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NATURAL PROGRESSION


Land North West of Goring Station, Goring-by-Sea, West Sussex

Breeding Bird Survey

August 2020

Land North West of Goring Station, Goring-by-Sea, West Sussex

Breeding Bird Survey

Client:	Persimmon Homes Thames Valley	
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Author: Dr Richard Bickers BSc(Hons) PhD MCIEEM	Proofed: Nick Pincombe BA(Hons) MSc CEnv MIEMA MCIEEM	Approved: Nick Pincombe BA(Hons) MSc CEnv MIEMA MCIEEM
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Abbreviations

Annex 1 species - Species listed in Annex I of EC Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (1979)

Schedule 1 species - Species listed in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

BoCC Red, Amber and Green species - Species listed in the Birds of Conservation Concern Red, Amber and Green lists (Eaton et al., 2015) respectively

Section 41 species - Species of Principal Importance in England listed in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

0 Executive Summary

0.1 Introduction

0.1.1 A breeding bird survey was carried out for the site of a proposed mixed use development at Land North West of Goring Station, Goring-by-Sea, West Sussex (Grid Reference: 510120, 103430). This was undertaken to identify and evaluate the potential impacts of development on breeding bird species, and make recommendations in order to avoid and mitigate any such impacts and to enhance the site for breeding birds.

0.2 Results

0.2.1 Ten probable breeding species were identified within the survey area, as well as eight possible breeding species. These included BoCC Red and Amber listed and Section 41 species, most notably populations of skylark, breeding in the arable, and house sparrow, breeding in boundary vegetation in the south west of the site (both Red Listed/section 41). The other probable breeding species was dunnock (Amber listed/section 41) and possible breeding species were starling and song thrush (both Red Listed/section 41), mallard (Amber listed) and reed bunting (Amber listed/section 41). Seven and four BoCC Green Listed bird species were also identified as probable or possible breeding species respectively.

0.3 Evaluation

0.3.1 The survey area is considered to be of local importance for its breeding bird populations and assemblage, of which the most significant elements are the populations of skylark and house sparrow, as well as other BoCC Red and Amber Listed and section 41 species. Apart from the skylark population, which was located within the large arable fields, most breeding bird activity was associated with woody vegetation on the eastern and western edges of the site, as well as along the Ferring Rife corridor.

0.3.2 The proposed development will result in the loss of c.18.1ha of arable habitat in the southern part of the site, between the Ferring Rife and the railway line, as well as c.0.2ha of tree and scrub habitat on the eastern edge of the site. While arable land can represent a sub-optimal habitat for skylarks, loss of the arable habitat in the south of the site, if unmitigated, would impact on the breeding skylark population as more than half of the existing population is located in this area. Loss of scrub and trees on the eastern edge of the site would probably result in the loss of small numbers of territories of, for example, greenfinch, robin, wren and possibly song thrush, great tit and woodpigeon.

0.3.3 However, the boundary vegetation elsewhere on the eastern and western edges of the site, as well as the Ferring Rife corridor, the area north of the Ferring Rife, and the south-west corner of the survey area would be retained and protected as part of the development proposals. These

offer opportunities, in combination with the creation of new greenspace within and adjoining the proposed development (i.e. green corridors through the development and greenspace between the main developable areas and the rife), for mitigating the impacts of development and enhancing the site for breeding birds.

0.4 Recommendations

0.4.1 Recommendations are made for the avoidance and/or mitigation of impacts to breeding birds, to prevent an offence under the relevant legislation from occurring and to reduce the risk of development proposals impacting on the populations and distribution of species recorded during the survey; these are summarised in Table 0.1. Recommendations are also made to enhance the site for breeding birds post-construction, with the aim of achieving an overall net gain for biodiversity in line with the requirements of local and national policy and guidance.

Table 0.1: Summary of recommendations

#	Recommendations
Avoidance and mitigation	
R1	As far as possible retain and protect existing woody vegetation on the western (for the benefit of breeding house sparrow) and eastern boundaries of the site (for the benefit of breeding greenfinch, robin, wren and possibly song thrush, great tit and woodpigeon). Extensive native species hedgerow planting is proposed as part of the development which will more than off-set the small scale losses expected at eastern boundary.
R2	Retain and protect the Ferring Rife corridor for the benefit of mallard, reed bunting, little egret, moorhen and a range of other species that use the scrub and trees along the rife.
R3	Removal of nesting bird habitats (including vegetation and buildings) will be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season, which runs from 1 March to 31 August. Where suitable bird breeding habitat needs to be removed during the bird nesting season it will be checked for nesting birds by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to works commencing.
R4	Create high quality breeding habitat for skylarks, comprising appropriately managed permanent grassland with a variety of structures and heights. Land within the applicant's control in the local area can offer a suitable alternative habitat for skylarks. As far as possible, alternative habitats should be managed to reduce disturbance by people and dogs.
Enhancement	
R5	Enhance the Ferring Rife, particularly for waterbirds.
R6	Create and appropriately manage new species-rich hedgerows, including with trees.
R7	Incorporate tree and shrub planting of appropriate native species in new greenspaces.
R8	Incorporate areas of wildflower meadow and tall, tussocky grassland into new greenspaces.
R9	Create new ponds or waterbodies, for example as part of a sustainable drainage scheme, in new greenspaces.
R10	Incorporate nest boxes for house sparrow, swift swallow and house martin in or onto new buildings. Install a kestrel nesting box, for example on the edge of new greenspace in the north of the site.

0.5 Conclusion

- 0.5.1 In summary, the proposed development will result in a loss of arable habitat used by breeding skylark, and a small-scale loss of scrub habitat used by small numbers of breeding greenfinch, robin, wren and possibly song thrush, great tit and woodpigeon. Habitats used by house sparrows would be retained. The landscape scheme for the proposed development provides extensive native species hedgerow planting which will more than compensate for the loss of scrub. High quality grassland habitat for breeding skylark will be created on land within the applicant's control within the local area to mitigate for the loss of skylark territory. In addition, a range of enhancements for breeding birds are recommended including habitat creation and management, and installation of nest boxes.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Report

1.1.1 An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey was carried out in April 2013 for the site of a proposed mixed use development at Land North West of Goring Station, Goring-by-Sea, West Sussex (Grid Reference: 510120, 103430). It was recommended that further surveys should be carried out for a number of protected species, including breeding birds, due to the presence of suitable habitats. Protected species surveys were initially undertaken between 2013 and 2014 and were updated from 2018.

1.2 Objectives and Approach

1.2.1 The survey was undertaken to;

- ▶ Identify the breeding bird species present;
- ▶ Determine the number of breeding territories of each bird species;
- ▶ Establish how each breeding bird species use the site;
- ▶ Evaluate the importance of the breeding bird species populations and assemblage present;
- ▶ Identify and evaluate the potential impacts of development on the breeding bird species populations and assemblage; and
- ▶ Outline measures required for avoiding and mitigating negative impacts to breeding bird species, and make recommendations for ecological enhancement.

1.2.2 To meet these objectives the approach involved:

- ▶ A review of information in the Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report (WYG, 2015) regarding the habitats present within the site boundary and wider area; and
- ▶ Field surveys using a standard method to record the presence, distribution and abundance of bird species within the survey area, with reference to current industry guidelines.

1.3 Survey Area

1.3.1 The survey area lies to the west of Goring-by-Sea in the West Sussex coastal plain, currently comprising approximately 30.8 hectares (ha) of predominantly arable fields bordered with semi-improved grassland, scattered scrub and trees. Ferring Rife runs from east to west through the northern part of the site. The survey area is bounded to the north by the A259 Littlehampton Road, to the east by the A259 Goring Street, to the south by the south coast railway, and to the west by residential properties.

-
- 1.3.2 The extent of the survey area is outlined in red on Figure 1.1 and the Phase 1 habitat map of the site is included for reference at Appendix I.
- 1.3.3 The local area comprises residential areas to the south, east and west, a school and associated playing field to the south and a small number of residential properties beside the A259 and arable fields to the north. The wider semi-rural landscape is dominated by residential development, industrial estates and arable farmland.

1.4 Proposed Construction Activities

- 1.4.1 Outline planning permission is being sought for a mixed use development comprising up to 475 dwellings along with associated access, internal roads and footpaths, car parking, public open space, landscaping, local centre (uses including A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, D1, D2) with associated car parking, car parking for the adjacent railway station, undergrounding of overhead HV cables and other supporting infrastructure and utilities.
- 1.4.2 The planning application boundary is smaller than the survey area boundary and measures 19.96ha. The indicative masterplan for the site is shown on Figure 1.2.

1.5 Legislative, Planning Policy and Conservation Context

- 1.5.1 Appendix IV sets out the legislative, planning policy and conservation context in relation to breeding wild birds.

Land North West of Goring Station

 Survey area



Figure 1.1: Survey area

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Ordnance Survey 0100031673




ENVIRONMENTAL
CONSULTING
Unit 5 Westergate
Business Centre
Brighton
BN2 4QN

Scale 1:5,000	Date Dec2018
Created by NP	Reviewed by NP
Drawing number UE0284ECO-Site181205	



NOTES
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 License No. 100027330. DO NOT scale from the drawing.
 Contractors, Sub-contractors and suppliers are to check all relevant dimensions and levels of the site and building before commencing any shop drawings or building work. Any discrepancies should be recorded to the Architect.
 Where applicable this drawing is to be read in conjunction with the Consultants' drawings.

REV	DESCRIPTION	DATE	AUTHOR	CHK'D
P1	Preliminary Issue	12/06/18	PM/SWD	HS
P2	Amendments to Layout	15/06/20	HS/AE	HS
P3	Amendments to Layout	26/06/20	HS/AE	HS
P4	Amendments to Layout and	26/06/20	HS/AE	HS
P5	Amendments to Layout and	10/07/20	HS/AE	HS
P6	Final Boundaries	15/07/20	HS/AE	HS
P6	Amendments Boundaries	15/07/20	HS/AE	HS

KEY

- Site Boundary (19.96 Ha)
- Land in Applicant's Control (11.17 Ha)
- Proposed Development Parcels
- Indicative Development Units
- Mixed Use Development Blocks
- Key Space
- Shared Surface
- Courtyard
- Mews Lane
- Parkland
- Open Space
- Sustainable Drainage Strategy (SuDS)
- Existing Vegetation
- Proposed Vegetation
- Proposed Planting to Northern Boundary
- Potential New Pedestrian Route
- Principal Vehicular Access Point
- Principal Vehicular Access Route
- Potential Location of Play Area
- 200m Walking Distance from Goring Station
- Existing High Voltage Cable
- Pylon Grounded
- Potential Secondary Access
- Proposed Car Park Entrance

thrive.
architects

Romsey Office
 Building 300, The Grange, Romsey Road, Michelmersh, SO51 0AE
 t 01794 367703 f 01794 367276 www.thrivearchitects.co.uk

PROJECT
Goring Station
 Goring-on-Sea
 For: Persimmon Thames Valley

DRAWING
Concept Masterplan - 02

SCALE	DATE	AUTHOR	CHK'D
1:1250 @ A1	12/06/19	PM/SWD	PM

JOB NO. PERS190227 DRAWING NO. CMP-02 REV. P6

Figure 1.2: Indicative masterplan

2 Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

2.1.1 The summary of desk study results for breeding birds from the 2015 Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey report (WYG, 2015) was referred to.

2.2 Field Surveys

2.2.1 The survey methodology was based on the Common Bird Census methodology (CBC) which involved standard territory (registration) mapping techniques as originally set out in Marchant (1983) and detailed in Gilbert et al (1998) and Bibby et al (2000). This method is based on the observation that many species during the breeding season are territorial. This is found particularly amongst passerines, where territories are often marked by conspicuous song, display, and periodic disputes with neighbouring individuals.

2.2.2 All bird locations and behaviours/activity were mapped using standard British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) codes. The expected outcome of this technique is that mapped registrations fall into clusters, approximately coinciding with territories.

2.2.3 Three survey visits were undertaken between April and June in appropriate weather (Table 2.1) and within three hours of sunrise. During each survey visit the survey area was walked at a slow and methodical pace in order to detect, locate and identify all individual birds. All parts of the survey area, as well as some areas immediately adjacent, were covered.

Table 2.1: Survey visit dates and weather conditions

Date	Temperature (°C)	Wind (Beaufort scale)	Cloud (%cover)	Precipitation
29-04-20	8 - 11.5	1 S	60-70	None
15-05-20	4 - 9.5	2 NE	0	None
01-06-20	13.5-16	2 NE	0	None

2.2.4 The results of the three survey visits used to create a master map, following the completion of the surveys, following methods detailed in Gilbert et al. (1998). The number of territories for each species was calculated from the species master map, normally based on a minimum of two registrations for each territory, although for late flying migrants, such as spotted flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*, for which fewer potential contacts are possible, only one registration is required to confirm a territory, an approach which can also be applied to inconspicuous species.

2.3 Survey Limitations

2.3.1 All three visits covered the full survey area and some areas immediately adjacent, and were carried according to the standard methodology set out above during the appropriate period (April to June) and time, and under suitable weather conditions. All such surveys provide snapshots of activity but there are not considered to be any significant limitations to the survey or the results obtained.

2.4 Evaluation

2.4.1 The breeding bird populations and assemblage were evaluated in terms of their conservation importance with reference to the following;

- ▶ Annex I of EC Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (1979) (Annex 1 species);
- ▶ Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (Schedule 1 species);
- ▶ Birds of Conservation Concern Red, Amber and Green lists (Eaton et al., 2015) (BoCC Red, Amber and Green species);
- ▶ Species of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (Section 41 species); and
- ▶ Birds of Sussex 1996 (Sussex Ornithological Society ,1996)
- ▶ Guidelines for the selection of biological SSSIs in relation to birds (Drewitt et al, 2015)

2.4.2 In addition, the method set out by Fuller (Fuller, 1980), based on the number of breeding bird species supported by a site, was also referred to. This assigns a level of importance according to the following categories - Local (25-49 species), County (50-69 species), Regional (70-84 species) and National (85+ species).

3 Results

3.1 Desk Study

- 3.1.1 The following is copied from the 2015 Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey report (WYG, 2015).
- 3.1.2 'There were several hundred records of protected or notable species of birds within 2km of the site. The following species are protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended): great bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*), red kite (*Milvus milvus*), Montagu's harrier (*Circus pygargus*), Eurasian hobby (*Falco subbuteo*), peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), little plover (*Charadrius dubius*), Mediterranean gull (*Larus melanocephalus*), barn owl (*Tyto alba*), common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), woodlark (*Lullula arborea*), Cetti's warbler (*Cettia cetti*), firecrest (*Regulus ignicapilla*), bearded tit (*Panurus biarmicus*) and common crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*).'

3.2 Field Surveys

- 3.2.1 A total of 27 species were recorded within the survey area (including flying over the site), of which ten are considered probable breeding species, eight possible breeding species and nine other species considered unlikely to have used the site for breeding. Records of these species and their use of the survey area are discussed below, along with accounts of status in Sussex in 1996, and of any subsequent national declines¹, where relevant, for Red and Amber Listed probable and possible breeding species. The locations of records for the three surveys are shown in Appendix II and the approximate location of territories of probable and possible breeding species are illustrated in Appendix III. The species recorded, their conservation status and the number of territories, where appropriate, are listed in Table 3.1. No Annex 1 or Schedule 1 species were recorded.

Probable breeding species

BoCC Red list species

- 3.2.2 Skylark *Alauda arvensis* (Section 41 species): It is estimated that there was a minimum of ten skylark territories within the survey area, six in the arable field south of Ferring Rife and four in the arable field to its north. Movements by skylarks between the two arable fields, across Ferring Rife, and between the site and the arable field to the north of the A259, were observed during each survey visit. No skylarks were recorded in the area of arable in the south western corner of the survey area.
- 3.2.3 Skylark is described in the Birds of Sussex 1996 as a common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor, being most common on the South Downs, coastal plain and open floodplains.

¹ <https://www.bto.org/understanding-birds/birdfacts>

However, skylark has continued to decline nationally since 1996 (c.24% decline in England 1995-2017).

- 3.2.4 House sparrow *Passer domesticus* (Section 41 species): It is estimated that there was a minimum of five pairs of house sparrows probably breeding in the boundary hedge/scrub on the southern end of the western boundary of the survey area, where it adjoins residential gardens. In excess of ten individuals were recorded in this location, including both males and females, during each survey visit and mating was observed during the 29th of April survey visit. Whilst they normally nest in buildings house sparrows can also nest in dense vegetation. House sparrows do not defend territories, as normally understood, and usually nest colonially, with nests often located close to one another. House sparrows were also recorded further to the north on the western boundary, but these appeared to be foraging individuals and the main focus for nesting appeared to be at the location further to the south.
- 3.2.5 Seven to 13 house sparrows were observed close to the western half of the southern boundary of the site during each survey visit. These appeared to be individuals foraging along the southern edge of the survey area, for example among the grassland along the PRoW, and among vegetation on the northern side of the railway line. However, suitable vegetation for nesting was lacking in this part of the site and most birds appeared to return to the vegetation beside the railway line, or the residential area to the south, when disturbed, where it is considered likely nesting was taking place. Individual birds were also recorded during single survey visits close to the northern and eastern edges of the site, before flying off site to the north and east respectively, as well as among scrub beside the eastern section of the Ferring Rife.
- 3.2.6 House sparrow is described in the Birds of Sussex 1996 as an abundant resident. However, house sparrow has continued to decline nationally since 1996 (c.16% decline in England 1995-2017).

BoCC Amber list species

- 3.2.7 Dunnock *Prunella modularis* (Section 41 species): A single dunnock territory was recorded among scrub and trees on the eastern edge of the survey area, beside the Ferring Rife. A dunnock was also recorded singing within the site during the survey visit of the 15th May, among scrub separating the two areas of arable in the south west of the site, as well as from an adjoining residential garden. However, no other activity by dunnocks was recorded in this area during the other survey visits and so this cannot be confirmed as a territory. At least two, possibly three, further dunnock territories were recorded immediately outside the site in residential gardens to the west.
- 3.2.8 Dunnock is described in the Birds of Sussex 1996 as an abundant resident.

Bocc Green list species

- 3.2.9 Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*: Two probable greenfinch territories were identified among trees and scrub on the eastern boundary of the survey area. Two greenfinches were also recorded in scrub beside the central section of the Ferring Rife, before flying north towards the A259 during

the 29th April survey visit. A calling/singing male was recorded flying over the south western edge of the site from and to a location within residential gardens to the west during the 29th April survey visit.

- 3.2.10 Blackbird *Turdus merula*: A single territory was located among trees and scrub on the eastern edge of the survey area, next to the Ferring Rife. A singing male was also recorded in scrub beside the western section of the Ferring Rife on the 29th April survey visit. However, no other activity by blackbirds was recorded in this area during the other survey visits and so this cannot be confirmed as a territory.
- 3.2.11 Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*: Three wren territories were identified, two among trees and scrub on the eastern boundary of the survey area and one among scrub beside the western half of the Ferring Rife. A wren was also recorded singing in the garden that projects into the centre of the western edge of the site.
- 3.2.12 Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*: A territory was located among scrub set within a grassy strip between arable in the south west of the survey area. A singing male was also recorded in scrub along the eastern section of the southern boundary of the site during the 15th May survey visit. A singing male was also recorded among scrub beside the eastern section of the Ferring Rife, almost due north of the 15th May record during the 1st June survey visit. This may represent a single male, recorded from two different locations over the two survey visits and collectively are considered to represent a second breeding territory.
- 3.2.13 Robin *Erithacus rubecula*: A single territory was located among trees and scrub on the eastern edge of the survey area. Singing robins were also recorded in gardens, including boundary vegetation, adjacent to the western boundary of the site.
- 3.2.14 Magpie *Pica pica*: A single territory (identified by presence of pair plus nest) was located among scrub between the arable fields in the south west of the survey area. Individual birds and pairs (groups of two) were also recorded among trees and scrub on the eastern edge of the site, in boundary vegetation on the western edge of the site and beside the Ferring Rife. Suitable breeding habitat was present in all these areas but breeding was not considered confirmed.
- 3.2.15 Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*: It is estimated that there were six breeding territories along the length of the main east to west section of the Ferring Rife. One individual was recorded repeatedly collecting nest material in the central section of the Ferring Rife during the 29th April survey visit. A single calling individual was also recorded at the northern end of the Ferring Rife, in the north eastern corner of the site, during the 1st June survey visit.

Possible breeding species

BoCC Red list species

- 3.2.16 Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* (Section 41 species): Large numbers of starling were observed making foraging flights across the site. Most of these appeared to be based among residential areas, especially to the east but also to the west of the site. Birds appeared to be foraging in fields to the north of the site or on playing fields to the south and were observed returning with food items. Three birds were recorded landing in the northern arable field on the 1st June survey visit,

and may have foraged there. However, this was the only occasion such behaviour was observed. Birds were also recorded perched and calling among trees on the eastern edge of the survey area, for example during the 29th April survey visit. Some of the trees in this area appeared to support features suitable for breeding starling, such as holes and cavities, but no clear evidence of breeding, such as birds entering or exiting holes or returning with food, was observed.

- 3.2.17 Starling is described in the Birds of Sussex 1996 as an abundant resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. However, starling has continued to decline nationally since 1996 (c.64% decline in England 1995-2017).
- 3.2.18 Song thrush *Turdus philomelos*: A single singing bird was recorded among trees and scrub on the eastern edge of the survey area during the 15th May survey visit. Suitable breeding habitat for song thrush is present within this part of the site.
- 3.2.19 Song thrush is described in the Birds of Sussex 1996 as an abundant resident and partial migrant, abundant passage migrant and very common winter visitor.

BoCC Amber list species

- 3.2.20 Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*: Individuals and groups of two birds were recorded at locations throughout the length of the Ferring Rife during all three survey visits but breeding sites were not confirmed. Suitable breeding habitat for mallard is present, along the Ferring Rife.
- 3.2.21 Mallard is described in the Birds of Sussex 1996 as a common resident and winter visitor. However, Wetland Bird Survey results² indicate that mallard has declined nationally since 1996.
- 3.2.22 Reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* (Section 41 species): A single singing male was recorded in scrub alongside the western half of the Ferring Rife during the 1st June survey visit. Although relatively late in the season to be recorded this could have been a male that had relocated from another area making a later or second breeding attempt. Suitable breeding habitat for reed bunting is present, particularly along the Ferring Rife.
- 3.2.23 Reed bunting is described in the Birds of Sussex 1996 as a common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Bocc Green list species

- 3.2.24 Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*: Woodpigeon were frequently recorded flying over the survey area. They were also recorded perched and singing/calling in trees and scrub on the eastern and western boundaries, as well as beside the Ferring Rife and on the pylons located within the site. However, clear breeding territories/locations were not identified. Suitable breeding habitat for woodpigeon is present within the site.
- 3.2.25 Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*: A singing male was recorded among scrub and trees on the eastern edge of the site, next to the Ferring Rife, during the 29th April survey visit, but there were no further records of blackcap from this area during the subsequent two survey visits. Similarly, a

² <https://app.bto.org/webs-reporting/?tab=numbers&speciescode=69>

single record of a singing male was recorded in the garden projecting into the centre of the western edge of the site during the 15th May survey visit. Suitable breeding habitat for blackcap is present within the site.

- 3.2.26 Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*: Two birds were recorded among trees on the southern part of the eastern edge of the survey area during the 29th April survey visit. However, there were no further records of chiffchaff from this area, or any other part of the site during subsequent survey visits. Although suitable breeding habitat was present in this area chiffchaff tend to sing/call persistently when occupying a territory and the lack of subsequent records suggests that this species did not breed here, although possible breeding cannot be ruled out.
- 3.2.27 Great tit *Parus major*: Birds were recorded, including a calling male, in scrub and trees on the eastern edge of the survey area during the 15th May and 1st June survey visits, where suitable breeding habitat is present. There were single records from the garden projecting into the centre of the western edge of the site as well as two records of birds along the western part of the southern edge of the site. However, suitable breeding habitat was lacking in this latter area and both birds were observed flying towards residential gardens to the south or west, where breeding territories are considered more likely to have been located.

Other species

BoCC Red list species

- 3.2.28 Herring gull *Larus argentatus*: Birds were frequently observed flying over the survey area during all survey visits, but only one individual was recorded landing within it, in the arable field north of the Ferring Rife during the 29th April survey visit. There is no suitable breeding habitat for herring gulls within the site.

BoCC Amber list species

- 3.2.29 Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*: A single individual was recorded hunting for a short time over the verge on the northern edge of the survey area, next to the A259, before flying north, during the 1st June survey visit. Although suitable breeding habitat for kestrels is present within the site, based on the lack of other records, it is considered very unlikely that they were breeding in the site.
- 3.2.30 Swift *Apus apus*: Two birds were recorded flying over the eastern edge of the site during the 1st June survey visit. There is no suitable breeding habitat for swifts within the site.

Bocc Green list species

- 3.2.31 Carrion crow *Corvus corone*: A single individual was recorded beside the western section of the Ferring Rife during the 29th April survey visit. Although suitable breeding habitat for carrion crows is present within the site, based on the lack of other records, it is considered unlikely that they were breeding in the site.
- 3.2.32 Collared dove *Streptopelia decaocto*: A single individual was recorded singing/calling from a pylon on the eastern edge of the survey area during the 1st June visit. Although suitable

breeding habitat for collared doves is present within the site, based on the lack of other records, it is considered unlikely that they were breeding in the survey area.

- 3.2.33 Little egret *Egretta garzetta*: Single individuals were recorded foraging at the western and north eastern ends of the Ferring Rife during the 29th April and 15th May survey visits respectively. Little egrets tend to nest colonially, sometimes with herons or other species, and such locations tend to be relatively conspicuous. It is therefore considered very unlikely that they were breeding in the site.
- 3.2.34 Swallow *Hirundo rustica*: Individual birds were observed flying/foraging over the arable fields in the north east and south west of the site during the 15th May and 1st June survey visits. There is no suitable breeding habitat for swallows within the site.
- 3.2.35 Blue tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*: Individual birds were recorded in the south western corner of the site during all three survey visits but due to the lack of suitable breeding habitat in this part of the site, as well as their movements, it is considered most likely that they were foraging on vegetation on the boundaries of the site but nesting in residential gardens to the west.
- 3.2.36 Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*: Small groups were recorded flying north over the survey area from residential areas to the south. Although suitable breeding habitat for goldfinch was present goldfinches were only recorded flying over the site. It is therefore considered unlikely that they were breeding within the site.

Table 3.1: Survey results

Species	BoCC list	Section 41 species?	Minimum no. of territories
Probable breeding species			
Skylark	Red	Yes	10
House sparrow	Red	Yes	5
Dunnock	Amber	Yes	1
Greenfinch	Green	No	2
Blackbird	Green	No	1
Wren	Green	No	3
Whitethroat	Green	No	2
Robin	Green	No	1
Magpie	Green	No	1
Moorhen	Green	No	6
Possible breeding species			
Starling	Red	Yes	?
Song thrush	Red	Yes	1?
Mallard	Amber	No	?
Reed bunting	Amber	Yes	1?
Woodpigeon	Green	No	?

Species	BoCC list	Section 41 species?	Minimum no. of territories
Blackcap	Green	No	?
Chiffchaff	Green	No	?
Great tit	Green	No	1?
Other species			
Herring gull	Red	No	n/a
Kestrel	Amber	No	n/a
Swift	Amber	No	n/a
Carrion crow	Green	No	n/a
Collared dove	Green	No	n/a
Little egret	Green	No	n/a
Swallow	Green	No	n/a
Blue tit	Green	No	n/a
Goldfinch	Green	No	n/a

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4 Evaluation

4.1 Breeding Bird Assemblage

- 4.1.1 The breeding bird assemblage recorded is considered to be of local importance. The most important breeding populations, from a nature conservation perspective, are considered to be those of BoCC Red Listed and Section 41 species skylark, within the arable fields, and house sparrow, in boundary hedges on the western edge of the site, as well as those of other BoCC Red and Amber / Section 41 species listed species, i.e. dunnock and possibly starling, song thrush, mallard and reed bunting.
- 4.1.2 The totals of ten probable breeding species, even when combined with the total of eight possible breeding species means the site falls below the threshold for local importance (25 identified by Fuller (Fuller, 1980). However, in light of further significant declines in populations of a range of bird species since 1980, including skylark and house sparrow, the populations of these species, as well as the other notable species identified above, are considered sufficient to justify local importance.

4.2 Impacts of Development

- 4.2.1 The proposed development will result in the loss of c.18.1ha of arable habitat in the southern part of the site, between the Ferring Rife and the railway line, as well as c.0.2ha of tree and scrub habitat on the eastern edge of the site. While arable land can represent a sub-optimal habitat for skylarks, loss of the arable habitat in the south of the site, if unmitigated, would impact on the breeding skylark population as more than half of the existing population is located in this area. Loss of scrub and trees on the eastern edge of the site would probably result in the loss of small numbers of territories of, for example, greenfinch, robin, wren and possibly song thrush, great tit and woodpigeon.
- 4.2.2 However, the boundary vegetation elsewhere on the eastern and western edges of the site, as well as the Ferring Rife corridor, the area north of the Ferring Rife, and the south-west corner of the survey area would be retained and protected as part of the development proposals. These offer opportunities, in combination with the creation of new greenspace and boundary vegetation within and adjoining the proposed development (i.e. green corridors through the development and greenspace between the main developable areas and the rife), for mitigating the impacts of development and enhancing the site for breeding birds.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Avoiding and Mitigating Impacts

5.1.1 Table 5.1 lists recommendations for avoiding and mitigating the impacts of the proposed development on the breeding bird populations and assemblage within the site.

Table 5.1: Recommendations for avoidance and mitigation

#	Recommendations
Avoidance and mitigation	
R1	As far as possible retain and protect existing woody vegetation on the western (for the benefit of breeding house sparrow) and eastern boundaries of the site (for the benefit of breeding greenfinch, robin, wren and possibly song thrush, great tit and woodpigeon). Extensive native species hedgerow planting is proposed as part of the development which will more than off-set the small scale losses expected at eastern boundary.
R2	Retain and protect the Ferring Rife corridor for the benefit of mallard, reed bunting, little egret, moorhen and a range of other species that use the scrub and trees along the rife.
R3	Nesting bird habitats that need to be removed will be cleared outside of the bird nesting season, which runs from 1 March to 31 August. It will therefore be carried out between September and February, but should be planned and implemented in accordance with the findings of the other ecological surveys carried out for the site (reported separately), as other protected species may still be present outside of the bird breeding season. Any construction works undertaken within the bird breeding season where suitable bird breeding habitat exists will require a site check for nesting birds by a suitably qualified ecologist. This will take place no more than two days prior to works commencing. This is to ensure that no disturbance to active bird nests occurs. If a nest is found it must be cordoned off and works adjacent to the nest must be delayed until such time that the chicks have fledged from the nest. This will be supervised by a suitably qualified ecologist.
R4	Create high quality breeding habitat for skylarks, comprising appropriately managed permanent grassland with a variety of structures and heights. Land within the applicant's control in the local area can offer a suitable alternative habitat for skylarks. As far as possible, alternative habitats should be managed to reduce disturbance by people and dogs.

R1 and R2

5.1.2 Apart from the skylark population most breeding bird activity, including notable species, is focussed in the woody vegetation located largely on the boundaries of the site, as well as along the Ferring Rife corridor (including channel, banks and associated woody vegetation). The Ferring Rife corridor will be retained and protected as part of the development proposals which will avoid many of the potential impacts on the breeding bird assemblage. The woody vegetation on western boundary will also be retained, hence providing for continued use of the survey area by the house sparrow population. In addition, approximately 2km of native species

hedgerow is proposed as part of the landscaping scheme which will more than off-set the small scale losses (c.0.2ha) of scrub expected at eastern boundary, thereby securing continued availability of suitable habitat for greenfinch, robin, wren, song thrush, great tit and woodpigeon.

R3

5.1.3 If removal of breeding bird habitat is necessary this should be carried out as recommended in order to avoid a breach of provisions under the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

R4

5.1.4 The skylark population occupied most of the arable areas within the site, with the exception of the area in the south west. At the time of the survey the arable was being used to grow cereals, probably winter cereals. Such crops can represent sub-optimal habitat for skylarks as the crop often becomes too tall and thick for more than a single brood each year. Skylarks need to rear two or three broods a year in order to maintain populations. Suitably managed permanent grassland, with a range of structures including taller tussocky grassland, can provide a more productive habitat for skylarks. By replacing the area of sub-optimal arable habitat which is to be lost to development with an area of high-quality tussocky grassland, the loss of skylark territories within the red line boundary can be adequately mitigated. Land within the applicant’s control within the local area can deliver a suitable alternative habitat for skylarks

5.1.5 If this area is to be publicly accessible greenspace it is recommended that measures are put in place to reduce disturbance to breeding skylarks by people or dogs. This could comprise signs and interpretation boards requesting that people remain on paths and keep their dogs under close control, or on leads, during the breeding season (from March to August inclusive).

5.2 Enhancing the Site for Breeding Birds

5.2.1 Table 5.2 lists recommendations for enhancing the site for breeding birds following development.

Table 5.2: Recommendations for enhancement

#	Recommendations
Enhancement	
R5	Enhance the Ferring Rife for breeding birds, for example by widening the channel in places to create larger areas of emergent and marginal vegetation for nesting waterbirds, such as moorhen and mallard.
R6	Create and appropriately manage new species-rich hedgerows, including with trees, for example along site boundaries, using appropriate native species which will provide cover, nesting sites and a range of food resources.
R7	Incorporate tree and shrub planting of appropriate native species, which will provide nesting sites and a range of food resources, in new greenspaces within and adjoining the proposed development.

#	Recommendations
R8	Incorporate into new greenspaces within and adjoining the proposed development areas of wildflower meadow grassland, using an appropriate mix of native species, and/or areas of tall, tussocky grassland, including species such as knapweeds, thistles and teasels etc., which will provide food resources, including both seeds and invertebrates for a range of bird species.
R9	Create new ponds or waterbodies, for example as part of a sustainable urban drainage scheme, with appropriate native wetland plant species, preferably with adjoining grassland and scrub habitats, which will provide nesting sites and a range of food resources, in new greenspaces within and adjoining the proposed development.
R10	<p>Incorporate nest boxes for house sparrow, swift in or onto new buildings, particularly where these occur adjacent or close to retained or new greenspace or habitat, for example;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Schwegler 17 Swift Box (or other manufacturer's equivalent);▶ Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Terrace (or other manufacturer's equivalent);▶ Schwegler Barn Swallow Nest 10 or 10b (or other manufacturer's equivalent); and▶ Schwegler House Martin Nest No. 9A, 9B or 11. <p>Install a kestrel nesting box, for example on the edge of new greenspace in the north of the site, between the Ferring Rife and the A259 (see R4).</p>

R5, R6, R7, R8 and R9

5.2.2 These measures would provide additional resources, in the form of cover, nesting sites and food resources, for a range of breeding birds.

R9

5.2.3 The provision of nest boxes suitable for species that commonly use buildings in residential areas as breeding sites, such as house sparrow, swift, swallow and house martin, as well as for kestrel (in combination with habitat creation) will increase the available nesting/breeding resource for these species.

6 Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 A breeding bird survey was carried out for the site of a proposed mixed use development at Land North West of Goring Station, Goring-by-Sea, West Sussex. This was undertaken to identify and evaluate the potential impacts of development on breeding bird species, and make recommendations in order to avoid and mitigate any such impacts and to enhance the site for breeding birds.

6.2 Results

6.2.1 Ten probable breeding species were identified within the survey area, as well as eight possible breeding species. These included BoCC Red and Amber listed and Section 41 species, most notably populations of skylark, breeding in the arable, and house sparrow, breeding in boundary vegetation in the south west of the site (both Red Listed/section 41). The other probable breeding species was dunnock (Amber listed/section 41) and possible breeding species were starling and song thrush (both Red Listed/section 41), mallard (Amber listed) and reed bunting (Amber listed/section 41). Seven and four BoCC Green Listed bird species were also identified as probable or possible breeding species respectively.

6.3 Evaluation

6.3.1 The survey area is considered to be of local importance for its breeding bird populations and assemblage, of which the most significant elements are the populations of skylark and house sparrow, as well as other BoCC Red and Amber Listed and section 41 species. Apart from the skylark population, which was located within the large arable fields, most breeding bird activity was associated with woody vegetation on the eastern and western edges of the site, as well as along the Ferring Rife corridor.

6.3.2 The proposed development will result in the loss of c.18.1ha of arable habitat in the southern part of the site, between the Ferring Rife and the railway line, as well as c.0.2ha of tree and scrub habitat on the eastern edge of the site. While arable land can represent a sub-optimal habitat for skylarks, loss of the arable habitat in the south of the site, if unmitigated, would impact on the breeding skylark population as more than half of the existing population is located in this area. Loss of scrub and trees on the eastern edge of the site would probably result in the loss of small numbers of territories of, for example, greenfinch, robin, wren and possibly song thrush, great tit and woodpigeon.

6.3.3 However, the boundary vegetation elsewhere on the eastern and western edges of the site, as well as the Ferring Rife corridor, the area north of the Ferring Rife, and the south-west corner of the survey area would be retained and protected as part of the development proposals. These

offer opportunities, in combination with the creation of new greenspace within and adjoining the proposed development (i.e. green corridors through the development and greenspace between the main developable areas and the rife), for mitigating the impacts of development and enhancing the site for breeding birds.

6.4 Recommendations

6.4.1 Recommendations are made for the avoidance and/or mitigation of impacts to breeding birds, to prevent an offence under the relevant legislation from occurring and to reduce the risk of development proposals impacting on the populations and distribution of species recorded during the survey; these are summarised in Table 6.1. Recommendations are also made to enhance the site for breeding birds post-construction, with the aim of achieving an overall net gain for biodiversity in line with the requirements of local and national policy and guidance.

Table 6.1: Summary of recommendations

#	Recommendations
Avoidance and mitigation	
R1	As far as possible retain and protect existing woody vegetation on the western (for the benefit of breeding house sparrow) and eastern boundaries of the site (for the benefit of breeding greenfinch, robin, wren and possibly song thrush, great tit and woodpigeon). Extensive native species hedgerow planting is proposed as part of the development which will more than off-set the small scale losses expected at eastern boundary.
R2	Retain and protect the Ferring Rife corridor for the benefit of mallard, reed bunting, little egret, moorhen and a range of other species that use the scrub and trees along the rife.
R3	Removal of nesting bird habitats (including vegetation and buildings) will be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season, which runs from 1 March to 31 August. Where suitable bird breeding habitat needs to be removed during the bird nesting season it will be checked for nesting birds by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to works commencing.
R4	Create high quality breeding habitat for skylarks, comprising appropriately managed permanent grassland with a variety of structures and heights. Land within the applicant's control in the local area can offer a suitable alternative habitat for skylarks. As far as possible, alternative habitats should be managed to reduce disturbance by people and dogs.
Enhancement	
R5	Enhance the Ferring Rife, particularly for waterbirds.
R6	Create and appropriately manage new species-rich hedgerows, including with trees.
R7	Incorporate tree and shrub planting of appropriate native species in new greenspaces.
R8	Incorporate areas of wildflower meadow and tall, tussocky grassland into new greenspaces.
R9	Create new ponds or waterbodies, for example as part of a sustainable drainage scheme, in new greenspaces.
R10	Incorporate nest boxes for house sparrow, swift swallow and house martin in or onto new buildings. Install a kestrel nesting box, for example on the edge of new greenspace in the north of the site.

6.5 Conclusion

- 6.5.1 In summary, the proposed development will result in a loss of arable habitat used by breeding skylark, and a small-scale loss of scrub habitat used by small numbers of breeding greenfinch, robin, wren and possibly song thrush, great tit and woodpigeon. Habitats used by house sparrows would be retained. The landscape scheme for the proposed development provides extensive native species hedgerow planting which will more than compensate for the loss of scrub. High quality grassland habitat for breeding skylark will be created on land within the applicant's control within the local area to mitigate for the loss of skylark territory. In addition, a range of enhancements for breeding birds are recommended including habitat creation and management, and installation of nest boxes.

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Appendix I: Phase 1 Habitat Map

Please see insert.



N

Legend

- Site boundary
- Target note
- Intact species poor hedgerow
- Scattered trees
- Scattered scrub
- A Amenity grassland
- A Arable land
- SI Semi-improved grassland
- Watercourse
- Dry ditch

0 40 80 160 Metres

Executive Park Tel: 0116 2348100
 Avalon Way Fax: 0116 2348002
 Anstey email: midlands.ecology@wyg.com
 Leicester LE7 7GR

WYG Environment creative minds safe hands

Project
 Land by Goring station

Drawing Title:
 Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Drawn by: Date:	Checked By: Date:	Approved By: Date:
VC 13/03/15	DW 13/03/15	CH 13/03/15
Project No:	Office	Type
A080495	45	94
	Drawing No.	Revision
	Figure 1	

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Appendix II: Breeding Bird Survey Maps

Please see inserts.

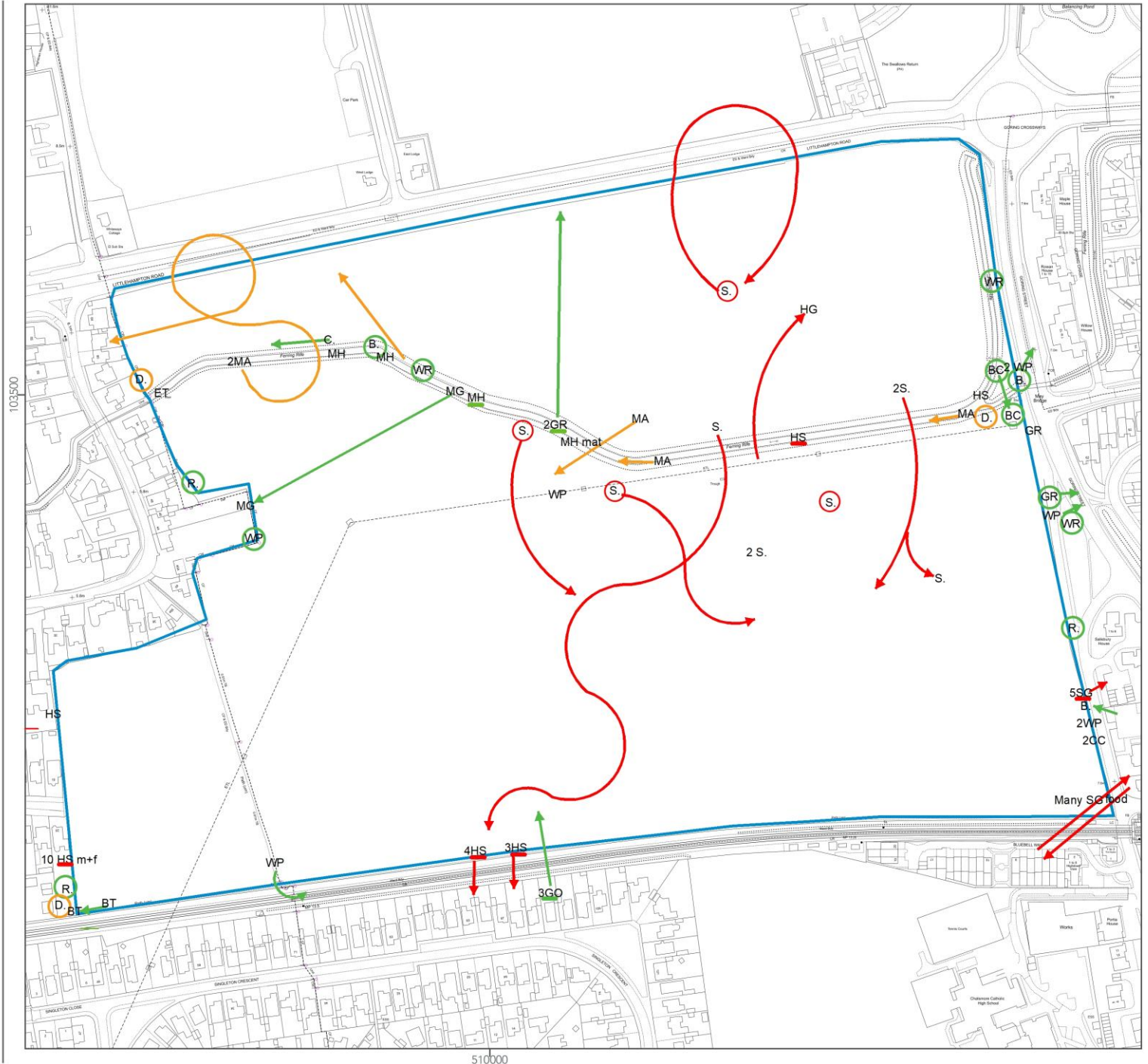
Breeding Bird Survey: April

- Ecological survey area
- Bird in song (red list)
- Bird in song (amber list)
- Bird in song (green list)
- Bird in flight (red list)
- Bird in flight (amber list)
- Bird in flight (green list)
- m / f Male / female
- Calling bird
- food Carrying food
- mat Carrying nest material



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Scale: 1:3,000 Created by: AD
Date: Jul 2020 Reviewed by: NP
Drawing number:
UE0284ECO-BBSApril200729



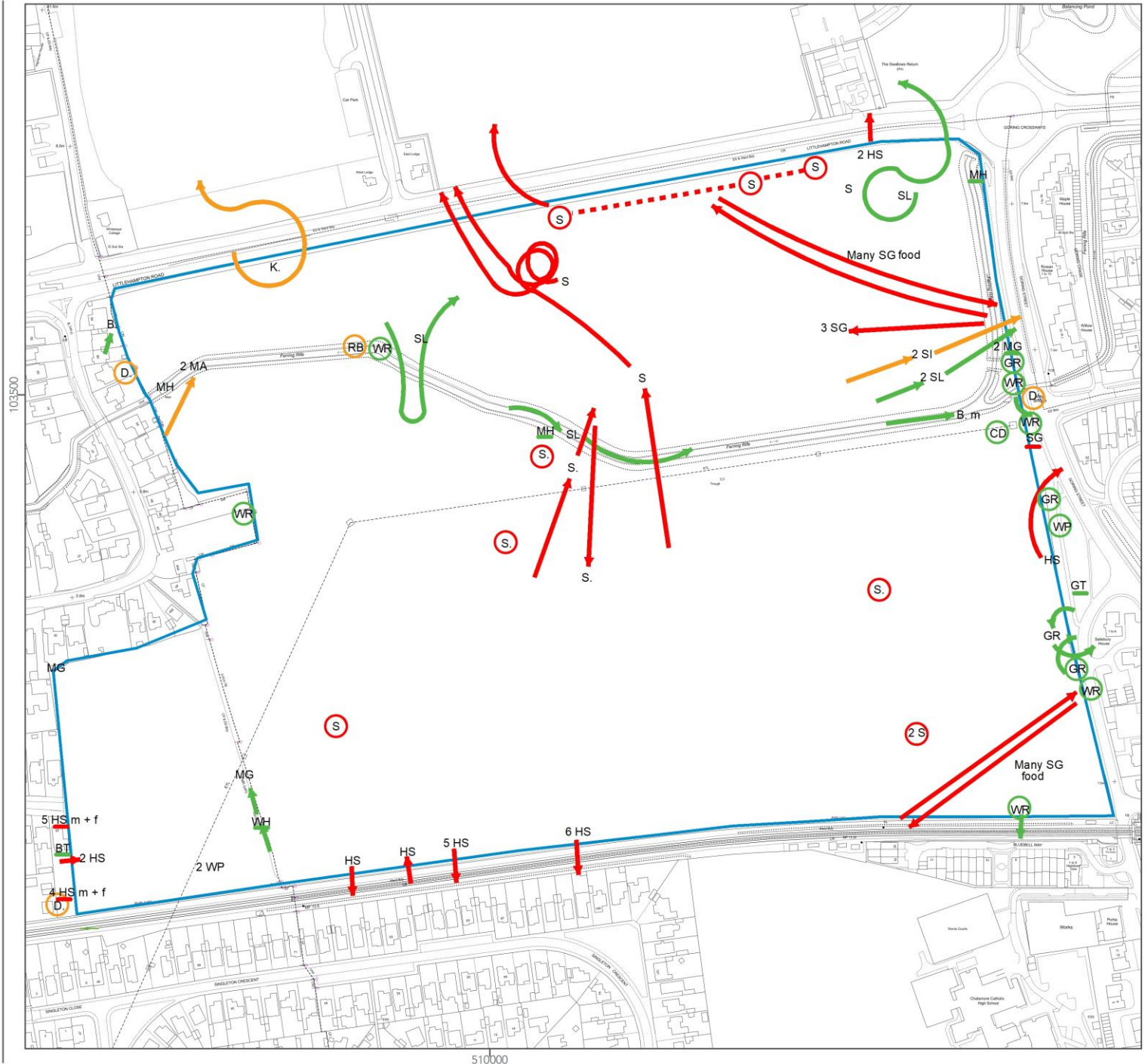
Breeding Bird Survey: June

- Ecological survey area
- Bird in song (red list)
- Bird in song (green list)
- Bird in song (amber)
- Seperate territories
- Bird in flight (red list)
- Bird in flight (green list)
- Bird in flight (amber list)
- food Carrying food
- Calling bird
- m / f Male / female



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Scale: 1:3,000 Created by: AD
Date: Jul 2020 Reviewed by: NP
Drawing number:
UE0284ECO-BBSJune200729

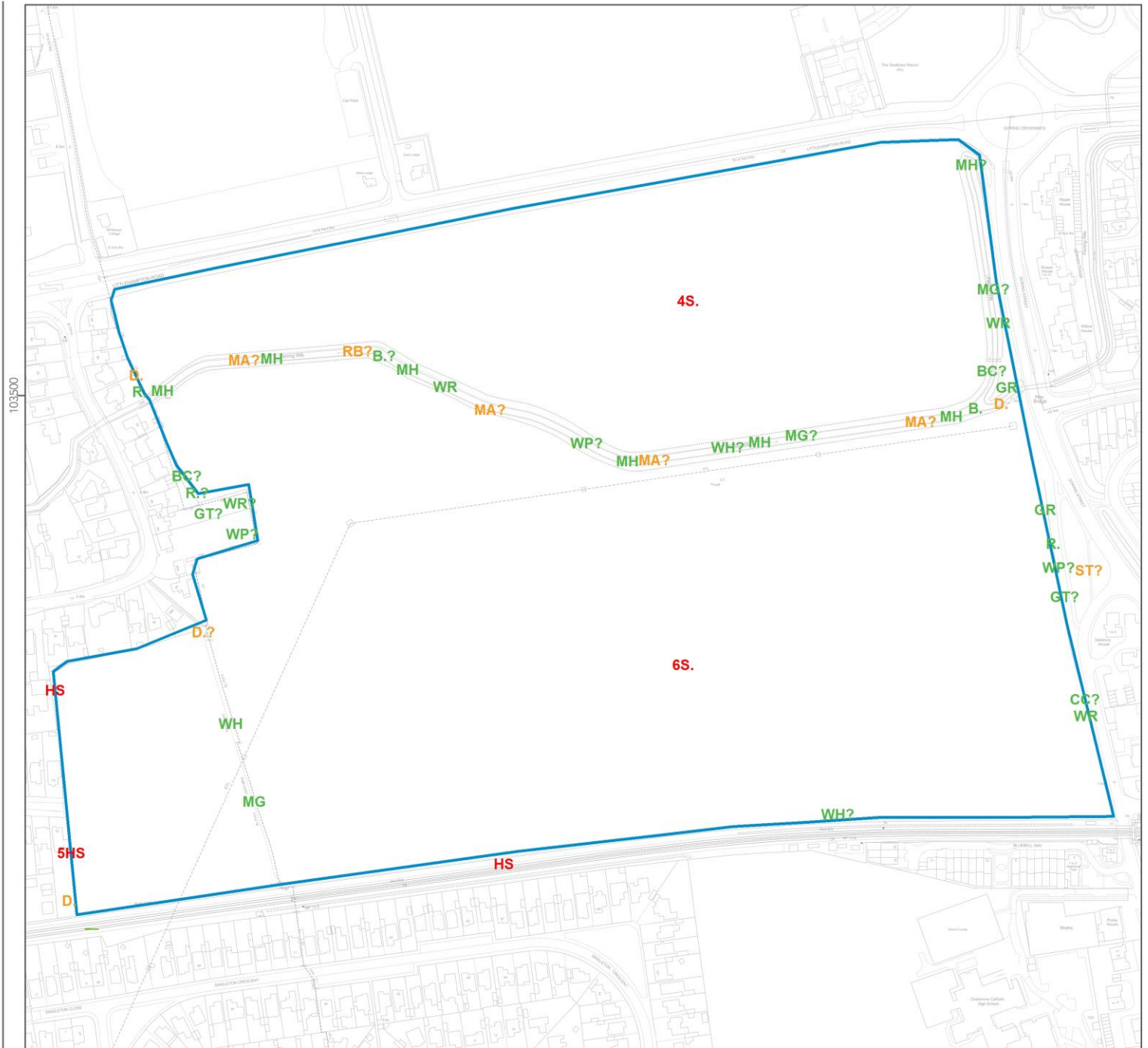


Appendix II: Breeding Bird Territories

Please see inserts.

Land North West of Goring Station: Breeding Birds

- Ecological survey area
- WP Breeding bird (green list)
- RB Breeding bird (amber list)
- HS Breeding bird (red list)



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Appendix IV: Legislative, Planning Policy and Conservation Context

Legislation

The main legislative instrument for the protection of wild birds is the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA; as amended). Under this all birds, their nests and eggs, are protected by law, and it is thus an offence, with certain exceptions, to intentionally;

- ▶ kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- ▶ take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built; or
- ▶ take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

Further, for those species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act, it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb them while nest building, or while at a nest containing eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young of such species.

In addition to the WCA, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW; as amended) amended and strengthened existing wildlife legislation detailed in the WCA. It placed a duty on government departments & the National Assembly for Wales to have regard for biodiversity and provided increased powers for the protection and maintenance of SSSIs. The Act contained lists of habitats and species (Section 74), including wild birds, for which conservation measures should be promoted, in accordance with the recommendations of the Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio Earth Summit) 1992.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC) consolidated and replaced aspects of earlier legislation. Section 40 of the Act places a duty upon all local authorities and public bodies in England and Wales to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity, including wild birds, in exercising all of their functions, including by restoring or enhancing habitats and species populations. Sections 41 (England) and 42 (Wales) list habitats and species, including wild birds, of principal importance to the conservation of biodiversity (otherwise known as priority habitats/species as listed in the now superseded UK Biodiversity Action Plan). These lists supersede Section 74 of the CRoW Act 2000. These species and habitats are a material consideration in the planning process.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Habitats Regulations; as amended) placed a duty upon the relevant authority of government to:

- ▶ identify sites which are of importance to the habitats and species listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)); and
- ▶ maintain a register of European protected sites (Special Protection Areas (SPAs)) designated as a result of Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (The Birds Directive).

In addition, the Habitats Regulations also provide for the protection of individual species of fauna, including wild birds, of European conservation concern listed in Schedules 2 (European Protected Species (EPS)). Under the Habitats Regulations disturbance includes any activity which is likely to: impair the ability of a EPS to survive, breed, reproduce, or rear/nurture its young; impair the ability of a EPS to migrate or hibernate; or significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species.

When enacted, the Environment Bill is expected, among other things, to: establish an Office for Environmental Protection; require all new development requiring planning permission to achieve a net gain for biodiversity (expected to be at least 10%); amend the NERC Act duty to conserve biodiversity by explicitly adding a duty to enhance; and require local authorities to produce local nature recovery strategies.

Planning Policy

The protection and enhancement of biodiversity, including breeding wild birds, is an objective of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in February 2019, which sets out requirements in this regard for planning policies and local planning authorities and their local plans.

Birds of Conservation Concern

This lists bird species according to their conservation status, based on a number of criteria. Species are assigned to the Red, Amber or Green lists of conservation concern, with Red Listed species those of greatest conservation concern.

Note that listing on either the Red or Amber Birds of Conservation Concern lists does not offer any further legal protection, but planning authorities are required to prevent these species from being adversely affected by development in accordance with National Planning Policy and the CRoW and NERC Acts.

Appendix V: Legal and Technical Limitations

- This report has been prepared by Urban Edge Environmental Consulting Ltd (UEEC Ltd) with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the contract made with the Client to undertake this work, and taking into account the information made available by the Client. No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this report or any other services provided by us.
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- The advice provided in this report does not constitute legal advice. As such, the services of lawyers may also be considered to be warranted.
- Unless otherwise stated in this report, the assessments made assume that the sites and facilities that have been considered in this report will continue to be used for their current planned purpose without significant change.
- All work carried out in preparing this report has utilised and is based upon UEEC Ltd's current professional knowledge and understanding of current relevant UK standards and codes, technology and legislation. Changes in this legislation and guidance may occur at any time in the future and may cause any conclusions to become inappropriate or incorrect. UEEC Ltd does not accept responsibility for advising the Client or other interested parties of the facts or implications of any such changes;
- Where this report presents or relies upon the findings of ecological field surveys (including habitat, botanical or protected/notable species surveys), its conclusions should not be relied upon for longer than a maximum period of two years from the date of the original field surveys. Ecological change (e.g. colonisation of a site by a protected species) can occur rapidly and this limitation is not intended to imply that a likely absence of, for instance, a protected species will persist for any period of time;
- This report has been prepared using factual information contained in maps and documents prepared by others. No responsibility can be accepted by UEEC Ltd for the accuracy of such information;
- Every effort has been made to accurately represent the location of mapped features, however, the precise locations of features should not be relied upon;
- Populations of animals and plants are often transient in nature and a single survey visit can only provide a general indication of species present on site. Time of year when the survey was carried out, weather conditions and other variables will influence the results of an ecological survey (e.g. it is possible that some flowering plant species which flower at other times of the year were not observed). Every effort has been made to accurately note indicators of presence of protected, rare and notable species within and adjacent to the site but the possibility nonetheless exists for other species to be present which were not recorded or otherwise indicated by the survey;
- Any works undertaken as a consequence of the recommendations provided within this report should be subjected to the necessary health & safety checks and full risk assessments.

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Urban Edge Environmental Consulting Ltd

Unit 5 | Westergate Business Centre | Brighton | BN2 4QN

T: 01273 68 67 66 | E: enquiries@ueec.co.uk

www.ueec.co.uk |  @UrbanEdgeEnviro | 

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Urban Edge Environmental Consulting Ltd

Unit 5 | Westergate Business Centre | Brighton | BN2 4QN

T: 01273 68 67 66 | E: enquiries@ueec.co.uk

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