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Appendix 13: Recreational Impacts Technical Note

Client

Hargreaves Land

Project

Lincolnshire Lakes (North),

Scunthorpe

Date

January 2025

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Figure 1: Location of Humber Estuary Designated Sites

Rev	Issue Status	Prepared/Date	Approved/Date
-	Final	GP / 27.01.25	AJB & ET / 27.01.25

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The following note has been prepared by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd. (FPCR) on behalf of Hargreaves Land, to accompany a hybrid planning application at Lincolnshire Lakes (North), in Scunthorpe. The application site is located within the eastern plot of the wider Lincolnshire Lakes (North) site (central grid reference SE865095), as is shown on Figure 1, and hereafter referred to as the 'Site'.

Site Context

1.2 The Planning Application#1 Site extends to approximately 56ha (138 acres) of mostly arable land. The Site is relatively flat and currently divided into separate parcels of land through existing hedgerows and ditches.

1.3 The hybrid planning application proposals include:

- a full planning application for the construction of a new vehicular access off the M181/A1077(M) roundabout, a pedestrian and cycle link to Scotter Road, a foul pumping station, earthworks and 'off-plot' drainage, ecological and associated landscaping and infrastructure works; and
- an outline planning application, with all matters reserved, for the development of up to 550 residential dwellings (Use Class C3), a local centre (Use Class E) and associated 'on-plot' landscaping, drainage and other infrastructure works.

Location of sites on the National Site Network

1.4 A plan showing the location of designated sites in relation to the Site is provided at the end of this note (Figure 1). However, in summary:

- at its closest point, the Humber Estuary SAC & Ramsar lies 2.1km from the north-western extent of the Site; and
- the closest part of the Humber Estuary SPA boundary is c. 10.9 km to the north of the Site.

Scope of This Note

1.5 The LPA have requested the applicant provides information reasonably required for a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). In a meeting held on the 15th November 2023, attended by the Strategic Development Team, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) requested the information to include, but not be limited to, that set out in Table 1, below.

Table 1. Information requested by the Council, to inform their Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Ref.	Requested information	Location of information summarised/provided by FPCR
A	A plan, in Shapefile, pdf or [sic] Jpeg format, showing the location of the proposals in relation to the boundaries of the Humber Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar site.	Figure 1, appended to this document
B	A habitat survey of the application site and surrounding areas, with particular reference to habitat features that may support breeding, wintering or passage birds associated with the Humber Estuary SPA and Ramsar Site.	Full details in the Ecological Impact Assessment, but summarised here in Section 2.0
C	Details of likely construction and operational lighting, noise and visual disturbance levels.	Not applicable to this note, given the application Site is over 2km from the sites on the National Network (see paragraph 1.4) no construction-phase lighting/noise/visual impacts anticipated. The presence of flood defence banks along the River Trent and scrub planting along the M181 offer additional screening of the Site from the River (>2km from Site).
D	Details of any proposed foul and surface water drainage, along with any proposed measures to avoid harm to the Humber Estuary.	See Ecological Impact Assessment report but summarised in Section 3.0
E	Details of bird populations and assemblages associated with the Humber Estuary that could be affected by disturbance due to recreational visits.	Section 4.0
F	Information on existing background levels of recreational disturbance.	Section 5.0
G	Projections of any likely increase in disturbance – clearly showing the any assumptions and the basis upon which this has been calculated.	Section 6.0
H	Any measures proposed to discourage recreational disturbance.	Section 7.0
I	Links to previous studies of recreational disturbance of birds using the Humber Estuary: https://www.humburnature.co.uk/resources/reports	Section 5.0
J	Recent wintering and passage survey information sufficient to assess the usage of the application site, adjacent land and nearby SSSI units by birds associated with the Humber Estuary SPA and Ramsar Site.	Full details in Breeding and Wintering Bird Appendices, but summarised in Section 8.0

Documents used to inform this Technical Note

1.6 Documents reviewed to inform this note were:

- i. Footprint Ecology Reports¹:
 - a. Cruickshanks K., Liley D., Fearnley H., Stillman R., Harvell P., Hoskin R. & Underhill-Day J. (2010). Desk Based Study on Recreational Disturbance to birds on the Humber Estuary. Footprint Ecology / Humber Management Scheme
 - i. Cruickshanks et al. (2010b). Associated Maps
 - b. Fearnley H., Liley D. & Cruickshanks K. (2012). Results of the recreational visitor surveys across the Humber Estuary. Footprint Ecology, unpublished report for Humber Management Scheme
 - ii. Fearnley at al. (2012b). Associated Maps.
 - c. Ross K. & Liley D. (2014). Humber Winter Bird Disturbance Study. Unpublished report for the Humber Management Scheme by Footprint Ecology.
 - iii. Liley D. & Cruickshanks K. (2014b) Results of the Recreational Visitor Surveys Across the Humber Estuary. Unpublished maps by Footprint Ecology.
- ii. Humber Nature Partnership website²
- iii. Humber Management Scheme^{3&4}
 - a. The Humber Estuary European Marine Site Codes of Conduct⁵
- iv. North Lincolnshire Habitats Regulations Assessment Stage 1⁶
- v. North Lincolnshire Habitats Regulations Assessment Stage 2⁷
- vi. North Lincolnshire Local Development Framework: Lincolnshire Lakes Area Action Plan⁸
- vii. Habitats Regulations Assessment. Lincolnshire Lakes Area Action Plan – Submission (Publication Draft)⁹. URS. October 2014.

¹ <https://www.humburnature.co.uk/resources/reports>

² <https://humburnature.co.uk/news/2021-02-21-recreational-disturbance-what-is-it-and-how-to-report-it>

³ <https://glnp.org.uk/knowledge-hub/category/local-initiatives/humber-management-scheme>

⁴ [https://humburnature.co.uk/our-work/humber-management-scheme#:~:text=The%20Humber%20Management%20Scheme%20\(HMS,known%20as%20'favourable%20condition'](https://humburnature.co.uk/our-work/humber-management-scheme#:~:text=The%20Humber%20Management%20Scheme%20(HMS,known%20as%20'favourable%20condition)

⁵ <https://humburnature.co.uk/assets/codes-of-conduct-pdf.pdf>

⁶ <https://m.northlincs.gov.uk/public/planningreports/corestrategy/hraupdate/nlccorestrategyrevhrascreening.pdf>

⁷ <https://m.northlincs.gov.uk/public/planningreports/corestrategy/hraupdate/nlccorestrategydpdhrastage2.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.northlincs.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/planning-policy-local-development-framework/#1591179301719-17cb465c-501b>

⁹ https://m.northlincs.gov.uk/public/planningreports/LincolnshireLakes/LLAAP_Final_Option_&_Policies_HRA.pdf

2.0 A HABITAT SURVEY OF THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREAS, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO HABITAT FEATURES THAT MAY SUPPORT BREEDING, WINTERING OR PASSAGE BIRDS ASSOCIATED WITH THE HUMBER ESTUARY SPA AND RAMSAR SITE.

- 2.1 A comprehensive UKHab habitat survey was carried over several visits between November 2023 and November 2024 by suitably experienced ecologists at FPCR. Given the known history of the Site from the now-lapsed outline permission, update breeding and wintering bird surveys have been carried out by FPCR since 2022.
- 2.2 A baseline habitat plan is provided in the Ecological Assessment and BNG report. The majority of the Site comprises ploughed arable fields with modified grassland margins. Other habitats recorded on Site include other neutral grassland, a small area of lowland dry acid grassland, modified grassland adjacent to ditches, bramble scrub, developed land, unvegetated unsealed surface, ditches, and native hedgerows.
- 2.3 The habitats on Site are suitable for Humber Estuary qualifying species. Within the wider survey area, an offsite field approximately 260m northeast of the Site boundary was flooded with a large shallow pool during the wintering bird surveys, which was found to offer habitat for species such as lapwing, mallard, snipe and teal (see Figs 7.1 – 7.24 in Appendix 7).

3.0 DETAILS OF ANY PROPOSED FOUL AND SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE, ALONG WITH ANY PROPOSED MEASURES TO AVOID HARM TO THE HUMBER ESTUARY

- 3.1 As stated in the Ecological Assessment:

“There are direct hydrological links between the Site and the Humber Estuary SAC via the network of ditches and drains that are present within and around the Site. The scheme has been designed to avoid impact to these ditches where possible. However, there remains a potential risk for effects upon the interest features of the SAC via changes to surface water run-off quality and accidental pollution of the watercourse.”

- 3.2 As stated in the Ecological Assessment, during the operational stage:

“The cessation of intensive agriculture will result in a lower pesticide, herbicide, sediment and nutrient loading of run-off, but in the absence of mitigation there is potential for sedimentation and pollution impacts via surface water drainage during the operational phase.

Surface water quality issues during the operational stage would be addressed through a SuDS drainage strategy/maintenance and management plan as outlined in the Sustainable Drainage Statement as submitted with the application (LLP1-BWB-ZZ-XX-PR-YE-0003_SDS_S2). The detailed surface water drainage strategy for each phase of the development of the Site will include mitigation measures to be adopted in relation to water quality during the operational phase. This will ensure that the surface water run-off will be restricted to greenfield rates, foul water will be treated off-site and the operational maintenance to ensure that the contaminant control measures remain effective can be secured...

The proposed SuDS network has been designed to provide water treatment and prevent pollution. The Proposed Development will continue to discharge surface water to the local watercourses at the IDB drainage rate of 1.4l/s/ha.”

4.0 DETAILS OF BIRD POPULATIONS AND ASSEMBLAGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE HUMBER ESTUARY THAT COULD BE AFFECTED BY DISTURBANCE DUE TO RECREATIONAL VISITS

SPA, SAC and Ramsar: threats, pressures and activities

4.1 The SPA citation¹⁰ lists the following negative threats, pressures and activities:

- I01 (inside and outside the SPA): invasive non-native species
- G01 (inside the SPA): outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities
- M02 (inside and outside the SPA): changes in biotic conditions
- M01 (inside and outside the SPA): changes in abiotic conditions
- K01 (inside the SPA): abiotic (slow) natural processes

4.2 The SAC citation¹¹ lists the following negative threats, pressures and activities:

- M01 and K01, as above
- E02 (outside the SAC): industrial or commercial areas
- J02 (inside and outside the SAC): human induced changes in hydraulic conditions
- H02 (inside and outside the SAC): pollution to groundwater (point sources and diffuse sources)

4.3 The Ramsar citation states that the site has social and cultural values including: tourism, sport fishing and hunting, non-consumptive recreation, aesthetic, and environmental education. Factors adversely affecting the site's ecological character are listed as:

- Disturbance to vegetation through cutting and clearing
- Vegetation succession
- Water diversion
- Overfishing (lamprey by-catch in eel nets in the River Ouse)
- Pollution (domestic sewage)
- Pollution (agricultural fertilisers)
- Coastal squeeze
- Recreational/tourism disturbance (inside the Ramsar site), particularly illegal access by motorised recreational vehicles and craft, to be controlled through a management scheme

4.4 As such, the recreational pressure pathways relate to SPA features within the SPA boundary, and Ramsar features within the Ramsar boundary (particularly from motorised vehicles and craft), but no qualifying features of the SAC.

¹⁰ <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SPA-N2K/UK9006111.pdf>

¹¹ <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030170.pdf>

4.5 The LPA has requested information on bird populations and assemblages associated with the Humber Estuary that could be affected by disturbance due to recreational visits. The right-hand side column of Table 2 highlights those features.

Table 2: Nature Conservation Designations of the Humber Estuary (B = breeding population; P = passage population; W = wintering population).

Designation	Justification / Interest Feature	Feature of note
SAC ¹²	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>1130 Estuaries</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Habitats within the estuary include: 1330 Atlantic salt meadows and a range of sand dune types in the outer estuary, together with subtidal sandbanks (H1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time), extensive intertidal mudflats (H1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide), glasswort beds (H1310 <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand), and 1150 coastal lagoons. - <u>1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</u> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time - 1150 Coastal lagoons (*Priority feature) - 1310 <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand - 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) - 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes - 2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) - 2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) (*Priority feature) - 2160 Dunes with <i>Hippopha rhamnoides</i> <p>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1099: river lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> - 1095: sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> - 1364: grey seal <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> 	No
SPA ¹³	<p>The site qualifies under article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the Great Britain populations of the following species listed in Annex I in any season:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i> (B, W) - Bar-tailed godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i> (W) - Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i> (B, W) - Golden plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> (W) - Hen harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i> (W) - Little tern <i>Stellaris albifrons</i> (B) - Marsh harrier <i>Circus aeruginosus</i> (B) - Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> (P) 	Yes
	<p>The site qualifies under article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the biogeographical populations of the following regularly occurring migratory species (other than those listed in Annex I) in any season:</p>	Yes

¹² <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030170.pdf>, updated Dec 2015

¹³ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/4968674834251776>, updated July 2007

Designation	Justification / Interest Feature	Feature of note
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i> (W, P) - Common redshank <i>Tringa tetanus</i> (W, P) - Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i> (W, P) - Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i> (W, P) - Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> (W) 	
	<p>The site qualifies under article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by over 20,000 waterbirds (as defined by the Ramsar Convention) in any season; in the non-breeding season the area regularly supports 153,934 waterbirds (5-year peak mean 1996/7 – 2000/01¹⁴)</p> <p>Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>, bar-tailed godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>, bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>, black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>, curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>, dark-bellied brent goose <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>, dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>, golden plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>, goldeneye <i>Bucephala clangula</i>, grey plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>, greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i>, knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>, lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>, mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>, oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>, pochard <i>Aythya farina</i>, redshank <i>Tringa tetanus</i>, ringed plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>, ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>, sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>, scaup <i>Aythya marila</i>, shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, teal <i>Anas crecca</i>, turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>, wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i>, and whimbrel <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>.</p>	Yes
RAMSAR ¹⁴	<p>Ramsar criterion 1: "The site is a representative example of a near-natural estuary with the following component habitats: dune systems and humid dune slacks, estuarine waters, intertidal mud and sand flats, saltmarshes, and coastal brackish/saline lagoons."</p>	No
	<p>Ramsar criterion 3: "The site supports a breeding colony of grey seals <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> at Donna Nook. It is the second largest grey seal colony in England and the furthest south regular breeding site on the east coast. The dune slacks at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe on the southern extremity of the Ramsar site are the most north-easterly breeding site in Great Britain of the natterjack toad <i>Bufo calamita</i>."</p>	No
	<p>Ramsar criterion 5 – assemblages of international importance: The Humber estuary is designated because it regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds (153,934 peak mean from 1996/7 – 2000/01; as above)</p>	Yes
	<p>Ramsar criterion 6 – species/populations occurring at levels of international importance: The Humber estuary regularly supports 1% of European population of the following species or subspecies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bar-tailed godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i> (W) - Golden plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> (W, P) - Common redshank <i>Tringa tetanus</i> (W, P) - Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i> (W, P) - Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i> (W, P) - Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> (W) - Black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i> (W, P) 	Yes
	<p>Ramsar criterion 8:</p>	No

¹⁴ <https://rsis.ramsar.org/RSapp/files/RSrep/GB663RIS.pdf>, last updated Aug 2007

Designation	Justification / Interest Feature	Feature of note
	The site is an important migration route for both river lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> and sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> between coastal waters and their spawning areas.	
	The site also supports noteworthy fauna: bird species occurring at levels of national importance: great bittern, marsh harrier, pied avocet, little tern, dark-bellied brent goose, wigeon, teal, pochard, greater scaup, goldeneye, hen harrier, oystercatcher, great ringed plover, grey plover, lapwing, sanderling, curlew, ruddy turnstone, ruff, whimbrel and greenshank.	Yes

5.0 INFORMATION ON EXISTING BACKGROUND LEVELS OF RECREATIONAL DISTURBANCE

- 5.1 The main source of information on existing background recreational disturbance of birds using the Humber Estuary sites comes from Footprint Ecology's reports. The relevant documents are:
- a. Cruickshanks K., Liley D., Fearnley H., Stillman R., Harvell P., Hoskin R. & Underhill-Day J. (2010). [Desk Based Study on Recreational Disturbance](#) to birds on the Humber Estuary. Footprint Ecology / Humber Management Scheme
 - i. Cruickshanks et al. (2010b). Associated Maps
 - b. Fearnley H., Liley D. & Cruickshanks K. (2012). Results of the [recreational visitor surveys](#) across the Humber Estuary. Footprint Ecology, unpublished report for Humber Management Scheme
 - i. Fearnley at al. (2012b). Associated Maps.
 - c. Ross K. & Liley D. (2014). [Humber Winter Bird Disturbance Study](#). Unpublished report for the Humber Management Scheme by Footprint Ecology.
 - i. Liley D. & Cruickshanks K. (2014b) Results of the [Recreational Visitor Surveys](#) Across the Humber Estuary. Unpublished maps by Footprint Ecology.
- 5.2 Footprint Ecology's 'desk-based study on recreational disturbance' report was published in 2010 (Cruickshanks et al. 2010) was commissioned by the Humber Estuary Management Scheme. Their report shows the distribution of key bird species in mid-winter (Nov – Jan), and also maps the access infrastructure (car parks, marinas and slipways). Footprint Ecology gathered information on recreational use of the Humber and highlighted that shore-based activities caused most disturbance. Maps were produced which showed the busiest areas, which comprised Donna Nook and Spurn Head which have particular wildlife features (birds/seals) and settlements around Hull, Grimsby and Cleethorpes due to 'local' visitor pressure.
- 5.3 Following on from their desk-based study (summarised above) Footprint Ecology then presented their 'results of the recreational visitor surveys across the Humber Estuary' (Fearnley et al. 2012) report. This report details visitor survey information carried out during 614 face-to-face interviews at 20 survey locations during November 2011 to March 2012.
- 5.4 Footprint Ecology found 80% of respondents were local residents, and dog walking was the main activity undertaken at the study locations (40% respondents), followed by walking (27%)

and wildlife watching (13%). Most interviewees arrived by car (70% respondents), traveling a median distance of 4.4km; dog walkers and walkers tended to undertake those activities close to home (median distance of 3km and 6.5km respectively).

- 5.5 The closest study locations to the Site were locations 10 (Ancholme), and 11 (Alkborough Flats), although, as stated in the LLAPHRA:

“the nearest location to Scunthorpe where significant visitor activity coincided with an area of key importance for birds was Blacktoft RSPB reserve (point 12 in the visitor survey; most visitors were bird watchers who will know enough to minimise disturbance). Although there are several other key areas for birds such as Alkborough Flats at a similar distance from Scunthorpe, only very small numbers of visitors were recorded there. Aside from being an RSPB reserve mainly visited by birdwatchers (rather than being an area used by the general public for dog walking etc) Blacktoft RSPB reserve is over 10km from the Lincolnshire Lakes area, much further than the 4km median distance travelled between place of residence and the SPA/Ramsar site. This is reflected in the findings of the visitor survey that although 614 people were interviewed, only 11 came from Scunthorpe (1.8% of the total). Scunthorpe therefore currently makes an effectively trivial contribution to recreational activity within the SPA.”

- 5.6 Footprint Ecology then produced their 'Humber Winter Bird Disturbance Study' (Ross + Liley, 2014; Liley & Cruickshanks, 2014). Those reports detail how fieldwork was carried out at ten locations across the Humber to record human activity, bird counts and their responses to human disturbance. Those surveys were carried out across eight visits between October 2013 and January 2014; all potential disturbance events at each of the ten locations were recorded. 1304 diary entries were recorded, involving 2280 people and 839 dogs; dog walking was the most common activity (45% of diary entries) whereas walkers without dogs accounted for 28% of the diary entries. The majority of activity was on the shore (77%) and water-based activities only accounted for 1.5% of records, restricted to Chowder Ness and Faxfleet (locations 9 and 10). Results showed that localised flushing caused birds to temporarily vacate the surveyed areas, although 69% of observations resulted in no bird response; dog walking accounted for over half of the flushing events.

- 5.7 The nearest location to the development Site was location 9, Chowder Ness, which is 30-minute (16 mile) drive north of the Site, on the banks of the Humber, overlooking saltmarshes. At that location, 67 'events' were recorded, of which dog walking (18 events = 27%) and walking without a dog (13 events = 20%) were the most common.

6.0 PROJECTIONS OF ANY LIKELY INCREASE IN DISTURBANCE – CLEARLY SHOWING THE ANY ASSUMPTIONS AND THE BASIS UPON WHICH THIS HAS BEEN CALCULATED

- 6.1 As stated in the LLAAAP HRA, during visitor surveys carried out by Footprint Ecology, the nearest location to Scunthorpe where significant visitor activity was recorded was Blacktoft Sands RSPB reserve, over 10km from the current development Site. Of the 614 people interviewed during Footprint Ecology's surveys, only 11 (1.8%) came from Scunthorpe.
- 6.2 As stated in the LLAAAP HRA, the median distance travelled between place of residence and the SPA/Ramsar site is 4km. The closest distance between the development Site and the Humber Estuary SPA is over 10km, whereas the Humber Estuary Ramsar is 2.1km from the Site. Even so, the LLAAP HRA states:

“Although the Humber Estuary Ramsar site (lower River Trent) lies relatively close to the Lincolnshire Lakes area (approximately 1.3km from the nearest proposed village), scrutiny of aerial photography and mapping identifies that there are no Public Rights of Way along or into the Ramsar site until north of Gunness, approximately 2.5km to the north of Lincolnshire Lakes, and even at that point an embankment effectively shields the Ramsar site. The Lincolnshire Lakes AAP does not propose introducing a new access to the River Trent, particularly not in its internationally designated sections. All residential development will be to the south of the existing railway line, across which there is currently no foot access. Therefore, there is very little likelihood of walkers, cyclists, and dog walkers directly accessing the European sites from their homes. Moreover, the lower River Trent is of international importance primarily for its intertidal habitats and river and sea lamprey on migration between their coastal and spawning locations, which are considerably less vulnerable to disturbance than those areas covered by the SPA designation, much further downstream.”

Projected change in visitor numbers

- 6.3 This application is for development of up to 550 residential dwellings. Using the approach of the 'Lincolnshire Lakes Area Action Plan' (LLAAP) HRA, if we took a precautionary approach and assumed a typical occupancy of 2.4 people per dwelling, then the development would result in an additional 1320 residents to the population of Scunthorpe (assuming they are newcomers, rather than rehoused from within the local area).
- 6.4 Assuming the baseline population of Scunthorpe is 80,750 residents (as stated in the LLAAP HRA), then an increase of 1320 residents from the proposed development would result in an increase in Scunthorpe's population to approximately 82,070, which equates to a 1.6% increase (i.e. $82070 / 80750$).
- 6.5 Therefore, if we increase the percentage of visitors to the Humber Estuary attributable to Scunthorpe pro-rata, there would be an approximate 0.03% increase in visitors as a result of the proposed development (i.e. $1.8 \times 0.016 = 0.03$).
- 6.6 Thus, there would be a very minimal change in the number of visitors to the designated sites from the development, therefore no likely significant effect as a result of recreational disturbance is anticipated.

7.0 ANY MEASURES PROPOSED TO DISCOURAGE RECREATIONAL DISTURBANCE

- 7.1 The full planning application includes 'ecological and associated landscaping', which will include the creation of a water vole receptor and mitigation area, and large areas of greenspace.
- 7.2 The development will offer no direct access to the SAC / Ramsar site by foot, cycle or vehicles. Additionally, there will be no facilities adjacent to the SAC/Ramsar site.
- 7.3 The Ecological Assessment discusses the creation of areas 'AB1, BG1' and 'BG2' as embedded mitigation. These are large areas of greenspace, equivalent to approximately one third of the proposed residential development area. These will provide alternative recreational opportunities within the Site to minimise the potential for significant adverse effects on designated sites and their qualifying species or habitats.
- 7.4 As outlined in the Ecological Assessment, it is also proposed that information packs should be distributed to residents informing them of the ecological value of nearby designated sites (Local Wildlife Sites as well as sites on the National Network). The packs would include measures the residents should take to minimise or prevent impacts to the designated sites, primarily through the use of the alternative recreational opportunities provided on Site, and responsible use of the designated sites. For the sites on the National Network in particular, the packs would include information on preventing disturbance to SPA / Ramsar qualifying species – through e.g. responsible dog ownership, keeping to paths, and noting particularly sensitive times of year – as well as highlighting alternative recreational opportunities or when in the SPA / Ramsar, adhering to existing codes of conduct and focusing activities (walking, dog walking etc) within managed areas of the SPA / Ramsar.
- 7.5 The Humber Estuary European Marine Site Codes of Conduct¹⁵ includes useful contacts as well as codes of conduct relating to: water & airborne recreation, walking, dog walking and horse riding, bird watching, angling, bait digging, wildfowling, motorised access and field trips.

8.0 RECENT WINTERING AND PASSAGE SURVEY INFORMATION SUFFICIENT TO ASSESS THE USAGE OF THE APPLICATION SITE, ADJACENT LAND AND NEARBY SSSI UNITS BY BIRDS ASSOCIATED WITH THE HUMBER ESTUARY SPA AND RAMSAR SITE.

- 8.1 Full details of the wintering and breeding bird surveys and results are provided in Appendices 7 and 6, respectively.

Wintering bird surveys

- 8.2 The scope of the wintering bird surveys was:

"[Dirunal and nocturnal] surveys were carried out between the wintering bird season (October-March, inclusive) in both 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. To provide a robust level of accuracy for determining the population status of wintering birds in the survey area, a total of 12 surveys have been undertaken across the two seasons, to cover the over-wintering and passage period...

Surveys were programmed to encompass a range of tidal states, with an emphasis on high tide in order to establish whether the Site was being used as a winter high tide roosting or foraging resource by Humber Estuary SPA - associated species."

¹⁵ <https://humburnature.co.uk/assets/codes-of-conduct-pdf.pdf>

- 8.3 A total of 64 bird species were recorded within the survey area across the two survey periods. These included four qualifying species of the Humber Estuary: mallard, teal, lapwing and golden plover. Additionally, one species considered a 'non-qualifying' species of interest of the Humber Estuary was recorded on-site: the short-eared owl.
- 8.4 Full survey results are provided in the wintering bird appendix but are summarised here in Table 3, and below:
- mallard were recorded on Site in small numbers, with a peak count of 29 in 2022/23 season (equating to 2.2% of the Humber population) and 19 in the 2023 season (1.3%);
 - teal: during the 2023/2024 surveys teal were only recorded once outside the Site boundary (peak count of 2 = 0.03%). During 2022/2023 surveys, teal were largely recorded in the wider survey area (NE of Site) with a peak count of 14 individuals in 2022/23 season (equating to 0.2% of the Humber Estuary population)
 - lapwing: in 2022/23 lapwing were recorded predominantly on Site in low numbers. During diurnal surveys, peak count of 20 individuals (= 0.13% of Humber Estuary population) and during nocturnal surveys and diurnal surveys of the wider area a peak count of 50 birds south-east of the Site (= 0.3%). In 2023 lapwing were recorded in a flooded field offsite, in low numbers and only on 3 visits, with the exception of flock of 80 birds on the November visit (=0.5%);
 - golden plover were recorded on Site during one survey in low numbers (peak count of 4 = 0.019%) in the 2022/23 season, and were not recorded in the 2023/24 season;
 - short-eared owl were recorded on Site once in the 2023/24 season, and were not recorded in 2022/23.

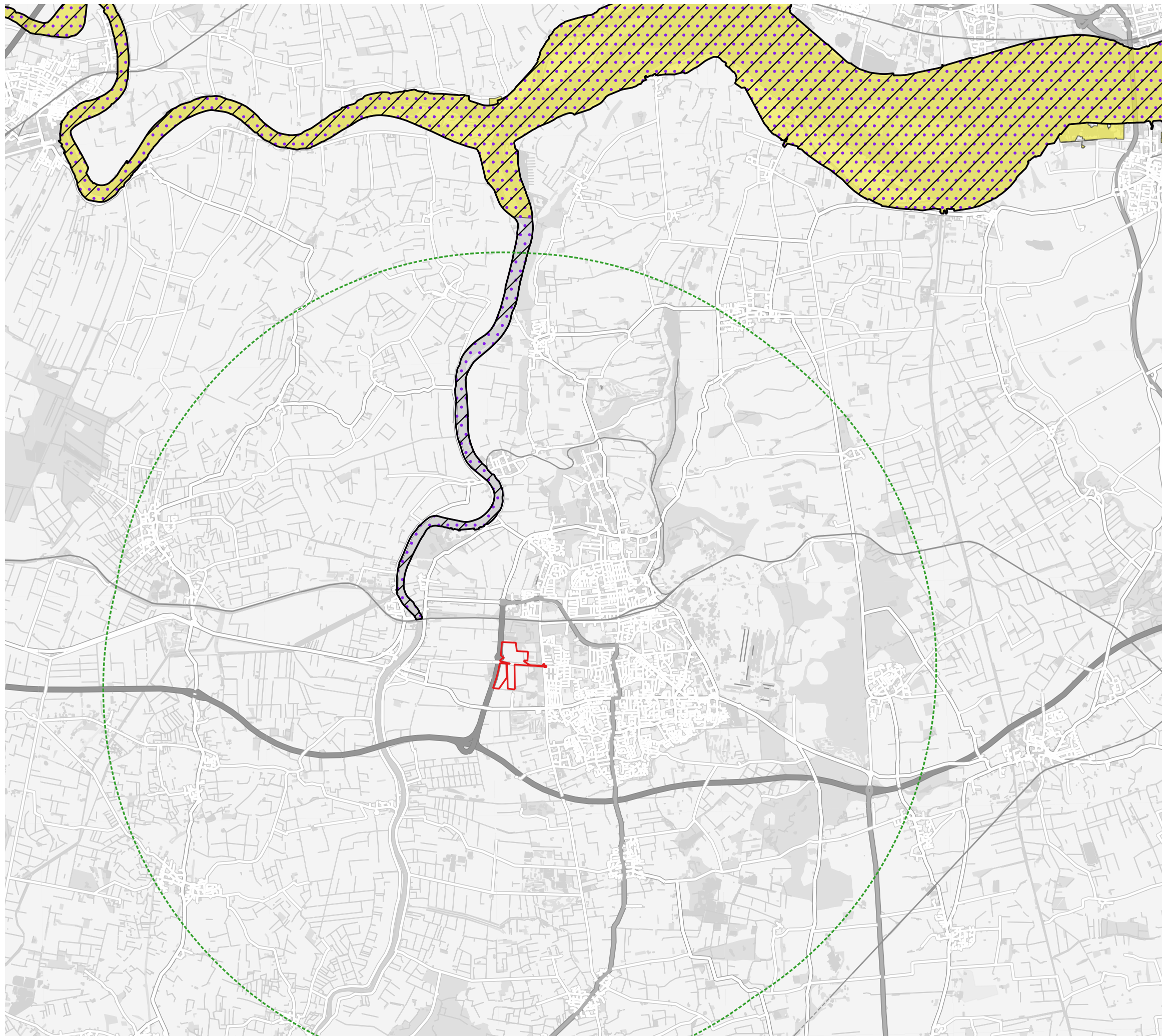
Table 3: Species associated with the Humber Estuary designated site, recorded during wintering bird surveys.

Species	Legal/ Conservation Status	Peak Count / No. of Survey Visits Recorded 2022	Peak Count / No. of Survey Visits Recorded 2023
Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Amber List SPA	29/7	19/8
Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>	Amber List	14/3	2/1
Lapwing <i>Vanellus Vanellus</i>	Red List NERC S.41 LBAP	50/4	80/3
Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	Green List	4/1	-
Short-eared Owl <i>Asio flammeus</i>	Green List	-	1/1

- 8.5 The wintering bird surveys demonstrated that the habitats within the Site do support low numbers of assemblage criteria species of the Humber Estuary. However, it is considered that that the Site is not functionally linked to the SPA due to the distance between the Site and SPA designated area, and the low numbers and irregular use of the Site by qualifying species.

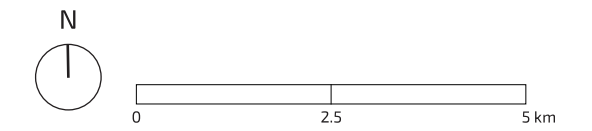
Breeding bird surveys






- 8.6 Six surveys were undertaken in April, May, June and July 2023. The surveys included one dusk survey to identify the presence of crepuscular or nocturnal singing species, while the rest were carried out at dawn.
- 8.7 A total of 50 bird species were recorded during the breeding bird surveys. None of the six breeding bird species listed on the SPA citation (qualifying: avocet, bittern, marsh harrier, little tern, and non-qualifying species of interest: common tern and kingfisher) were recorded on Site during the breeding bird survey.
- 8.8 The Site is not functionally linked to the Humber Estuary SPA.



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-  Site boundary
-  10km buffer
- Humber Estuary designated sites**
-  RAMSAR Sites
-  Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
-  Special Protection Areas (SPA)

date 16/12/24 drwn/chkd
CAG / GP

client **Hargreaves Land**
project **Lincolnshire Lakes
Scunthorpe**

title **HRA - Location of Humber
Estuary designated sites** scale
1:97,015 @ A3

number **FIGURE 1** rev
-

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