

## **The Sizewell C Project**

## 9.22 Bird Survey Report - Sizewell Link Road

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Planning Act 2008 Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009





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Figure 6: Schedule 1 and Species of Local & National Importance Recorded in March 2021 Surveys

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## 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Receptor Status 2020/2021 Summary Overview
- 1.1.1 This report presents the findings of the 2020/2021 wintering bird surveys undertaken at Sizewell link road, part of the associated development sites of the proposed Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station project (hereafter referred to as 'Sizewell C project').
- 1.1.2 The surveys are part of on-going ecological surveys of Sizewell link road, following previous extended Phase 1 habitat surveys undertaken on the site [APP-461].
- 1.1.3 The site is approximately 6km in length, and is located approximately 2.7km north west of the existing Sizewell C power Station. Habitats across the site comprise arable fields bordered by hedgerows and are typical of the surrounding intensively cultivated arable landscape. The site location is presented in **Figure 1** in **Appendix A**.
- 1.1.4 The 2020/2021 wintering bird surveys identify that the habitats within the Sizewell link road survey area supported an assemblage of bird species including six Schedule 1 species, 15 red listed species, 13 amber listed species and 31 species of no conservation concern.
- 1.1.5 The main habitats within the survey area comprise arable fields, hedgerows along field boundaries and sparsely distributed areas of broadleaved woodland.

## 2 OVERVIEW

- 2.1 The Aims of the Surveys
- 2.1.1 The aim of the surveys was to determine the wintering bird assemblages and to gather spatial data regarding numbers and distribution of birds within the Sizewell link road area of the Sizewell C project.

### 2.2 Wintering Bird Surveys 2020/2021

2.2.1 The surveys took place between 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and 16th March 2021, following a designated survey transect to record the wintering bird assemblage, numbers and spatial distribution. The surveys were undertaken within the Sizewell link road area.

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- 2.2.2 The 2020/2021 surveys identified that the proposed Sizewell link road site supported a small number of waterfowl species, as well as a range of other bird species of conservation concern commonly associated with the arable habitats identified within the survey area.
- 2.2.3 The distribution of birds recorded was evenly spread throughout the survey area, although the main areas supporting passerine wintering birds were field boundary hedgerows. Gulls were frequently observed feeding and loafing within the arable fields. Waders and waterfowl were primarily observed commuting over the survey area.
- 3 METHODS
- 3.1 Desk Study
- 3.1.1 Desk study information is fully detailed within the Volume 6, Chapter 7 and Volume 6, Appendix 7A of the Environmental Statement (ES) [APP-461 and <u>APP-462</u>]
- 3.2 Field Surveys
- 3.2.1 Transect surveys for wintering bird survey visits were undertaken monthly from November 2020 to March 2021 (inclusive), to record species observed or heard within the Sizewell link road survey area and adjacent habitats. Surveyors walked a predefined transect route once per month. The survey area and transect route are detailed on **Figure 1** in **Appendix A**.
- 3.2.2 The surveys were undertaken by two teams of two surveyors,

, all of whom are competent ornithologists.

- 3.2.3 The surveyors were equipped with binoculars and telescopes to aid identification. Observations were entered onto iPads, with the focus of the surveys being wintering birds. Sightings of all species of importance were recorded and mapped, using standard British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) species codes. Species of importance included:
  - Species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) (Ref. 1).
  - Red and Amber listed Birds of Conservation Concern (BOCC) (Ref. 2).
  - Species of Principal Importance listed under Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006 (Ref. 3).

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- 3.2.4 Species of no special conservation concern/ green listed were also recorded but were not mapped.
- 3.2.5 See **Table 1** in **Appendix B** for the full survey details, including surveys dates and times, surveyors and weather conditions.

### 3.3 Limitations

3.3.1 Access was not permitted to two parcels of land within the survey area during the surveys (central grid references TM 43018 66253 and TM 40760 67757), however surveyors were able to walk along adjacent public footpaths. Any birds observed or heard calling within these areas were recorded, and as such this was not considered a major constraint to data collection.

## 4 RESULTS

- 4.1.1 During the 2020/2021 surveys, 61 bird species were recorded. Of the species recorded, six were listed as Schedule 1 (Ref. 1), 15 were included of the BoCC (Ref. 2) red list and 13 on the amber list. Additionally, 12 species were listed under S41 of the NERC Act (Ref. 3) and 31 species of no conservation concern were recorded. Birds may fall into multiple categories of the above, and as such do not contribute to the total count of species recorded.
- 4.1.2 The results of the surveys are detailed in Table 4.1 below, **Table 2** in **Appendix C** and in **Figure 2** to **Figure 6** in **Appendix A**.

| Common<br>Name       | Scientific Name               | Conser<br>-vation<br>Status | Sch<br>1     | S41<br>NERC  | Nov<br>2020 | Dec<br>2020 | Jan<br>2021 | Feb<br>2021 | Mar<br>2021 |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Black-headed<br>gull | Chroicocephalus<br>ridibundus | Amber                       |              |              | 0           | 67          | 4           | 3           | 6           |
| Brambling            | Fringilla<br>montifringilla   | Green                       | $\checkmark$ |              | 1           | 0           | 18          | 0           | 0           |
| Bullfinch            | Pyrrhula pyrrhula             | Amber                       |              | $\checkmark$ | 5           | 4           | 0           | 6           | 2           |
| Common gull          | Larus canus                   | Amber                       |              |              | 140         | 172         | 70          | 3           | 0           |
| Dunnock              | Prunella<br>modularis         | Amber                       |              | $\checkmark$ | 10          | 9           | 7           | 11          | 13          |
| Fieldfare            | Turdus pilaris                | Red                         | $\checkmark$ |              | 3           | 126         | 26          | 57          | 28          |

#### Table 4.1: Notable species recorded at Sizewell link road.

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| Common<br>Name        | Scientific Name               | Conser<br>-vation<br>Status | Sch<br>1     | S41<br>NERC  | Nov<br>2020 | Dec<br>2020 | Jan<br>2021 | Feb<br>2021 | Mar<br>2021 |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Greylag goose         | Anser anser                   | Amber                       |              |              | 0           | 0           | 104         | 0           | 0           |
| Grey wagtail          | Motacilla cinerea             | Red                         |              |              | 1           | 0           | 0           | 0           | 0           |
| Herring gull          | Larus argentatus              | Red                         |              | $\checkmark$ | 1           | 2           | 9           | 0           | 1           |
| House sparrow         | Passer<br>domesticus          | Red                         |              | $\checkmark$ | 4           | 24          | 0           | 25          | 0           |
| Kestrel               | Falco<br>tinnunculus          | Amber                       |              |              | 1           | 1           | 2           | 1           | 0           |
| Lapwing               | Vanellus<br>vanellus          | Red                         |              | $\checkmark$ | 2           | 0           | 140         | 22          | 0           |
| Lesser redpoll        | Carduelis<br>cabaret          | Red                         |              | $\checkmark$ | 1           | 0           | 0           | 0           | 0           |
| Linnet                | Linaria<br>cannabina          | Red                         |              | $\checkmark$ | 160         | 32          | 110         | 27          | 11          |
| Mallard               | Anas<br>platyrhynchos         | Amber                       |              |              | 0           | 0           | 4           | 5           | 0           |
| Marsh harrier         | Circus<br>aeruginosus         | Amber                       | $\checkmark$ |              | 2           | 0           | 0           | 0           | 0           |
| Marsh Tit             | Poecile palustris             | Red                         |              | $\checkmark$ | 0           | 0           | 0           | 1           | 0           |
| Meadow pipit          | Anthus pratensis              | Amber                       |              |              | 35          | 10          | 2           | 12          | 0           |
| Mediterranean<br>gull | lchthyaetus<br>melanocephalus | Amber                       | $\checkmark$ |              | 0           | 0           | 0           | 0           | 2           |
| Mistle thrush         | Turdus<br>viscivorus          | Red                         |              |              | 1           | 2           | 2           | 0           | 0           |
| Red kite              | Milvus milvus                 | Green                       | $\checkmark$ |              | 0           | 0           | 0           | 0           | 1           |
| Redwing               | Turdus iliacus                | Red                         | $\checkmark$ |              | 2           | 82          | 9           | 11          | 26          |
| Reed bunting          | Emberiza<br>schoeniclus       | Amber                       |              | $\checkmark$ | 1           | 1           | 0           | 1           | 1           |
| Skylark               | Alauda arvensis               | Red                         |              |              | 101         | 161         | 137         | 85          | 26          |



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| Common<br>Name | Scientific Name        | Conser<br>-vation<br>Status | Sch<br>1 | S41<br>NERC  | Nov<br>2020 | Dec<br>2020 | Jan<br>2021 | Feb<br>2021 | Mar<br>2021 |
|----------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Snipe          | Gallinago<br>gallinago | Amber                       |          |              | 2           | 1           | 0           | 0           | 0           |
| Song thrush    | Turdus<br>philomelos   | Red                         |          | $\checkmark$ | 1           | 9           | 2           | 8           | 4           |
| Starling       | Sturnus vulgaris       | Red                         |          | $\checkmark$ | 8           | 0           | 17          | 25          | 62          |
| Stock dove     | Columba oenas          | Amber                       |          |              | 3           | 0           | 12          | 6           | 5           |
| Woodcock       | Scolopax<br>rusticola  | Red                         |          |              | 0           | 0           | 0           | 7           | 0           |
| Yellowhammer   | Emberiza<br>citrinella | Red                         |          | $\checkmark$ | 40          | 16          | 7           | 52          | 17          |

- 4.1.3 The distribution of wintering birds was fairly evenly spread throughout the survey area. Waterfowl and waders were observed primarily commuting over the survey area.
- 4.1.4 Gulls were most frequently observed foraging and loafing within the arable fields.
- 4.1.5 Lapwings and greylag geese were observed commuting above the survey area only.
- 4.1.6 Passerine species were primarily observed foraging, calling and singing from within field boundary hedgerows and sparse areas of woodland, however a large number of skylark were consistently observed foraging in a stubble field at the extreme south-east of the survey area (central grid reference TM 44169 64944).
- 4.1.7 Two marsh harriers were observed during the November survey, one of which was hunting, with the other commuting in an easterly direction above the survey area. The location of these recordings is presented in **Figure 2** in **Appendix A**.
- 4.1.8 One dead barn owl (*Tyto alba*) was found adjacent north of Town Farm Lane (grid reference TM 38883 67035).
- 4.1.9 31 bird species of no special conservation value were recorded over the course of the surveys, these results have been presented below in Appendix C.

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## 5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1.1 The Sizewell link road survey area supports a range of wintering bird species. The majority of birds recorded within the survey area were passerines using hedgerows and woodland areas, however large numbers of skylark were observed foraging within a stubble field to the south-east of the survey area. Gulls used the survey area primarily for foraging and loafing within arable fields, and waterfowl were observed commuting above the survey area.
- 5.1.2 Overall, six Schedule 1 species, 15 red listed species and 13 amber listed species were identified over the course of the surveys, with 31 species of no special conservation value recorded (as presented in **Appendix C**).
- 5.1.3 The results of the 2020/2021 surveys are largely consistent with those identified in the desk study [<u>APP-461</u> and <u>APP-462</u>] results and do not affect the conclusions of the Environment Statement..



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## REFERENCES

- 1. Wildlife and Countryside Act, as amended. 1981. (Online) Available from: <u>http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/contents</u> (Accessed 22 March 2021).
- 2. Eaton, M.A., Aebisher, N., Brown, A., Hearn, R., Lock, L., Musgrove, A., Noble, D., Stroud, D., and Gregory, R. 2015. BoCC 4: Population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. British birds 108:708-746.
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act. 2006. Section 41: Species of Principal Importance in England. (Online) Available from: <u>http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/section/41</u> (Accessed 22 March 2021).

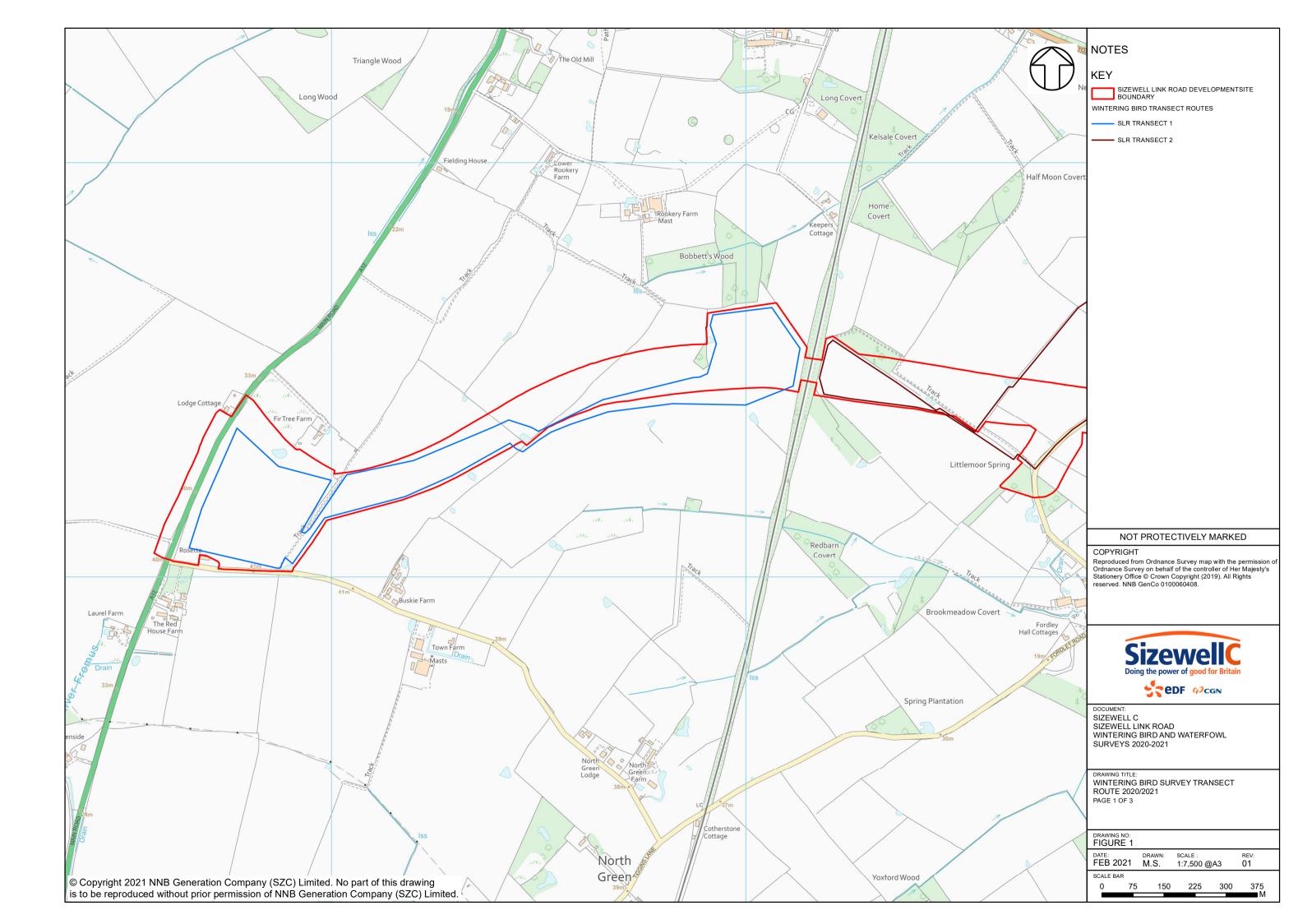


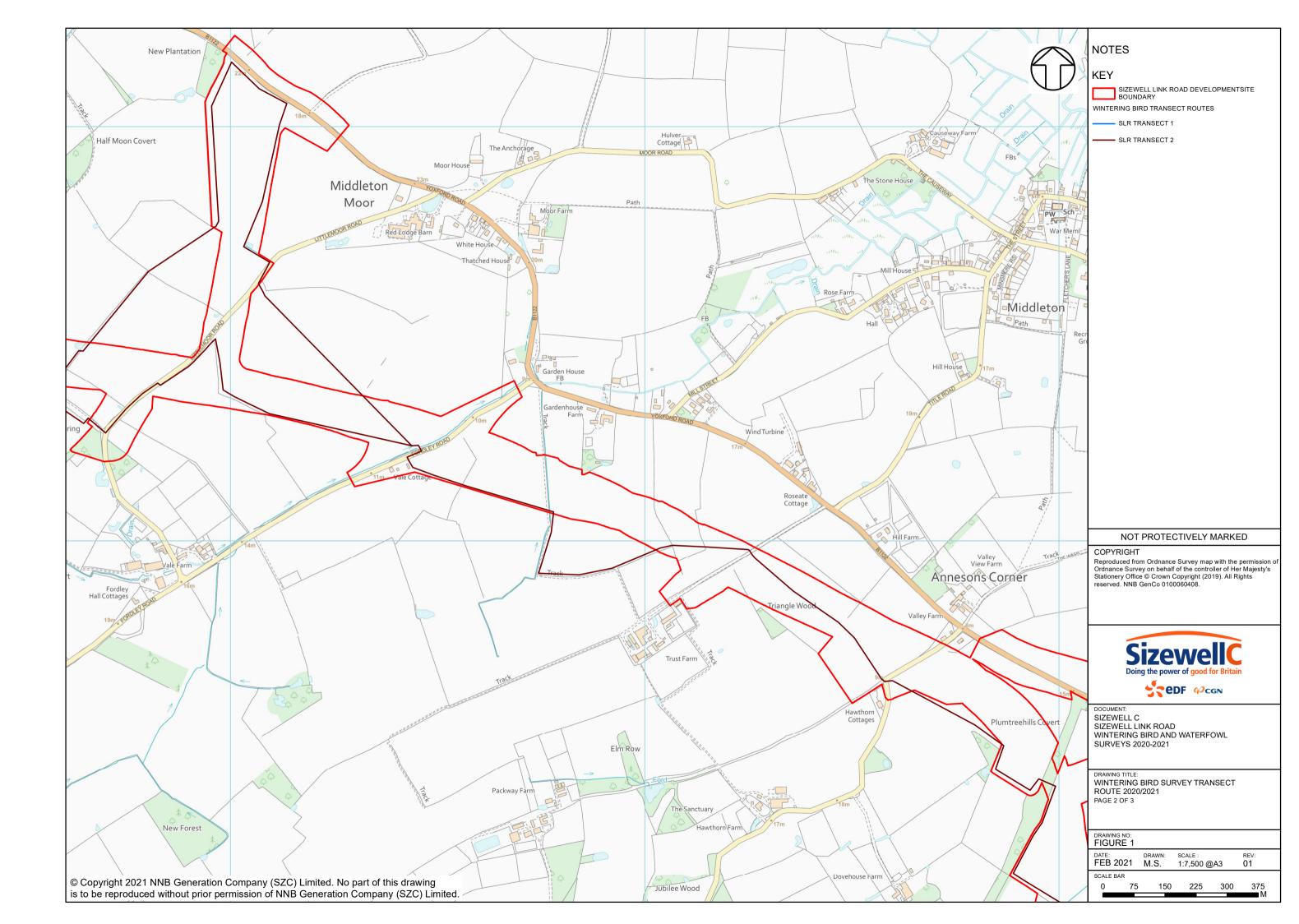
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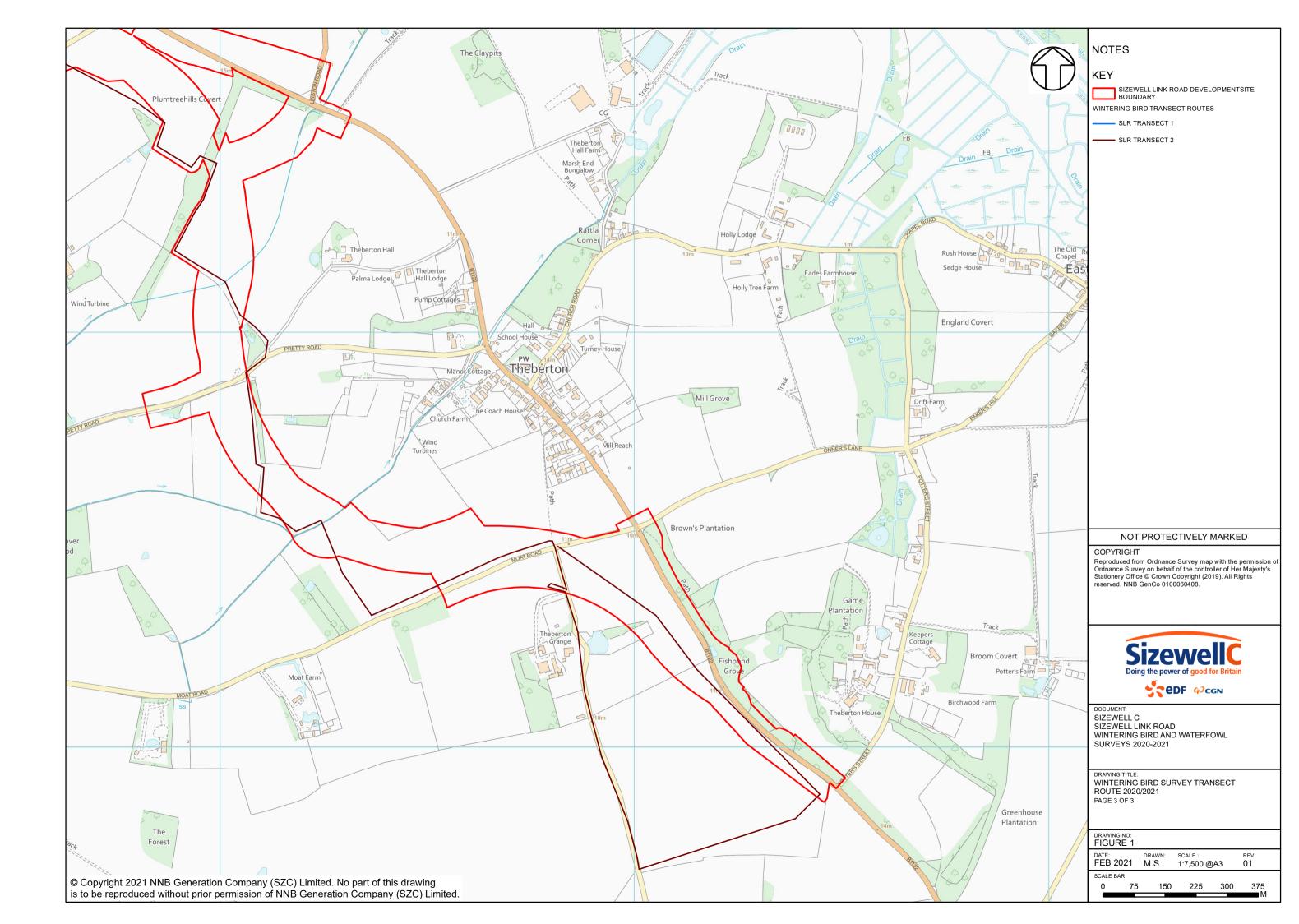
## **APPENDIX A: DRAWINGS**

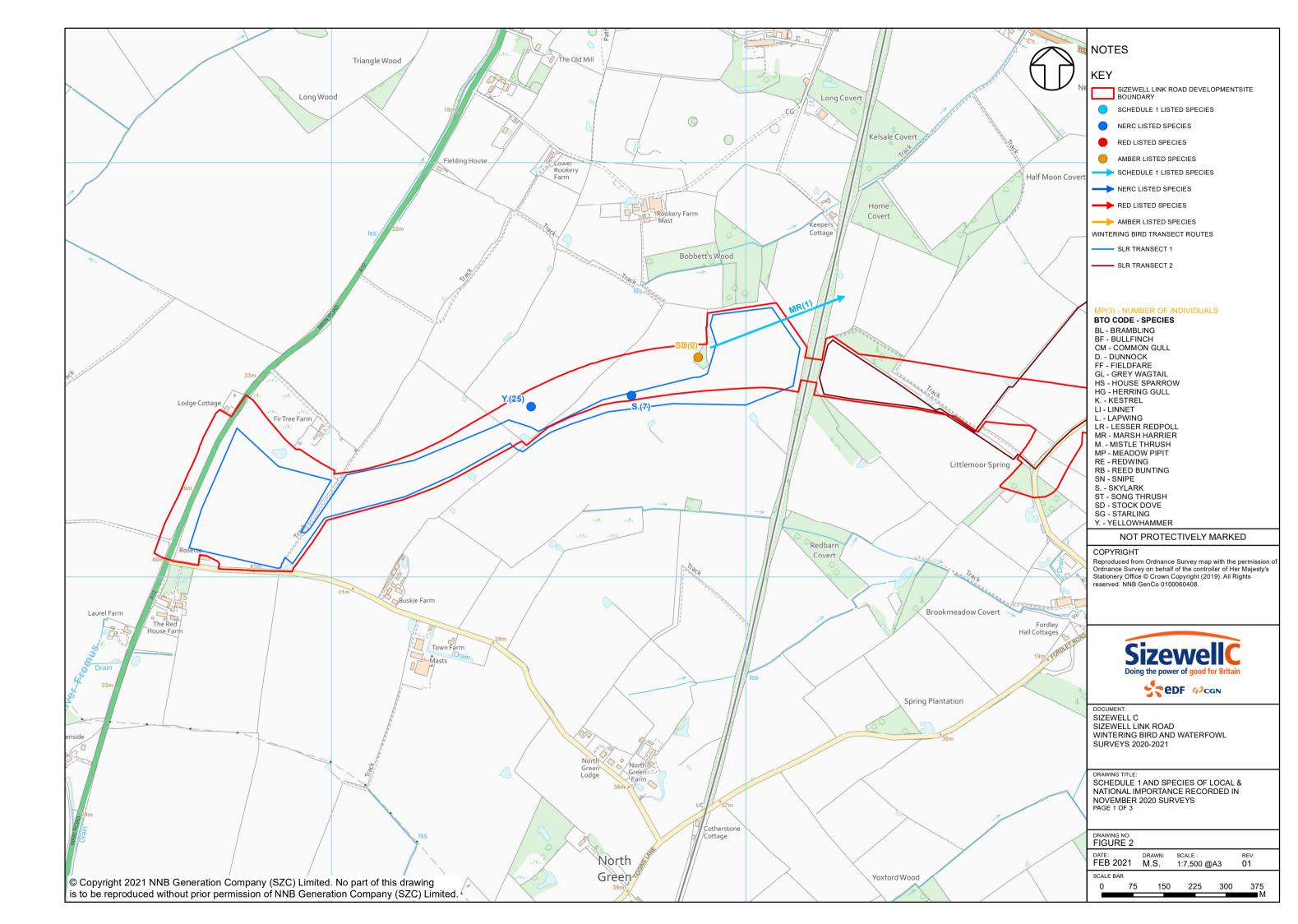
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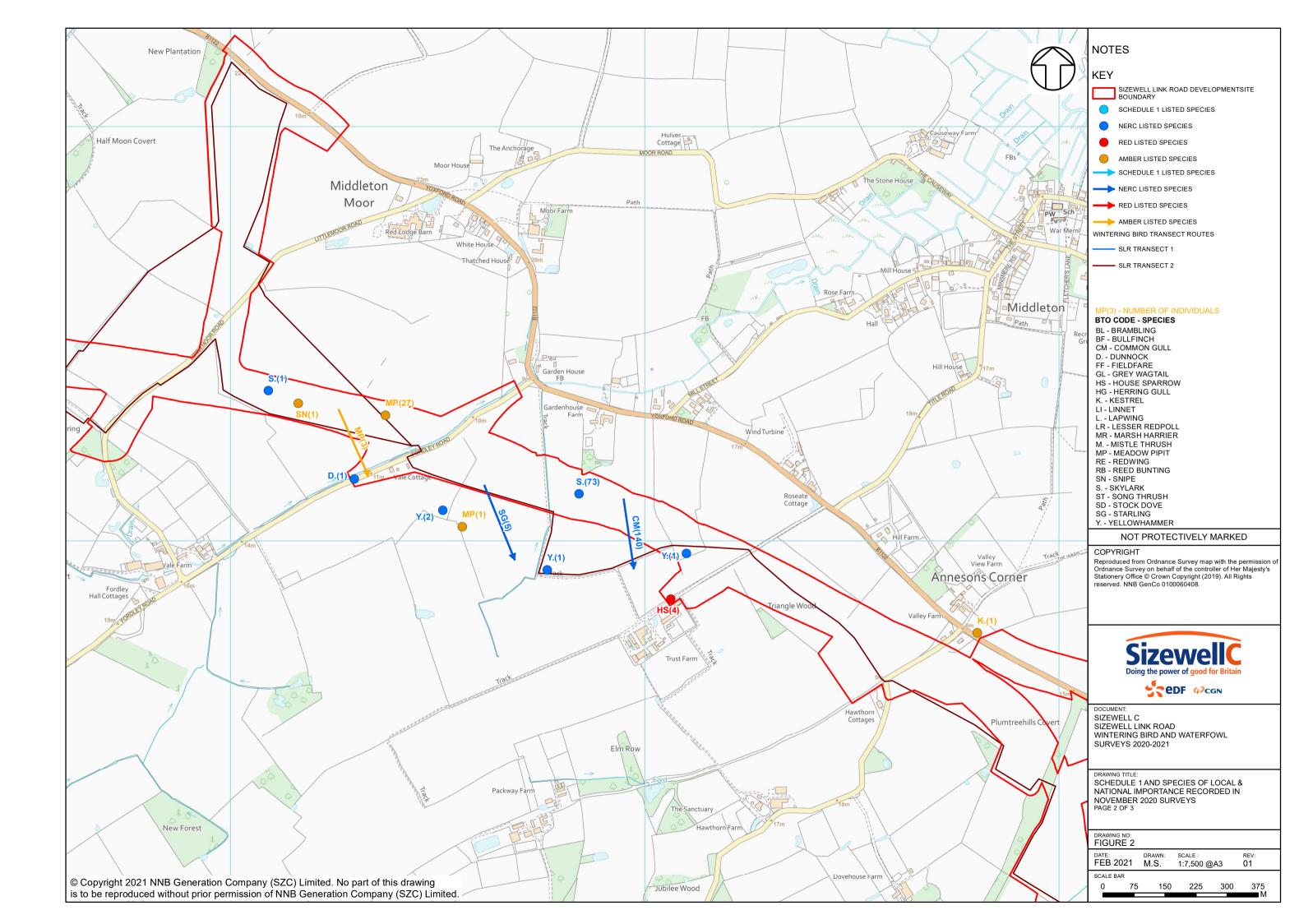
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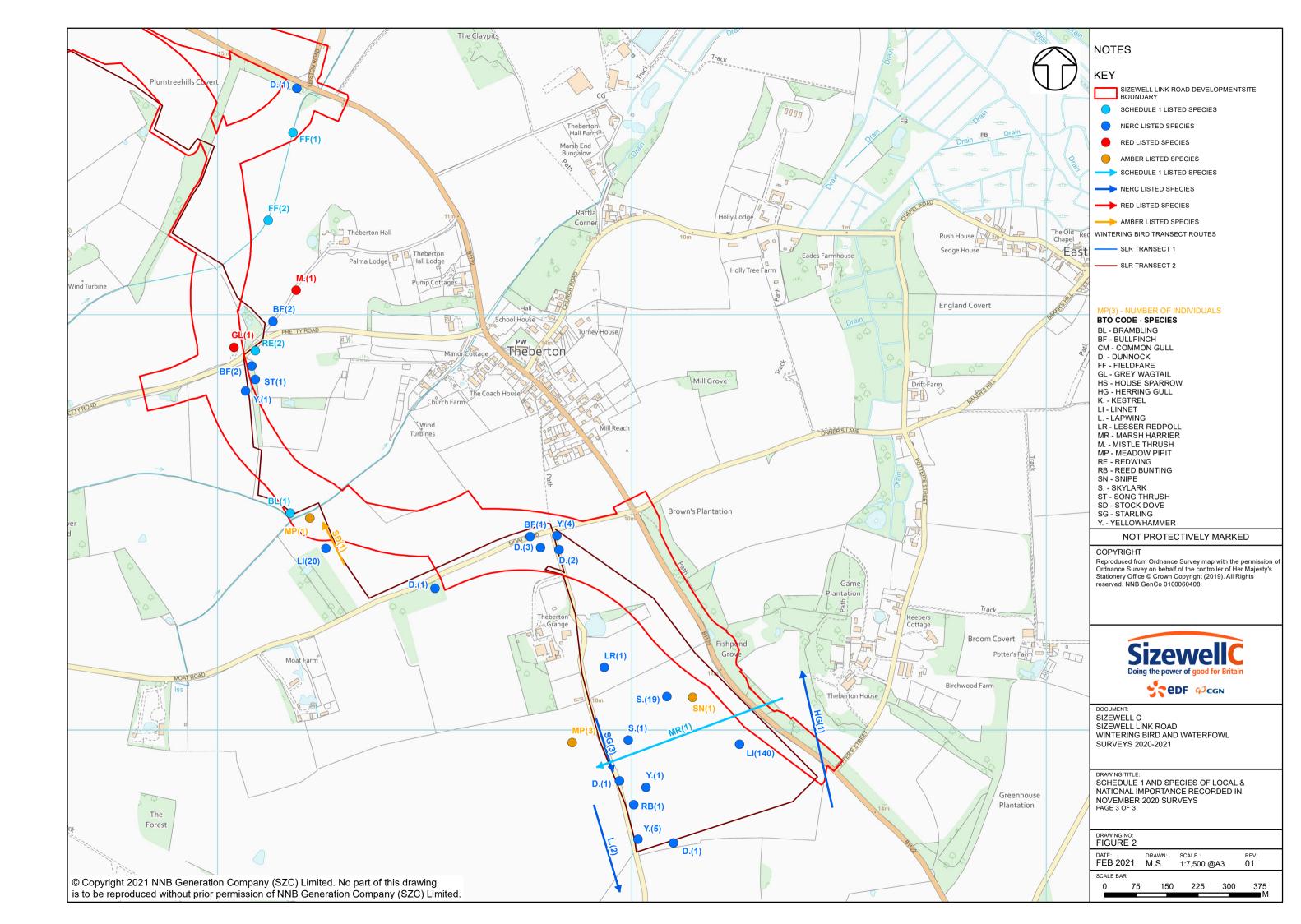


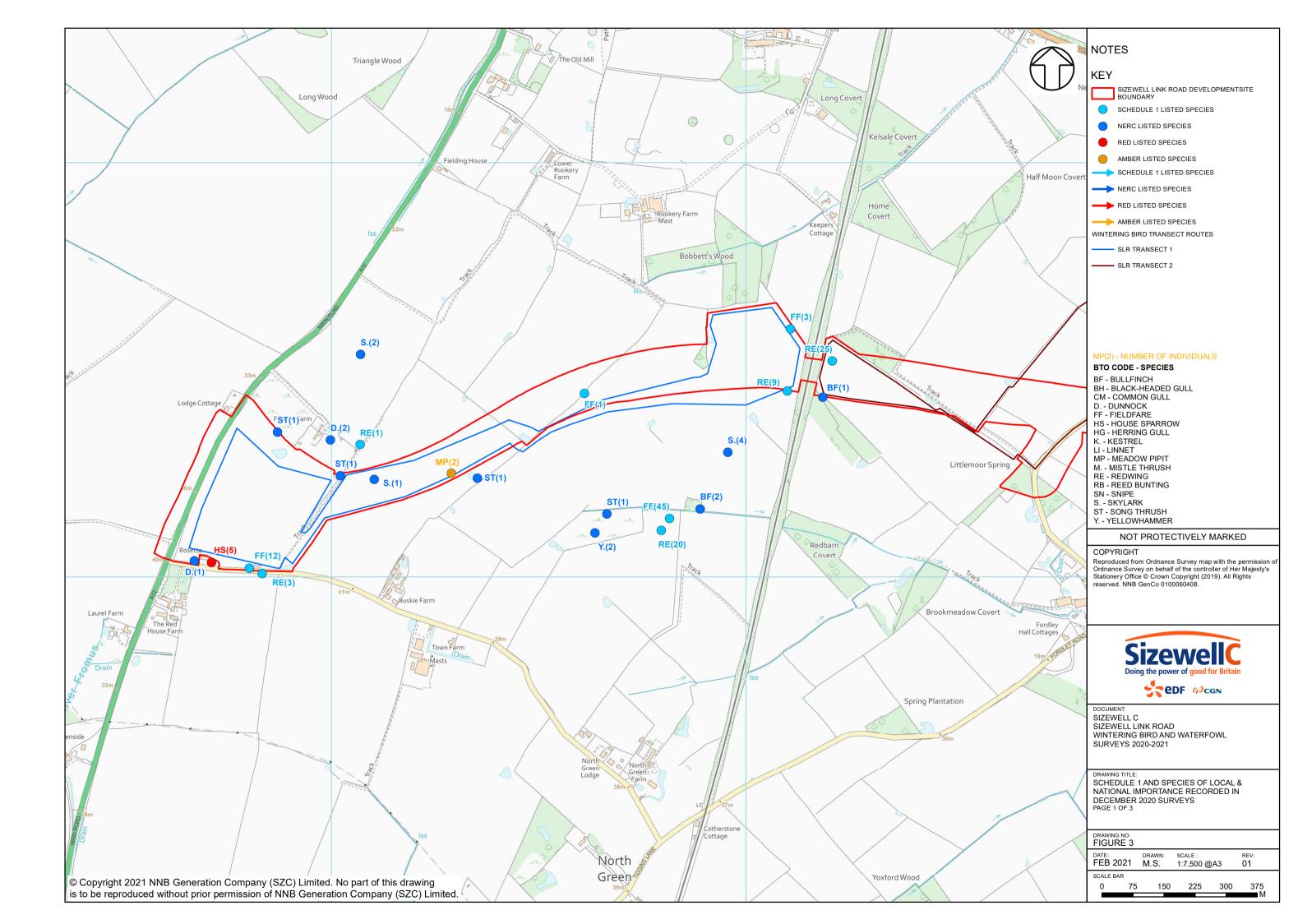


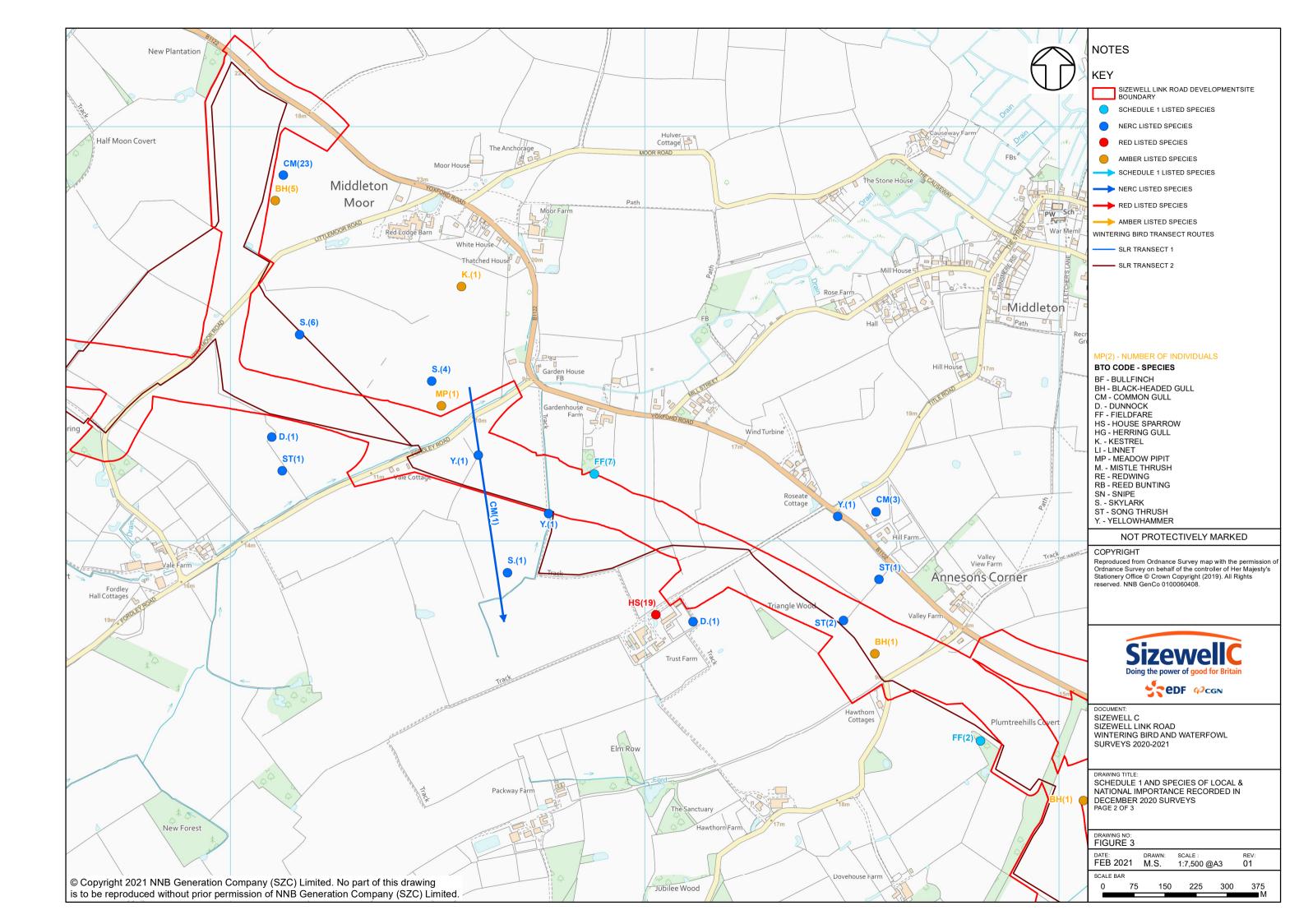


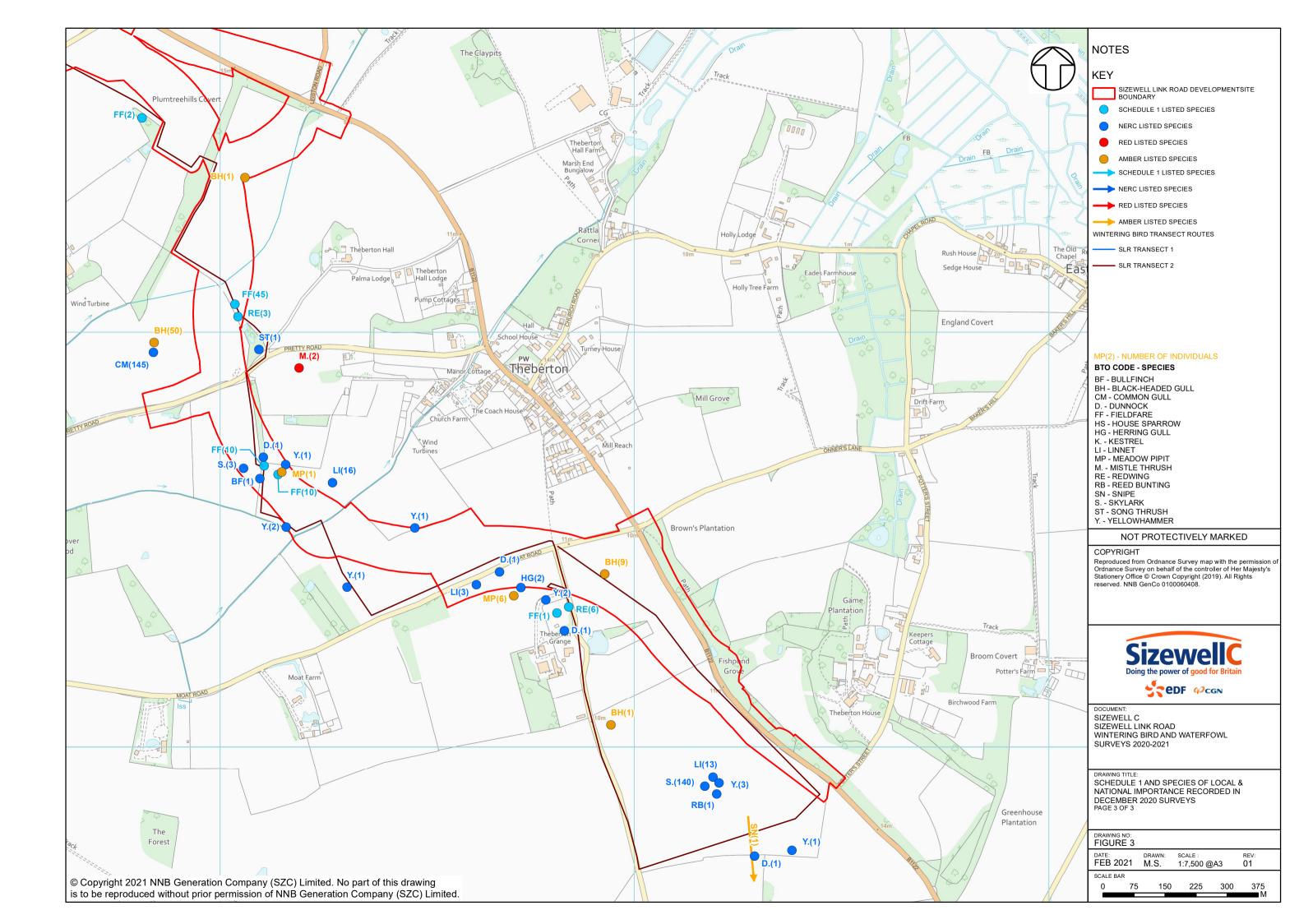


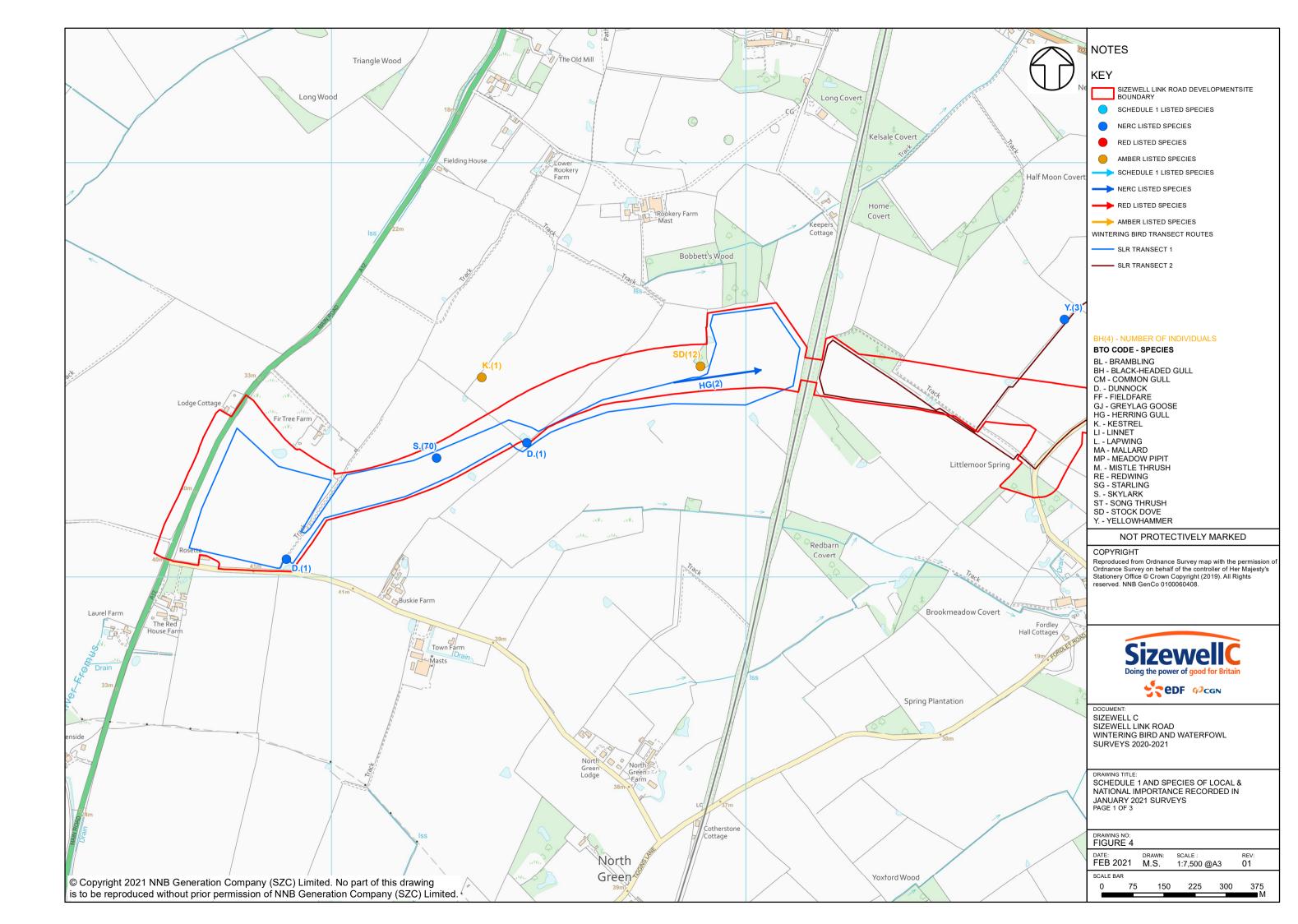


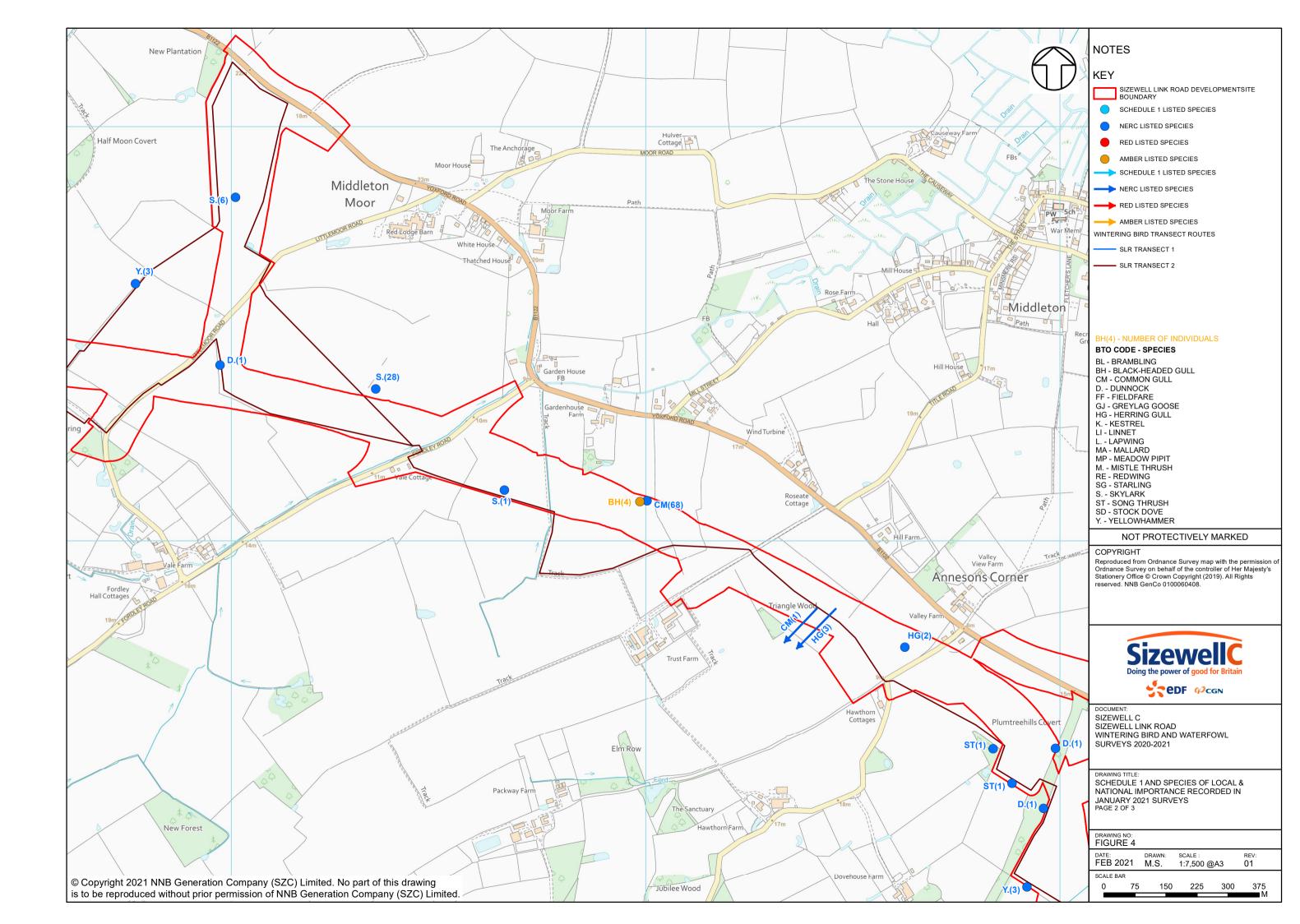


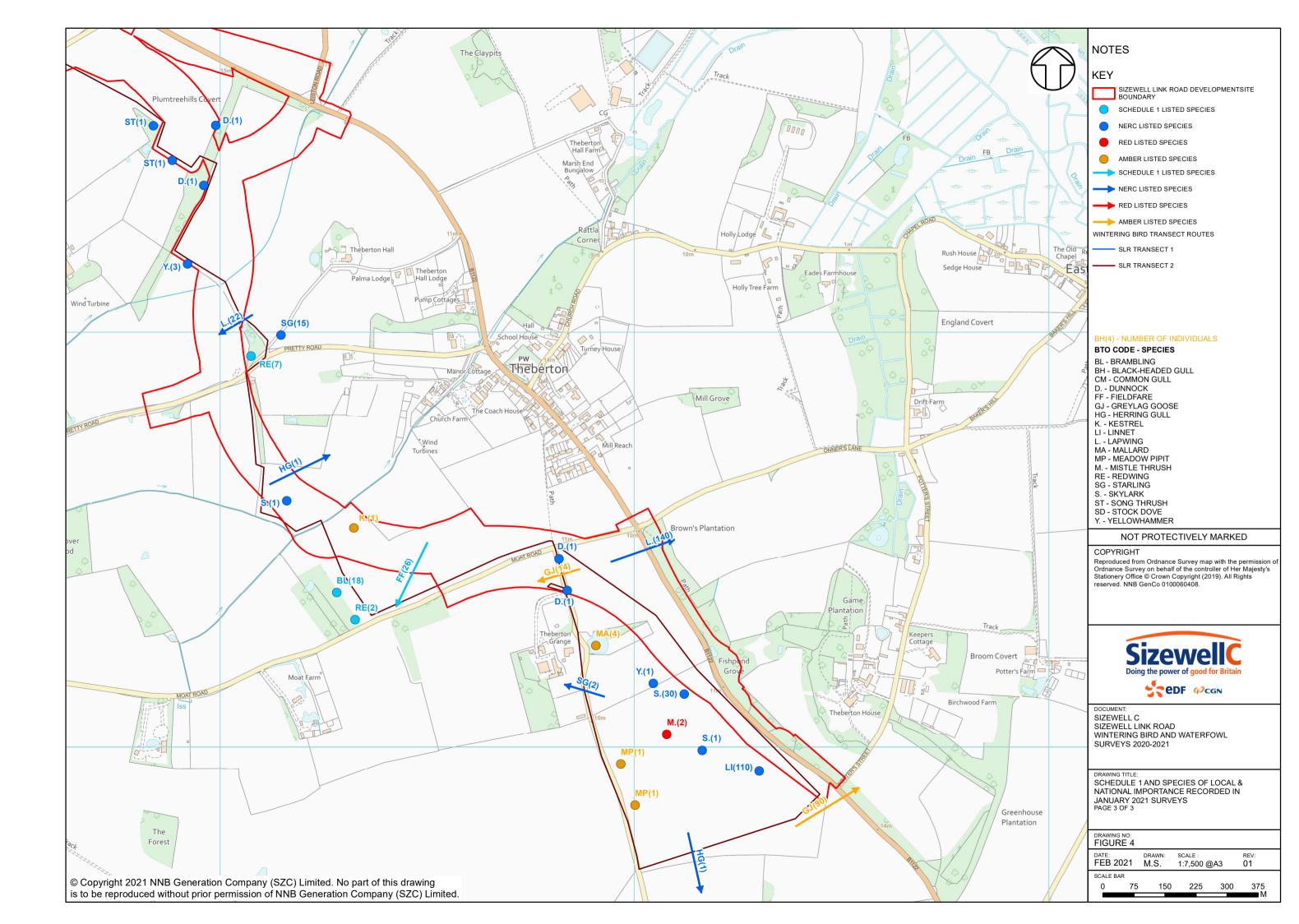


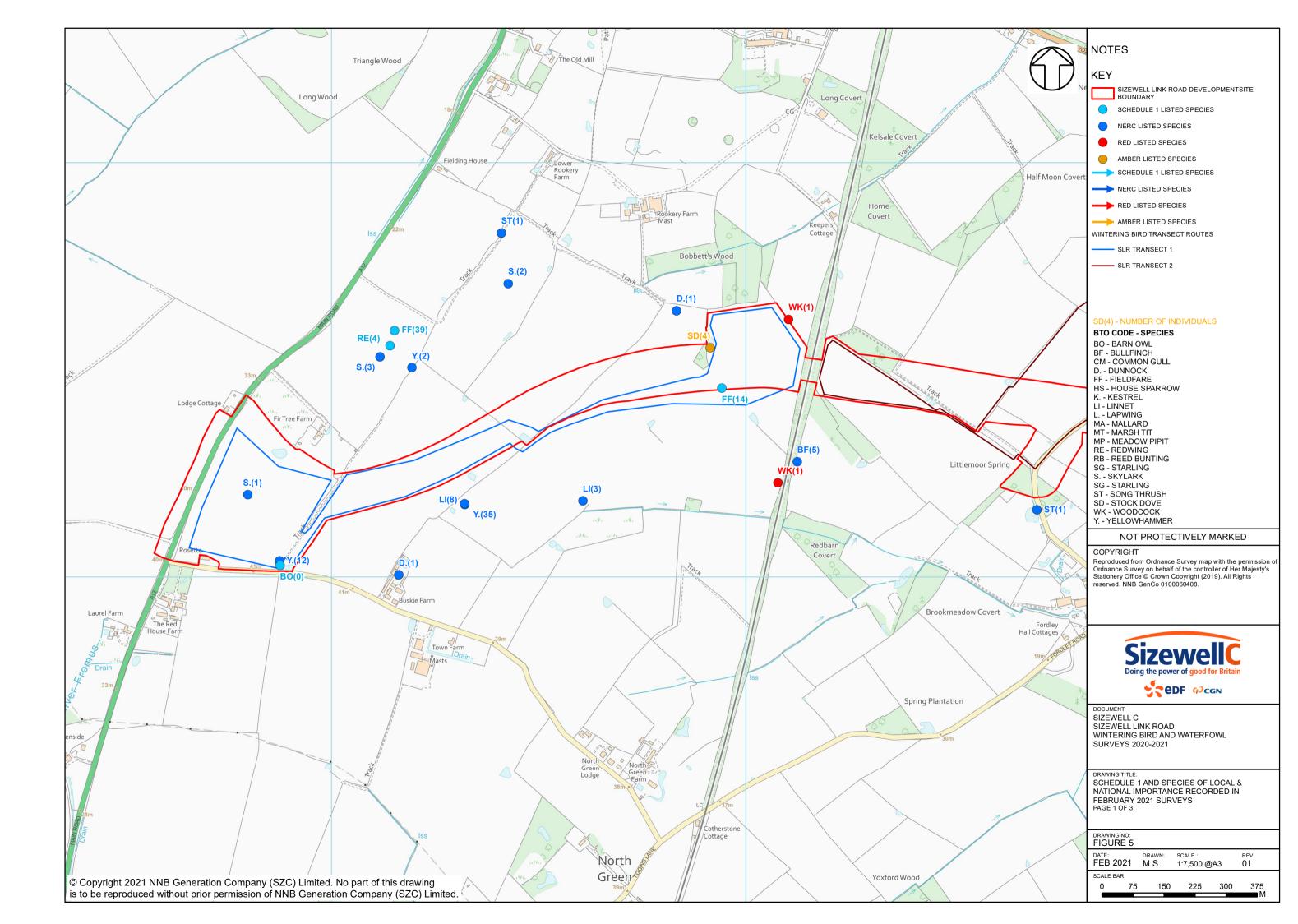


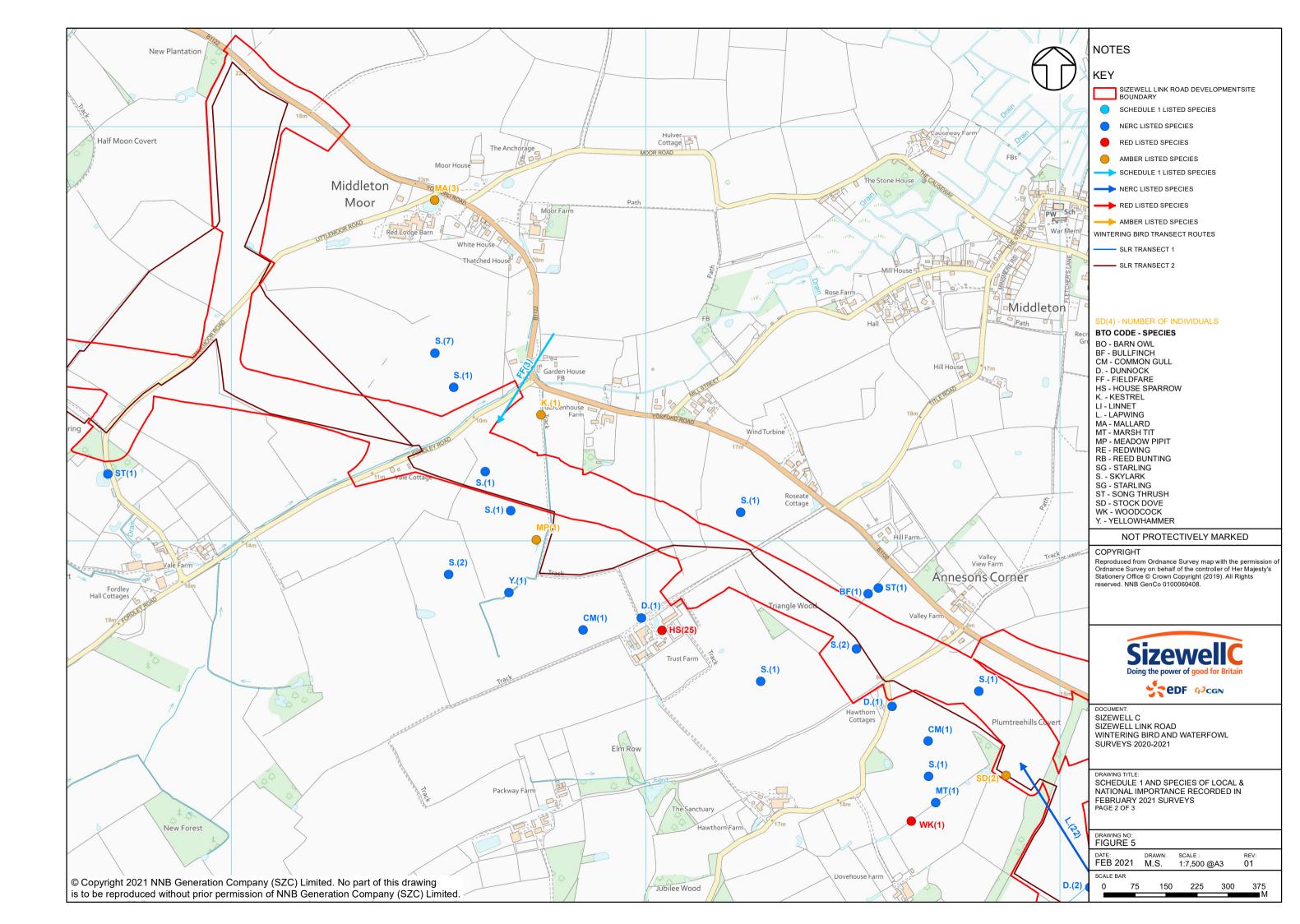


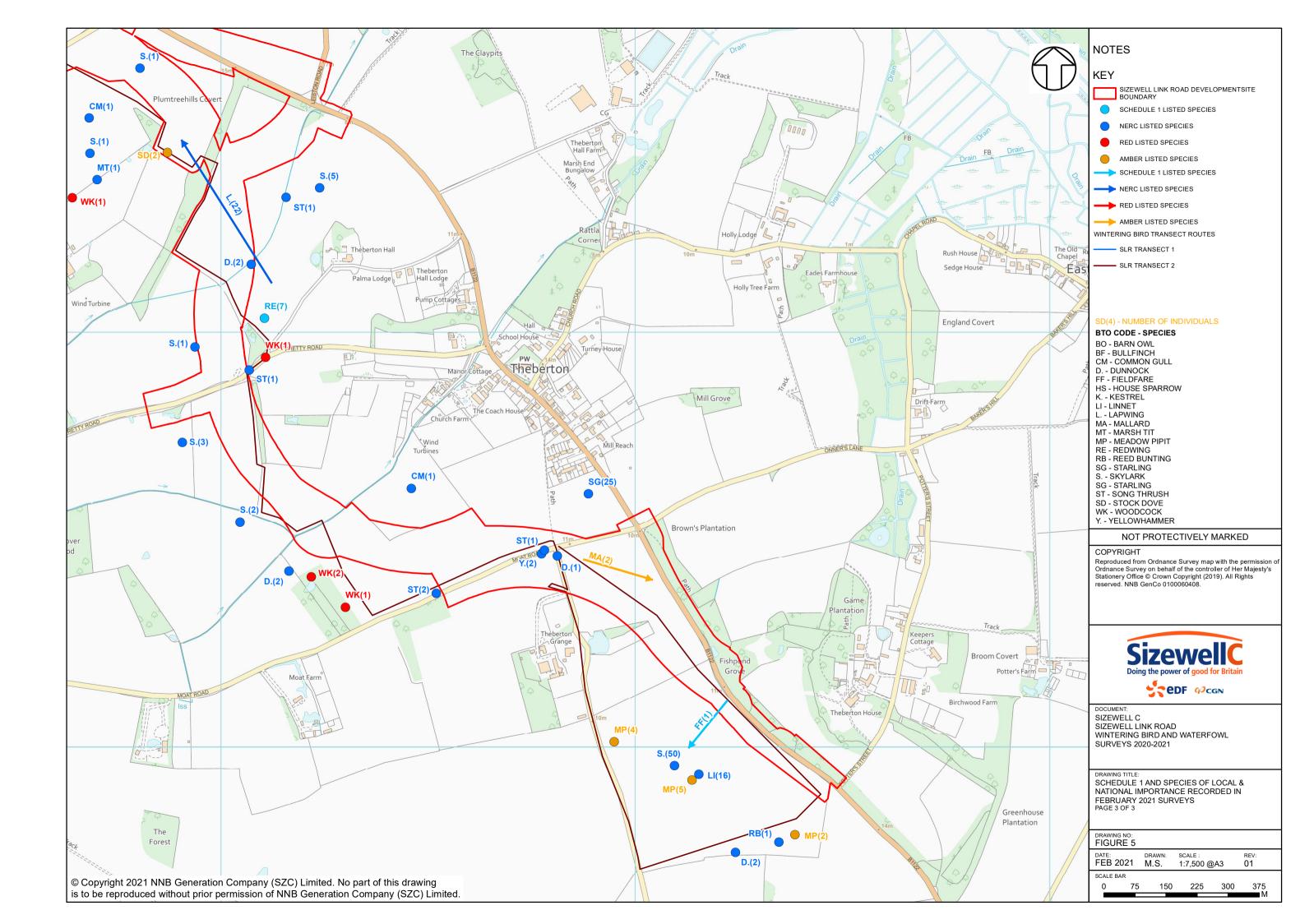


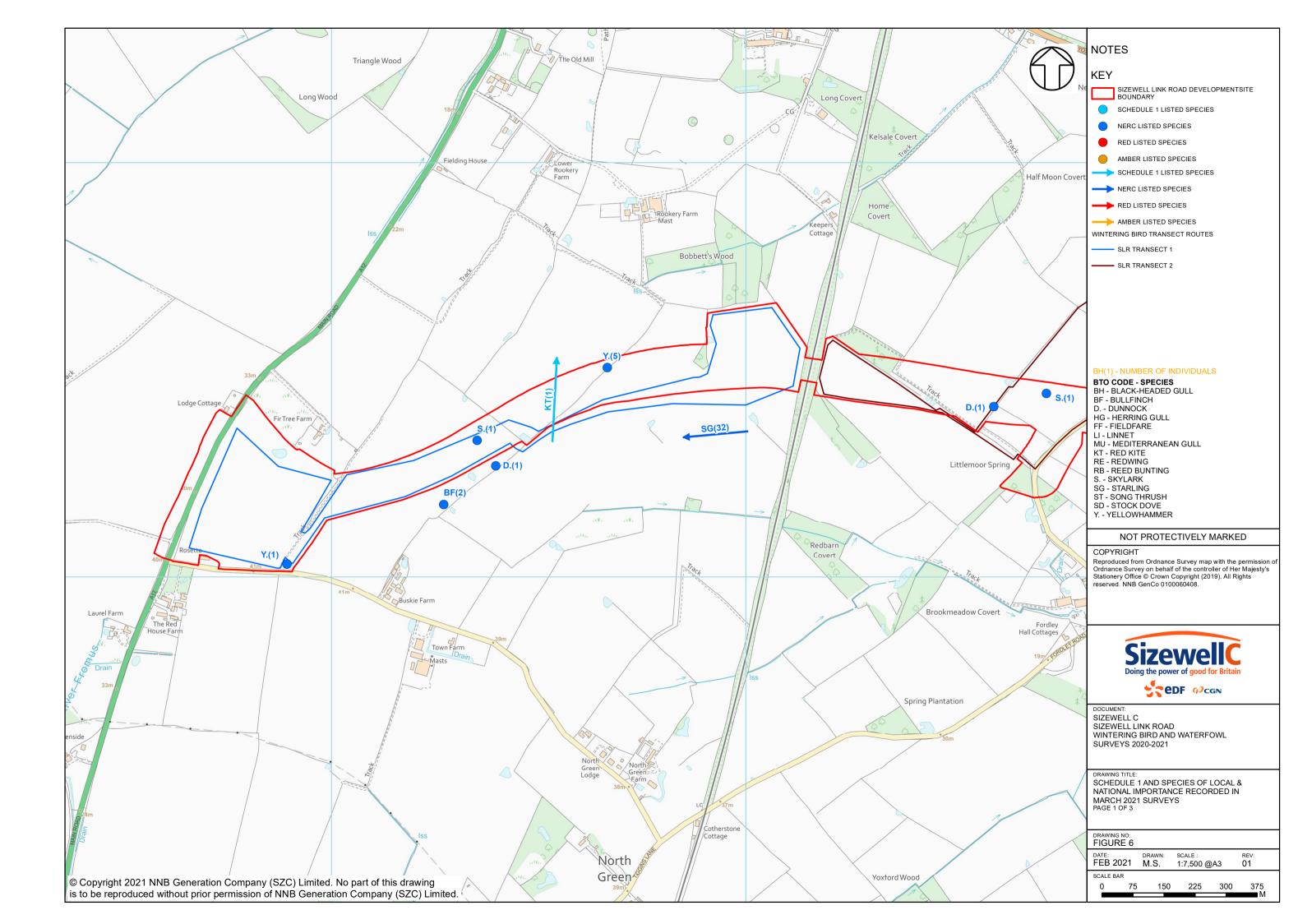


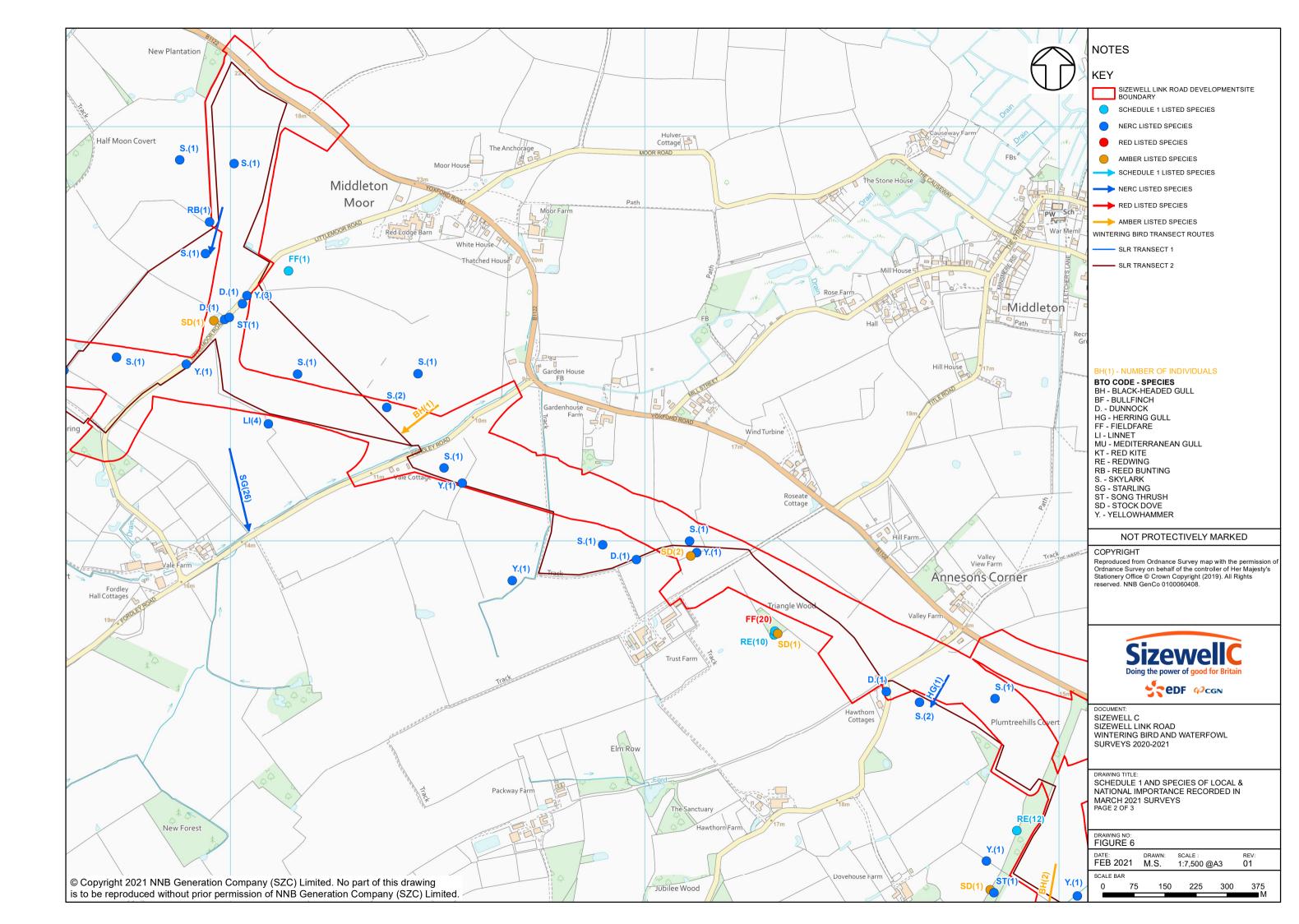


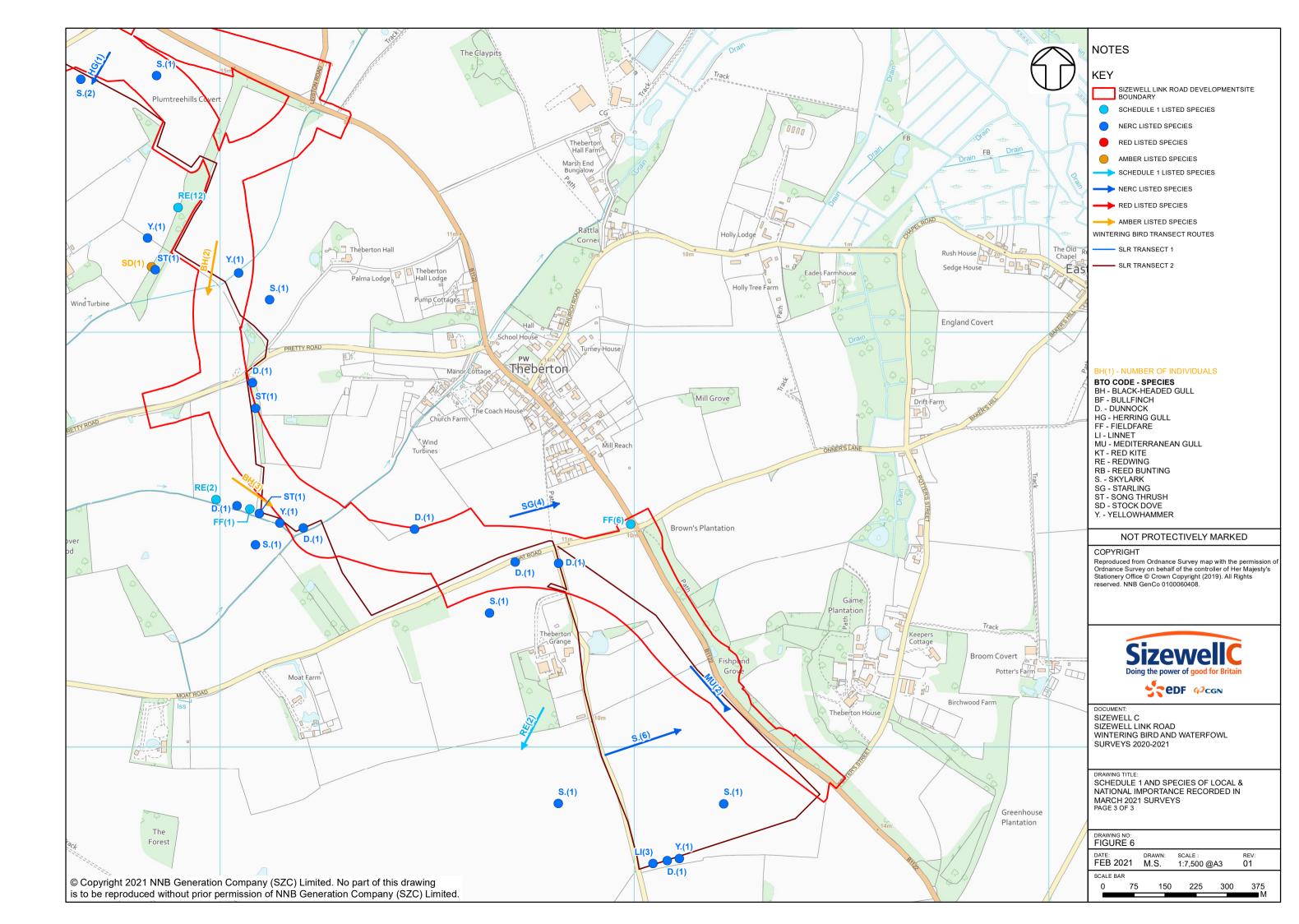














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## APPENDIX B: SURVEY DETAILS AND WEATHER CONDITIONS

- B.1.1. Table 1 below details the survey timings and weather conditions during each survey at Sizewell Link Road. Temperature (T) is measured in Celsius, cloud cover (CC) is measured in Oktas and wind speed (WS) is measured using the Beaufort Scale.
- B.1.2. The surveys were undertaken by lead surveyors were assisted by

#### Table 1: Survey details for wintering bird surveys at Sizewell Link Road

| Survey Details     | November 2020                                                          | December 2020                                                       | January 2021                                                              | February 2021                                                                                                                         | March 2021                                                             |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Date               | 24/11/2020                                                             | 15/12/2020                                                          | 19/01/2021                                                                | 16/02/2021                                                                                                                            | 16/03/2021                                                             |
| Survey timings     | 08:10 – 13:10                                                          | 09:00 - 14:20                                                       | 08:27 – 13:44                                                             | 08:30 - 14:00                                                                                                                         | 07:30 – 12:30                                                          |
| Surveyors          |                                                                        |                                                                     |                                                                           |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                        |
| Weather conditions | T: 8°C, CC: 7,<br>WS/direction: 0, no<br>rain, excellent<br>visibility | T: 7°C, CC: 3,<br>WS/direction: 3 S,<br>no rain, good<br>visibility | T: 10°C, CC: 8,<br>WS/direction: 3 S,<br>no rain, excellent<br>visibility | T: 8°C, CC: 8,<br>WS/direction: 2 W,<br>no rain, good<br>visibility, patches of<br>snow on ground<br>from previous<br>week's snowfall | T: 10°C, CC: 8,<br>WS/direction: 0,<br>drizzle, moderate<br>visibility |

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# APPENDIX C: SPECIES LIST – BIRDS WITH NO SPECIAL CONSERVATION CONCERN

 Table 2: Peak counts of species of no special conservation concern recorded across the survey areas.

| Species                     | Scientific Name       | Nov 20 | Dec 20 | Jan 21 | Feb 21 | Mar 21 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Blackbird                   | Turdus merula         | 6      | 43     | 10     | 31     | 19     |
| Blue tit                    | Cyanistes caeruleus   | 17     | 51     | 14     | 116    | 26     |
| Buzzard                     | Buteo buteo           | 2      | 6      | 5      | 5      | 2      |
| Carrion crow                | Corvus corone         | 2      | 3      | 2      | 3      | 5      |
| Chaffinch                   | Fringilla coelebs     | 44     | 34     | 35     | 56     | 35     |
| Collared dove               | Streptopelia decaocto | 1      | 0      | 0      | 1      | 1      |
| Cormorant                   | Phalacrocorax carbo   | 0      | 0      | 1      | 4      | 0      |
| Feral pigeon                | Columba livia         | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 1      |
| Goldcrest                   | Regulus regulus       | 0      | 0      | 2      | 0      | 3      |
| Goldfinch                   | Spinus tristis        | 19     | 33     | 45     | 34     | 4      |
| Great spotted<br>woodpecker | Dendrocopos major     | 1      | 4      | 2      | 3      | 1      |
| Great tit                   | Parus major           | 4      | 23     | 6      | 41     | 9      |
| Green<br>woodpecker         | Picus viridis         | 0      | 2      | 0      | 4      | 0      |
| Greenfinch                  | Carduelis chloris     | 4      | 2      | 3      | 3      | 0      |
| Grey heron                  | Ardea cinerea         | 0      | 0      | 0      | 1      | 0      |
| Jackdaw                     | Corvus monedula       | 2      | 64     | 7      | 18     | 3      |
| Jay                         | Cyanocitta cristata   | 1      | 6      | 2      | 2      | 1      |
| Long-tailed tit             | Aegithalos caudatus   | 8      | 7      | 2      | 12     | 1      |
| Magpie                      | Pica pica             | 4      | 6      | 10     | 1      | 1      |
| Moorhen                     | Gallinula chloropus   | 0      | 0      | 0      | 1      | 0      |
| Nuthatch                    | Sitta europaea        | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 1      |
| Pheasant                    | Phasianus colchicus   | 7      | 5      | 0      | 29     | 10     |
| Pied wagtail                | Motacilla alba        | 9      | 3      | 0      | 0      | 3      |

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| Species                 | Scientific Name         | Nov 20 | Dec 20 | Jan 21 | Feb 21 | Mar 21 |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Red-legged<br>partridge | Alectoris rufa          | 25     | 16     | 0      | 5      | 0      |
| Robin                   | Erithacus rubecula      | 7      | 7      | 6      | 22     | 12     |
| Rook                    | Corvus frugilegus       | 90     | 47     | 1      | 0      | 0      |
| Sparrowhawk             | Accipiter nisus         | 1      | 0      | 0      | 1      | 0      |
| Stonechat               | Saxicola rubicola       | 2      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      |
| Treecreeper             | Certhia familiaris      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 1      |
| Woodpigeon              | Columba palumbus        | 190    | 46     | 523    | 64     | 572    |
| Wren                    | Troglodytes troglodytes | 6      | 7      | 3      | 9      | 6      |