Re-consultation – Ecological and Ornithological Assessment

Revision Number: 1

June 2026

Future Energy Llanwern Limited

Contents

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 This Ecological and Ornithological Assessment documents the additional ecological and ornithological considerations associated with the amendment to the Development Consent Order (DCO) boundary of the Future Energy Llanwern Solar Farm (hereafter referred to as “the Proposed Development”).

1.1.2 The amendment has been made following the review of bird survey data, including most recent results, and in light of consultation comments made by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) on the mitigation proposed as part of Chapters 8 and 9 of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) (GE Consulting, 2025a; GE Consulting 2025b).

1.1.3 The purpose of this document is to enable consultees to develop an informed view of the likely significant effects of the proposed changes and to comment on particular aspects of interest. Feedback received throughout the consultation process will be incorporated by the project team to inform the ongoing development of the final design of the Proposed Development and the Environmental Statement (ES).

1.1.4 This document aims to assess the potential effects arising on ecological and ornithological receptors as a result of the DCO boundary and land use change.

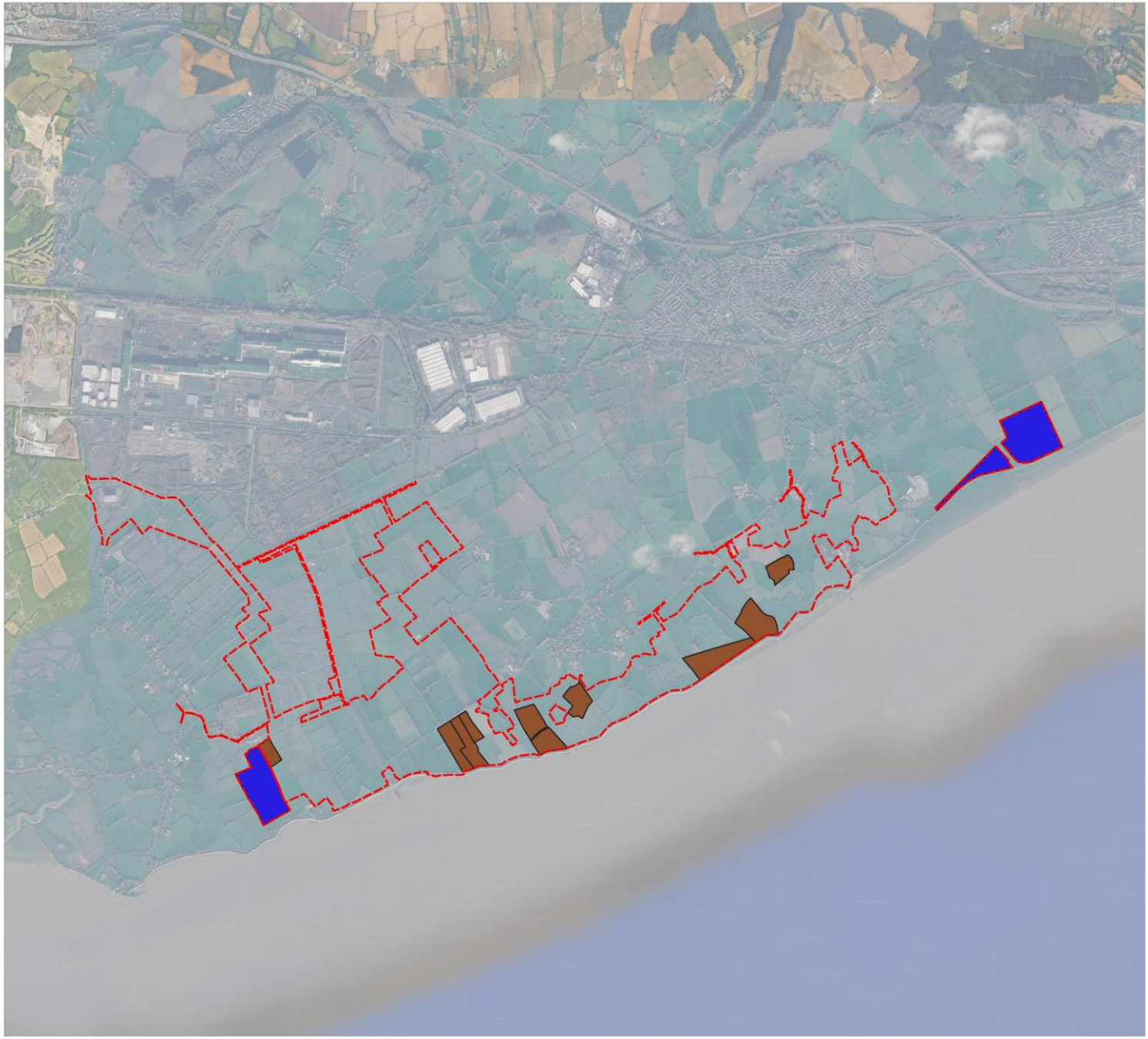
1.1.5 Effects are considered during construction, operation and decommissioning phases, covering the lifetime of the Proposed Development and are informed by the Technical Appendices submitted with the PEIR where relevant.

1.2 Proposed Changes

1.2.1 The DCO boundary is proposed to be amended to incorporate 45ha of additional land (**Figure 1-1**) to be used solely for the purpose of mitigating impacts of displacement of ground nesting and non-breeding birds associated with the Proposed Development.

1.2.2 The land will not be developed with no panels or other infrastructure proposed, but will be managed to provide enhanced breeding and foraging habitat for ground-nesting and non-breeding bird species. The Outline Bird Mitigation Area Management Plan (oBMAMP) (GE Consulting, 2026) submitted as part of the consultation provides further details, but briefly the following is proposed:

- Creation of a mosaic of grassland habitats known to be used by the target species, comprising open grassland with good visibility and shallow wet pools e.g. grips with some bare patches for foraging
- Removal/ reduction in height or extent of hedgerows (excluding outer boundary hedgerows) to reduce potential predator perches. An additional 2.06km (0.53ha) of hedgerow will be removed to provide open fields.
- On-going management in line with the other bird mitigation areas in the DCO boundary, focusing on creation a varied sward with nesting and foraging features for ground-nesting and non-breeding bird species; management as an extensively grazed pasture with low stocking rates with removal/ reduction in grazing during the key breeding period; and removal/ reduction in the suitability of potential predator perches.



Key:

- DCO Boundary
- Existing Bird Mitigation Land
- Additional Bird Mitigation Land and DCO area

0 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 m

Map data ©2015 Google

Figure 1-1
Bird Mitigation Areas and Additional DCO Boundary

Project:
Future Energy Llanwern

Client:
Future Energy Llanwern Limited

Date:
29/6/2026

Drawn:
CB

Ref:
0840-TN-1-1

Revision:
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2.0 Ecological Baseline

2.1.1 Full details of the ecological baseline data collected for this additional land will be presented in the Ecology and Ornithology Environment Statement chapters and associated technical appendices. A summary of the habitats present is below, and information on the baseline for important ecological features is presented in **Table 1-1**.

2.1.2 An extended Phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken on 26 May 2026 by Alexia Michaelides MBiol (Hons) ACIEEM and Meike Simms BSc (Hons) in accordance with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology (JNCC 2010). The survey was extended to highlight the potential presence of protected and notable species in accordance with CIEEM's Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2017). This involved a search to identify the presence or potential presence of protected notable species such as breeding birds, bats, badger, dormouse, reptiles and amphibians.

2.1.3 The baseline habitat present is improved/ semi-improved cattle and/ or sheep grazed grassland. Species present include perennial rye-grass, meadow grass species, Yorkshire-fog, cocks-foot, broad-leaved dock, spear thistle, creeping thistle, meadow foxtail, soft rush, meadow buttercup, white clover and red clover.

2.1.4 Species-poor intact and defunct hedgerows and lines of trees, some with ditches, divide the fields and form the boundaries. Species in hedgerows included a combination of elm, bramble, hawthorn, blackthorn, willow, ash, sycamore and dog rose. Occasional mature trees were present in the western parcel hedgerows. Ditch margins contained hemlock water-dropwort and common reed.

3.0 Impact Assessment

3.1.1 **Table 1-1** provides an assessment of potential impacts of the inclusion of the additional land for each ecological and ornithological feature taken forward for assessment in the PEIR, and any further mitigation required. Full details will be provided in the Ecology and Ornithology Environment Statement chapters and associated technical appendices.

Table 1-1: Assessment of Potential Impacts

Ecological/ Ornithological Feature	Description of potential impact	Additional Mitigation/ Enhancement Measure (where applicable)
Severn Estuary Ramsar (ornithological features) and SPA	There are not anticipated to be any additional direct or indirect significant adverse impacts. There are anticipated to be beneficial effects on operation from the increase in functional wintering/ foraging/ breeding habitat associated with optimal land use management and enhancement of the additional land, which is currently intensively grazed pasture.	N/A
Severn Estuary Ramsar/ SAC/ SSSI; River Usk SAC; Gwent Levels (covering Magor and Undy SSSI, Redwick and Llandevenny SSSI, Whitson SSSI and Nash and Goldcliff SSSI); Magor Marsh SSSI; Newport Wetlands SSSI/ NNR; Non-statutory sites	There are not anticipated to be any additional direct or indirect significant adverse impacts. The reduction in intensive agricultural use is expected to have a beneficial effect on polluted run-off entering these designations through hydrological links during operation.	N/A
Coastal Floodplain Grazing Marsh (CFGM)	There are not anticipated to be any additional direct or indirect significant adverse impacts. Due to the	N/A

Ecological/ Ornithological Feature	Description of potential impact	Additional Mitigation/ Enhancement Measure (where applicable)
	geographical location of these low-lying fields adjacent to the estuary with adjacent ditches, the grasslands all qualify as Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Habitat of Principal Importance (HPI) in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Section 7 Biodiversity Lists. This habitat will remain within the Site with a less intensive management regime which will benefit ditches associated with this habitat on operation. In addition, the management of grips/ natural channels to provide standing water and removal of hedgerows along ditches will enhance the habitat present.	
Wet reens/ ditches	There are not anticipated to be any additional direct or indirect significant adverse impacts. Where hedgerow removal (see below) is undertaken along ditches/ reens this will have a beneficial impact on ditches and reens through removal of shading, as in the rest of the Site, on operation.	N/A
Hedgerows	Hedgerows are Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Section 7 Biodiversity Lists. All hedgerows are considered 'Important' under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 due to the presence of Schedule 5 species dormouse. There will be an additional loss of	As per the mitigation presented as part of the PEIR, to compensate for losses, a suite of measures will be designed to enhance retained hedgerows across the site, including gapping up of defunct hedgerows with a diverse mixture of whips and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) to ensure ongoing management focuses on

Ecological/ Ornithological Feature	Description of potential impact	Additional Mitigation/ Enhancement Measure (where applicable)
	2.06km (0.53ha) of species-poor native hedgerow habitat to enhance the suitability of the land for ground nesting birds. The four internal hedgerows in the east of the Site will be managed to a lower height (1m rather than the current average of 2m).	restoring dense, continuous hedgerows. Impacts associated with losses of hedgerow in relation to their function of being a place of shelter for breeding, resting and feeding for wildlife will be compensated through the creation of scrub at multiple locations across the Site and is covered in more detail in the sections below on fauna.
Breeding/ non-breeding birds	The additional land has been included as mitigation for potential displacement of ground-nesting and non-breeding birds from the wider DCO boundary. The enhancement and ongoing optimal management of the land for these species will provide alternative nesting locations. There will be some loss of hedgerow habitat that could be used by hedge-nesting species, including direct impacts during construction.	As per the PEIR, measures will be taken during hedge clearance to safeguard nesting birds. Additional mixed scrub habitat suitable for hedge-nesting species will be re-created outside of the bird mitigation fields, and existing hedgerows will be enhanced through long-term optimal management to increase the potential to support nesting birds, as compensation for this loss.
Roosting bats	There are not anticipated to be any additional direct or indirect significant adverse impacts. No trees with bat roost potential were identified within the additional land and there are no structures that could be used as bat roosts present on the Site.	N/A
Commuting/ foraging bats	There are not anticipated to be any additional direct or indirect adverse impacts. It is considered that, as per the wider Site, bats may use	N/A

Ecological/ Ornithological Feature	Description of potential impact	Additional Mitigation/ Enhancement Measure (where applicable)
	hedgerows, tree lines and ditches as commuting and foraging corridors. Boundary hedgerow features and ditches will remain as navigational features and the less intensive land use and mosaic of habitat created is expected to be of benefit to commuting and foraging bats on operation.	
Amphibians (great crested newt)	There are not anticipated to be any additional direct or indirect significant adverse impacts. A pond is present immediately to the north of the western additional land parcels. This was previously surveyed in 2023 and found to be negative for great crested newt (GCN). No ponds are present within 500m of the eastern parcels, the closest being approximately 980m north-east. Therefore, no great crested newts are considered likely to be impacted during construction (hedgerow removal).	N/A
Dormice	Given the proximity of records in the wider Site and the link to suitable habitat, it is considered that dormouse are present within hedgerows within the additional land. An additional 2.06km (0.53ha) hedgerows will be removed during construction resulting in loss of habitat and potential killing/injury/disturbance if unmitigated.	As per the mitigation presented in the PEIR, a mitigation licence will be required with method statements followed during construction appropriate compensatory habitat to be provided. It is anticipated that this will be in the form of native mixed scrub planting in close proximity to existing records and suitable habitat.

Ecological/ Ornithological Feature	Description of potential impact	Additional Mitigation/ Enhancement Measure (where applicable)
Otter	There are not anticipated to be any additional direct or indirect significant adverse impacts. No holts/ resting places are present and hedgerow removal works will not be undertaken while otters are active.	N/A
Water vole	There are not anticipated to be any additional direct or indirect adverse impacts. No evidence of water vole use of the ditches was present during the walkover survey.	N/A
Aquatic invertebrates	There are not anticipated to be any additional direct or indirect significant adverse impacts. Removal of hedgerows along ditches will reduce shading and have a beneficial effect on invertebrates through increasing sunlight to ditches on operation.	N/A
Terrestrial invertebrates	There are not anticipated to be any additional direct or indirect significant adverse impacts. The land currently has limited value for terrestrial invertebrates due to the intensive grazing present. The creation of a mosaic of habitats through less intensive agricultural use and targeted habitat enhancement is anticipated to have a beneficial effect on terrestrial invertebrates on operation.	N/A
Reptiles	There are not anticipated to be any additional direct or indirect significant adverse impacts. The land is currently unsuitable for reptiles due to the intensive grazing present, but there is potential for beneficial effects on	N/A

Ecological/ Ornithological Feature	Description of potential impact	Additional Mitigation/ Enhancement Measure (where applicable)
	operation through the creation of a mosaic of habitats and less intensive agricultural use.	
European eel and fish	There are not anticipated to be any additional direct or indirect adverse impacts. There could be beneficial effects from reduction in intensive agriculture adjacent to ditches reducing polluted run-off, and hedgerow removal will provide more sunlight to ditches.	N/A
Badger	There are not anticipated to be any additional direct or indirect significant adverse impacts. No badger setts were noted in these areas.	N/A
Hedgehog	There are not anticipated to be any additional direct or indirect significant adverse impacts. The Site could be used by hedgehog for foraging and/or shelter in hedgerows, but any loss of hedgerow habitat is not considered significant.	N/A
Brown hare	There are not anticipated to be any additional direct or indirect significant adverse impacts. The Site could be used by brown hare, but there will be no loss of habitat for this species.	N/A

4.0 Summary

4.1.1 An additional 45ha of land is proposed to be added to the existing DCO boundary. This land is solely for the purpose of providing mitigation for displacement of ground nesting and non-breeding birds and will not be panelled or contain any other infrastructure associated with the Proposed Development.

4.1.2 The additional land is currently intensively sheep/ cattle grazed improved/ semi-improved fields bisected by species-poor hedgerows/ lines of trees and ditches.

4.1.3 The proposal for this land is enhancement to provide a more open space through the removal/ reduction in height of hedgerows, with retention and enhancement of ditches and existing in-field grips and channels, and enhancement to a mosaic of habitats comprising tussocky grassland, standing water and bare areas through ongoing optimal habitat management.

4.1.4 No additional significant adverse ecological or ornithological effects as a result of the inclusion that would require additional/ alternative mitigation to that already proposed in the PEIR are considered likely.

4.1.5 It is anticipated that the change in land use will be of benefit to designated sites within, adjacent or in close proximity to the Site, coastal floodplain grazing marsh priority habitat, reens/ditches, commuting/ foraging bats, aquatic invertebrates, terrestrial invertebrates, reptiles, European eel and fish, ground nesting birds and wintering birds.

4.1.6 The Ecology and Ornithology ES chapters and associated Technical Appendices will be updated to reflect the inclusion of this additional land with an updated assessment on the significance of any potential effects identified.

5.0 References

GE Consulting (2025a) Preliminary Environmental Information Report Chapter 8: Ecology

GE Consulting (2025b) Preliminary Environmental Information Report Chapter 9: Ornithology

JNCC (2010) *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey - a Technique for Environmental Audit.* JNCC, Peterborough, ISBN 0 86139 636 7.

CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition.* Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.