

Leicestershire County Council
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicester
LE3 8RA

BG Reference: BG24.214

19th March 2026

RE: Consultation response received in relation to the outline planning application (25/01207/OUT) at Land to the East of Ashby Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire.

Further to the consultation response received from Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council in relation to the planning application (25/01207/OUT) at Ashby Road, Hinckley, please find below a response to the key points raised and a proposed strategy to move forward.

Consultation Response

The comments from Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council state that:

It is highlighted that Skylark, a Priority species under the NERC Act 2006 (as amended), is strongly associated with arable fields and developments can often lead to reduced breeding territory opportunities. We note that the breeding bird surveys undertaken as part of the Ecological Impact Assessment (Brindle & Green, September 2025) identified that the proposed development will likely result in the loss or displacement of a single Skylark territory. It is proposed that a compensatory Skylark plot will be created within an adjacent arable field which is part of the applicant's blue line boundary land, and that the enhancement of the modified grassland to other neutral grassland in the north of the application site will provide additional foraging resource for Skylark.

Background

Brindle and Green Ltd were commissioned by Davidsons Homes to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) of the site known as Land to the East of Ashby Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire. This included an impact assessment of the site's suitability for breeding birds and the results of further surveys targeted at this species group. The results of the EcIA can be found in the accompanying document produced by Brindle and Green (BG24.214 Land at Ashby Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire, ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT – FINAL, September 2025).

The breeding bird surveys undertaken as part of the Ecological Impact Assessment by Brindle & Green in September 2025 identified that the proposed development will likely result in the loss or displacement of a single Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) territory. At the time it was understood that the scheme would be able to provide mitigation for this single territory in the adjacent offsite arable land. While it was initially intended to provide a compensatory Skylark plot within the adjacent blue-line boundary land, a change in land control means this specific offsite area is no longer available for managed mitigation and this method of mitigation is no longer available.

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Proposed Alternative Mitigation

The previous mitigation solution of a compensatory Skylark Plot is no longer available. While the development site itself is not of sufficient scale or openness to support a Skylark breeding territory post-development, the scheme has been designed to maximise high-quality onsite biodiversity gains. The strategy prioritises a diversified habitat mosaic that supports a broader range of Priority and Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) species, such as Swift (*Apus apus*), Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*) and House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*).

Key enhancements include the creation of new grassland, native hedgerows, and strategic tree planting, which will increase ecological connectivity and provide foraging and nesting resources for a wide variety of birds compared to the existing monoculture/arable baseline.

To further support a range of species, the development will include the following integrated nesting boxes at a 1:1 ratio with new dwellings.

- No. 17A Triple Cavity Swift Boxes: Specifically targeting Swifts, an LBAP species for Leicestershire.
- Habitat Starling Nest Boxes: Supporting Red-listed species.
- 1SP Schwegler Sparrow Terraces: Promoting colonial nesting for House Sparrows.

It is noted that the surrounding landscape remains predominantly rural, characterised by an extensive network of arable fields. This surrounding habitat provides significant alternative breeding opportunities, and it is considered that the displacement of a single territory is not a significant impact that will adversely impact the conservation status of the local Skylark population.

Conclusion

The impact of the development upon skylark is limited to the loss of a single territory, and it is considered the proposed onsite enhancements represent a proportionate and reasonable response given the constraints of the site. The scheme prioritises high-quality onsite habitats that support a broad range of breeding birds, ensuring a meaningful net benefit to the local bird population can be achieved.

If required, the loss of the skylark territory may be recorded within the EcIA as a residual negative (Not Significant) impact upon breeding birds, which would be compensated for by the aforementioned habitat creation and nest box provision. The absence of specific mitigation for a single skylark territory is not considered a barrier to the general conclusions of the EcIA and this sites' impact upon this ecological receptor.

If you have any further questions, please contact Brindle & Green using the details at the top of this letter.

Yours Sincerely,



Lloyd Wyatt
Biodiversity Net Gain - Technical Lead
For and on behalf of Brindle & Green Ltd

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