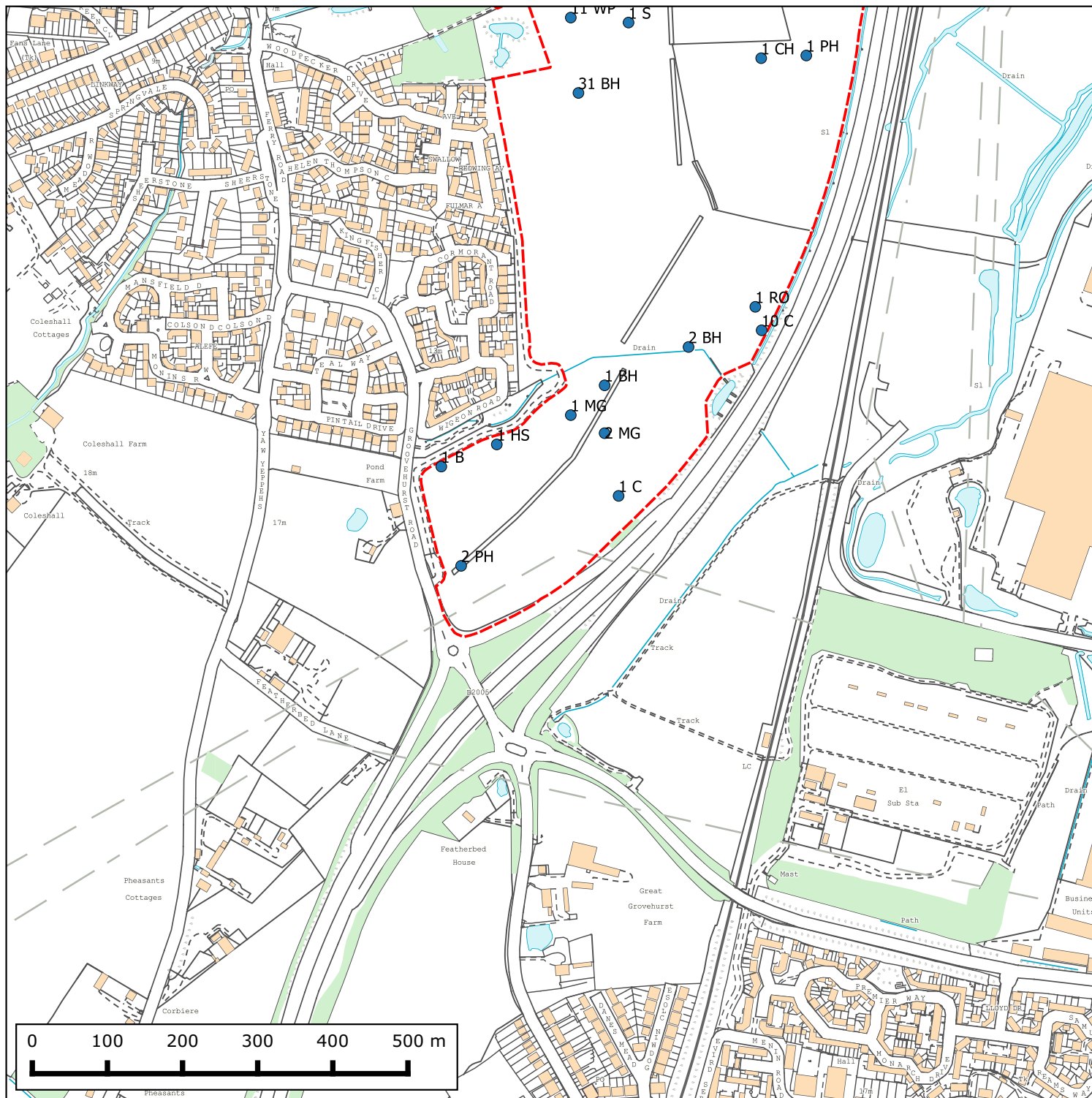






## Key

Survey Area

● Birds

B - Blackbird  
 BH - Black headed gull  
 BT - Blue tit  
 CH - Chaffinch  
 CD - Collard dove  
 C - Crow  
 D - Dunnock  
 GO - Goldfinch  
 GT - Great tit  
 HS - House sparrow  
 LI - Linnet  
 LG - Little grebe  
 LT - Long tailed tit  
 MG - Magpie  
 MA - Mallard  
 MP - Meadow pipit  
 PH - Pheasant  
 RB - Reed bunting  
 R - Robin  
 RO - Rook  
 S - Skylark  
 SG - Starling  
 WP - Woodpigeon  
 WR - Wren



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Project: Land East of Iwade, Sittingbourne

Title: Wintering Bird Survey Visit 6 (South Area)

April 2017

Figure 12

[www.ecosulis.co.uk](http://www.ecosulis.co.uk)

0 100 200 300 400 500 m

### **3 RESULTS**

- 3.1 Details of the species and individual number are recorded within Appendix 1. Results from each visit are shown on Figures 1 - 12. Overwintering species listed within the SPA citation include black-tailed godwit, dark-bellied brent goose, dunlin, grey plover, pintail, redshank, ringed plover and shelduck. None of these species or assemblages which qualify The Swale as an SPA were seen within the survey area boundary.
- 3.2 Visit 5, undertaken in March 2015, recorded six curlew and one little grebe within the north of the survey area, within the SPA. Curlew were recorded within the north-eastern area within the sheep grazed fields close to the eastern boundary of the survey area, whilst the little grebe was recorded on the northern-most boundary of the survey area. Both of these areas are over 500 meters from the proposed development site which is located within the south and south-west of the survey area. Both species were recorded exhibiting foraging behaviour.

#### Assessment

- 3.3 Curlew and little grebe are not included within the SPA Annex I of the Directive for breeding birds, however they are listed under Article 4.2 of the Directive for overwintering assemblages. This means that although they are not one of the main species identified within the directive for breeding, consideration of disturbance will be required with regards to overwintering. Mitigation measures will need to be implemented on site during construction works to ensure no indirect impacts on the SPA as a result of disturbance. This could include restricting certain activities during wintering months, a sensitive lighting scheme and potentially temporary screening. The presence of the landscaped countryside gap will assist with minimising any disturbance.
- 3.4 Curlew were recorded within the survey area on the fifth visit which took place on the 7 March 2017. They were not recorded within any of the other visits to the survey area. The little grebe was recorded on the fifth visit which took place in March 2017. This indicates both species are unlikely to be using the survey area for overwintering, and instead are utilising it later in the year for foraging. Both species breed within similar habitats including wet grassland within close proximity to open water. The survey area does not support areas of open water, which indicates it is unlikely these species are breeding within the survey boundary. The agricultural fields within the survey area, further south, had been recently ploughed prior to the fifth visit, and therefore the number of birds recorded during the fifth survey had increased in comparison to previous surveys. It is possible this change in food abundance had encouraged these species further south of the SPA and into the northern areas of the survey area, suggesting they are not utilising this area regularly.

**4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 Curlew are present along the majority of coastal areas around Britain and breed in habitats including wet grasslands, farmland, heath and moorlands. Although they are present within the SPA they are not among the species listed within the Annex I of the Directive for breeding birds. They are listed under Article 4.2 of the Directive for overwintering assemblages. This means, although they are not one of the main species identified within the directive, an assessment of disturbance will need to be completed.
- 4.2 Because curlew were not recorded within any of the other survey visits, and the little grebe was only recorded within Visit 5, which took place in March, it is likely both species are not utilising the area for overwintering. That said a Habitat Regulations Assessment will be required to assess the levels of disturbance on these species as a result of the development.
- 4.3 The survey area included two potential development sites; one within the south and one within the west. These will be bordered by a retained green corridor and proposed countryside gap/country park (Annex II). This area extends to the north adjacent to the sheep grazed fields where the curlew were recorded. As such the development is likely to have minimal effects on the curlew and little grebe habitat. However mitigation measures including the retention of suitable habitat within the proposed country park would enhance the area for these species.

## 5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The purpose of this report is to accompany and inform a planning application. The proposals for the development site include the construction of residential housing within two areas of the survey boundary; one within the southern area which covers approximately 11ha and one on the western edge which covers approximately 2ha. These are then buffered by a proposed green corridor and further landscaping, with a proposed Country Park beyond that.
- 5.2 The survey area comprises of a network of large arable fields, which are bordered by grassland and hedgerows. Scattered trees and areas of scrub are also present across the survey area.
- 5.3 The Swale SPA is located to the north-east of the survey area and consists of a complex of brackish and fresh water floodplain, ditches, saltmarsh and mudflats. Together they provide great habitat for a wide variety of invertebrate and algae species which, in turn, support a wide range of bird species including waders. The Swale provides crucial habitat for a variety of bird species and supports large percentages of the UK's populations. As such the wintering bird surveys were completed to assess the usage of the survey area by wintering birds in association with the bird species present within the neighbouring SPA, to monitor any potential impacts the development may have.
- 5.4 None of the species or assemblages which qualify The Swale as an SPA were seen within the development area. Visit 5 recorded six curlew foraging within the northern sheep grazing area and one little grebe was recorded on the northernmost boundary. Both of these records are located within the SPA itself. Although these species are mentioned within the text of the SPA they are not overwintering birds and are likely to have been recorded as a result of the timing of the later survey (March 2017). This area is not within the development land and instead falls within the SPA.
- 5.5 As the development parcels are located further south the construction works are likely to have minimal impact on the curlew recorded within the north of the survey area. As such mitigation measures will include the retention of suitable habitat for curlew within the proposed Country Park.

**6 LIMITATIONS OF SURVEY AND REPORT**

- 6.1 This report records wildlife found during the survey and anecdotal evidence of sightings. It does not record any plants or animals that may appear at other times of the year and were therefore not evident at the time of visit. Some species that might use the survey area or be apparent at other times of year, or only in certain years, would not have been detected.
- 6.2 This report provides provisional ecological baseline for the survey area and should not be considered to be conclusive until the ecological considerations have been undertaken and all necessary further surveys completed. Likewise the ecological considerations at this stage are not necessarily final and may be subject to change or additional proposals made following the results of further surveys and detailed development plans.
- 6.3 The behaviour of animals can be unpredictable and may not conform to standard patterns recorded in current scientific literature. This report therefore cannot predict with absolute certainty that animal species will occur in apparently suitable locations or habitats or that they will not occur in locations or habitats that appear unsuitable.
- 6.4 The advice contained in this report relate primarily to factual survey results and general guidance only. On all legal matters you are advised to take legal advice.

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**Appendix I: WINTERING BIRD SURVEY RESULTS – SPECIES COUNTS**Table 1: Results of the Wintering Bird Survey (16 November 2016)

| <b>Bird Species</b> | <b>Number</b> |
|---------------------|---------------|
| Blackbird           | 19            |
| Black headed gull   | 10            |
| Blue tit            | 1             |
| Collared dove       | 29            |
| Crow                | 1             |
| Dunnock             | 1             |
| Fieldfare           | 59            |
| Feral pigeon        | 117           |
| Green woodpecker    | 1             |
| Goldfinch           | 106           |
| Herring gull        | 2             |
| House sparrow       | 46            |
| Mallard             | 1             |
| Magpie              | 24            |
| Marsh harrier       | 1             |
| Pheasant            | 3             |
| Pied wagtail        | 10            |
| Rook                | 47            |
| Stonechat           | 3             |
| Starling            | 128           |
| Woodpigeon          | 29            |

Table 2: Results of the Wintering Bird Survey (14 December 2016)

| <b>Bird Species</b> | <b>Number</b> |
|---------------------|---------------|
| Blackbird           | 43            |
| Black headed gull   | 4             |
| Blue tit            | 4             |
| Chaffinch           | 8             |
| Collared dove       | 4             |
| Crow                | 7             |
| Dunnock             | 3             |
| Fieldfare           | 42            |
| Feral pigeon        | 117           |
| Green woodpecker    | 1             |
| Goldfinch           | 22            |
| Great tit           | 4             |
| House sparrow       | 17            |
| Long tailed tit     | 3             |
| Magpie              | 22            |
| Peregrine falcon    | 1             |
| Pied wagtail        | 1             |
| Robin               | 3             |
| Rook                | 7             |
| Stonechat           | 1             |
| Starling            | 124           |
| Woodpigeon          | 31            |
| Wren                | 1             |

Table 3: Results of the Wintering Bird Survey (10 January 2017)

| Bird Species      | Number |
|-------------------|--------|
| Blackbird         | 25     |
| Black headed gull | 13     |
| Blue tit          | 4      |
| Chaffinch         | 1      |
| Collared dove     | 3      |
| Crow              | 6      |
| Fieldfare         | 70     |
| Goldfinch         | 65     |
| Great tit         | 3      |
| Heron             | 1      |
| House sparrow     | 22     |
| Magpie            | 12     |
| Meadow pipit      | 2      |
| Pied wagtail      | 1      |
| Robin             | 4      |
| Rook              | 2      |
| Song thrush       | 1      |
| Starling          | 14     |
| Woodpigeon        | 33     |
| Wren              | 2      |

Table 4: Results of the Wintering Bird Survey (3 February 2017)

| Bird Species      | Number |
|-------------------|--------|
| Blackbird         | 29     |
| Black headed gull | 11     |
| Blue tit          | 2      |
| Chaffinch         | 8      |
| Collared dove     | 1      |
| Coot              | 4      |
| Crow              | 6      |
| Fieldfare         | 6      |
| Goldfinch         | 30     |
| Great tit         | 4      |
| House Sparrow     | 39     |
| Jackdaw           | 4      |
| Little grebe      | 1      |
| Long tailed tit   | 4      |
| Magpie            | 14     |
| Mallard           | 4      |
| Meadow pipit      | 2      |
| Pheasant          | 3      |
| Robin             | 3      |
| Woodpigeon        | 40     |
| Wren              | 1      |

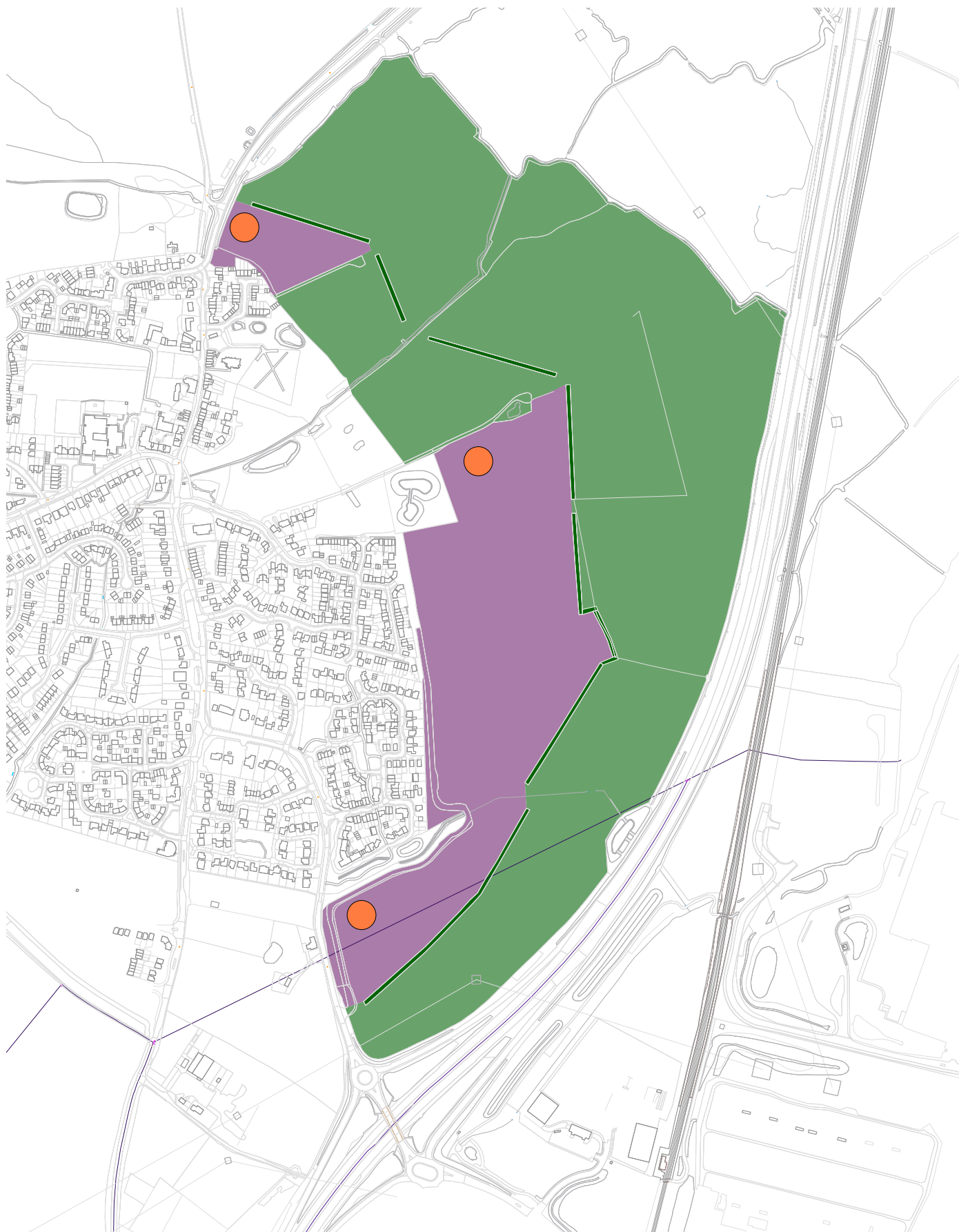
Table 5: Results of the Wintering Bird Survey (7 March 2017)

| Bird Species      | Number |
|-------------------|--------|
| Blackbird         | 15     |
| Blackcap          | 1      |
| Black headed gull | 73     |
| Blue tit          | 8      |
| Buzzard           | 2      |
| Chaffinch         | 33     |
| Collared dove     | 4      |
| Coot              | 1      |
| Crow              | 12     |
| Curlew            | 6      |
| Dunnock           | 4      |
| Fieldfare         | 2      |
| Goldfinch         | 32     |
| Great tit         | 6      |
| Green woodpecker  | 2      |
| House sparrow     | 27     |
| Linnet            | 18     |
| Little grebe      | 1      |
| Long tailed tit   | 2      |
| Magpies           | 15     |
| Mallard           | 11     |
| Marsh harrier     | 1      |
| Meadow pipit      | 4      |
| Mute swan         | 3      |
| Pied wagtail      | 1      |
| Pheasant          | 2      |
| Redwing           | 2      |
| Reed bunting      | 2      |
| Robin             | 2      |
| Skylark           | 3      |
| Starling          | 13     |
| Woodpigeon        | 22     |
| Wren              | 5      |

Table 6: Results of the Wintering Bird Survey (29 March 2017)

| Bird Species      | Number |
|-------------------|--------|
| Blackbird         | 7      |
| Black headed gull | 68     |
| Blue tit          | 5      |
| Chaffinch         | 13     |
| Collard dove      | 4      |
| Crow              | 19     |
| Dunnock           | 1      |
| Goldfinch         | 16     |
| Great tit         | 5      |
| House Sparrow     | 14     |
| Linnet            | 1      |
| Little grebe      | 1      |
| Long tailed tit   | 2      |
| Magpie            | 7      |
| Mallard           | 7      |
| Meadow pipit      | 8      |
| Pheasant          | 3      |
| Reed bunting      | 2      |
| Robin             | 1      |
| Rook              | 1      |
| Skylark           | 5      |
| Starling          | 1      |
| Woodpigeon        | 28     |
| Wren              | 8      |

**Appendix II: PROPOSED COUNTRYSIDE GAP/COUNTRY PARK**



## LAND EAST OF IWADE

-  New housing area
-  Existing shelter belts
-  Countryside gap / Country park
-  Possible locations for community hall and nursery school



scale 1:5,000@ A3