



College Road, Campdown

Winter Bird Mitigation Strategy



Persimmon Homes

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

WYG was commissioned by Persimmon Homes in to prepare a Winter Bird Mitigation Strategy for land at College Road, Campdown, Havant (the Site).

The Site encompasses Fields H106, H113, H125 and H02A which have been monitored for the presence of brent geese as part of the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy. H106 and H02A are designated as Primary Support Areas, H125 as a Secondary Support Area and H113 as a Low Use site. Data provided by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) included peak counts of one wader and 70 dark-bellied brent geese (*Branta bernicula bernicula*) (at this point the whole site was listed as H02A). Surveys completed by WYG over the winter months (October – March 2015/16 and 2016/17) recorded peak counts of approximately 50 brent geese and 150 curlew (*Numenius arquata*). A request for updated local records has been made but this data has not been received at the time of writing.

Dark-bellied brent geese are a qualifying feature of the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA, along with a broader assemblage of wading birds which includes curlew. The Solent Wader and Brent Goose Strategy (SWBGS) aims to protect the network of non-designated terrestrial wader and brent goose sites that support the Solent SPAs from land take and recreational pressure associated with new development. The terrestrial wader and brent goose sites are located on land that falls outside of the boundaries of the Solent SPAs. However, as this land is frequently used by SPA species (including qualifying features and assemblage species), it supports the functionality and integrity of the designated sites for these features. This land will contribute to the achievement of the SPAs' conservation objectives and is therefore protected in this context. This land supports the ecological network by providing alternative roosting and foraging sites.

The impact of any future proposals on wintering birds using the site and the nearby Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA has been identified as a potential constraint. The potential impacts are likely to consist of disturbance due to increased recreational pressure and loss of foraging habitat over the winter months.

This report identifies a strategy to mitigate for potential adverse effects upon brent geese and waders and to make sure that there is no negative impact upon the integrity of the Chichester and Langstone Harbour SPA and Ramsar.

This report has been prepared by Senior Ecologist John Simper MCIEEM and Associate Ecologist David West CEnv MCIEEM.

1.2 Site Location

The proposed development site measures c. 31 ha in area, located to the west of Havant in Hampshire, centred on Ordnance Survey grid reference SU690069. The site is bounded by Scratchface Lane and the A3 (M) along the eastern boundary and College Road forming the western boundary. Further east of the site lies the residential area of Bedhampton. South of the site are agricultural fields with the B2177 Portsdown Hill Road and the residential dwellings of Farlington



beyond. Directly north of the site is Littlepark Wood. Portsmouth Golf Course lies directly south west of the site. On the north western corner of the site lies South Downs College.

1.3 Development Proposals

Development of land at Campdown for the provision of circa 735 dwellings (Use Class C3), sports facilities, formal and informal open space, landscaping, the provision of new access onto College Road and necessary associated works and infrastructure.



2.0 Baseline

2.1 Existing Data

The site has been monitored as part of the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy and is identified as Field H02A for the purposes of the study. Records from 2010 carried out for the survey indicate that up to 70 brent geese were recorded to be present in the field, and up to one wader.

WYG¹ have also undertaken a series of winter bird surveys during 2015/16 and 2016/17 at the site. These surveys revealed that up to 50 brent geese were utilising the site and up to 150 curlew. During these surveys both species were recorded during most visits.

These surveys were completed using a rigorous scientific methodology in line with that specified by the SWBGS. This therefore represents a suitable evidence base upon which to assess likely impacts and their magnitude.

2.2 Current Management

The site is managed as a pasture field, grazed by a mixture of cattle, horses and goats. Consequently the grassland is kept extremely short with larger areas of poaching and bare ground. The notable feature of the site is the south west field where a drain crosses the field. This area is extremely wet and was waterlogged during most visits to the site.

Unofficial use by walkers/dog walkers is known to occur occasionally and there is a public right of way along the north and east boundary, although this is screened by hedgerow for much of its length. No significant disturbance events were noted during any of the surveys.

¹ WYG (2017). Land off College Road, Campdown Wintering Bird Report.



3.0 Potential Impacts of development on Brent Geese

3.1 Habitat Loss

The proposed development will result in a loss of 31ha of potential foraging habitat for brent geese and waders. However, it should be noted that the winter bird surveys conducted on site have never recorded any use of H106 by brent geese or other waders, and only minimal use of H02A, including when conditions were optimal. Brent geese were predominately recorded in H125 and curlew in H113.

3.2 Disturbance

3.2.1 Occupation

As the development will occupy the entire site, there are anticipated to be no direct impacts as a result of recreation or occupation. The potential foraging sites to the south are screened from the development by an intact tree line.

In the absence of mitigation there is potential for recreational disturbance to birds using areas within or adjacent to the Solent SPAs as the development lies within the 5.6km zone of influence.

3.2.2 Construction

The development of may also result in disturbance impacts during the construction phase. This will primarily be through noise, but visual disturbance may also cause disturbance if present on site during construction.



4.0 Proposed Mitigation

H106 and H02A are currently listed as Primary Support Areas for brent geese and waders under Policy E17 of the Draft Havant Local Plan, and H125 as a Secondary Support Area (H113 is listed as a Low Use site).

In consultation with Havant Borough Council it is proposed that an off-site Wader and Brent Goose Refuge will be created to mitigate this loss. This refuge will be located on land under the ownership of Havant Borough Council and comprise two fields: H07A and H07B. These are listed as Core and Secondary Support Areas respectively. However, monitoring by Havant Borough Council has not recorded any use of these sites (predominately due to disturbance and the unsuitable habitat). Following consultation with the HBC Ecologist it is understood that the classification of these fields is due to the proximity to the SPA and not due to any use by qualifying bird species.

It was identified that the aim of the mitigation strategy, followed by appropriate management in perpetuity, is to improve the quality of the site such that it is suitable for brent geese and waders consistent with a Core site. This will adequately mitigate any adverse effects as a result of the proposed development.

4.1 Habitat Creation and Management

In order to maintain and improve the quality of foraging habitat within the mitigation area it is proposed that the land is managed as grassland which will be suitable for waders and brent geese every year. The objective is to create wet grassland with a mix of perennial rye grass and white clover which provides a nutrient-rich food source for foraging geese. It is anticipated that management of the grassland will be through cutting although grazing could be used as an alternative should a suitable local herd be identified.

To improve the habitat suitability for other wading birds (either qualifying species for the SPA or part of the qualifying assemblage) it is proposed that six wader scrapes are created within the mitigation area. These will be of irregular shape with an average area of 50m². To create a range of conditions and support different species the scrapes will be of variable depth with shallow margins and a deeper centre of 0.5m depth. Water supply for the scrapes will come from rainfall and surface water runoff. The primary objective is to hold perched water during the winter, but it is anticipated that deeper areas will also hold water for part of the summer and provide an enhancement for breeding birds. The deeper central section of the scrape will occupy approximately 50% of the total area to maximise the likelihood of water retention. Scrapes will be created using an excavator with arisings piled adjacent to the margins to improve water retention and provide bare ground areas suitable for invertebrates.

The location of the scrapes will be determined following a site visit but will ideally be located in the lowest-lying area of the site in order to maximise water retention.

4.2 Avoidance of Disturbance

4.2.1 Occupation

The following measures are proposed to reduce the current levels of disturbance within the mitigation area and avoid any additional disturbance post development. This is in addition to the standard



payments to be made to the Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project to mitigate in combination effects.

The mitigation area is currently used for recreation including dog walking. It is anticipated that it will not be possible to exclude the public from this area entirely. Therefore, in order to avoid future disturbance from the use of this path, it is proposed that a fence is installed to create a circular walking route around each field, preventing access into the interior. This will comprise timber post and wire stock fencing to prevent access by dogs off leads. This livestock fence should be to BS1722 Part 2 and suitable to enclose livestock if they are used to manage the field. The fence will allow a 3m wide path which will allow walkers to avoid areas of mud and the like, and therefore avoid the need to enter the mitigation area. To support these measures, it is proposed that planting using native hedgerow species (hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, field maple) is completed to reinforce the fence line. This will further discourage any attempted cutting through this boundary and provide a visual barrier to prevent disturbance of geese within the mitigation area.

Further screening planting will be created along the southern boundary of the Site to screen it from the mitigation area. This will be supplemented by the situation of the attenuation basin which will provide further separation between the residential development and created foraging habitat, as well as deterring access by residents and providing additional wetland habitat creation. The lighting layout for the development site will avoid any increase in artificial light spill into the land to the south.

Interpretation boards will be installed to educate new and existing residents about the conservation status of the SPA and wintering birds and the proposed use of the mitigation area. These will also explain the impacts of disturbance (particularly dogs) and recommend suitable walking routes to avoid disturbing wintering birds. These will be located at the existing access points to the mitigation area.

4.2.2 Construction

It is recommended that the Construction Environmental Management Plan for the site include measures to prevent disturbance during construction.

This should include restricting works to the summer months (April – September), until the works to the mitigation area have been completed. The mitigation area works should be completed prior to the winter (prior to October) and before any works within H02A and H125.



5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Capital works such as the installation of fencing and interpretation boards, scrape creation and landscaping will be completed by the developer during the construction phase.

Upon completion it is proposed that the management of the eastern portion of the mitigation area is transferred to an appropriate conservation body such as the RSPB or Wildlife Trust. It is currently understood that HBC do not have capacity to undertake the management. The management will be transferred upon completion of an audit to confirm that all capital works are complete, and the mitigation area is in satisfactory condition.

A commuted sum will be provided for long-term management to cover maintenance of the following: fencelines, footpaths, interpretation boards, scrapes and grassland management. This will be secured as part of the Section 106 agreement. The following costs have been calculated using 2017 Countryside Stewardship Grants. This is considered a suitable approach as it is also used in the draft SWBGS Mitigation Guidance (SWBGS, 2018). This covers an 80-year period.

Grassland:

- GS12 Creation of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl – Years 1-10 (£310/ha)
- GS10 Management of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl – Years 11-80 (£157/ha)
- An additional 2 years of GS12 will be allowed every 10 years to allow for sward improvement and scrape management.
- As the mitigation area measures 7ha this will result in a commuted sum of £122,472.

Hedgerow/scrub:

- Management on 3-year rotation – cutting of one site every 3 years (£27/100m).
- As there is an estimated 1.5km of hedgerow requiring management this will result in a commuted sum of £10,530.

Fencing

- Replacement of fencing three times in the life of the strategy – years 25, 50, 75 (£8/m).
- As the fencing measures 1.5km this will result in a commuted sum of £36,000.

Interpretation Boards:

- Replacement of two boards twice in the life of the strategy – years 10, 20 (£1,000/ea).
- This will result in a commuted sum of £4,000.

The total commuted sum will be £173,002.

Following the management transfer and payment of the commuted sum, long term management, maintenance and monitoring will be the responsibility of the managing body (to be determined).



6.0 Management Activities

Management of the main mitigation area will predominately involve management of the grassland. For the first ten years this will include additional grass seeding where necessary which should take place between August and September. It is anticipated that the primary form of management will be cutting. The key objective is to provide forage for brent geese and other waders during the winter, therefore the following timings are recommended:

- First cut – late August (following majority of breeding bird activity)
- Second cut – late September (to achieve winter sward height of 50-60mm)

Alternatively, low-intensity grazing could be utilised as an alternative to cutting. This will be dependent on the identification of a suitable grazing partner. Therefore, the above cutting regime is proposed as the default management, however the managing body will be free to use alternative measures (such as grazing) provided they meet the objectives of the mitigation area.

Other management activities to be completed will include:

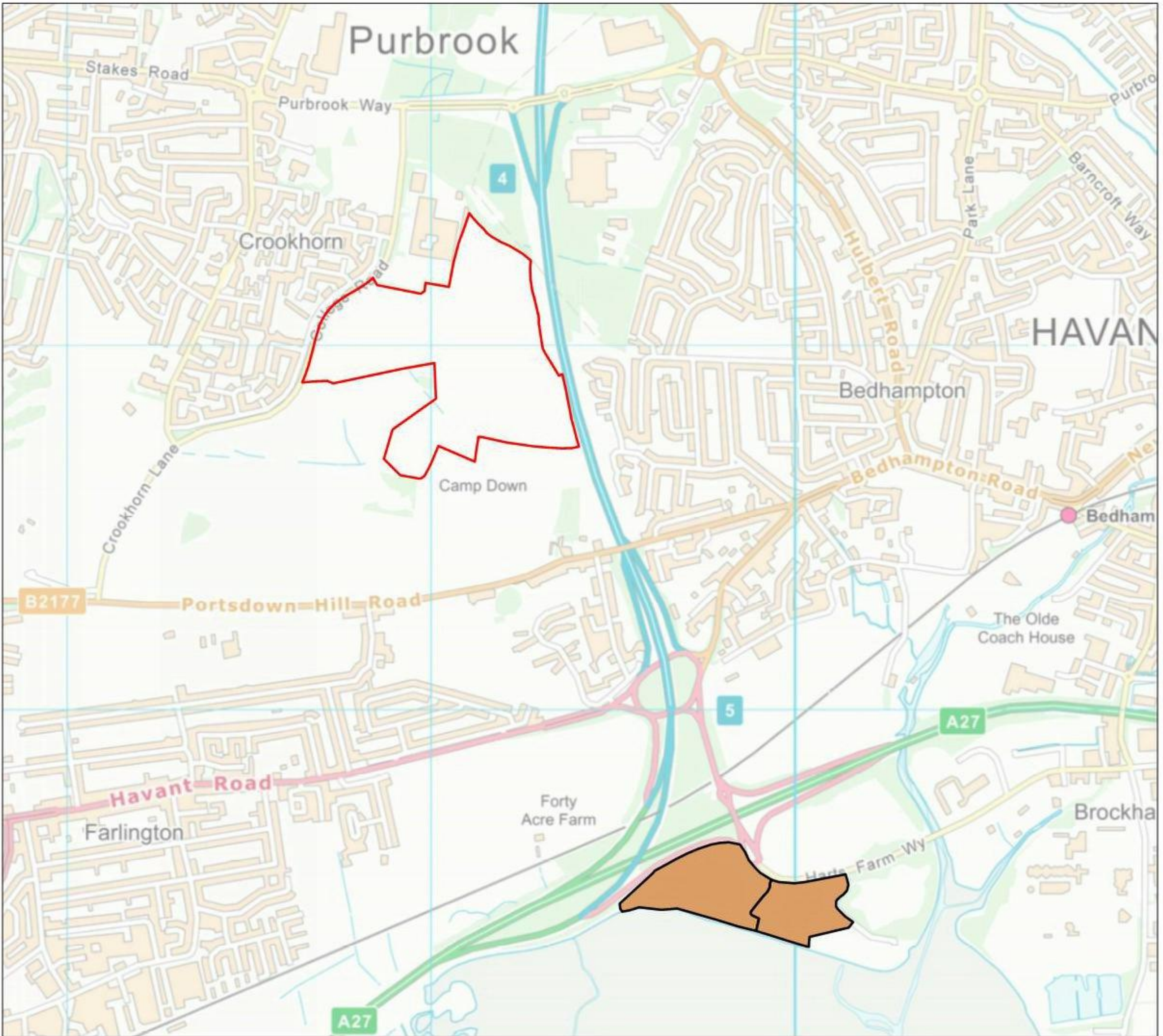
- Hedgerows/scrub margins – to be cut in early October (to avoid nesting birds) on three-year rotation (each year to be one side or the top)
- Fences and footpaths – management anticipated to be minimal however fence integrity should be monitored annually and repaired as necessary.
- Interpretation boards – no management anticipated however boards should be replaced if necessary
- Scrapes – management to prevent dense vegetation from establishing in margins to comprise of strimming to ground level every two years in late September – early October.

Monitoring will be required to make sure that the management activities are proceeding and to identify any necessary changes to management to continue achieving the management objective (maintain the mitigation area as a 'core' site for brent geese). It is anticipated that three years of winter bird monitoring will take place followed by annual site visits to monitor management actions.



FIGURES

Figure 1 – Mitigation Plan



Rev	Date	Notes
A	23/07/18	Initial map production

Legend

- Site boundary
- Wader and Brent Goose Refuge (WBGF)

0 100 200 400 Metres



Wader and Brent Goose Refuge (WBGF)

Campdown Persimmon Homes

Scale at A3: 1:10,000	Project No: A100376	Drawing No: Figure 1	Revision: A
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