Clarifications to Bidder’s Questions:

Wintering bird surveys for the north bank of the Humber Estuary, Yorkshire

**Q1) Would it be possible to borrow kit to help undertake the field work for this project?**

A1) Natural England is unable to provide equipment you deem necessary to deliver this work.

**Q2) I was wondering if you had the document Humber north bank bird surveys - Jan to March 2024 RFQ.pdf as a word document?**

A2) Please find attached the Word version of the Request for Quotation for both the north bank and the south bank surveys.



Survey Methods

**Q3) It would be useful to clarify whether all vantage points within a 2km square are expected to be surveyed simultaneously, thus requiring as many surveyors within a 2km square as there are vantage points. Clearly there are limitations to a single surveyor moving between vantage points within a 2km square point during the survey period, however it would also be a significant reduction in effort and therefore cost.**

A3) Vantage points do not need to be surveyed simultaneously, and instead can be one after the other. However, all vantage points for a single 2km survey square should be undertaken on the same day to ensure that you are not double/ re-counting the same birds.

**Q4) It would be useful to understand the expected time spent surveying each 2km square. Conventional low tide/core counts would often extend two hours either side of low/high tide for example.**

A4) This detail should be determined by you and included within your response to the Request for Quotation (RFQ), with suitable justification. The proposal should enable an accurate record of the number of birds using the 2km square at that time.

**Q5) It is stated that: “Surveys should cover the extremes of spring/ neap tide cycle and across the high/ low tide cycle to pick up any seasonal and tidal variation.” Please can it be confirmed that this translates to: ensuring at least one survey of the 12 required at each square covers low and high tide periods as well as spring and neap tides. OR, will a more even split be expected? This is because logistically a more even split is more ambitious when added to the weather requirements.**

A5) This detail should be determined by you and included within your response to the RFQ, with suitable justification. For example, bird usage may be less likely to be influenced by the tidal state at sites further from the estuary.

**Q6) Relating to night time surveys, it is stated: “An expert in this field should be consulted”. Please can NE define how this expertise is to be demonstrated? For example, our team includes bird ringers familiar with use of thermal imaging scopes to spot target species at night within open habitats (e.g. woodcock), is this level of knowledge acceptable?**

A6) We agree that this is sufficient. Surveys carried out at night will require specialist equipment. The potential supplier should determine whether it would be more useful to use night vision scope/binoculars or thermal imagery. Detail should be included in your response to the RFQ.

**Q7) In relation to the nighttime surveys that are mentioned: Please could NE define if they require any thermal/infra-red footage to be taken? If so, this would be used as evidence to support the inland habitats value for roosting sites in relation to the SPA, SAC etc. If multiple VP’s are required to be surveyed throughout an evening’s high tide period; species can utilise inland habitats at an increased level more so at night than during the day. Footage would be advantageous if large roosts are identified.**

A7) The aim of this project is to collect data suitable for use in Habitat Suitability Models. If you deem it useful to collect footage for this purpose, please include detail and justification in your response to the RFQ.

**Q8) NE state that survey completion will be set at 31st March 2024. Can NE confirm, that as the surveys will be taking place at a time during the beginning of the territory set-up/ breeding season of lapwing *Vanellus vanellus,* that records of this species should/ shouldn’t be included in the surveys if they are showing signs of breeding OR if these should be included to further aid in identifying the cross over period from winter to passage breeding grounds for this species.**

A8) Records of this species should be included.

Habitat Data

**Q9) It is briefly mentioned in the methodology that habitat data should be collected. Is there a list of specific attributes to be recorded (e.g. signs of management, DAFOR) or is this to be determined by us?**

A9) This detail should be determined by the potential supplier and included within your response to the Request for Quotation (RFQ). This will be discussed and agreed at a Project Initiation Meeting with the successful supplier.

**Q 10) With regard to the above subject matter, would NE object to the use of thermal imaging drones and/or helicopter?**

A: We understand drones can be useful tools for researching and monitoring wildlife safely and efficiently, and therefore Natural England would consider the use of drones for this contract, provided the proposed methodology clearly considered feasibility, and ability to gain any required permissions.

Natural England advises that you refer to the following guidance:

* The Drone and Model Aircraft Code (which includes a brief reference to SSSIs): [https://register[1]drones.caa.co.uk/drone-code](https://register#drones.caa.co.uk/drone-code)
* Government advice about drones and the guidance and laws surrounding their use: [https://www.gov.uk/government/news/drones-are-you-flying-yours-safely-and-legally](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fnews%2Fdrones-are-you-flying-yours-safely-and-legally&data=05%7C01%7CHannah.Gooch%40naturalengland.org.uk%7C75e1206701d9455987f008dbe9e7b89b%7C770a245002274c6290c74e38537f1102%7C0%7C0%7C638360953664011985%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=4RT83lBtx%2B%2FuPdkb8shuavOUqEXW6so%2BOO4EfHUz%2B9Y%3D&reserved=0).
* Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) information about drone use: [https://www.caa.co.uk/drones](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.caa.co.uk%2Fdrones&data=05%7C01%7CHannah.Gooch%40naturalengland.org.uk%7C75e1206701d9455987f008dbe9e7b89b%7C770a245002274c6290c74e38537f1102%7C0%7C0%7C638360953664011985%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=mdWMHHZDAd0PQwf9Y0Zuut19Bfi5GmQQ5ON72YFfxzY%3D&reserved=0)
* Guidance for owner/occupiers of SSSIs (may also be useful for third parties wishing to discuss with owner/occupiers): [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-areas-sites-of-special-scientific[1]interest#get-consent-to-carry-out-operations-on-your-land](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fguidance%2Fprotected-areas-sites-of-special-scientific%23interest%23get-consent-to-carry-out-operations-on-your-land&data=05%7C01%7CHannah.Gooch%40naturalengland.org.uk%7C75e1206701d9455987f008dbe9e7b89b%7C770a245002274c6290c74e38537f1102%7C0%7C0%7C638360953664011985%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=a8IQMxZyHEYuVz34IAZN4cAjOk1hFK7S8%2BVCySgrEfY%3D&reserved=0)
* Guidance on whether you will need to apply for a licence for disturbing or removing wildlife or damaging habitats: [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wildlife-licences](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fguidance%2Fwildlife-licences&data=05%7C01%7CHannah.Gooch%40naturalengland.org.uk%7C75e1206701d9455987f008dbe9e7b89b%7C770a245002274c6290c74e38537f1102%7C0%7C0%7C638360953664011985%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=kP6PvX4smzNUS6IoB%2FTJ7u%2FkeYXxtBnLpBjliwBAcZ0%3D&reserved=0)

In addition, the ownership rights of a landowner generally extend upwards into the airspace immediately above the ground. The upper height of this lower airspace is not fixed and may vary on a case-by-case basis depending on how the land is used and enjoyed by the landowner. However, it is likely that the airspace immediately above land will form part of that ownership and therefore landowner permission is likely to be needed. It is up to drone users to satisfy themselves that they have any necessary landowner permission.

Regarding the use of helicopters and UAVs, sufficient detail would need to be provided in the quote submission regarding the use of these technologies and how it will be ensured that the birds will not be disturbed and that accurate species, numbers and behaviour can be recorded. In addition, we assume that similar permissions for helicopters as those for UAVs will be required from landowners.