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LAPWING COMPENSATION FIELD MANAGEMENT PLAN

PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER: 232653

SPENCER'S WOOD SOLAR FARM

Prepared for: Greentech

Date: February 2026

Report Reference: JN00833/D03

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1. INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 This Management Plan has been prepared to discharge the requirements of the third schedule within the s106 agreement attached to planning permission 232653, which permits the construction of Spencer's Wood Solar Farm (the 'site') on Land North of Sheepbridge Court Farm, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield, RG7 1PT.
- 1.2 According to the Section 106 agreement, the skylark *Alauda arvensis* and lapwing *Vanellus Vanellus* compensation plan is defined as:

"a detailed plan showing the proposed location of the Compensation Fields, providing a baseline survey and detailing measures to be implemented on an annual basis to provide compensation for the loss of Skylark territory and Lapwing territory as a result of the Development and including such other details and information as the Council may reasonably specify".

Purpose of this Document

- 1.3 This Management Plan has been prepared to support the provision of compensatory habitat for breeding lapwing (a separate Management Plan has been prepared for skylark Ref: JN00833/D02). The purpose of this document is to demonstrate how the designated compensation field will be managed, enhanced, and monitored to provide appropriate compensation for the loss of lapwing breeding territories as a result of the proposed solar farm.
- 1.4 The plan has been prepared in accordance with relevant best practice conservation advice, including Natural England Technical Information Note *TIN090 - Illustrated guide to managing farmland for lapwings and RSPB's Lapwing conservation - Advice for farmers*.

Lapwing Ecology

- 1.5 Lapwings are birds of open, largely unwooded countryside, strongly associated with short-sward habitats such as lowland farmland, wet grassland, river floodplains, coastal grazing marsh and other where they can nest and forage effectively. Breeding density varies with habitat conditions and management, but wet grassland and semi-natural pasture often support higher densities than intensively managed arable fields, particularly when key factors such as water levels and vegetation structure favour foraging success and nest site availability (Ausden et al. 2002; Wilson et al. 2005).

- 1.6 The UK lapwing population experienced substantial declines during the late 20th century, with national surveys indicating long-term reductions in breeding numbers across England and Wales between the 1980s and early 2000s (Wilson et al. 2005; Milsom 2005). Intensification of agriculture, including drainage of wet grasslands, conversion to arable or heavily improved grassland, loss of mixed farming systems, and changes in cropping practices and grazing regimes, has reduced the extent and quality of suitable breeding habitat for lapwings (BTO research; Wilson et al. 2005; Sharpe 2006).
- 1.7 Population decline in lapwings has also been linked to changes in food availability, particularly soil and surface-dwelling invertebrates, which form a major component of chick diet during the breeding season (Johansson & Blomqvist 1996).
- 1.8 Research on farmland biodiversity indicates that intensive agricultural practices can reduce invertebrate abundance and diversity, particularly in regions dominated by cropland with high fertiliser and pesticide inputs, which in turn can negatively affect food availability during critical breeding periods.
- 1.9 During winter, adult lapwings forage predominantly on soil invertebrates and plant material across a range of grassland and stubble habitats.

Project Description

- 1.10 The project comprises the installation of a ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) farm along with ancillary infrastructure, substation, security fencing, landscaping provision, ecological enhancements and associated works.
- 1.11 A field has been designated for lapwing compensation and is denoted by the blue boundary on Figure 1, below.

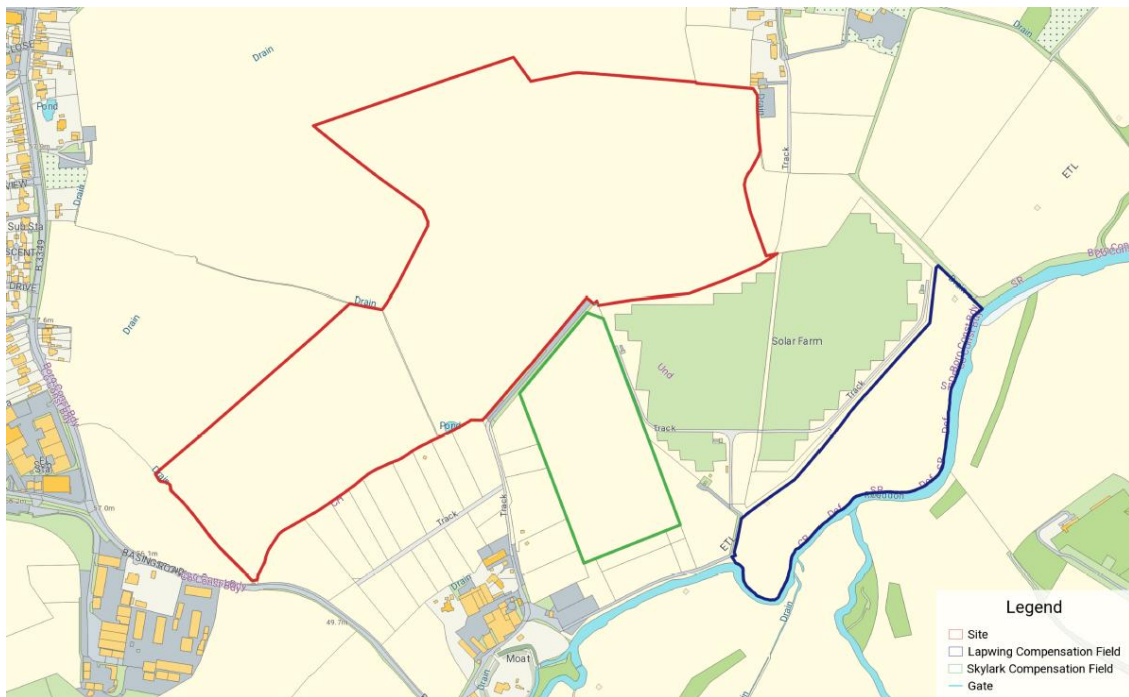


Figure 1 - Lapwing Compensation Field (Blue Boundary)

2. ECOLOGICAL BASELINE

2.3 The Lapwing Compensation Field was surveyed to UKHab standard on 03/02/2026. The habitats recorded are show on Figure 2 below.



Figure 2 – Habitats recorded within the Lapwing Mitigation Field

2.4 At the time of survey, the field comprised g3c – Other neutral grassland with secondary codes: 19 – Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, 32 – Scattered trees, 103 – Horse grazed, 502 – Seasonally wet, 504 – Waterlogged.

2.5 The lapwing compensation field is located adjacent to the River Loddon, which flows parallel to the eastern field boundary, and is subject to seasonal inundation and waterlogging, with areas of standing water evident at the time of survey. The river corridor supports a mature tree line comprising alder *Alnus glutinosa*, crack willow *Salix fragilis*, and ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, with locally tall emergent vegetation, including reed canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea* and common

reed *Phragmites australis*. A second watercourse is located along the northern field boundary, comprising a narrow, linear ditch with a shallow channel and a gravel bed substrate in places. Water levels were moderate at the time of visit with clear evidence of running water. The channel supports a sparse to locally frequent emergent and marginal flora, including water-parsnip *Berula erecta*, floating sweet-grass *Glyceria fluitans*, and brooklime *Veronica beccabunga*, with cleavers *Gallium aparine* frequent along the upper margins and adjacent bank vegetation. The banks of the ditch are generally low and the ditch is closely associated with the adjacent hedgerow (H4), which provides shade and inputs of leaf litter and woody debris.



River Loddon



Ditch along northern field boundary

- 2.6 The grassland sward is tussocky and grass-dominated, with Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* locally abundant, alongside cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, fescue species *Festuca spp.*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, and perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*. Scattered stands of reed canary-grass and common reed were recorded within areas of standing water.
- 2.7 Forbs were generally sparse; however, crane's-bill *Geranium spp.* was frequent throughout, with occasional creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, lesser celandine *Ficaria verna*, and common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris* also present.



2.8 Scattered young trees were also recorded within the field, particularly adjacent to hedgerow H2. A total of four juvenile individuals were noted, comprising silver birch *Betula pendula* and alder *Alnus glutinosa*. These trees are at an early stage of establishment and currently possess small canopies; however, if left unmanaged, they may contribute to increased habitat fragmentation and elevated predator perching opportunities, potentially reducing the suitability of the field for breeding lapwings.

Four hedgerows were recorded along the north/northwestern field boundaries. The hedgerows are summaries in Table 1 below.

Hedgerow Reference	UKHab	Secondary Code	Habitat Description
H1	h2a6 – Other native hedgerow	16 – Tall forbs	A newly planted hedgerow is present along the western boundary near the access gate. Species recorded include rose <i>Rosa canina</i> , hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> , and dogwood <i>Cornus sanguinea</i> . Early successional ground flora along the hedge base includes cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i>

			and common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i> . The feature is currently low and in its establishment phase.
H2	h2a5 – Species-rich native hedgerow		Along the northern boundary adjacent to the solar farm is a more established species-rich hedgerow comprising hawthorn, hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> , blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> , and elder <i>Sambucus nigra</i> , with occasional oak <i>Quercus robur</i> and holly <i>Ilex aquifolium</i> .
H3	h2a6 – Other native hedgerow		H3 comprises a newly planted extension of H2, again in early establishment. Recorded planted species include hawthorn, rose and dogwood.
H4	h2a6 – Other native hedgerow	11 – Hedgerow with trees	A mature native hedgerow runs parallel to, and is directly associated with, River Loddon along the eastern field boundary. This hedgerow is relatively species-poor along this section, with hawthorn forming the dominant woody component. Mature ash is present as hedgerow trees, one of which supports a bat box. The hedgerow has a generally dense structure with occasional gaps and variable height. Bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. is interspersed throughout.

3. HABITAT MANAGEMENT

- 3.3 It is proposed that the lapwing compensation field be managed on a long term basis to support lapwing breeding.

Wet Areas

- 3.4 The field already benefits from its floodplain setting adjacent to the River Loddon, with evident seasonal inundation. The resulting shallow standing water and soft ground conditions provide suitable foraging habitat for lapwing.

Grassland

- 3.5 The grassland will be managed through horse grazing to maintain a predominantly short sward, with vegetation under 5cm across at least 70% of the field. Scattered clumps of 10–15cm vegetation, with occasional taller tussocks, will be retained across approximately 20% of the sward to provide structural variation. To reduce the risk of nest trampling, stocking density will be reduced between mid-March and May.

Bare ground

- 3.6 Autumn grazing on soft ground will create hoof prints and patches of bare ground, which are important features for lapwing nesting and foraging in the following spring and summer. A minimum of 10% bare ground should be maintained. If grazing does not achieve this in any given year, bare ground will be created mechanically by scraping areas of approximately 20m² to a depth of around 20cm.

Reed/Rush Management

- 3.7 The field will be cut/topped to 5cm once a year in late summer after the chicks have fledged (August) to keep rush and reeds in check and at less than 20% cover.

General

- 3.8 There will be no fertiliser and pesticide use within the lapwing compensation area.
- 3.9 The field will be managed for 40 years as a long term secure resource for lapwing.

Management Schedule

- 3.10 The following management programme shows possible months in which activities will commence within the first planting period after construction.

Management Activity	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Grassland cutting/ topping for rush/reed management								✓	✓			
Grazing (* reduced density)	✓	✓	*✓	*✓	*✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lapwing scrape creation (if required)	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

4. LONG-TERM MONITORING

Habitat Surveys

- 4.1 Habitat surveys will be undertaken in Years 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40.
- 4.2 Surveys to be completed in June/July. Habitats will be mapped to UKHab standard and photographs taken as a record.
- 4.3 The survey will assess sward height (should be between no more than 5cm across 70% of the field), % bare ground cover (ideally around 10%) and % tussock cover (no more than 20%).
- 4.4 The habitat survey will also check for scrub and rush encroachment. Remedial action will be recommended if scrub encroachment exceeds 5% and rush encroachment exceeds 20%.
- 4.5 Further remedial measures will be recommended and implemented as necessary based on the results of the monitoring surveys. If remedial measures are required, additional monitoring visits may also be implemented.

Lapwing Surveys

- 4.6 It is proposed that monitoring surveys for lapwings be undertaken. The surveys will include walking transects and recording lapwing activity in accordance with British Trust for Ornithology territory mapping methodology. Three survey visits will be carried out between March and June.
- 4.7 Surveys will commence in Year 1. There after survey will be undertaken in Years 2, 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 ,35 and 40.
- 4.8 Remedial measures will be recommended and implemented as necessary based on the results of the monitoring surveys. If remedial measures are required, additional monitoring visits may also be implemented.