectable change with respect to the structure and function of any of the heathland assessed above would be predicted using the dose-response relationship [paragraph 5.3.69].
- 5.15 The Annual Average Daily Traffic ("AADT") flows along the M25 and M3 are some of the largest in the country. As such, the changes in AADT predicted both in the Do Something and Do Minimum HRA scenarios are very small increments of the existing flows, changing the traffic numbers by less than 1%. Such changes are unlikely to be perceptible [REP3-043, paragraph 5.3.73].

### **Conclusion of the Appropriate Assessment**

- 5.16 The Secretary of State has undertaken an objective scientific assessment of the implications of the Proposed Development on the qualifying features of the European sites, using the best available scientific knowledge. The assessment has been made in light of the conservation objectives for the SACs and SPAs. A summary of the Secretary of State's appropriate assessment is presented above.
- 5.17 The Secretary of State has carefully considered all the information presented within the Application, during the Examination and the representations made by IPs, along with the Recommendation Report.
- 5.18 The Applicant's HRA [REP3-043] concluded that the Proposed Development will not result in AEoI of the following European sites, alone or in combination:
- Thames Basin Heaths SPA (Ockham and Wisley Common SSSI component);
  - Thames Basin Heaths SPA (Chobham Common SSSI component);
  - Ashdown Forest SAC;
  - Ashdown Forest SPA; and
  - Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC (Chobham Common SSSI component).



- 5.19 The Secretary of State is content to agree with the ExA [ER 19.4.15] that AEol on these sites and their qualifying features can be excluded, and notes that neither Natural England nor any other IP objected to these conclusions [ER 19.4.14].
- 5.20 AEol were rejected at these sites due to the absence of suitable habitat present in the affected areas identified, or the unsuitability of the habitat that may be present for the qualifying features. Effects on the Ashdown Forest SAC/SPA were ruled out as supporting habitat for the qualifying features is not located within 10 m of the A22 carriageway. This is similarly the case for the Thames Basin SPA, where the habitat is absent from the side of the affected road network and the proximity of the road was likely to deter interest bird features from using the site. These conclusions do not require the delivery of mitigation to conclude no AEol on these sites [ER 19.4.13].

## **6. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 As the competent authority in relation to the Application for development consent, the Secretary of State has undertaken an assessment for LSE under regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations for the Mens SAC, Ebernoe Common SAC, Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC, Thames Basin Heaths SPA, Thursley Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC, Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC. LSE were ruled out for The Mens SAC, Ebernoe Common SAC, Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC.
- 6.2 LSE could not be ruled out for:
- Thames Basin Heaths SPA
- 6.3 Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC
- 6.4 Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC
- 6.5 The Secretary of State is satisfied that given the relative scale and magnitude of the identified effects on the qualifying features of the European sites, and the location of the affected road network in relation to the qualifying features, there would not be any implications for the achievement of the conservation objectives for the European sites listed above. Those conservation objectives are set out in Annex 1 of this HRA Report.
- 6.6 Based on the submissions to the Examination as summarised in the ExA's RIES and Recommendation Report, the Secretary of State is satisfied that the views of NE, as the appropriate nature conservation body have been considered and that they are in agreement with the scope and conclusions of the Applicant's HRA as demonstrated by their signed Statement of Common Ground [ER 1.5.1 and REP9-090, table 2.8.1]. Having carried out an appropriate assessment, the Secretary of State concludes that the Proposed Development would not give rise to adverse effects on integrity on any of the European sites identified. The Secretary of State has therefore concluded, as the competent authority for the purposes of the Habitats Regulations it is permissible for her to give consent for the Development.

## **Annex 1: Conservation Objectives**

Available from: Natural England Access to Evidence - Conservation objectives European Sites: London and South East (accessed 25.06.2025).

NB. In the case of all European sites identified below, the Conservation Objectives are to be read in conjunction with the accompanying Supplementary Advice documents, which provides more detailed advice and information to enable the application and achievement of the Objectives set out.

### **Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC (UK0012804)**

European Site Conservation Objectives for Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC - UK0012804 (accessed 25.06.2025).

With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:

- The extent and distribution of the qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats;
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species; and
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

#### **Qualifying Features:**

- H4030. European dry heaths
- H5110. Stable xerothermophilous formations with *Buxus sempervirens* on rock slopes (Berberidion p.p.); Natural box scrub
- H6210. Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (FestucoBrometalia) (important orchid sites); Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites)\*
- H9130. Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests; Beech forests on neutral to rich soils
- H91J0. *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles; Yew-dominated woodland\*
- S1166. *Triturus cristatus*; Great crested newt

- S1323. *Myotis bechsteinii*; Bechstein's bat

\* denotes a priority natural habitat or species

## **Ashdown Forest SAC (UK0030080)**

European Site Conservation Objectives for Ashdown Forest SAC - UK0030080 (accessed 25.06.2025)

With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats;
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species; and
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

### **Qualifying Features:**

- H4010. Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*; Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath
- H4030. European dry heaths
- S1166. *Triturus cristatus*; Great crested newt

## **Ashdown Forest SPA (Site Code: UK9012181)**

European Site Conservation Objectives for Ashdown Forest SPA - UK9012181 (accessed 25.06.2025).

With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblages of species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;

- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;
- The population of each of the qualifying features; and
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

#### **Qualifying Features:**

- A224 *Caprimulgus europaeus*; European nightjar (Breeding)
- A302 *Sylvia undata*; Dartford warbler (Breeding)

### **Thames Basin Heaths SPA (Site Code: UK9012141)**

European Site Conservation Objectives for Thames Basin Heaths SPA - UK9012141 (accessed 25.06.2025).

With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblages of species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;
- The population of each of the qualifying features; and
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

#### **Qualifying Features:**

- A224 *Caprimulgus europaeus*; European nightjar (Breeding)
- A302 *Sylvia undata*; Dartford warbler (Breeding)
- A246 *Lullula arborea*; Woodlark (Breeding)

### **The Mens SAC (Site Code: UK0012716)**

European Site Conservation Objectives for The Mens SAC - UK0012716 (accessed 25.06.2025).

With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats;
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species; and
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

#### **Qualifying Features:**

- H9120. Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with Ilex and sometimes also Taxus in the shrublayer (Quercion roburi-petraeae or Ilici-Fagenion); Beech forests on acid soils
- S1308. Barbastella barbastellus; Barbastelle bat

### **Ebernoe Commons SAC**

European Site Conservation Objectives for Ebernoe Common SAC - UK0012715  
(accessed 25.06.2025).

With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:

- The extent and distribution of the qualifying natural habitats and habits of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of the habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely;

- The populations of qualifying species; and
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

#### **Qualifying Features:**

- H9120. Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with Ilex and sometimes also Taxus in the shrublayer (Quercion roburi-petraeae or Ilici-Fagenion); Beech forests on acid soils
- S1308. Barbastella barbastellus; Barbastelle bat
- S1323. Myotis bechsteinii; Bechstein's bat

### **Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC**

European Site Conservation Objectives for Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC - UK0012793 (accessed on 25.06.2025).

With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:

- The extent and distribution of the qualifying natural habitats;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of the habitats of qualifying natural habitats; and
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely;

#### **Qualifying Features:**

- H4010. Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix; Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath
- H4030. European dry heaths
- H7150. Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion