

Your guide to...

HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT (HRA)

View the full toolkit at kit.riveractionuk.com

Where a development proposal may harm protected sites known as **Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)**, **Special Protection Areas (SPAs)** or Ramsar sites (a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands), the Council must carry out an assessment under the **Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017**. This is known as a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and is relatively common in applications that impact rivers and water bodies, because many rivers and water bodies form part of these protected sites.

The Government has an online map showing all protected sites, which you can use to check whether there are any local protected sites around you. The map is available on **DEFRA's Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website**.

A council cannot approve a planning application which would adversely affect an SAC, SPA or Ramsar site unless very strict exceptions apply. **Guidance on HRAs covering England and Wales can be found on the Government's website**.