

Appendix 6.4 Breeding Bird Habitat Suitability Assessment

30th May 2012

Paul Coleman
Senior Planning Officer
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
The Quays
Brunel Way
Baglan Energy Park,
Neath
SA11 2GG

Our Ref: 60275968

Dear Paul

Requirement for Breeding Bird Surveys, Proposed Power Station at TATA Port Talbot

Thank you for your comments on the draft Scoping Report for the proposed power station at TATA Steelworks Port Talbot. We note your requirement for breeding bird surveys and wish to provide the following response based up site conditions and surveys undertaken to date.

Surveys to date

A Phase 1 Habitat Survey has already been undertaken of the proposed site and was summarised in the draft Scoping Report. The full report will be provided in the formal Development Control Order submission to the Planning Inspectorate. We have continued with the Phase 2 surveys outlined in the Scoping Report and further to our request to include a breeding bird survey, we undertook a breeding bird scoping surveys on the 1st May 2013 by our Associated Director of Ecology, Kevin Webb. The following summary outlines his notes on the scoping survey.

Ornithology Comments



On the 1st May 2013 I visited the site during one of the reptile surveys and assessed the habitats available for breeding birds and examined the habitat in detail to identify the presence or absence of breeding birds.

The primary habitat type is managed improved grassland with some rough grassland and an incomplete line of buddleia scrub to a maximum of 3m tall. The site is in very close proximity to noisy permanent infrastructure and holds limited potential to supporting breeding birds. The majority of the grassland habitat is managed and therefore unsuitable for ground nesting species. Mistle thrush and pied wagtail were recorded foraging on this grassland but no evidence of nesting or territorial behaviour was observed. The small area of unmanaged grassland lies in a narrow strip to the north of the buddleia scrub and was also unsuitable for supporting breeding birds. Whilst visiting this area herring gull, magpie and common linnet were observed (or heard) flying over this area. The line of buddleia scrub was also checked on a bush by bush basis and one wren was observed displaying behaviour indicative of breeding (alarm calling) at the far end of the line.

The only species able to breed within the site would be small passerines such as wren, robin and dunnock with very limited habitat available. The grassland parts of the site are unsuitable for breeding of any ground nesting species including lapwing, meadow pipit and skylark and no evidence of such species was recorded within the site boundary.

Therefore it is proposed to implement suitable mitigation measures such as prior to any development work involving the removal of buddleia scrub should be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season (March – August) to ensure no damage to nesting species occurs otherwise there is no requirement for further bird survey.

We will incorporate this justification into the Scoping Report and have attached photographs of the site to this letter. Based on the information above, please can you confirm that you approve of this approach?

Competence

Kevin Webb BSc (Hons) MSc, MIEEM

Associate Director



Kevin has more than 13 years experience working in ecological consultancy, research and nature conservation. He is experienced in Ecological Impact Assessment, habitat management, production of Biodiversity Action Plans, and protected species surveying. He has expertise surveying for bats, badgers, otters, water voles, dormice, amphibians, reptiles and breeding birds and preparing and implementing mitigation strategies to manage the presence of protected species. He holds a BTO ringing and training licence with endorsements for the capture of wild birds with mist nets, ringing of nestlings and the use of tape lures. With particular specialism in ornithology, Kevin can undertake a wide range of survey work for habitats and protected species in the UK and has also prepared Appropriate Assessments and has experience as an expert witness at Public Inquiry.

However should you have any queries or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me in the first instance.

Kind Regards



Catherine Mackay
Principal Environmental Consultant
Direct dial: +44 (0)292 035 3428
Email: catherine.mackay@aecom.com



