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Steeple Renewables Project

Information to Inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment

January 2026

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BSG ecology

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Steeple Renewables Project

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Contents

1 Summary

1.1 A Stage 1 (screening) assessment in accordance with Regulation 63(1)(a) has been undertaken in respect of a Development Consent Order proposal for the Steeple Renewables Project in Nottinghamshire.

1.2 The screening has been undertaken in the absence of any measures to mitigate effects on the qualifying features for which any Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) or Ramsar Sites are designated.

1.3 The scope of the screening encompassed the following sites:

Birklands and Bilhaugh SAC;

Hatfield Moor SAC;

Humber Estuary SPA;

Humber Estuary Ramsar;

Humber Estuary SAC;

Thorne and Hatfield Moors SPA; and,

Thorne Moor SAC.

1.4 It is concluded that the Proposed Development is not likely to have a significant effect on any of these sites either alone or in-combination.

1.5 It is concluded that there is no requirement to progress to Stage 2 of the appropriate assessment process (the test of ‘adverse effect on integrity’).

2 Introduction

Background and report purpose

2.1 BSG Ecology is commissioned by Renewable Energy Systems (RES) to prepare a report to inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for a Development Consent Order (DCO) proposal for the Steeple Renewables Project in Nottinghamshire (the Site). See Figure 1.

2.2 This report considers whether the development is likely to have a significant effect on any relevant designated sites of nature conservation interest (see section below), either when considered alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. If a significant effect is likely, then information to inform whether an Appropriate Assessment (AA) is provided.

2.3 Regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations states, "*A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for a plan or project which – (a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site in Great Britain (either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects), and (b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site, must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives*".

2.4 The competent authority is thus responsible for carrying out a HRA for a plan or project that is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site. This report provides the competent authority with relevant information needed to fulfil their duties.

Legislative context

2.5 Certain ecological sites that are designated for their international importance are subject to special considerations under the Conservation of Species and Habitat Regulations 2017 (as amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019), which apply either through operation of law or government policy. These are referred to as the 'Habitats Regulations' throughout the remainder of this document.

2.6 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended to account for the departure of the UK from the European Union by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 applies specific decision-making procedures to the 'national site network' (amended Regulation 3 'Interpretation'). This 'national site network' consists of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) that were designated both in that period when the UK was a member of the EU and since the UK left the EU.

2.7 It is UK Government policy (in England this is identified in paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2024) that all competent authorities should treat possible SACs (pSACs) and potential SPAs (pSPAs), listed or proposed Ramsar Sites, and sites identified or required as compensatory habitats as being within the scope of the decision-making requirement to conduct an assessment of plans and projects through HRA.

2.8 In this report the above collection of SACs, pSACs, SPA, pSPA, listed and proposed Ramsar Sites and compensatory habitat are referred to as 'Habitats Sites'.

2.9 The amending 2019 Regulations generally seek to retain the requirements of the 2017 Habitats Regulations but with adjustments for the UK's exit from the European Union. Regulation 4 confirms that the interpretation of these Regulations as they had effect, or any guidance as it applied before exit day, shall continue to do so.

2.10 These sites are subject to legal protection that imposes restrictions on a Competent Authority from granting consent, permission or authorisations for any plan or project that may affect the conservation status and integrity of these designations. The Habitats Regulations require the Competent Authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for a plan or project which is likely to have a significant effect on these designated sites (either alone or in

combination with other plans or projects) to make an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan or project for potentially affected sites in view of those sites' conservation objectives.

2.11 A Stage 1 (Screening) report by the competent authority (which is informed by this report) provides an initial assessment of whether significant effects on the qualifying interest features and conservation objectives of Habitats Sites are likely as a result of the proposal. The results of this assessment determine whether a more detailed Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2) is required. See Section 3 below for further information.

2.12 Likely Significant Effects (LSE) are considered first in isolation and then in combination with other plans and projects if appropriate. In line with the precautionary principal, unless a significant effect can be objectively ruled out with certainty, then it is considered 'likely'.

2.13 This screening exercise takes into account recent case law, including the People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta (C-323/17) which determined that mitigation aimed specifically at reducing the impacts of a given plan or project on a Habitats Site should be taken into account at Stage 2 only (Appropriate Assessment) and not at Stage 1 (Screening).

Contributors

2.14 This report has been prepared by James Gillespie, a Director at BSG Ecology. He is an experienced ecologist with over 30 years' experience. He has prepared HRA reports for a range of projects and managed, reviewed or otherwise contributed to numerous projects that have included a requirement for HRA.

2.15 The report has been reviewed by Dr Roger Buisson, An Associate Director at BSG Ecology. Roger has considerable experience in Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). This has included managing the delivery of HRA screening reports and appropriate assessments for developments, including renewable energy projects, potentially affecting wintering waders on farmland; wintering waterfowl at inland wetland complexes; intertidal waterbirds at the coast; seabirds when offshore; and birds at heathland / plantation forest mosaics. His experience has resulted in him being contracted to carry out reviews of HRAs for central Government, Government agencies and local planning authorities; and to prepare HRAs for public bodies acting as the appropriate authority or the decision-making body.

Consultation

2.16 During early engagement with the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) a scoping report was prepared and issued to PINS. The Scoping Opinion prepared by PINS on behalf of the Secretary of State and including the advice of Natural England that related to the consideration of Habitats Sites are reflected in this report.

2.17 Consultation meetings to discuss ecological topics have been held with Nottinghamshire County Council, Bassetlaw District Council and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust; and a series of public consultation meetings have been held.

2.18 RES have also undertaken statutory pre-application consultation directly with Natural England. The 03 March response from Natural England is appended to this report at Appendix 1.

2.19 Natural England were consulted directly for comments on the draft version of the document. They responded on 25 April 2025 and this was preceded by a videoconference meeting to review the main points of the response in advance. A further short clarification meeting then took place once the written response had been received. The written response is appended to this report at Appendix 2.

Data sources

2.20 This report draws on information from the following sources:

- The PEIR for the Proposed Development and the Environmental Statement for the Proposed Development, including Chapter 7: Biodiversity (including Appendix 7.2: (Designated Sites and

Habitats Baseline Report), Appendix 7.4 (Breeding Birds Survey Report), and 7.6 (Non-Breeding Bird Survey Report).

- Information gathered during stakeholder and public consultation for the development.
- Site designation information from the .gov.uk website and the Ramsar Sites Information Service.

Guidance

2.21 The following guidance has been used to inform this assessment:

- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Habitats Regulations Assessments (Planning Inspectorate, 2024)
- The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook (DTA Publications, 2023).

Terms used to describe the Site in this report

2.22 The following terms are used in this report.

- Proposed Solar Areas: areas within the Site which will support the solar panels, battery storage and associated infrastructure.
- Biodiversity Mitigation Areas (Eastern and Western): areas of the Site that will not be used for development, and are identified for biodiversity mitigation and enhancement.
- The Site: collectively including the Proposed Solar Areas and Biodiversity Mitigation Areas.

2.23 Figure 1 shows the Proposed Solar Areas and Biodiversity Mitigation Areas (as well as the Site boundary).

Baseline information

2.24 Biodiversity information about the Site that is relevant to this report has been collected as follows:

- Breeding bird survey March to July 2023 (incomplete coverage) and March to July 2024 (complete coverage of the Site) (see Appendix 7.4 of Chapter 7 of the PEIR; BSG Ecology 2025),
- Non-breeding bird survey October 2023 to March 2024 (complete coverage of the Site). (see Appendix 7.6 of Chapter 7 of the PEIR; BSG Ecology 2025),

3 Habitats Regulations Assessment process

3.1 The Habitats Regulations do not specify how an assessment should be undertaken. The methodology for this report is therefore informed by guidance as set out in Section 2, above.

3.2 The Habitats Regulations describe a procedure that provides for a systematic set of stages for the transparent consideration of the likely significant effects a plan or project could have on a Habitats Site. These are set out in Table 1, below. Each stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required. If, for example, the conclusions at the end of Stage One are that there are no likely significant effects on the Habitats Site, there is no requirement to proceed further.

Table 1: Stages in the Habitats Regulations Assessment process

Stage	Description	Legislative Context (Habitats Regulations)
Identification of purpose of plan or project	Determines if the purpose of the plan or project is directly connected with, or necessary, to the management of a Habitats Site. If it is, then no further assessment is necessary	Regulation 63(1)(b)
Scoping	The identification of any Habitats Sites that might be within scope of a HRA, i.e., those Habitats Sites should be taken forward to the screening stage based on a wide consideration of spatial and ecological factors. Such Habitats Sites may be located within the plan or project area but may also include sites located in	
Screening (Stage 1)	Assessment of whether a plan or project, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on any Habitats Site's qualifying features (habitats and species) and the achievement of the Habitats Site's conservation objectives. This is also known as the 'test of likely significant effect'.	Regulation 63(1)(a)
Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2)	Consideration of the impacts of the proposals to determine whether it is possible to conclude with certainty that the project will not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of a Habitats Site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects and with reference to the Habitats Site's conservation objectives. This is also known as the test of 'adverse effect on integrity'. At this stage consent may be granted for the plan or project if it is possible to conclude with certainty that the proposal will not result in any adverse effect on the integrity of any Habitats Site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.	Regulation 63(5)
If it cannot be concluded with certainty that the proposal will not result in any adverse effect on the integrity of any Habitats Site then proceed to:		
Assessment of alternative solutions (Stage 3)	Assess whether there is an alternative solution to the plan or project, i.e., one that avoids adverse effects on Habitats Sites. If no such alternative solution exists, the process continues to an assessment of whether there are 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest' (IROPI) for the plan or project to proceed.	Regulation 64(1)
Assessment of IROPI (Stage 4)	Assess whether a plan or project can be justified as being needed for IROPI.	Regulation 64(1)
Compensatory measures	Identify and secure necessary compensatory measures to ensure that the overall coherence of the 'national site network' is protected.	Regulation 68

Identification of relevant European sites (at risk of being affected by the development)

3.3 Prior to consideration of any of the stages in Table 1 above, an initial spatial scoping has been undertaken to identify all European sites of reasonably possible relevance to the development because of their location in a defined zone of influence.

3.4 On a precautionary basis all sites within 30 km of the Site are initially included in the spatial scoping exercise. Natural England (letter to the Planning Inspectorate dated 17 May 2024) identify several Habitats Sites within 30 km of the Site that should be considered for possible inclusion. This also included the Humber Estuary SPA which is 37 km from the Site.

3.5 Subsequent correspondence from Natural England to RES (statutory pre-application consultation response dated 03 March 2025) deals further with the question of the inclusion of the Humber Estuary SPA, at paras. 1.3 to 1.7 of their response letter (see full text of letter at Appendix 1 to this report).

> *Functionally Linked Land*
>
> *1.3. NE generally advise that functionally linked land may extend up to the maximum foraging distance for the designated bird species. However, the number of birds foraging will tend to decrease further away from the protected site and thus the importance of the land to the maintenance of the designated population will decrease. The maximum foraging distance usually expected for any species associated with the Humber designations is 20km.*
>
> *1.4. Due to the distance from the development site to the Humber Estuary SAC/Ramsar (and further to the SPA), NE consider it unlikely that the proposed development site would be functionally linked but nonetheless welcome review of the breeding and wintering bird survey results in this context.*
>
> *1.5. NE have reviewed appendices 7.4 and 7.6* [breeding and non-breeding bird survey results presented as part of the PEIR] *& are satisfied with the survey methods used. As stated in our EIA Scoping Response with regard to wintering birds: where there remains any doubt about the use of the site by species associated with international designations, further survey is likely to be required over a 2nd winter. In this scenario, NE consider the single year's wintering bird survey effort likely to be satisfactory to enable a robust assessment.*
>
> *1.6. It is noted at paragraph 7.8.11 that these surveys show no 'significant activity' at the proposed development site from qualifying bird species, although there is some activity. Whilst it is Natural England's advice that this activity is likely to be insignificant (as a result of the distance from the designations & expected foraging distances of the species which were recorded), para 7.8.11 is clear that only an 'initial assessment' has been made with regard to FLL. NE advise that the recorded activity should be considered within the 'formal report to inform a HRA' to ensure all the relevant evidence and rationale is presented to the Planning Inspectorate & ultimately the Secretary of State for their consideration as the competent authority.*

3.6 Taking the above comments into account, the Humber Estuary SPA has not been scoped out at the initial spatial scoping stage, despite its separation from the Site being over 30 km, but has been included for completeness.

3.7 The Habitats Sites are set out in Table 2 below (initial spatial scoping of Habitats Sites) along with a summary of the initial spatial scoping rationale for each of the Habitats Sites. This is an initial sift to identify which Habitats Sites should be considered at screening (Stage 1) of the HRA process.

3.8 Each of the Habitats Sites in Table 2 is shown on Figure 2.

Table 2: Initial spatial scoping of Habitats Sites within 30 km of the Site

Habitats Site name	Designation	Distance form Site	Summary of interest features	Preliminary conclusion presented in Chapter 7 of the PEIR for the application	Natural England 17 May 2024 comment to PINS on EIA scoping report (in summary)	Initial scoping outcome
Birklands and Bilhaugh	SAC	17 km southwest	Supports Annex I habitat 'old acidophilous oak woods' and is notable for its rich invertebrate fauna, particularly spiders, and for a diverse fungal assemblage.	The Site does not support any similar Annex I habitat. Due the nature of the Proposed Development, the location of the Site and its separation from the SAC, direct impacts for example as a result of land-take or indirectly, for example as a result of pollution, are highly unlikely.	Natural England considered that impacts to this site were unlikely due to the physical and hydrological separation from the development site.	Not considered further
Hatfield Moor	SAC	19.5 km north	Lowland raised bog, that supports Annex I habitat 'degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration'.	The Site does not support any similar Annex I habitat. Due the nature of the Proposed Development, the location of the Site and its separation from the SAC, direct impacts for example as a result of land-take or indirectly, for example as a result of pollution, are highly unlikely.	Natural England considered that impacts to the features of the SAC designation are unlikely due to the physical and hydrological separation. They went on to say, however, that this should still be assessed and considered within the Report to Inform the HRA.	Considered further
Thorne and Hatfield Moors	SPA	19.5 km north	Supports populations of breeding European nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus,* which is closely associated with lowland	The Site does not support any suitable habitat for European nightjar and this species was not	Natural England considered that whilst the development site is significantly further than the usually considered 2km Impact Risk Zone for nightjar, the ES should consider any possible impacts, including via loss or disturbance to Functionally Linked Land.	Considered further

Habitats Site name	Designation	Distance form Site	Summary of interest features	Preliminary conclusion presented in Chapter 7 of the PEIR for the application	Natural England 17 May 2024 comment to PINS on EIA scoping report (in summary)	Initial scoping outcome
			heathland and felled or recently planted conifer plantations. The site also supports small numbers (at non-qualifying levels) of other Annex I species: hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*, merlin *Falco columbarius,* short-eared owl *Asio flammeus* and hobby *Falco subbuteo*.	recorded during the breeding or wintering bird surveys undertaken during 2023 and 2024. Due the nature of the Proposed Development, the location of the Site and its separation from the SPA, direct impacts for example as a result of land-take or indirectly, for example as a result of pollution or effects to functionally linked land, are highly unlikely.		
Humber Estuary	SPA	37 km north	Extensive wetland and coastal habitats support important numbers of waterbirds (especially geese, ducks and waders) during the migration periods and in winter. In summer, it supports important breeding populations of bittern *Botaurus stellaris*, marsh harrier *Circus aeruginosus*, avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* and little tern *Sterna albifrons*	No significant effect on HRA due to distance - beyond 30 km from the Site.	Natural England suggested that consideration should be given to the Humber Estuary SAC, Ramsar and SPA. They advised in their response that, in respect of which species to consider when assessing the Humber Estuary SPA non-breeding, waterbird assemblage feature, focus should be on what they refer to as the 'main component species' of the assemblage (see Appendix 3). These main component species are set out in the text immediately below this table.	Although the SPA boundary is beyond 30 km from the Site, it is considered further for completeness, to reflect comments from Natural England.
Humber Estuary	SAC	26.5 km north	A range of Annex I coastal habitats including estuaries, Atlantic salt meadows, sandbanks, extensive intertidal mudflats, glasswort beds, coastal lagoons. Annex II species: sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*, river	The Site does not support any similar Annex I habitat or have the potential to support the Annex II species. Due the nature of the Proposed Development, the	Natural England stated that despite the physical separation of the development site to the SAC, consideration should be given within the Report to Inform the HRA to rule out any impacts to the features of the SAC.	Considered further

Habitats Site name	Designation	Distance form Site	Summary of interest features	Preliminary conclusion presented in Chapter 7 of the PEIR for the application	Natural England 17 May 2024 comment to PINS on EIA scoping report (in summary)	Initial scoping outcome
			lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*, grey seal *Halichoerus grypus*	location of the Site and its separation from the SAC, direct impacts for example as a result of land-take or indirectly, for example as a result of pollution, are highly unlikely.		
Humber Estuary	Ramsar	26.5 km north	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. Supports internationally important assemblages of passage and wintering waders and waterfowl, as well as supporting aquatic and marine species. Natural England designated sites website[1] (accessed February 2025 summarises the designated features: *Estuary* *Grey seal* *Natterjack toad* *River lamprey – Passage* *Sea lamprey - Passage*	Due the nature of the Proposed Development, the location of the Site and its separation from the Ramsar, direct impacts for example as a result of land-take or indirectly, for example as a result of pollution or effects to functionally linked land, are highly unlikely.	Impacts to the passage and wintering birds associated within the SPA and Ramsar Designations are most relevant, largely due to the mobile & migratory nature of the notified species. Impacts to species associated with these sites must be considered within the ES, including via loss or disturbance to Functionally Linked Land.	Considered further

[1] https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteGeneralDetail.aspx?SiteCode=UK11031&SiteName=humber&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=

Habitats Site name	Designation	Distance form Site	Summary of interest features	Preliminary conclusion presented in Chapter 7 of the PEIR for the application	Natural England 17 May 2024 comment to PINS on EIA scoping report (in summary)	Initial scoping outcome
			Bird species: NOTE all Ramsar species are part of the SPA interest and the test of likely significant effect for the SPA designation is therefore relevant to the Ramsar designation with the addition of the species in bold below. While these are SPA interest species, they are not identified by Natural England as key species of the SPA for the purposes of HRA (see above). For completeness they are considered separately in the Ramsar assessment in Table 3 below. Species that are common to both the SPA and the Ramsar are assessed once, for the SPA in Table 3 below. ***Bar-tailed godwit - Wintering*** ***Black-tailed godwit - Passage*** ***Black-tailed godwit - Wintering*** *Dunlin - Passage* *Dunlin - Wintering* *Golden plover - Passage* *Golden plover - Wintering* ***Knot - Passage*** ***Knot - Wintering*** ***Little tern Sterna albifrons*** *Redshank - Passage* *Redshank - Wintering*			

Habitats Site name	Designation	Distance form Site	Summary of interest features	Preliminary conclusion presented in Chapter 7 of the PEIR for the application	Natural England 17 May 2024 comment to PINS on EIA scoping report (in summary)	Initial scoping outcome
			Shelduck - Wintering *Waterbird assemblage - Wintering*			
Thorne Moor	SAC	28.5 km north	Supports Annex I habitat 'degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration'.	The Site does not support any similar Annex I habitat. Due the nature of the Proposed Development, the location of the Site and its separation from the SAC, direct impacts for example as a result of land-take or indirectly, for example as a result of pollution, are highly unlikely.	Impacts to the features of the SAC designation are considered unlikely by Natural England, due to physical and hydrological separation. However, this should still be assessed and considered within the Report to Inform the HRA.	Considered further

Note on Humber Estuary SPA species

Natural England suggested in their 17 May 2024 advice to PINS that consideration should be given to the Humber Estuary SAC, Ramsar and SPA.

They advised in Annex B of their May advice that, in respect of which species to consider when assessing the Humber Estuary SPA non-breeding, waterbird assemblage feature, focus should be on what they refer to as the 'main component species' of the assemblage. (see Appendix 3). Main component species are then defined as:

(a) main component species of the SPA non-breeding waterbird assemblage;

(b) species that are not listed on the SPA citation but occur at site levels of more than 1% of the national population according to the most recent Humber Estuary Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) 5-year average count;

(c) species which are not considered to be non-breeding waterbirds but are listed on the citation qualifying under article 4.1 and 4.2 of the Directive.

The species marked in **bold text** below are identified by Natural England as known to use off-site supporting habitat / functionally linked land (FLL) (e.g. arable farmland, grassland/pasture, and/or non-estuarine waterbodies) in the non-breeding season and may therefore be the most relevant for assessing potential impacts of a proposed plan/project on birds using FLL associated with the Humber Estuary SPA.

a) Species listed individually under the assemblage feature on the SPA citation:

Avocet, *Recurvirostra avosetta* (non-breeding)

Bar-tailed godwit *Limosa lapponica* (non-breeding)

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* (non-breeding)

Brent goose *Branta bernicla* (non-breeding)

Curlew *Numenius arquata* (non-breeding)

Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina* (non-breeding)

Golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria* (non-breeding)

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* (non-breeding)

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* (non-breeding)

Grey plover *Pluviaris squatarola* (non-breeding)

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* (non-breeding)

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* (non-breeding

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* (non-breeding)

Pochard *Aythya farina* (non-breeding)

Redshank *Tringa totanus* (non-breeding

Ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula* (non-breeding)

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* (non-breeding)

Sanderling *Calidris alba* (non-breeding)

Scaup *Aythya marila* (non-breeding)

Teal *Anas crecca* (non-breeding)

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* (non-breeding)

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* (non-breeding)

Wigeon *Anas Penelope* (non-breeding)

b) Species which are not listed on the SPA citation but occur at site levels of more than 1% of the national population according to the most recent Humber Estuary Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) 5-year average count:

Green sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* (non-breeding)

Greylag goose *Anser anser* (non-breeding)

Little egret *Egretta garzetta* (non-breeding)

Pink-footed goose *Anser brachyrhynchus* (non-breeding)

Shoveler,*Anas clypeata* (non-breeding)

Crane *Grus grus* (non-breeding)

c) Species which are not considered to be non-breeding waterbirds but are listed on the citation qualifying under article 4.1 and 4.2 of the Directive. These include:

Hen harrier *Circus cyaneus* (non-breeding)

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* (breeding)

Little tern *Sterna albifrons* (breeding)

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* (breeding)

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* (breeding)

4 Proposed Works

Summary of location and setting of the Site

4.1 The DCO proposal site (the Site) is located around the village of Sturton le Steeple in Nottinghamshire, in a rural landscape characterised by agricultural land with occasional villages and individual properties. It includes part of the West Burton Power Station site to the north; and the River Trent is to the east. Otherwise, agricultural land surrounds the Site.

4.2 The Site is within the administrative area of Bassetlaw District Council and is approximately 5km to the south of Gainsborough. Sturton le Steeple is adjacent to the eastern and western boundaries of the Site; Knaith, is approximately 250 m to the east of the Site on the opposite side of the River Trent; and North Leverton with Habblesthorpe and Fenton are adjacent to the southern boundary.

4.3 The Site extends to approximately 888 hectares and comprises primarily large arable fields with boundary hedgerows and individual trees. There is a network of ditches and drains, and two ponds and a lake. There are occasional small woodland blocks, grassland pasture fields, and agricultural buildings.

4.4 Figure 1 shows the Site boundary.

Summary project description

4.5 The proposed DCO consent development is not related to the nature conservation management of any European site. As a consequence it is not exempted from assessment by virtue of the provision of part (b) of Regulation 63(1).

4.6 The Proposed Development comprises the construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning of ground-mounted solar PV and energy storage technologies. As technologies are rapidly advancing, and the detailed design of the Proposed Development will take place post-consent, a series of project parameters are therefore required to maintain the flexibility and allow an assessment of the likely 'worst-case' as far as is reasonable.

4.7 The Proposed Development would include:

- Areas for solar panels and associated development (e.g. PV module mounting infrastructure, Inverters and Transformers).
- Cable infrastructure.
- Substation, Battery Energy Storage System ("BESS") and associated infrastructure.
- Land on two dedicated biodiversity areas (east and west of the Site covering approximately 99 ha and 82 ha respectively.
- Land within the main development areas that will form part of the green infrastructure of the overall scheme.

4.8 Subject to obtaining the necessary consents, construction of the Proposed Development is anticipated to commence at the earliest in the year of 2027, and to be completed and operational in the year of 2029.

4.9 The Proposed Development is anticipated to be operational for approximately 40 years, at which point the decommissioning phase will commence.

5 Potential for Likely Significant Effects

5.1 Habitats Site are screened in or out of further assessment based on whether the predicted effects of the proposed development are likely to give rise to a significant effect on the qualifying interest features of each Habitats Site.

5.2 Qualifying features of Habitats Sites have the potential to be affected by the proposed development where:

- There is overlap in the zone of influence/timing of an effect and a Habitats Site's qualifying feature (alone or in-combination with other plans or projects), i.e., there is a spatial and/or temporal pathway between the effect and the receptor; or
- In the case of qualifying species, the predicted effects of the proposed development overlap spatially and temporally with vital habitats or food resources within the species' normal range (alone or in-combination with other plans or projects).

Potential impact pathways and likely significant effects test for the identified Habitats Sites

5.3 Screening for likely significant effects (LSE) for construction (and decommission) and operational phases of the development is set out in Table 3 below, for each of the identified (i.e. scoped-in) Habitats Sites. Potential impact pathways considered include the following.

Physical loss / change of habitats on which interest features depend

5.4 The Site and adjacent land do not form part of any European site and therefore loss of habitats within a Habitats Site will not occur.

5.5 The construction phase of the development will result in the direct removal of habitats including modified grassland, cropland, and small sections of hedgerow and ditch habitat, which will be replaced with modified grassland (including beneath the solar panels), other neutral grassland, woodland copses, hedgerows, and the infrastructure of the solar energy and battery storage development.

5.6 Grassland has the potential to provide supporting habitats (and therefore functionally linked habitat) for interest features of European Sites, particularly birds such as geese, waders, and raptors.

5.7 Downstream hydrological impacts arising from pollution of watercourses or groundwater systems could give rise to downstream habitat changes that could impact functionally linked land upon which Habitats Site qualifying species rely.

5.8 The operational phase will not result in habitat loss.

5.9 Lamprey associated with the Humber Estuary SAC and Ramsar migrate upstream in the River Trent and its tributaries to spawn. In their 25 April 2025 consultation response Natural England advised that "*whilst little evidence is available for the distances these species travel upstream along the River Trent, NE consider that any works that may create a barrier to migration could cause an adverse effect to the SAC* [and Ramsar] *populations. From the information available, NE advise that the project appears unlikely to introduce any new barriers to migration. Nonetheless, it is advised that this pathway should be considered within the HRA for completeness.*"

5.10 The construction phase of the development will result in the insertion and replacement of culverts at crossing points, on several small drains, with no structures affecting the River Trent or the water flow in any of the larger drains on the Site. Culverts will be designed to maintain existing flows[2] and given this and the distance upstream of the Site from the SAC it is very unlikely that any barrier to migration of lampreys would occur.

Disturbance of interest features of Habitats Site (noise, visual, killing / injury of interest features or their prey)

5.11 The construction phase of the development will require the use of machinery and personnel that have potential to cause disturbance to wildlife. Habitats are not sensitive to noise and visual disturbance in this sense, so cannot be affected.

5.12 Noise and visual disturbance during construction and decommissioning have the potential to disturb birds that may be that may be sensitive to noise and visual disturbance and are interest features of the scoped-in Habitats Sites. They or their prey items may also be subject to killing / injury. The impact mechanisms for these species are considered below.

5.13 The operational phase will result in levels of disturbance that are negligible.

5.14 In terms of visual disturbance, the level of visual enclosure provided by existing vegetation and (to a limited degree) changes in topography result in some visual screening. It is anticipated that the effects of visual disturbance would be limited to localised areas within the Site and the immediately adjacent fields. This includes disturbance via artificial lighting, where used.

Killing, injury or removal of a designated species, or their prey

5.15 The construction phase of the development will require the use of machinery and personnel that have potential to cause killing / injury of wildlife.

5.16 Killing or injury of interest features or their prey items during construction and decommissioning phase has the potential to disturb birds that may be interest features of the scoped-in Habitats Site.

Changes to air quality and deposition

5.17 With reference to Chapter 14 of the Environmental Statement (air quality) construction dust, construction traffic emissions, and emissions from on-site (Non-Road Mobile Machinery (NRMM)) are considered.

5.18 It is concluded that NRMM will give rise to no likely significant effects to air quality, in the absence of any mitigation. NRMM (for example on-Site generators / cement mixers) would also only potentially cause impacts locally so due to separation distances would not impact the Habitats Sites.

5.19 With regard to construction traffic, there are no statutory designated ecological sites (SSSI/SPA/SAC/Ramsar) within 200 m of the proposed construction routes.

5.20 Dust emissions from construction activities may impact local air quality concentrations. However, the closest Habitats Site is 17 km away to the south-west and no effect on Habitats Site are identified.

[2] 32 ditch and river crossings have been identified. 16 relate to ditches that are considered likely to be dry most of the time. These are not considered suitable to support regular fish passage. For proposed crossings of dry ditches where culverted sections and farm tracks already exist the culverts will be replaced and upgraded. Four of the crossings over dry ditches will be wholly new, with new culverts to be installed; and three will involve backfilling small areas of the dry ditch to widen an existing land bridge.
Of the remaining crossings over wet ditches and rivers:

- One is a road bridge (where Common Lane overlies the Catchwater Drain), which has been assessed as requiring no additional work for the proposed development.
- Two would be wholly new clear-span footbridges for a pedestrian route.
- Two are existing culverts that will be removed and replaced with new clear-span vehicle bridges.
- Three would be wholly new culverts on wet ditches confirmed as either isolated from rivers or having ca. 6cm water depth and likely to dry in late summer, and unlikely to support fish species.
- Eight are existing culverts on wet ditches which will be upgraded as culvert pipes of the same or greater flow capacity.

5.21 Issues of changes to air quality and deposition are likely to be non-existent or imperceptible for all relevant Habitats Sites during all phases and are ruled out as a potential impact mechanism.

Hydrology and water quality changes

5.22 Standard practice construction and decommissioning phase pollution control and water management measures will be implemented and governed by a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) or similar. This would prevent incidents of pollution of watercourses and prevent pollution from reaching Habitats Sites. This would avoid a likely significant effect without any further measures being required.

5.23 In addition, the Humber Estuary SPA, SAC, Ramsar is around 30 km downstream of the Site via the drains on the Site and the River Trent. Because of the distance between the Site and the Habitats Sites and the volume and flows in the drains and the river, the dispersion and dilution of any contaminants in drains / watercourses would mean that there would be no discernible adverse effect on any Habitats Sites should any pollution enter the watercourse.

5.24 Issues of hydrology and water quality are likely to be non-existent for or imperceptible for all relevant Habitats Sites and are ruled out as a potential impact mechanism.

Table 3: Stage 1 – screening of likely significant effects

Site, designation, summary of interest	Potential impact pathway	Screening of likely significant effect	Summary
Hatfield Moor SAC (Annex I habitat 'degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration')	Physical loss / change of habitats on which interest features depend	Habitat interest – no appreciable effect due to separation distance, no work taking place outside of application Site boundary.	No likely significant effect
	Disturbance of interest features of Habitats Site (noise, visual, killing / injury of interest features or their prey)	Habitat interest – not a receptor; no appreciable effect.	No likely significant effect
	Killing, injury or removal of a designated species, or their prey	Habitat interest – not a receptor; no appreciable effect.	No likely significant effect
	Changes to air quality and deposition	Ruled out as a potential impact mechanism for all Habitats Sites.	No likely significant effect
	Hydrology and water quality changes	Ruled out as a potential impact mechanism for all Habitats Sites.	No likely significant effect
Thorne and Hatfield Moors SPA (breeding nightjar)	Physical loss / change of habitats on which interest features depend	There are no records of nightjar within 2 km of the Site (see Chapter 7 of the PEIR). Nightjar is closely associated with lowland heathland and felled or recently planted conifer plantations, and none are found on the Site. No work taking place outside of application Site boundary. No appreciable effect due to separation distance, lack of survey records and lack of suitable habitat on the Site. In addition, due to the distance to the SPA, the Site is unlikely to be in the core foraging or roosting area for individuals that are associated with the SPA.	No likely significant effect
	Disturbance of interest features of Habitats Site (noise, visual, killing / injury of interest features or their prey)	There are no records of nightjar within 2 km of the Site (see Chapter 7 of the PEIR). Nightjar is closely associated with lowland heathland and felled or recently planted conifer plantations, and none are found on the Site. No appreciable effect due to separation distance, lack of survey records and lack of suitable habitat on the Site.	No likely significant effect
	Killing, injury or removal of a designated species, or their prey	There are no records of nightjar within 2 km of the Site (see Chapter 7 of the PEIR). Nightjar is closely associated with lowland heathland and felled or recently planted conifer plantations, and none are found on the Site. No appreciable effect due to separation distance, lack of survey records and lack of suitable habitat on the Site.	No likely significant effect

Site, designation, summary of interest	Potential impact pathway	Screening of likely significant effect	Summary
	Changes to air quality and deposition	Ruled out as a potential impact mechanism for all Habitats Sites.	No likely significant effect
	Hydrology and water quality changes	Ruled out as a potential impact mechanism for all Habitats Sites.	No likely significant effect
Humber Estuary SPA (range of qualifying species and waterbird assemblage) 37 km north	Physical loss / change of habitats on which interest features depend	With reference to the main component species identified by Natural England (see Table 2 above) the following non-breeding species of the SPA were recorded on the Site. All other species in Appendix 3 have not been recorded and are not likely to suffer any appreciable adverse effect. Due to the distance to the SPA (37 km), the Site is unlikely to be in the core foraging or roosting area for any individual of species that are interest features of the SPA, and the Site is unlikely to be functionally linked land. Curlew: - recorded once in Eastern Biodiversity Mitigation Area on open fields; peak count 3. This location will not be affected by development. No appreciable effect likely due to very low numbers and location recorded, away from development. Site unlikely to be functionally linked land because of the separation distance between the Site and the SPA. Dunlin: - peak count 2 (once in Eastern Biodiversity Mitigation Area; one further record from the Proposed Solar Areas). No appreciable effect likely due to very low numbers, and Site unlikely to be functionally linked land because of the separation distance between the Site and the SPA. Lapwing: - recorded each month in winter, all in Eastern Biodiversity Mitigation Area, peak count 150 (typically 20-55 birds, in same fields each time). No appreciable effect likely due to location recorded, and Site unlikely to be functionally linked land because of the separation distance between the Site and the SPA. Mallard: peak count 53, Eastern Biodiversity Mitigation Area. Recorded in all survey months, mostly in Eastern Biodiversity Mitigation Area. Peak count on Proposed Solar Areas 28 (range 2, 2, 5, 8, 28). Birds were typically recorded within wetland features such as Littleborough Lagoon LWS in the Eastern Biodiversity Area; and in the larger drains within the Proposed Solar Areas. No appreciable effect likely due to location, and when recorded on the Proposed Solar Areas, low numbers. Site unlikely to be functionally linked land because of the separation distance between the Site and the SPA. Teal: peak count 173; all records in eastern biodiversity area on Littleborough Lagoon LWS. No appreciable effect likely due to location recorded Site unlikely to be functionally linked land because of the separation distance between the Site and the SPA.	No likely significant effect

Site, designation, summary of interest	Potential impact pathway	Screening of likely significant effect	Summary
		Wigeon: peak count 525; all records in eastern biodiversity area on Littleborough Lagoon LWS. No appreciable effect likely due to location recorded. Site unlikely to be functionally linked land because of the separation distance between the Site and the SPA. Hen harrier: peak count 1 (immature bird) recorded on four occasions only: in October in the Eastern Biodiversity Mitigation Area; November, December and January over the Proposed Solar Areas. Typically it was hunting along the drains within the Proposed Solar Areas or in habitats near to the River Trent within the Eastern Biodiversity Area. The development is unlikely to preclude continued foraging at the Site and no appreciable effect is likely. Site unlikely to be functionally linked land because of the separation distance between the Site and the SPA. In addition, marsh harrier (an SPA species for its breeding population) was recorded in winter on two occasions in the eastern biodiversity area (counts: 1 and 2). The species was not recorded during the breeding season. A single bird was recorded hunting around the eastern wetland areas, and was considered likely to be the same individual. The species is unlikely to suffer any appreciable effect due to very low numbers and sporadic use of the Site, and location recorded. Site unlikely to be functionally linked land because of the separation distance between the Site and the SPA. The eastern biodiversity area has been identified an area for biodiversity enhancement measures, and no solar or associated built development will be sited in this area. The nearest area of potential Solar Development to the waterbody in the eastern biodiversity area is approximately 500 m away. Impacts on bird species using these waterbodies are unlikely during any phase of the Proposed Development. In addition, due to the distance to the SPA, the Site is unlikely to be in the core foraging or roosting area for individuals that are associated with the SPA, and is therefore unlikely to be functionally linked land.	
	Disturbance of interest features of Habitats Site (noise, visual, killing / injury of interest features or their prey)	No appreciable effect likely in respect of bird species considered above. Some localised displacement of bird species may arise on the Proposed Solar Areas during construction but given the distance from the SPA the Site is unlikely to be in the core foraging or roosting area for individuals that are associated with the SPA, and is unlikely to be functionally linked land.	No likely significant effect
	Killing, injury or removal of a designated species, or their prey	No appreciable effect likely in respect of bird species considered above. No killing is likely given normal working practices and operation of the renewables project. During construction there are no identifiable reasons for killing or injury to arise. Some prey items may be killed incidentally but given the abundance of retained habitat, no effect is likely. Given the distance from the SPA the Site is unlikely to be in the core foraging or roosting area for individuals that are associated with the SPA, and the Site is unlikely to be functionally linked.	No likely significant effect

Site, designation, summary of interest	Potential impact pathway	Screening of likely significant effect	Summary
	Changes to air quality and deposition	Ruled out as a potential impact mechanism for all Habitats Sites	No likely significant effect
	Hydrology and water quality changes	Ruled out as a potential impact mechanism for all Habitats Sites	No likely significant effect
Humber Estuary Ramsar (assemblages of passage and wintering waders and waterfowl as well as several other species and a range of habitats)	Physical loss / change of habitats on which interest features depend	All of the birds assessed for the SPA are relevant to the Ramsar, and the SPA assessment in respect of those birds is relevant to the Ramsar. In addition, the following Ramsar species are assessed: *Bar-tailed godwit – Wintering: not recorded on the Site. No appreciable effect on Habitats Sites likely.* *Black-tailed godwit – Passage: not recorded on the Site. No appreciable effect on Habitats Sites likely.* *Black-tailed godwit – Wintering: not recorded on the Site. No appreciable effect on Habitats Sites likely.* *Knot – Passage: not recorded on the Site. No appreciable effect on Habitats Sites likely.* *Knot – Wintering: not recorded on the Site. No appreciable effect on Habitats Sites likely.* *Little tern – Breeding: not recorded on the Site. No appreciable effect on Habitats Sites likely.* *Shelduck – Wintering – Recorded on 2 of 6 surveys (January and February 2024) with all birds recorded Littleborough Lagoon LWS in the Eastern Biodiversity Area. Peak count of 2 birds. No appreciable effect on Habitats Sites likely: very low numbers on Site and all records are away from development.* The Ramsar boundary is within 30 km of the Site. All Ramsar bird feature species encompassed within the list of features for the Humber Estuary SPA. The SPA boundary is 37 km from the Site. An evaluation of the suitability of that component of the Ramsar beyond and to the south of the SPA, is that it provides very little habitat that would support SPA species, being primarily tidal River Trent, upstream as far as Walcot. For these reasons the bird interest of the Ramsar designation is taken to coincide with that of the SPA. *No appreciable effect on Habitats Sites likely*. The eastern biodiversity area has been identified as an area for biodiversity enhancement, and no solar or associated built development will be sited in this area. The nearest area of potential Solar Development to these waterbodies is approximately 500 m away. Impacts on bird species using these waterbodies are unlikely during any phase of the Proposed Development. In addition, due to the distance to the Ramsar, the Site is	No likely significant effect

Site, designation, summary of interest	Potential impact pathway	Screening of likely significant effect	Summary
		unlikely to be in the core foraging or roosting area for individuals that are associated with the Ramsar. Other features: *Estuary – the complex of estuary habitats is separated from the Site by a minimum of 25.5 km (straight line) and no appreciable effect is likely.* *Grey seal – the Site is separated from the Ramsar by a minimum of 25.5 km (straight line) and no appreciable effect on grey seal is likely.* *River lamprey – Passage - the drains on the Site drain north into the River Trent, which flows ultimately into the Humber Estuary (Ramsar). Implementation of standard watercourse protection measures means that pollution of watercourses on the Site will be avoided and in any case there is a significant distance downstream to the Habitats Site and the volume and flows in the river will give rise to heavy dilution and dispersal. In addition, there will be no barrier effects in watercourses arising from the Proposed Development. As a result, there will be no appreciable adverse effect on river lamprey.* *Sea lamprey - Passage - the drains on the Site drain north into the River Trent, which flows ultimately into the Humber Estuary (Ramsar). Implementation of standard watercourse protection measures means that pollution of watercourses on the Site will be avoided and in any case there is a significant distance downstream to the Habitats Site and the volume and flows in the river will give rise to heavy dilution and dispersal. In addition, there will be no barrier effects in watercourses arising from the Proposed Development. As a result, there will be no appreciable effect on sea lamprey.* <u>Natterjack toad</u> In the HRA for the recently consented Cottam Solar Project, it states: "*3.5.4 Natural England's response to EXQ1 dated 21st November 2023 [REP2-088], it is expressed that, despite the earlier omission, significant effects upon the Humber Estuary Ramsar Site are considered unlikely:* *"3.5.5 The overlap between the SAC/SPA designations and Ramsar designation is noted, both geographically and with regard to the designated features. However this should not warrant the omission of consideration of the Ramsar designation in its own right. All but one of the Ramsar features are also features of the SAC/SPA. Natterjack Toad are a feature of the Ramsar site only. Due to the physical separation of the site from the proposed development, and the limited range of the Natterjack Toad, Natural England do consider that impacts on this feature are unlikely [...]*" The comments about natterjack toad are noted and it is concluded that no appreciable effect is likely to arise in respect of this interest feature.	

Site, designation, summary of interest	Potential impact pathway	Screening of likely significant effect	Summary
	Disturbance of interest features of Habitats Site (noise, visual, killing / injury of interest features or their prey)	No appreciable effect likely in respect of bird or other species considered above. Some localised displacement may arise on the Proposed Solar Areas during construction but given the distance from the Ramsar, the Site is unlikely to be in the core foraging or roosting area for individuals that are associated with the Ramsar.	No likely significant effect
	Killing, injury or removal of a designated species, or their prey	No appreciable effect likely in respect of bird or other species considered above. No killing is likely given normal working practices and operation of the renewables project. During construction there are no identifiable reasons for killing or injury to arise. Some prey items may be killed incidentally but given the abundance of very similar habitat in the locality, no effect is likely. Given the distance from the Ramsar the Site is unlikely to be in the core foraging or roosting area for individuals that are associated with the Ramsar.	No likely significant effect
	Changes to air quality and deposition	Ruled out as a potential impact mechanism for all Habitats Sites	No likely significant effect
	Hydrology and water quality changes	Ruled out as a potential impact mechanism for all Habitats Sites	No likely significant effect
Humber Estuary SAC (Annex I coastal habitats; Annex II species sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*, River lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis* and grey seal *Halichoerus grypus*)	Physical loss / change of habitats on which interest features depend	Habitat interest – no appreciable effect due to separation distance / no work taking place outside of application Site boundary. Faunal interest – no appreciable effect: the drains on the Site drain north into the River Trent, which flows ultimately into the Humber Estuary (Ramsar). However, because of the distance between the Site and the Habitats Site and the volume and flows in the drains and the river, the dispersion and dilution of any contaminants in drains / watercourses will have no discernible adverse effect on river lamprey, sea lamprey or grey seal.	No likely significant effect
	Disturbance of interest features of Habitats Site (noise, visual, killing / injury of interest features or their prey)	Habitat interest – no appreciable effect due to separation distance / no work taking place outside of application Site boundary. Faunal interest – no appreciable effect due to separation distance and nature of proposals.	No likely significant effect
	Killing, injury or removal of a designated species, or their prey	Habitat interest – no appreciable effect due to separation distance / no work taking place outside of application Site boundary. Faunal interest – no appreciable effect due to separation distance and nature of proposals.	No likely significant effect
	Changes to air quality and deposition	Ruled out as a potential impact mechanism for all Habitats Site	No likely significant effect

Site, designation, summary of interest	Potential impact pathway	Screening of likely significant effect	Summary
	Hydrology and water quality changes	Ruled out as a potential impact mechanism for all Habitats Site	No likely significant effect
Thorne Moor SAC ((Annex I habitat 'degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration')	Physical loss / change of habitats on which interest features depend	No appreciable effect due to separation distance between Site and SAC.	No likely significant effect
	Disturbance of interest features of Habitats Site (noise, visual, killing / injury of interest features or their prey)	Habitat interest – not a receptor; no effect.	No likely significant effect
	Killing, injury or removal of a designated species, or their prey	Habitat interest – not a receptor; no effect.	No likely significant effect
	Changes to air quality and deposition	Ruled out as a potential impact mechanism for all Habitats Sites	No likely significant effect
	Hydrology and water quality changes	Ruled out as a potential impact mechanism for all Habitats Site	No likely significant effect

6 Appraisal of Likely Significant Effects of Proposals 'In-Combination'

6.1 When considered alone, the development will not give rise to any appreciable adverse effects on Habitats Sites, due primarily to separation distances between the development Site and each Habitats Site. The rationale for why each impact pathway generates no appreciable adverse effect on Habitats Sites is contained within column 3 of Table 3 (above).

6.2 In the absence of the project alone giving rise to any appreciable adverse effects and thus making no material contribution to any type of adverse effect on the interest features of the Habitats Sites that could accumulate with other proposed developments, it is concluded that a formal in-combination assessment is not required.

7 References

BSG Ecology, 2025. Breeding bird surveys. Appendix 7.4 of Chapter 7 of the PEIR

BSG Ecology, 2025. Non-breeding bird surveys. Appendix 7.6 of Chapter 7 of the PEIR

BSG Ecology, 2025. Chapter 7: Ecology and Biodiversity. Preliminary Environmental Information Report, Steeple Renewables Project

DTA Publications, 2023 The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook.

Planning Inspectorate, 2024. Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Habitats Regulations Assessments

Appendix 1: Letter from Natural England to RES dated 03 March 2025

Appendix 2: Letter from Natural England dated 25 April 2025 with comments on draft iHRA report

Appendix 3: Humber Estuary SPA Focal Species Using Functionally Linked Land

The following have been identified by Natural England as species that make use of functionally linked land outside of the SPA boundary:

- Brent goose *Branta bernicla* (non-breeding)
- Curlew *Numenius arquata* (non-breeding)
- Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina* (non-breeding)
- Golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria* (non-breeding)
- Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* (non-breeding)
- Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* (non-breeding)
- Redshank *Tringa totanus* (non-breeding)
- Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* (non-breeding)
- Sanderling *Calidris alba* (non-breeding)
- Teal *Anas crecca* (non-breeding)
- Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* (non-breeding)
- Wigeon *Anas Penelope* (non-breeding)
- Little egret *Egretta garzetta* (non-breeding)
- Pink-footed goose *Anser brachyrhynchus* (non-breeding)
- Crane *Grus grus* (non-breeding)
- Hen harrier *Circus cyaneus* (non-breeding)
- Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* (breeding)