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Wintering Bird and Willow Tit Survey

Survey site:

Land at Engine Lane, Grimethorpe, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S72 7BN

Client:

Enviromena Project Management UK Ltd

Date:

6th May 2025

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with the Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council. The proposal is described as:
The construction of a temporary solar farm providing 49.9MW (AC) output.

The survey results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion.

Executive Summary

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by Enviromena to undertake a Wintering Bird and Willow Tit Survey at Land at Engine Lane, Grimethorpe, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S72 7BN (hereafter referred to as "the site"). The survey was required to inform a planning application for the construction of a temporary solar farm providing 49.9MW (AC) output, to include the installation of ground-mounted solar panels together with associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure (hereafter referred to as "the proposed development").

The WBS has been informed by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, that was completed by Arbtech in 2024 and 2025. The PEA determined that due to the size of the site, along with significant areas of arable land, it could support a significant population of overwintering bird species. Following on from a consultation response received from Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, it was requested that the scope of the report be extended, to provide an additional targeted survey, specifically focussed on willow tits. In addition to the above, previous breeding bird surveys have been undertaken at the site by Whitcher Wildlife Ltd in 2023.

A total of 29 species were recorded within the survey area. All of the observed species were confirmed to be foraging and interacting with the site, and likely use it as part of wintering grounds. The species assemblage contained several wintering bird species associated with the agricultural landscape area. A number of bird species also associated with woodland habitats were also observed within areas of the site where they lie within close proximity to such habitats, particularly in the north-eastern and western sections of the site. According to the criteria set out by Fuller (1980), the breeding bird assemblage of 29 species present within the survey indicates a value at the Local scale. The wintering assemblage includes 14 species of conservation significance, the majority of which, are common and widespread in the UK. At least 6 species present at the site were those on the UK red list of conservation concern. The overwhelming majority of the activity recorded within the site was confined to the field boundaries within the site. The site is largely located within an urban setting and suffers from high levels of disturbance within the internal compartments of the site, due to high levels of trespassing and the intensively managed arable nature of the site.

No willow tits were observed throughout the survey visit; however, suitable habitat is present in close proximity to the site, in the form of woodland. The site itself is considered to be largely unsuitable for willow tit, given the presence of intensively managed arable fields and pasture, along with the highly disturbed nature of the surrounding area.

An impact assessment and recommendations are made within Section 4 of the report.

Contents

1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Background

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by Enviromena to undertake a Wintering Bird and Willow Tit Survey at Land at Engine Lane, Grimethorpe, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S72 7BN (hereafter referred to as "the site"). The survey was required to inform a planning application for the construction of a temporary solar farm providing 49.9MW (AC) output, to include the installation of ground-mounted solar panels together with associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure (hereafter referred to as "the proposed development"). The proposed development plan is provided in Appendix 1.

The WBS has been informed by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, that was completed by Arbtech in 2024 and 2025. The PEA determined that due to the size of the site, along with significant areas of arable land, it could support a significant population of overwintering bird species. Following on from a consultation response received from Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, it was requested that the scope of the report be extended, to provide an additional targeted survey, specifically focussed on willow tits.

In addition to the above, previous breeding bird surveys have been undertaken at the site by Whitcher Wildlife Ltd in 2023. A total of thirty-five species were recorded over three visits, including four red-listed species, thirteen amber-listed species, fifteen green-listed species, and three introduced species. Five are listed on Section 41 of the NERC Act (List of priority habitats and species in England), and eight are listed on the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) for Barnsley. The survey determined that the overwhelming majority of the species recorded within the site were pertained to the boundary features, including hedgerows and trees, with minimal activity recorded within the central compartments of the site, including the intensively managed arable and grazed fields.

1.2 Site Location and Landscape Context

The site is located at its centre at National Grid Reference SE 40243 09215 and has an area totalling approximately 132ha split into four parcels of land comprising of worked arable fields, hedgerows, scattered trees, hard standing and scattered buildings. It is surrounded by agricultural and arable fields, scattered trees and residential developments located to the east and west.

A site location plan is provided in Appendix 2.

1.3 Scope of the Report

This report provides an assessment of the winter bird assemblage at the site, along with determining the presence of willow tit within the site. The report provides information on possible constraints to the proposed development as a result of wintering birds and willow tit and summarises the requirements for any mitigation proposals, where appropriate, to achieve planning or other statutory consent and to comply with wildlife legislation.

To achieve this, the following steps have been taken:

- Seven survey visits have been undertaken between November and April to establish wintering bird and willow tit usage of the site.

- An outline of potential impacts on wintering birds and willow tit has been provided, based on the proposed development.
- Recommendations for mitigation have been made, if appropriate.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Wintering Bird Survey

The Wintering Bird Surveys were undertaken at the site in accordance with an adapted version of the *Bird Survey Guidelines for Assessing Ecological Impacts* (BSG) (Bird Survey and Assessment Steering Group, 2024). These comprised a series of monthly visits, undertaken between October 2024 and April 2025, within the optimal season between November and January when wintering numbers will be at their peak. The survey area comprised the site and a surrounding 50m radius, where visible and accessible. With optimal season between November and January when wintering numbers will be at their peak.

The survey was led by Gareth Hey BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM, Ecological Consultant. Four of the survey visits were undertaken around dawn and three of the survey visits was completed at dusk, to coincide with peak bird activity. Two surveyors covered two sections of the site, with one covering the eastern section and one covering the western sections.

The nearest designated site relating to birds within close proximity to the site is the Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI, which is located 1.3km south-east and north-west. The site is of special interest for the following nationally important features:

- Breeding gadwall Mareca strepera, shoveler Spatula clypeata, garganey Spatula querquedula, pochard Aythya ferina, bittern Botaurus stellaris, black-headed gull Chroicocephalus ridibundus and willow tit Poecile montanus klienschmidti.
- Non-breeding gadwall Mareca strepera and shoveler Spatula clypeata.
- Diverse assemblages of breeding birds of Lowland damp grasslands, Lowland scrub and a mixed assemblage of Lowland open waters and their margins and Lowland fen

The above detailed SSSI is not designated for the presence of overwintering assemblages.

A fixed transect route was walked and this was reversed on alternate visits. The transect route is shown in Appendix 3. All contacts with birds, either by sight or sound, were plotted onto a site plan using standard BTO coding of each bird encountered, and to record any behaviour that could indicate wintering grounds of the species, such as regular interaction or active foraging.

The results were used to assess the status of the birds on site and assign each species one of the following categories:

- Confirmed foraging
- Confirmed winter roosting site
- Not confirmed at site, but habitats at site would support the species
- Not confirmed, habitats not suitable.

2.2 Evaluation of Site

The number of bird species for which wintering was confirmed or considered probable within the red line site boundary was used to assign value to the site based on the methodology developed by Fuller (1980). This methodology uses the number of species recorded in an area to indicate its wintering importance, based on the criteria provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Fuller (1980) Wintering Bird Diversity Criteria

National	Regional	County	Local
115+	85-114	55-84	25-54

2.3 Willow Tit Survey

Due to the proximity of the site to the Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI, and the suitability of the habitats present within the site and those adjacent to the site to support breeding willow tit, survey visits were extended into March and April, to cover the main periods when willow tit could be present within the survey area. The survey aimed to identify willow tits with or within close proximity to the site.

2.4 Limitations

This survey follows best practice guidance to record wintering bird activity within the site. However, this information is collected at finite dates and times, and provides an indication of the conditions on site only. The use of the site by wintering birds, at all times cannot be established based on this information. Birds are highly mobile creatures and can often abandon sites and return at various times of the year, depending on conditions and food availability. Some birds are more active at different times of the year, such as certain species focusing on nearby orchards, before heading towards fields when that food source has dried up later in the winter. Or delayed migration due to climate. There is potential for some birds to be missed or to go unnoticed due to the nature of wintering bird surveys and possibility of birds not vocalising and/or being present in dense vegetation.

The site experiences high levels of trespassing and on two of the survey visits, trespassers were observed leaving the site with presumed air rifles. A significant number of drug paraphernalia was also present within the site, with disturbed fire pits also present in the eastern and western sections of the site. This routine disturbance of the site is likely to reduce the suitability of the site for significant populations of overwintering bird species, and birds with a greater degree of conservation value.

A biological records data search has not been undertaken. BRD should be obtained in order to provide a more robust assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed development. Once this information has been received, the report should be updated to provide an updated assessment.

3.0 Results and Evaluation

The results of the field survey are illustrated in Appendix 3. The weather conditions recorded at the time of each survey visit are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Weather conditions during each survey visit

Date:	30/10/2024	24/11/2024	23/12/2024	19/01/2025	26/02/2025	23/03/2025	17/04/2025
Sunrise/Sunset Time	07:04am	07:50am	15:50pm	08:12am	17:39am	06:03am	06:02am
Start/End Time	07:00am – 11:00am	07:30am – 11:30am	12:00pm – 16:00pm	08:00am – 12:00pm	13:30pm – 17:30pm	06:00am – 10:00am	06:00am – 10:00am
Temperature	2°C	0°C	4°C	2°C	4°C	9°C	13°C
Humidity	72%	68%	71%	81%	77%	77%	74%
Cloud Cover	100%	80%	30%	100%	100%	100%	60%
Wind	4mph	5mph	3mph	1mph	11mph	14mph	3mph
Rain	None	None	None	None	None	None	None

A total of 29 species were recorded within the survey area. All of the observed species were confirmed to be foraging and interacting with the site, and likely use it as part of wintering grounds.

The species assemblage contained several wintering bird species associated with the agricultural landscape area. A number of bird species also associated with woodland habitats were also observed within areas of the site where they lie within close proximity to such habitats, particularly in the north-eastern and western sections of the site. No Schedule 1[1] species were identified within the site. Eight SPI were recorded within the surveys including dunnock, herring gull, house sparrow, linnet, skylark, song thrush, starling and yellowhammer. Overall, the following birds with elevated conservation levels were identified within the site:

- Seven SPI species were reported within the site: dunnock, herring gull, house sparrow, linnet, skylark, song thrush, starling and yellowhammer;
- Seven species listed within the Barnsley Biodiversity Action Plan (Barnsley Biodiversity Trust, 2023), including dunnock, house sparrow, linnet, skylark, song thrush, starling and yellowhammer.

Common species of robins, dunnocks and tit assemblage was present at the site within hedgerows on all boundaries, which accounted for the majority of the activity recorded throughout the surveys. The highest concentration of activity was at the edges and within 2-3 m of the hedgerow boundary, within the field margins, activity drops

[1] A Schedule 1 species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

off towards centre of the field which is more exposed to predation. Although on visits towards the end, low numbers of skylark were observed prospecting for nests, within the western section of the site. . Details on the breeding bird assemblage will be reported separately, upon completion of the breeding bird surveys.

No willow tits were observed throughout the survey visit; however, suitable habitat is present in close proximity to the site, in the form of woodland. The site is considered to be largely unsuitable for willow tit, given the presence of intensively managed arable fields and pasture, along with the highly disturbed nature of the surrounding area.

Full details are provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of birds observed during WBS

Species	BTO Code	Sch 1[2]	SPI[3]	BoCC[4]	LBAP[5]	Number Recorded							Using site for overwintering	Peak count of individuals
						Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	Visit 5	Visit 6	Visit 7		
Blackbird	B.					Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Confirmed foraging	12
Black-headed Gull	BH			AMBER			Y			Y			Confirmed winter roosting site	8
Blue Tit	BT					Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Confirmed foraging	13
Buzzard	BZ					Y		Y	Y				Not confirmed at site, but habitats at site would support the species.	2
Carrion Crow	C.					Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Confirmed foraging	14
Chaffinch	CF									Y	Y	Y	Confirmed foraging	18
Chiffchaff	CC											Y	Confirmed foraging	4

[2] A Schedule 1 species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
[3] A Species of Principal importance (SPI) under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.
[4] Bird of Conservation Concern (BoCC), such as a red or amber listed species.
[5] A priority species under the Barnsley Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP).

Collared Dove	CD					Y	Y	Y	Y		Y		Not confirmed at the site, but habitats at site would support the species.	4
Dunnock	D.		Y	AMBER	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Confirmed foraging	16
Goldcrest	GC					Y							Not confirmed, habitats not suitable.	1
Goldfinch	GO									Y		Y	Confirmed foraging	8
Great Tit	GT					Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Confirmed foraging	10
Greylag Goose	GJ			AMBER						Y	Y		Confirmed winter roosting site	2
Herring Gull	HG		Y	RED				Y					Confirmed winter roosting site	2
House Sparrow	HS		Y	RED	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Confirmed foraging	26
Jackdaw	JD					Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Confirmed foraging	4
Linnet	LI		Y	RED	Y					Y		Y	Confirmed foraging	14
Long-tailed Tit	LT									Y		Y	Confirmed foraging	2
Magpie	MG					Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Confirmed foraging	15
Mallard	MA			AMBER		Y		Y	Y			Y	Confirmed winter roosting site	4
Oystercatcher	OC			AMBER			Y				Y	Y	Confirmed winter roosting site	2
Pied Wagtail	PW						Y					Y	Confirmed foraging	4
Robin	R.					Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Confirmed foraging	16
Skylark	S.		Y	RED	Y						Y	Y	Not confirmed, habitats not suitable for overwintering.	4

Song Thrush	ST		Y	AMBER	Y	Y					Y	Y	Confirmed foraging	6
Starling	SG		Y	RED	Y					Y	Y	Y	Confirmed foraging	19
Woodpigeon	WP			AMBER		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Confirmed foraging	28
Wren	WR			AMBER		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Confirmed foraging	14
Yellowhammer	Y.		Y	RED	Y							Y	Confirmed foraging	2

4.0 Conclusions, Impacts and Recommendations

Taking the field survey results into account, Table 4 presents an evaluation of the value of the site for breeding birds in relation to the proposed development

Table 4: Evaluation of the site for breeding birds

Survey Results Summary
According to the criteria set out by Fuller (1980), the breeding bird assemblage of 29 species present within the survey indicates a value at the Local scale. The wintering assemblage includes 14 species of conservation significance, the majority of which, are common and widespread in the UK. At least 6 species present at the site were those on the UK red list of conservation concern. The overwhelming majority of the activity recorded within the site was confined to the field boundaries within the site. The site is largely located within an urban setting and suffers from high levels of disturbance within the internal compartments of the site, due to high levels of trespassing and the intensively managed arable nature of the site. No willow tits were observed throughout the survey visit; however, suitable habitat is present in close proximity to the site, in the form of woodland. The site itself is considered to be largely unsuitable for willow tit, given the presence of intensively managed arable fields and pasture, along with the highly disturbed nature of the surrounding area.
Impact Assessment
Habitat Loss The proposals will lead to an almost total loss of agricultural land within site. The majority of hedgerows with tree habitat is to be retained, with only minor losses of hedgerow sections for the creation of access across the site. The proposed landscaping should aim to incorporate as much native planting as possible, in order to provide opportunities for generalist species, year-round. It is considered that the presence of significant areas of arable fields within the wider area will provide continuing opportunities for overwintering species. The proposed

habitats surrounding the array of solar panels will also provide value for the low numbers of overwintering species identified within the site, along with providing value for the array of species utilising the site for foraging. In order to ensure that the habitats are managed appropriately within the site over the winter months (November to January optimal season), a breeding and wintering bird management plan is proposed, which should be provided upon the conclusion of the breeding bird surveys currently being undertaken at the site.

The individual species recorded on site that are arguably the most vulnerable to impacts from habitat loss/change are the 14 species that are considered to be of at least Local importance. These comprise notable species that are either specially protected, appear on the BoCC Red list and/or are listed as a NERC Priority Species and were recorded in at least locally important numbers.

The retention of the majority of hedgerows and the introduction of green infrastructure planting will continue to provide suitable foraging habitats for the generalist species recorded. A number of notable species are likely to benefit from the proposals, including house sparrow with the inclusion of built environment, grassland and hedgerows, providing potential breeding sites for this urban species. It is therefore considered that development of the site will result in beneficial or negligible impact to the majority of the generalist bird populations recorded. The retention of these habitats will also ensure that the site continues to provide suitable foraging habitat for willow tits.

Disturbance Impacts

Construction operations have the potential to disturb birds using the site for roosting, foraging, and breeding. Operations likely to disturb winter birds include noise from vegetation clearance, initial ground works and some construction activities, such as piling, which are of low frequency but of high amplitude. Active, high level, infrequent disturbance causes most birds to be displaced for short periods.

Recommendations

Clearance works should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the vegetation should be undertaken immediately, by qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained and work in that area cannot continue until the young have fledged.

Under the Management of Hedgerow Regulations 2024, Hedgerows that line farmland habitat and fields cannot be removed or cut in this time period at all.

It is recommended that if small sections of hedgerows are to be removed to facilitate the proposed development, works to these are exclusively undertaken in the winter months, between November and February, with replacement and enhancements to the existing hedgerows undertaken, to mitigate such losses.

In order to increase the biodiversity value of the site and to adhere to Government guidance set out in the NPPF, a range of enhancement measures should be incorporated into the landscaping proposals. These will include retention and strengthening of hedgerow habitats within the site, including the use of evergreen and fruit-bearing species beneficial to birds, such as rowan, hawthorn and holly, among others. This won't then be cut till late winter months when berry production is over for these species and food no longer provided for winter species.
Flailing management is not recommended as this will reduce the hedgerows yield of fruit every year and increase likelihood of disease within the hedgerow from wounds.

Due to the abundance of farmland bird species within the site, some of which are priority targets for conservation, compensation and enhancement measures are proposed. These
include:

- Creation of species-rich grassland or meadow habitat beneath or below the panels will provide nesting opportunities for some species, and increased foraging resources for many others in winter months.
- The grassland will be cut/managed sensitively to maintain its biodiversity value but also provide foraging for a range of species. This includes not cutting all the grassland areas at once, to retain some seed bank for foraging. Under the Hedgerow Management regulation Act 2024- a buffer strip of 2-3m must be retained from all hedgerows as a minimum.
- Provision of managed set-aside strips along the edges of some fields wider than the required 2-3m will benefit a range of farmland species throughout the year. The strips will offer nesting and foraging resources in the breeding season. This should be sown in a wintering bird seed mix to provide good quality foraging resources in the non-breeding season, particularly for granivorous species such as finches. This should be fenced off if grazers are to be included on the site, like cattle, in order to preserve the seed assemblage for winter foraging.
- Provision of nest boxes will be targeted toward species of conservation concern, such as sparrows. Larger boxes will also be provided for kestrel and barn owl. Further details are provided below.

Nest boxes will be provided to increase the opportunities for breeding birds. These will be placed in strategic locations around the site and targeted toward species of conservation
concern to increase their conservation value. All boxes will be tree-mounted, and (excluding the barn owl box) will be made of woodcrete, or similar material, to ensure durability. As a
minimum, nest boxes will include:

- Two tree-mounted barn owl boxes, on retained trees within the site boundaries; in order to encourage this species to the area.
- Twenty generalist bird boxes will be placed on suitable retained trees or posts throughout the site
- Five starling boxes will be placed in suitable locations throughout the site; and
- Ten further boxes for hole nesting species (five with 28 mm hole, five with 32 mm hole) will be scattered in suitable locations throughout the site.

Approximate locations and types of nest boxes should be detailed in an Ecological Enhancement and Management Plan for the site, and siting of individual boxes will be directed by an ECoW. Siting of barn owl will be directed on-site by an ECoW.

A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during and post-development, which will include the following measures:

- Use narrow spectrum light sources to lower the range of species affected by lighting.
- Use light sources that emit minimal ultra-violet light.
- Avoid white and blue wavelengths of the light spectrum to reduce insect attraction and where white light sources are required in order to manage the blue shortwave length content they should be of a warm / neutral colour temperature <4,200 kelvin.
- Not use bare bulbs and any light pointing upwards. The spread of light will be kept in line with or below the horizontal.
- Light spill will be reduced via the use of low-level lighting used in conjunction with hoods, cowls, louvers and shields. Lights will also be directional to ensure that light is directed to the intended areas only.
- External lighting will be on PIR sensors that are sensitive to large objects only (so that they are not triggered by passing bats) and will be set to the shortest time duration to reduce the amount of time the lights are on.

Wall lights and security lights will be ‘dimmable’ and set to the lowest light intensity settings. There are several products on the market that allow the control of the light intensity and the duration that the lights are on. All lighting on the developed site will make use of the most up to date technology available.

The proposed landscaping proposals should incorporate significant enhancements to the boundary hedgerows that are to be retained by the proposals, as these will provide elevated value for foraging, commuting and nesting birds, including willow tits, which these surveys aimed to identify.

Breeding bird surveys have been commissioned and will be reported separately.

5.0 Bibliography

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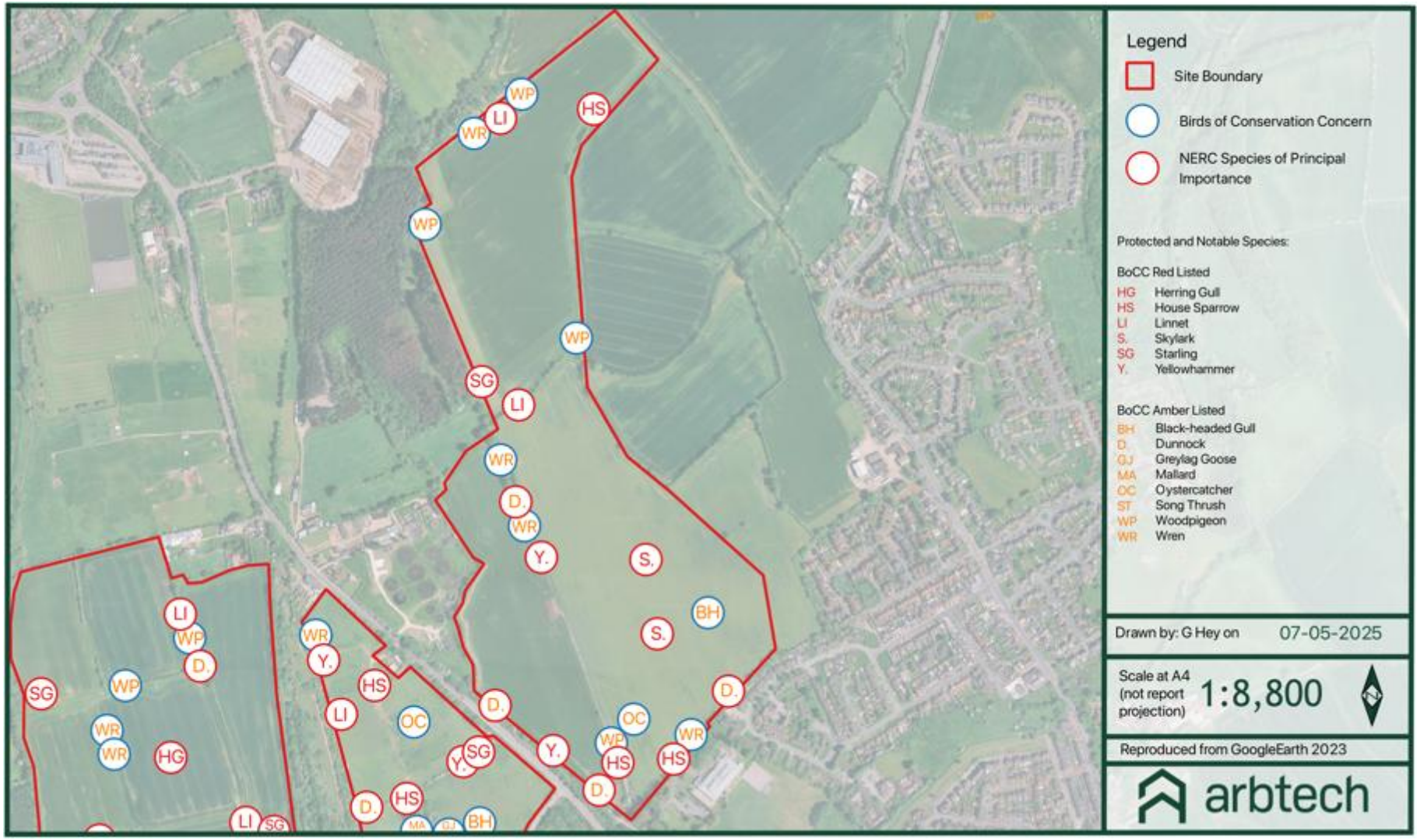
- Bird Survey & Assessment Steering Group. (2022). Bird Survey Guidelines for assessing ecological impacts, v.1.0.0.
- Fuller, R.J. (1980), A Method for Assessing the Ornithological Interest of Sites for Conservation. Biological Conservation 17: 229-239
- Gilbert, G., Gibbons, D.W., and Evans, J. (1998) Bird Monitoring Methods: A Manual of Techniques for UK Key Species. The Royal Society for the protection of Birds, Sandy, Bedfordshire, England.
- Stanbury, A., Eaton, M., Aebischer, N., Balmer, D., Brown, A., Douse, A., Lindley, P., McCulloch, N., Noble, D., and Win I. 2021. The status of our bird populations: the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man and second IUCN Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain. British Birds 114: 723-747.

Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan

Appendix 2: Site Location Plan

Appendix 3: Wintering Bird Survey Plan


Legend
Site Boundary
Birds of Conservation Concern
NERC Species of Principal Importance
Protected and Notable Species:
BoCC Red Listed
HG Herring Gull
HS House Sparrow
LI Linnet
S. Skylark
SG Starling
Y. Yellowhammer
BoCC Amber Listed
BH Black-headed Gull
D. Dunnock
GJ Greylag Goose
MA Mallard
OC Oystercatcher
ST Song Thrush
WP Woodpigeon
WR Wren
Drawn by: G Hey on 07-05-2025
Scale at A4 (not report projection) 1:8,800
Reproduced from GoogleEarth 2023
arbtech

Appendix 4: Legislation and Planning Policy

LEGAL PROTECTION

With certain exceptions, all birds, their nests and eggs are protected under Sections 1-8 of the WCA. Among other things, this makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy (or, in Scotland, otherwise interfere with) the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built
- Intentionally take or destroy an egg of any wild bird
- Sell, offer or expose for sale, have in his possession or transport for the purpose of sale any wild bird (dead or alive) or bird egg or part thereof.
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct or prevent any wild bird from using its nest (Scotland only)

Certain species of bird, for example the barn owl, bittern and kingfisher receive additional protection under Schedule 1 of the WCA and are commonly referred to as "Schedule 1" birds.

This affords them protection against:

- Intentional **or reckless** disturbance while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young
- Intentional **or reckless** disturbance of dependent young of such a bird at on or near the nests.

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

Works should be planned to avoid the possibility of killing or injuring any wild bird or damaging or destroying their nests. The most effective way to reduce the likelihood of nest destruction in particular is to undertake work outside the main bird nesting season which typically runs from March to August. Where this is not feasible, it will be necessary to have any areas of suitable habitat thoroughly checked for nests prior to vegetation clearance.

Schedule 1 birds are additionally protected against disturbance during the nesting season. Thus, it will be necessary to ensure that no potentially disturbing works are undertaken in the vicinity of the nest. The most effective way to avoid disturbance is to postpone works until the young have fledged. If this is not feasible, it may be possible to maintain an appropriate buffer zone or standoff around the nest.

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Industry Guidelines and Standards

This report has been written with due consideration to:

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2020). Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK. 2nd Edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- British Standard 42020 (2013). Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.
- British Standard 8683:2021 (2021). Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain.

Proportionality

> The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.
>
> The desk studies and field surveys undertaken to provide a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) might in some cases be all that is necessary.
>
> (BS 42020, 2013)

Version control			
Status	**Issue**	**Name**	**Date**
Draft	0.1	Gareth Hey BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM, Consultant Ecologist	26/06/2025
Proof	0.2	Annabel Sharpe Bsc (Hons) Consultant Ecologist CL18 licence	02/06/2025
Proof	0.3	Mel Reid BSc (Hons) MRes AMRSB, Principal Ecologist	02/06/2025
Final	1.0	Gareth Hey BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM, Consultant Ecologist	02/06/2025