

**Bishops Dal BESS** 

Wintering Bird Survey Report



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#### **Issuing office**

4 Riverside Studios | Newcastle Business Park | Newcastle Upon Tyne | NE4 7YL T: 0191 303 8964 | W: www.bsg-ecology.com | E: info@bsg-ecology.com

Client	Bishops Dal Energy Storage Limited	
Project	ishops Dal BESS	
Version	DRAFT	
Project number	P24-005 Bishops Dal BESS	

	Name	Position	Date
Originated	Jacquelyn Grissom	Ecologist	29 January 2025
Reviewed	Alexander Permain	Senior Ecologist	14 February 2025
Approved for issue to client	lan Heard	Principal Ecologist	18 February 2025
Issued to client	lan Heard	Principal Ecologist	19 February 2025
Amendments in line with EcIA	Harry Glass	Ecologist	24 July 2025

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### 1 Introduction

1.1 BSG Ecology was commissioned by Renewable Energy Systems Ltd. in October 2024 to undertake wintering bird surveys between November 2024 and February 2025. A further commission was made in January 2025 to produce a wintering bird survey report for the Bishops Dal site (the 'Site'), near Coldstream, Scottish Borders. The survey report considers land within the red line site boundary and an appropriate buffer (the 'Survey Area') provided by the client.

#### **Description of project**

1.2 The client proposes to construct a battery energy storage system (BESS) and associated infrastructure on the Site, including two access points from the A697 immediately north of the Site, and associated soft landscaping as illustrated in the current landscape masterplan (Drawing Number: P24-0160 EN 08 E, Appendix 1).

#### Site description

- 1.3 The Site is approximately 13.2 hectares (ha) in size and is situated at central ordnance survey grid reference NT 79154 41293. The location of the Site is shown on Figure 1. The Site slopes gently to the north east and is dominated by agricultural crop, delineated by hedgerows and ditches, with blocks of woodland along the southern boundary. The Site is approximately 5.25 km north west of Coldstream.
- 1.4 The wider landscape is dominated by agricultural land, largely arable but isolated pasture fields are present. Discreet blocks of plantation woodland (mostly conifer) are present to the south and east of the Site. Eccles substation is to the immediate north of the Site, separated by the A697.
- 1.5 The Site is not subject to any nature conservation designations, though the scheme lies within the Impact Risk Zones identified for Sites of Special Scientific Interest for the area, currently presented in Defra's interactive map (<a href="https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx">https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx</a>). Consultation with Natural England is not required for the proposed development as it is unlikely to have harmful effects on the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/).

#### **Purpose of report**

1.6 The aim of this report is to present the wintering bird survey methods and results of the surveys undertaken between November 2024 and February 2025. Potential impacts and proposed mitigation measures for breeding birds are considered in the Ecological Impact Assessment (BSG Ecology, 2025).

#### Personnel

- 1.7 The wintering bird surveys were completed by Tom Cadwallender. Tom is an experienced ornithologist who has been undertaking breeding bird surveys in England and Scotland for nearly 40 years, for both professional consultancies and volunteer organisations such as the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO).
- 1.8 This report was prepared by Jacquelyn Grissom, Ecologist at BSG, who has worked as an ecological consultant for 2 years and has authored several wintering bird survey reports. This report was reviewed by Alex Permain and Ian Heard ACIEEM. Alex has worked in the ecological sector for four years and is an experienced ornithologist. Ian has worked as an ecological consultant for 14 years and has extensive experience as a professional consultant and technical reviewer of wintering bird survey reports.
- 1.9 Further details of experience and qualifications can be found at http://www.bsg-ecology.com/people



#### 2 Methods

#### Field survey

#### Wintering bird survey

2.1 Four wintering bird survey visits were completed between early November 2024 to early February 2025, at a rate of one survey per month. Surveys were conducted during the diurnal period and between the timings of 07:30 and 18:30 (adjusted accordingly for daylight changes), in suitable weather conditions (see Table 1 for details).

Table 1: Wintering bird survey details.

Table II Time in a carrey decane.							
Date	Timing	Sunrise	Temperature	Wind speed (Beaufort Force)	Cloud cover (Oktas)	Precipitation	Visibility
12/11/24	08:30 - 10:15	07:40	4°C	1	5	Dry	>2 km
06/12/24	08:30 - 10:15	08:23	4°C	1	1	Dry	>2 km
07/01/25	09:15 - 11:00	08:37	0°C	1	1	Dry	>2 km
05/02/25	08:15 – 09:35	07:52	2°C	1	1	Dry	>2 km

2.2 The survey methodology followed current industry guidance (Bird Survey and Assessment Steering Group, 2023). The methodology employees, the 'look-see' methodology (Gilbert et. al., 1998) involving the observation of habitats along a pre-determined survey transect route and stopping at intervals and scanning the Survey Area for birds using binoculars. All species heard and/or observed were recorded onto base maps using standard British Trust for Ornithology ('BTO') Species Codes, in accordance with standard practice (Bibby, et al., 2000; Gilbert, et al., 1998).

#### Limitations

- 2.3 The wintering bird surveys were undertaken at an appropriate time of the year in suitable weather conditions. All parts of the Survey Area were covered effectively during each survey.
- During the December survey the surveyor noted tree felling had occurred in the north east corner of the Survey Area since the November site visit. During the February survey the surveyor noted ground levelling using heavy plant had taken place in the same area. There is potential for the wintering bird assemblage to be locally impacted through disturbance and loss of habitat. However the activities were localised to the north east of the Survey Area and were not undertaken during the surveys, therefore this is not considered to be a significant limitation to the data collected.

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#### 3 Results

- 3.1 Survey results are presented in Figures 1 4, Section 5.
- 3.2 In total twenty-three species were recorded within the Survey Area. Five species recorded are on the BoCC Red List and are considered to be of high conservation concern: fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*, grey partridge *Perdix perdix*, mistle thrush *Turdus viscivorus*, skylark *Alauda arvensis*, and yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*.
- 3.3 Seven species recorded are on the BoCC Amber List, six of which are considered to be of medium conservation concern: bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, dunnock *Prunella modularis*, redwing *Turdus iliacus*, reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*, sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*, and wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*. Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*, was also recorded but is Amber listed due to the UK supporting over 25% of the European population. Woodpigeon are a common and widespread species in the UK and ubiquitous in farmland environments. As such woodpigeon is not considered to be a species of conservation concern.
- 3.4 Ten were Green List species and are of low conservation concern: blackbird *Turdus merula*, blue tit *Cyanistes* caeruleus, buzzard *Buteo buteo*, carrion crow *Corvus corone*, chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*, coal tit *Periparus ater*, goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*, jay *Garrulus glandarius*, robin *Erithacus rubecula*, and siskin *Carduelis spinus*.
- 3.5 One introduced species that has not been assigned a BoCC status was recorded.
- 3.6 Table 2 below provides details of the species recorded on Site and their conservation status, including whether the species is listed on the Scottish Biodiversity List<sup>1</sup> (SBL) and Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Table 2: Summary list of species recorded during wintering bird surveys and their classification.

BTO code	Common name	Scientific name	BoCC status	Other classifications
FF	Fieldfare	Turdus pilaris	Red	Schedule 1
P.	Grey partridge	Perdix perdix	Red	SBL
M.	Mistle thrush	Turdus viscivorus	Red	
S.	Skylark	Alauda arvensis	Red	SBL
Υ.	Yellowhammer	Emberiza citrinella	Red	SBL
BF	Bulfinch	Pyrrhula pyrrhula	Amber	SBL
D.	Dunnock	Prunella modularis	Amber	
RE	Redwing	Turdus iliacus	Amber	Schedule 1, SBL
RB	Reed bunting	Emberiza schoeniclus	Amber	SBL
SH	Sparrowhawk	Accipiter nisus	Amber	SBL
WP	Woodpigeon	Columba palumbus	Amber	
WR	Wren	Troglodytes troglodytes	Amber	
В.	Blackbird	Turdus merula	Green	

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> As listed in <a href="https://www.nature.scot/scotlands-biodiversity/scottish-biodiversity-strategy/scottish-biodiversity-strategy/scottish-biodiversity-list">https://www.nature.scot/scotlands-biodiversity/scottish-biodiversity-strategy/scottish-biodiversity-list</a>

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вт	Blue tit	Cyanistes caeruleus	Green	
BZ	Buzzard	Buteo buteo	Green	
C.	Carrion crow	Corvus corone	Green	
CH	Chaffinch	Fringilla coelebs	Green	
CT	Coal tit	Periparus ater	Green	
GO	Goldfinch	Carduelis carduelis	Green	
J.	Jay	Garrulus glandarius	Green	
R.	Robin	Erithacus rubecula	Green	
SK	Siskin	Carduelis spinus	Green	SBL
PH	Pheasant	Phasianus colchicus	Not assessed	

#### **Species accounts**

3.7 Species accounts of notable species (BoCC red and Amber listed species) are provided below. Green list species not listed on the SBL are considered to be of low conservation concern being common, widespread and supported by a wide range of habitats. Therefore potential impacts from the proposed development are likely to be of negligible importance.

#### **BoCC Red List**

- 3.8 Flocks of fieldfare were recorded on three occasions (see Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4, Section 5) with a peak count of 66. Once during November a flock of 15 were recorded in the centre of the Site within the easterly arable field. A flock of 66 were recorded in the same location during December. In February, a flock of 18 were recorded in the south east corner of the Survey Area.
- 3.9 Grey partridge was recorded on a single occasion in February. Two birds were recorded within the Survey Area, adjacent to the ditch dividing the two fields (see Figure 4).
- 3.10 A single mistle thrush individual was recorded on one occasion during December (see Figure 2), flying over the Survey Area.
- 3.11 Two skylarks were recorded on a single occasion during February, within the north western corner of the Survey Area in an arable field (see Figure 4).
- 3.12 Yellowhammer were recorded on three occasions within the Site during December (see Figure 2) with a peak count of eight. Two separate flocks of eight individuals were recorded along the western boundary of the Site (one flock in each arable field). Two individuals were also recorded along the northern boundary of the Site within the north west arable field.

#### **BoCC Amber List**

- 3.13 Individual bullfinch were recorded during the November and December visits (see Figures 1 & 2). On both occasions the species was outside of the Site boundary, being recorded in woodland habitat within the Survey Area. In November the species was recorded in Egerton Covert, and in December north of the A697.
- 3.14 Individual dunnock were recorded on two occasions in December (see Figure 2). Once within the Site along the northern boundary of the eastern arable field, and once within the Survey Area in the south along the edge of woodland habitat.

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- 3.15 Flocks of redwing were recorded on three occasions (see Figures 1 3) with a peak count of 38. During November, a flock of 4 was recorded within the Survey Area in Crown Gorse directly south of the Site. During December of flock of 38 were recorded in the central arable habitats on Site. In February, a flock of 35 were recorded again in Crown Gorse.
- 3.16 Two reed bunting were recorded on two occasions during the month of December (see Figure 2). One registration was recorded in the central ditch on Site. The other registration was recorded within Egerton Covert in the Survey Area immediately west of Site.
- 3.17 A single sparrowhawk was recorded on one occasion during the February survey in the Survey Area within the arable field adjacent Site to the west (see Figure 4).
- 3.18 Individual wrens were recorded during all survey visits (see Figures 1 4). During November four individuals were recorded, one was recorded within the Site near woodland habitat along the northern boundary of the Site. The other records are from within the Survey Area just beyond the eastern and southern boundaries of the Site. During December three individuals were recorded along the western section of the survey buffer. During January three individuals were recorded in woodland in the western survey buffer. In February, a single individual was recorded within southern section of the survey buffer.

### **BoCC Green List & Scottish Biodiversity List**

3.19 A single siskin was recorded within the Survey Area, in Egerton Covert immediately west of the Site during the December survey (see Figure 2). No other registrations of siskin were recorded during the other surveys.



#### 4 References

Bibby, C.J., Burgess, N.D, Hill, D.A, and Mustoe, S.H (2000) Bird census techniques. Academic Press, London.

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Gilbert, G., Gibbons, D.Wand Evans, J. (1998) Bird monitoring methods: A manual of techniques for UK key species. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Sandy, Bedfordshire, England.

Stanbury A., Eaton M., Aebischer N., Balmer D., Brown A., Douse A., Lindley P., McCulloch N., Noble D. and Win I. (2021). The status of our bird populations: the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man and second IUCN Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain. *British Birds* **114:** 723–747. (BoCC5)



### 5 Figures

Figure 1: Wintering Bird Survey - Visit 1

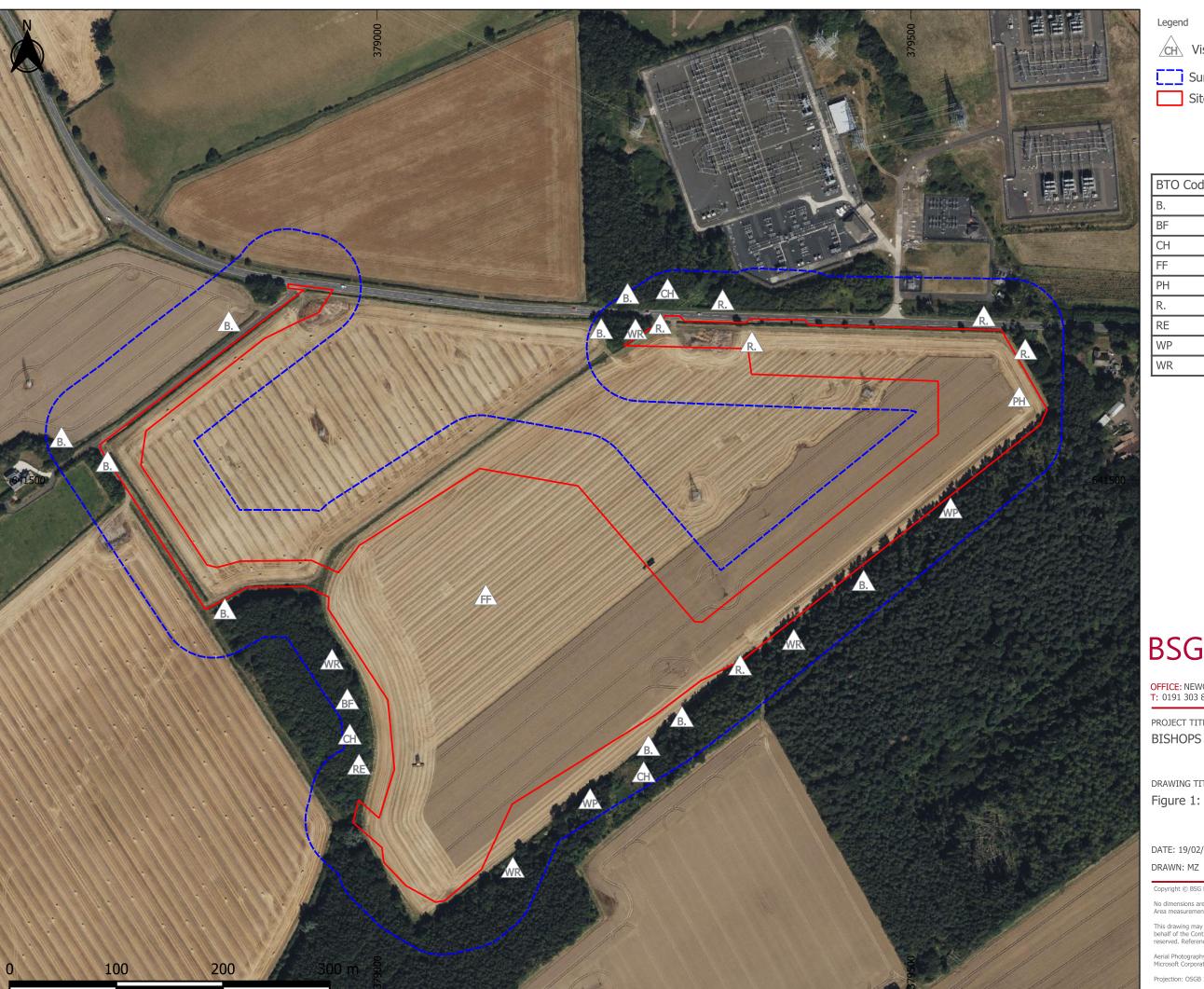
Figure 2: Wintering Bird Survey - Visit 2

Figure 3: Wintering Bird Survey - Visit 3

Figure 4: Wintering Bird Survey - Visit 4

(overleaf)

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CH Visit 1 - non-breeding

Survey boundary

Site boundary

BTO Code	Common Name
В.	Blackbird
BF	Bullfinch
СН	Chaffinch
FF	Fieldfare
PH	Pheasant
R.	Robin
RE	Redwing
WP	Woodpigeon
WR	Wren

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PROJECT TITLE

BISHOPS DAL BESS

DRAWING TITLE

Figure 1: Wintering bird survey - Visit 1

DATE: 19/02/2025

CHECKED: JG

SCALE: 1:3,300

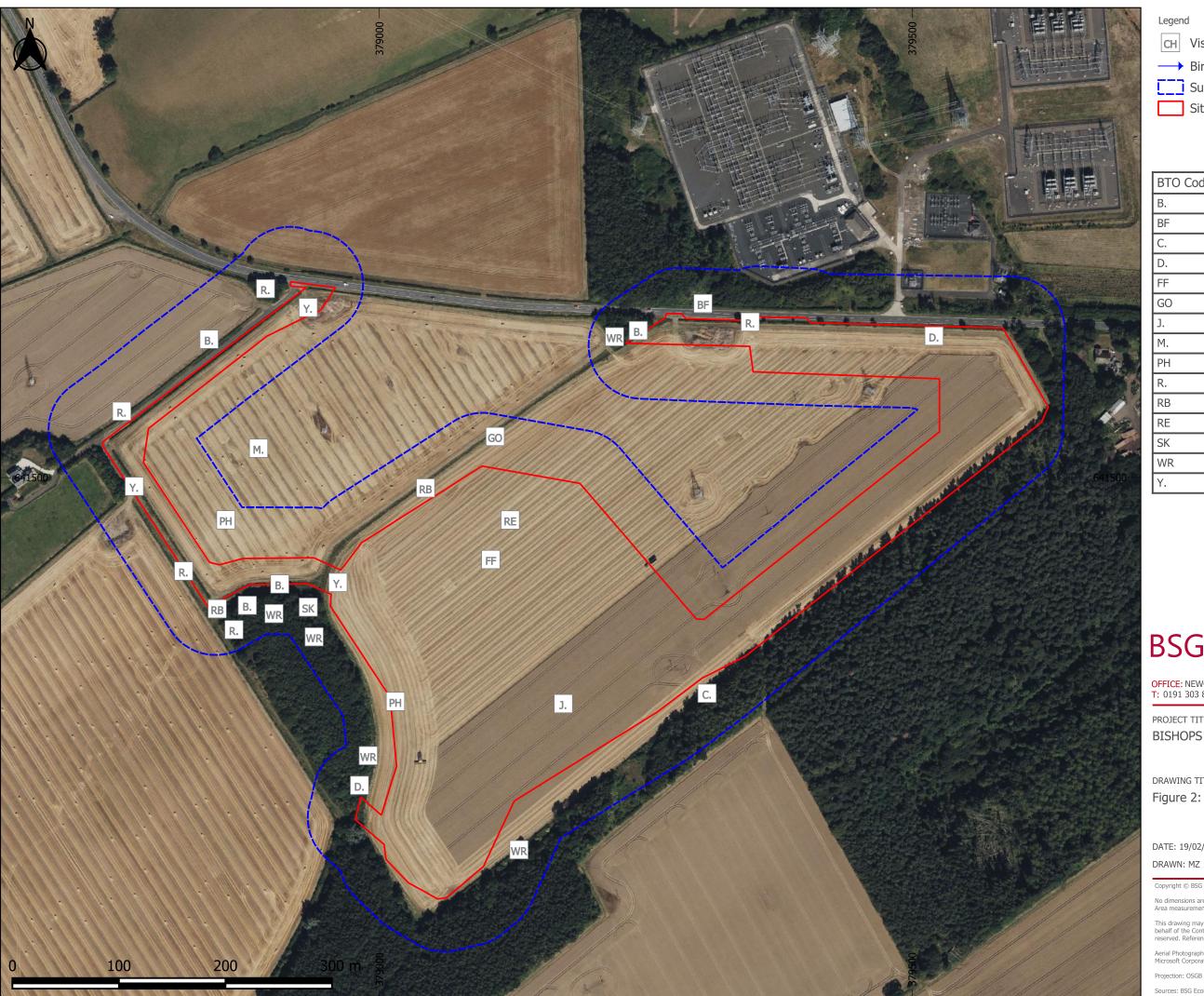
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APPROVED: CD VERSION:1.1

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CH Visit 2 - non-breeding

→ Bird Flight Line

Survey boundary

Site boundary

BTO Code Common Name Blackbird Bullfinch Carrion Crow D. Dunnock Fieldfare GO Goldfinch Jay Mistle Thrush Pheasant Robin RB Reed Bunting RE Redwing SK Siskin WR Wren Yellowhammer

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JOB REF: P24-005

SCALE: 1:3,300

### PROJECT TITLE

**BISHOPS DAL BESS** 

#### DRAWING TITLE

Figure 2: Wintering bird survey - Visit 2

DATE: 19/02/2025 CHECKED: JG

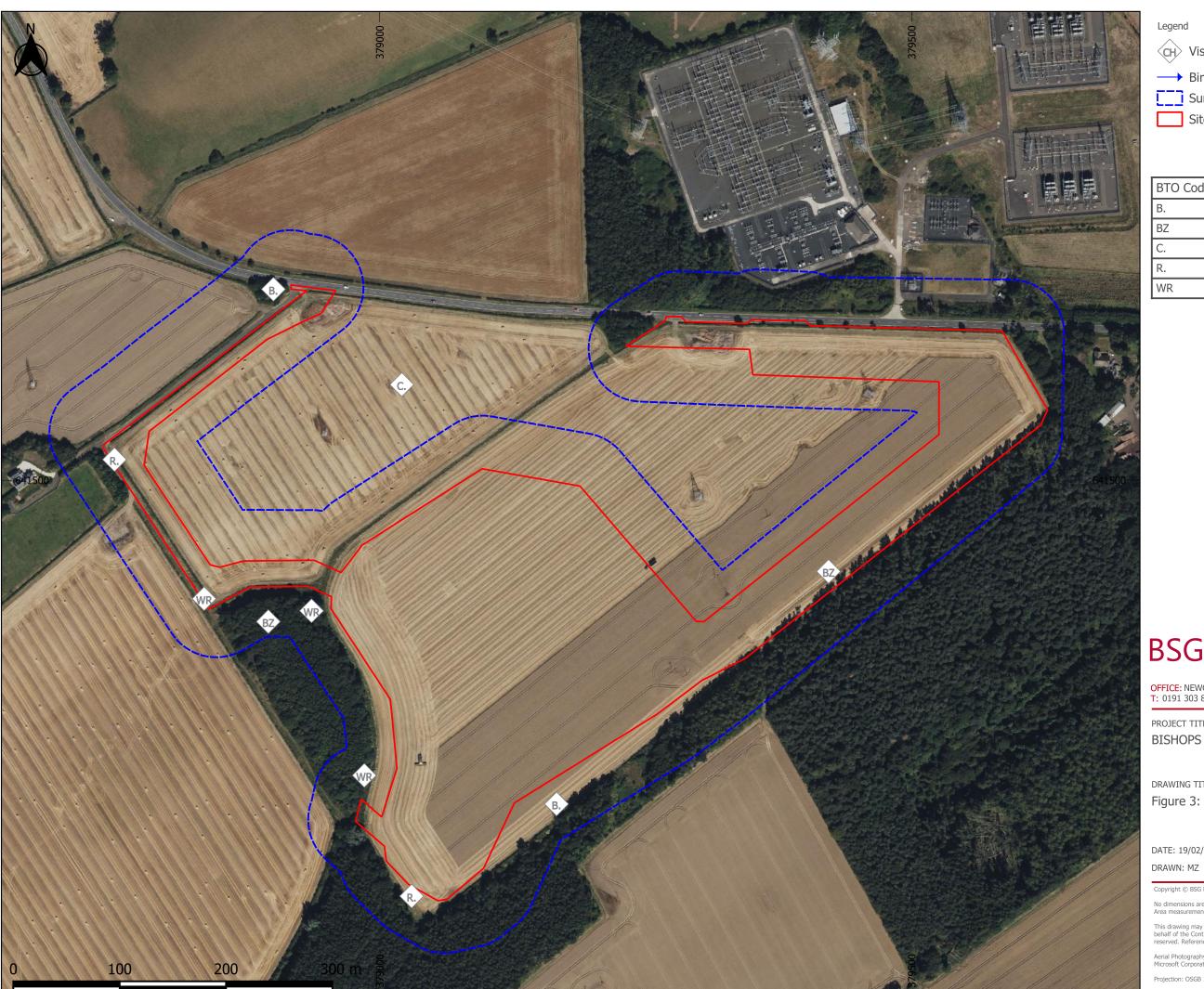
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CH Visit 3 - non-breeding

→ Bird Flight Line

Survey boundary

Site boundary

BTO Code	Common Name
B.	Blackbird
BZ	Buzzard
C.	Carrion Crow
R.	Robin
WR	Wren

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DRAWING TITLE

Figure 3: Wintering bird survey - Visit 3

DATE: 19/02/2025

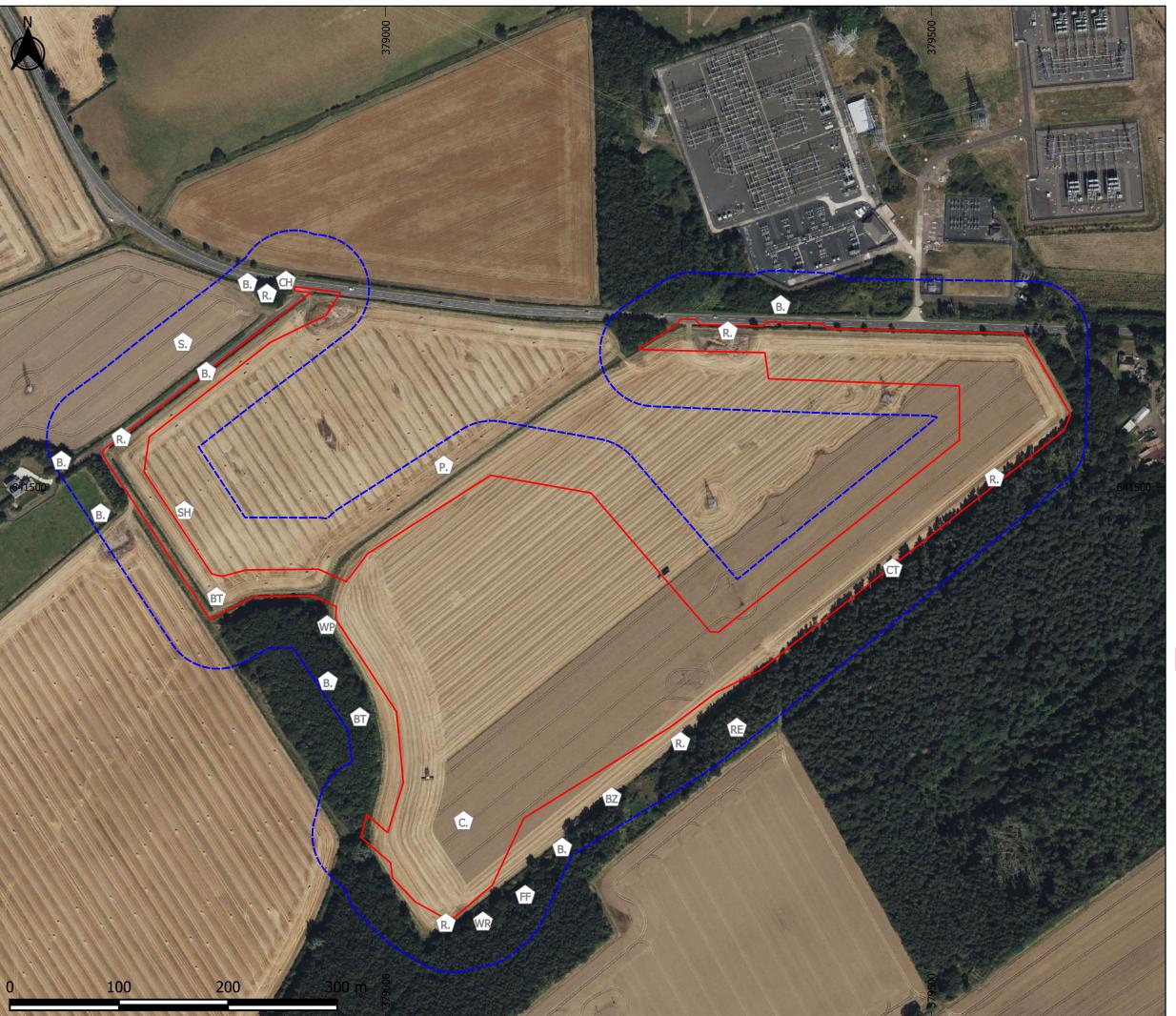
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CH Visit 4 - non-breeding

→ Bird Flight Line

Survey boundary

Site boundary

3TO Code	Common Name
3.	Blackbird
ЗТ	Blue Tit
3Z	Buzzard
C.	Carrion Crow
CH	Chaffinch
СТ	Coal Tit
F F	Fieldfare
P.	Grey Partridge
₹.	Robin
RE	Redwing
5.	Skylark
SH	Sparrowhawk
MP	Woodpigeon
NR	Wren
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#### PROJECT TITLE

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#### DRAWING TITLE

Figure 4: Wintering bird survey - Visit 4

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## Appendix 1: Landscape masterplan

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