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COMBINED BIRD SURVEY REPORT

Client

Miller Homes

Project

Ashby Road

Hinckley

Date

August 2026

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 FPCR Environment and Design Ltd were commissioned by Miller Homes to conduct Breeding Bird Surveys and a scoping Wintering Bird Survey to inform a Full planning application for a residential development at a site spanning two separate areas, Ashby Road and Normandy Way, Hinckley (central OS grid references SP428 963 and SP429 957 respectively).
- 1.2 This document should be read in conjunction with the other ecological documents prepared for this application which included surveys and reporting for badgers¹, bats², and great crested newts³ along with the Ecological Appraisal⁴ and the Biodiversity Net Gain Report⁵.

Site Context

- 1.3 The application sites, hereafter referred to as 'the Ashby Road site', 'the Normandy Way site' or collectively as 'the sites', comprise of two separate redlines. The larger of the two sites (Ashby Road) is c.17.8ha, with the Normandy Way site c.2.8ha. Both sites are situated to the north of the town of Hinckley and are located approximately 350m from each other.
- 1.4 The Ashby Road site comprises three large primarily arable fields bound by native hedgerows with occasional mature trees standards. Other habitats present include a single pond (P1) and seasonally wet ditch (D1) towards the eastern boundary, narrow field margins and small areas of ruderal vegetation and bare earth soil mounds.
- 1.5 The Normandy Way site comprises a single modified grassland field under agricultural management, bound by native hedgerows, wooden boundary fencing to the south, and residential gardens to the east.
- 1.6 Land use in the surrounding area consists of a mixture of large open arable and grassland pasture fields with boundary hedgerows, and a stream situated over 200m west of both sites.

Site Proposals

- 1.7 Full planning application for the erection of 482 dwellings on land at Normandy Way and Ashby Road, Hinckley, comprising development across two parcels including:
- the northern parcel (off Ashby Road) for residential development, public open space, play provision, structural landscaping, sustainable drainage infrastructure and the provision of a new vehicular route;
 - the southern parcel (off Normandy Way) for residential development, public open space, landscaping and drainage infrastructure.
- 1.8 Together with associated access, internal roads, pedestrian and cycle connections, utilities and all other associated infrastructure.

¹ FPCR (2026) Badger Survey Report, Ashby Road and Normandy Way, Hinckley, August 2026

² FPCR (2026) Bat Survey Report, Ashby Road and Normandy Way, Hinckley, August 2026

³ FPCR (2026) Great Crested Newt Survey Report, Ashby Road and Normandy Way, Hinckley, August 2026

⁴ FPCR (2026) Ecological Appraisal, Ashby Road and Normandy Way, Hinckley, August 2026

⁵ FPCR (2026) Biodiversity Net Gain Report, Ashby Road and Normandy Way, Hinckley, August 2026

Survey Objectives

- 1.9 The Breeding Bird Surveys were carried out across the sites between April and June 2024 inclusive. The objectives of the surveys were to:
- To identify the presence of any designated nature conservation sites that support notable breeding bird assemblages within or in the vicinity of the sites.
 - To identify the presence of any notable species/populations of breeding birds within or in the vicinity of the sites.
 - Identify the presence, species and distribution of breeding birds on the sites.
 - Evaluate the conservation importance of habitats within the sites to local bird populations and identify any areas of ornithological interest.
 - Identify appropriate mitigation, compensation and enhancement within the sites.
 - Make recommendations to minimise the potential impact of development and where feasible to consider opportunities for additional mitigation, compensation and enhancement where relevant.
- 1.10 The scoping Wintering Bird Survey was carried out within the Ashby Road site in January 2025. The objectives of the survey were to:
- Identify the presence and distribution of wintering birds;
 - Evaluate the conservation importance of wintering bird populations present;
 - Evaluate the importance of wintering bird populations and the anticipated residual impacts of the development, and
 - To identify areas of ornithological interest and make recommendations to minimise the potential impact of the scheme.

2.0 LEGISLATION

- 2.1 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA) is the principal legislation affording protection to UK wild birds. Under this legislation all birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law, and it is an offence, with certain exceptions, to recklessly or intentionally:
- Kill, injure or take any wild bird.
 - Take, damage, or destroy the nest of any wild bird while in use or being built; or
 - Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.
- 2.2 Additional protection is afforded to species listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA, whereby intentional disturbance whilst building or occupying a nest or disturbance of dependent young is also considered an offence.
- 2.3 Certain species have also been identified as Species of Principal Importance (SPI) under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 (NERC S.41). The S.41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.
- 2.4 The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan includes 16 Species Action Plans, seven of which are birds including barn owl *Tyto alba*, nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*, redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*, sand martin *Riparia riparia*, swift *Apus apus*, swallow *Hirundo rustica* and house martin *Delichon urbicum*.

Status

- 2.5 In addition to statutory protection, some bird species are classified according to their conservation status, such as their inclusion on the Red and Amber lists of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) in the UK⁶:
- 2.6 Red list (high conservation concern) species meet at least one of the following criteria:
- They are globally threatened according to IUCN criteria.
 - Their population has declined rapidly (50% or more) in recent years.
 - They that have declined historically and not shown a substantial recent recovery.
- 2.7 Amber list (medium conservation concern) species meet at least one of the following criteria:
- They have an unfavourable conservation status in Europe.
 - Their population or range has declined moderately (between 25% and 49%) in recent years.
 - Their population has declined historically but made a substantial recent recovery.
 - They are rare breeders.
 - They have internationally important or localised populations.
- 2.8 Green list (low conservation concern) species fulfil none of the above criteria.

⁶ Stanbury, A, Eaton MA, Aebischer N, Balmer, D, Brown A, Douse, A, Lindley P, McCulloch, N, Noble D, and Win I (2021) *The status of our bird populations: the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man and second IUCN Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain*. British Birds 114, pp723-747.

METHODOLOGY

Desktop Study

- 3.1 In order to compile existing baseline ornithological information, the following statutory and non-statutory organisations were consulted for data regarding designated sites for which birds are a designating feature, and protected/notable bird records:
- Natural England via the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website⁷;
 - Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC).
- 3.2 The geographical extent of the search area for biodiversity information was related to the significance of sites and species and potential zones of influence which might arise from development within the sites, as follows:
- 10km around the Site boundary for sites of International Importance (e.g. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Ramsar sites);
 - 2km around the Site boundary for statutory sites of National or Regional Importance (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs));
 - 1km around the Site for non-statutory designated sites of County Importance (e.g. Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)/Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs), and protected or otherwise notable species records.

Breeding Bird Survey

- 3.3 The survey methodology employed was in accordance with the protocol specified in the best practice guidelines – Bird Survey Guidelines for Assessing Ecological Impacts⁸. All birds encountered (seen or heard) were recorded on a field survey plan using standard BTO species codes and symbols for bird activities and to denote activity, sex, and age where appropriate. Breeding status was inferred for each species based on the sixteen categories implemented by the European Ornithological Atlas Committee (EOAC)⁹ and their corresponding definitions, in addition to four additional codes to classify non-breeding species as birds recorded away from suitable breeding habitat, summering non-breeders, passage migrants, or flyovers. Birds were considered to be holding a territory and therefore likely to be utilising the site for breeding activities if they were displaying breeding behaviours, such as: singing, nest building, food carrying or territorial defence. If birds did not display such behaviours, e.g. they were only recorded flying over the Site, they were considered non-breeders.
- 3.4 To provide a reasonable level of accuracy for determining the population status of the breeding birds on the site, three surveys were undertaken on the Ashby Road site and one scoping survey was undertaken on the Normandy Way site. These surveys were completed between dawn and 11.00am in April, May, and June 2024 (Ashby Road site) and between dawn and 11.00am in April (Normandy Way site). In the case of the sites, the relatively small area is considered unlikely to provide a substantial resource for species given the local context of ample much larger areas

⁷ [Online]. <http://www.magic.gov.uk/>

⁸ Bird Survey & Assessment Steering Group. (2023). Bird Survey Guidelines for assessing ecological impacts, v.1.1.1. <https://birdsurveyguidelines.org> [Accessed: 26.06.24]

⁹ Sharrock, J.T.R (1973) Ornithological Atlases. *Auspicium* 5:13-15.

of similar habitat in the surrounding landscape. Furthermore, the initial walkover identified internal habitats dominated by arable cropland (Ashby Road site) and modified grassland (Normandy Way site) lacking seasonally constrained habitat features such as temporary wetland areas that would necessitate increased survey effort.

- 3.5 The detailed surveys were undertaken in the season in which the majority of breeding activity occurs for typical species, and no species with vastly differing breeding cycles are reasonably expected to occur at the sites following the consultation results and assessment of the habitats present. Survey effort was reviewed on a rolling basis and throughout returned a basic assemblage of common and widespread birds, with composition consistent between survey occasions. It was therefore considered that further survey effort would not find significant additional information to change the impact assessment. Anticipated impacts are expected to be minimal based on the retention and creation of suitable breeding habitat for the majority of species recorded.
- 3.6 The requirement for a dusk survey was scoped-out on the basis that the sites are outside the known breeding ranges of most crepuscular or nocturnal singing species. The arable areas within the Ashby Road site were in arable rotation, which at the time of the bird surveys, consisted of a non-cereal crop and therefore provided no suitability for quail *Coturnix coturnix* – the only such crepuscular/nocturnal species that could potentially occur at the sites. Owing to the crop rotation, any quail that would utilise the site, would do so in a transient nature and therefore any impacts are considered to be minimal to this species. The Normandy Road site was also considered unsuitable for quail due to its very small size and homogenous sward which lacked any structural diversity. Consequently, a dusk survey was considered to be unnecessary.
- 3.7 The survey visits were undertaken between sunrise and 11.00am. A route was mapped-out prior to the survey being undertaken, with particular attention paid to linear features, such as hedgerows and watercourses. The survey was not undertaken in unfavourable conditions such as heavy rain or strong wind, which may negatively affect the results. The conditions during the survey visits are summarised in Table 1 below.

Wintering Bird Survey

- 3.8 The objective of the scoping wintering bird survey undertaken on the Ashby Road site was to identify areas of ornithological interest and make recommendations to minimise the potential impacts of the scheme. The survey methodology employed was in accordance with the protocol specified in the best practice guidelines – Bird Survey Guidelines for Assessing Ecological Impacts¹⁰. All birds encountered (seen or heard) were recorded on a field survey plan using standard BTO species codes and symbols for bird activities and to denote activity, sex, and age where appropriate.
- 3.9 A route was mapped-out prior to the survey being undertaken, with particular attention to linear features, such as hedgerows and watercourses. The survey was not undertaken in unfavourable conditions such as heavy rain or strong wind, which may negatively affect the results. The conditions during the survey visit are summarised in Table 1.

¹⁰Bird Survey & Assessment Steering Group. (2023). Bird Survey Guidelines for assessing ecological impacts, v.1.1.1. <https://birdsurveyguidelines.org>

- 3.10 Due to the very small size of the site, the homogenous habitats present (modified grassland) and lack of substantial boundary features, a scoping wintering bird survey was deemed unnecessary on the Normandy Way site.

Table 1: Breeding Bird Survey Dates and Conditions

Survey	Surveyor	Date	Cloud (%)	Cover	Rain	Wind	Visibility
Ashby Road: 2024 Breeding Bird Survey							
1	OJB	30.04.24	40		0 - none	1 - light air	Excellent
2	LC	28.05.24	95		0 - none	2 - light breeze	Very good
3	EJW	17.06.24	75		0 - none	3 - gentle breeze	Very good
Normandy Way: 2024 Scoping Breeding Bird Survey							
1	OJB	30.04.24	40		0 - none	1 - light air	Excellent
Ashby Road: 2025 Scoping Winter Bird Survey							
1	JC	13.01.25	10		0 - none	2 - light breeze	Good

Species & Assemblage Assessment

- 3.11 The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidance on ecological impact assessment assesses nature conservation importance within a geographical context¹¹. To attain each level of importance, an ornithological resource or one of the features (species population or assemblage of species) should meet the criteria set out in Table 2. In some cases, professional judgment may be required to increase or decrease the allocation of importance, based upon local knowledge.
- 3.12 The sites were also assessed against the selection criteria for Local Wildlife Site (LWS) for Leicestershire and Rutland¹² on a number of criteria set out for breeding and wintering birds. LWSs are recognised by central government as an important tool in promoting sustainable development and protecting biodiversity.
- 3.13 The recent county annual bird report *Leicestershire and Rutland Annual Bird Report 2020*¹³ was consulted to inform the assessment. The abundance of species referred to by these reports is classified by the following criteria:
- 3.14 Number of birds/pairs for breeding species:
- Very Rare – Fewer than ten records ever;
 - Rare – More than ten records ever, but less than annual;
 - Scarce – Fewer than ten birds occurring or pairs breeding annually;
 - Uncommon – Between ten and 100 birds occurring or pairs breeding annually;
 - Fairly common – Between 100 and 1000 birds occurring or pairs breeding annually;

¹¹ <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/ECIA-Guidelines-2018-Terrestrial-Freshwater-Coastal-and-Marine-V1.1Update.pdf>

¹² Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust (Revised 2011). Guidelines for the Selection of Local Wildlife Sites. [online] Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust. Available at: https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2016/8/22/Guidelines_LWS_0.pdf

¹³ Leicestershire and Rutland Ornithological Society (2022). *Leicestershire and Rutland Annual Bird Report 2020*.

- Common – Between 1000 and 10,000 birds occurring or pairs breeding annually;
- Abundant – More than 10,000 birds occurring or pairs breeding annually.

Table 2: Evaluation Criteria

Nature Conservation Value	Examples of Selection Criteria
International	A species which is part of the cited interest of an SPA and which regularly occurs in internationally or nationally important numbers. A species present in internationally important numbers (>1% of international population).
National	A species which is part of the cited interest of a SSSI and which regularly occurs in nationally or regionally important numbers. A nationally important assemblage of breeding or over-wintering species. A species present in nationally important numbers (>1% UK population). Rare breeding species (<300 breeding pairs in the UK).
Regional	Species listed as being of principal importance under NERC S.41 which are not covered above, and which regularly occurs in regionally important numbers. Species present in regionally important numbers (>1% of regional population). Sustainable populations of species that are rare or scarce within a region. Species on the BoCC Red List & which regularly occur in regionally important numbers.
County	Species listed as being of principal importance under NERC S.41 which are not covered above, and which regularly occurs in county important numbers Species present in county important numbers (>1% of county population). Sustainable populations of species that are rare or scarce within a county, or are listed as being of principal importance under S41 of the NERC Act. A site designated for its county important assemblage of birds (e.g. a SINC Site). Species on the BoCC Red List & which regularly occur in county important numbers.
Local	Other species of conservation interest (e.g. all other species on the BoCC Red and Amber List or species listed as being of principal importance under NERC S.41 which are not covered above) regularly occurring in locally sustainable populations. Sustainable populations of species which are rare or scarce within the locality.
Site	Species that are common and widespread

4.0 RESULTS & EVALUATION

Desktop Study

- 4.1 None of the statutory or non-statutory designated sites identified within the search area cited avifauna in their designations.

Protected/Notable Species

- 4.2 A total of 17 notable bird species were recorded within 1km of the sites from 2004 onwards through consultation with local environmental record centres. One record of song thrush *Turdus philomelos* was returned from within the boundary of the Ashby Road site, and two species records were returned adjacent to the Ashby Road site boundary including dunnoek *Prunella modularis* and bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*.
- 4.3 Records outside of the Ashby Road and Normandy Way site boundaries were returned from fields within the wider landscape and from residential environs within the town of Hinckley. Species included black redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* and swift *apus apus* which both have their own specific Species Action Plan within the county, and also included the WCA Schedule 1 listed barn owl *Tyto alba*. Other records in the search area were of common and widespread species typical of the agricultural and suburban landscape.
- 4.4 Full details of species and locations can be found within the accompanying Ecological Appraisal (FPCR, 2026).

Breeding Bird Field Survey

Ashby Road Site

- 4.5 A total of 30 species were recorded during the breeding bird surveys in 2024 (for complete list see Appendix A). Of these, eleven species met the criteria of at least one of the following pieces of legislation/classifications discussed above: Schedule 1 of the WCA; Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006; and BoCC Red or Amber lists. These species are referred to as 'notable' species.
- 4.6 Of the 30 species recorded as present during the surveys, three were confirmed breeding which included two BoCC Green list species (blue tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* and blackbird *Turdus merula*) which are of low conservation concern, and one BoCC Amber listed species (dunnock). Seven species were considered probable breeders including notable skylark *Alauda arvensis*, whitethroat *Curruca communis*, wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, greenfinch *Chloris chloris*, linnet *Linaria cannabina* and yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*. The remaining 20 species were considered possible (16) and non-breeders (4) on site due to the lack of breeding behaviours observed.
- 4.7 Table 3 provides a summary of the notable species recorded during the breeding bird survey and their respective breeding status on the Ashby Road site, whilst Figure 1 shows the approximate locations where they were recorded.

Table 3: Notable Breeding Bird Species Recorded at the Ashby Road site during 2024 and their Recent Status in Leicestershire and Rutland

Species	Legal/Conservation Status	Peak Count	Breeding Status	Recent Status in Leicestershire and Rutland
Stock Dove <i>Columba oenas</i>	Amber List	6	Possible	Fairly Common to Common resident breeder
Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>	Amber List	27	Possible	Abundant resident breeder
Skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Red List, NERC S.41	22	Probable	Common resident breeder
Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Green List, LBAP	1	Non-Breeder	Common migrant breeder
Whitethroat <i>Curruca communis</i>	Amber List	2	Probable	Common migrant breeder
Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Amber List	9	Probable	Abundant resident breeder
Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Amber List, NERC S.41	4	Possible	Common resident breeder, recent decline
Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	Amber List, NERC S.41	6	Confirmed	Abundant resident breeder
Greenfinch <i>Chloris chloris</i>	Red List	4	Probable	Common resident breeder
Linnet <i>Linaria cannabina</i>	Red List, NERC S.41	2	Probable	Common resident breeder
Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Red List, NERC S.41	2	Probable	Common resident breeder, recent declines in population

Normandy Way Site

- 4.8 A total of 10 species were recorded during the breeding bird survey in 2024 (for a complete list see Appendix B). Of these, three species met the criteria of at least one of the following pieces of legislation/classifications discussed above: Schedule 1 of the WCA; Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006; and BoCC Red or Amber lists. These species are referred to as 'notable' species.
- 4.9 Of the 10 species recorded as present during the survey, no species were confirmed breeding within the Normandy Way site. The notable species stock dove *Columba oenas*, was considered to be a probable breeder within the site. The remaining nine species were considered possible (7) and non-breeders (2) on site due to the lack of breeding behaviours observed.
- 4.10 Table 4 provides a summary of the notable species recorded during the breeding bird survey and their respective breeding status on the Normandy Way site, whilst Figure 1 shows the approximate locations where they were recorded.

Table 4: Notable Breeding Bird Species Recorded in 2024 and Their Recent Status in Leicestershire and Rutland

Species	Legal/ Conservation Status	Peak Count	Breeding Status	Recent Status in Leicestershire and Rutland
Stock Dove <i>Columba oenas</i>	Amber List	2	Probable	Fairly Common to Common resident breeder
Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>	Amber List	7	Possible	Abundant resident breeder
Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Amber List	3	Probable	Abundant resident breeder

Breeding Bird Survey Results Description

Ashby Road Site

- 4.11 The majority of bird species recorded were typical of the range of habitats that dominated the Ashby Road site, being heavily influenced by current agricultural management. The internal parts of the arable fields provided limited breeding habitat for birds, with the exception of skylark. A low number of foraging species including notable woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* and greenfinch were recorded, neither of which utilised the habitat for breeding.
- 4.12 The hedgerows on the Ashby Road site were of most value to the breeding bird assemblage and supported the majority of the recorded species. Notable species recorded include whitethroat, wren, song thrush, dunnoek, greenfinch, linnet and yellowhammer, along with the common and widespread finches, tits and warbler species.

Normandy Way Site

- 4.13 The majority of bird species recorded were typical of the range of habitats that dominated the Normandy Way site, being influenced by the current grassland management. The internal part of the grassland field provided very limited breeding habitat for birds, however, no ground-nesting birds were recorded during the survey. Only one species, magpie *Pica pica*, was recorded foraging within this habitat, but did not utilise the habitat for breeding.
- 4.14 The hedgerows on the Normandy Way site were of most value to the breeding bird assemblage and supported the large majority of species recorded. Notable species recorded include stock dove, woodpigeon, and wren along with a small number of common and widespread species including robin *Erithacus rubecula*, tits and corvid species.

Winter Bird Field Surveys

- 4.15 During the Scoping Winter Bird Survey undertaken on 13th January 2025 a total of 15 species were recorded within the survey area (Appendix C). Of these, 4 species met the criteria of at least one of the following pieces of legislation/classifications discussed above: Schedule 1 of the WCA; Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006; and BoCC Red or Amber lists. These species are referred to as 'notable' species.
- 4.16 Table 5 summarises the notable wintering bird species, whilst Figure 2 illustrates their distribution across the site.

Table 5: Notable Wintering Bird Species Recorded in 2025 & Their Recent Status in Leicestershire

Species	Legal/ Conservation Status	Peak Number Survey Occasions Recorded	Count/ of	Recent Status in Leicestershire
Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>	Amber List	4		Abundant resident and winter visitor.
Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Amber List	1		Abundant resistant.
Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Amber List WCA Sch.1	1		Common winter visitor.
Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	Amber List NERC S.41	4		Abundant resident and passage migrant.

Wintering Bird Survey Results Description

- 4.17 The wintering bird assemblage was typical of the habitats present with the arable fields across the Ashby Road site creating foraging habitat for a range of resident and migratory species. Notable species utilising this habitat include woodpigeon, redwing *Turdus iliacus*, wren and dunnock.
- 4.18 The hedgerows and mature trees provided suitable foraging and shelter for a range of common and widespread species. Notable species recorded include woodpigeon, wren, redwing and dunnock.
- 4.19 Raptor species utilising the fields and hedgerows for foraging comprised buzzard *Buteo buteo*.

5.0 EVALUATION

Local Wildlife Site Selection Criteria

- 5.1 The sites were assessed against published criteria for LWS selection to assess the sites against the thresholds for Leicestershire.
- 5.2 Under the above criteria any site that supports significant and established populations of Leicestershire & Rutland Red Data Book (RDB) species can be eligible for LWS selection where:
- RDB species are defined as those that are considered Uncommon to Very Rare under the classifications set in the above section;
 - Significant populations are those that support a minimum of 10% of the county breeding or wintering population of a given species; and
 - A population is considered to be established once the species has been recorded in significant numbers in the equivalent of one in three years. To specifically qualify the criteria dictates three of the last 15 years though given the scope of these surveys the populations cannot be assessed over such a period so the precautionary equivalent of one in three years is used such that any species recorded as having a significant population during the survey could be considered established.
- 5.3 In addition to criteria relating to individual bird species, a site may also qualify for LWS designation in the county based on its bird assemblages. A site meets the criterion for LWS selection if the sum of its individual species scores is equal to or greater than the threshold value given for the appropriate habitat. There must be evidence that a species is breeding i.e. it was recorded as a confirmed or probable breeder, for its score to be included in the sum. The wintering bird assemblage refers to open water sites which regularly support more than 750 waterbirds.
- 5.4 None of the individual species recorded on the Breeding Bird Surveys are classified as Very Rare, Rare, or Scarce in the county and therefore the sites do not qualify for LWS designation on the basis of any individual species recorded. Furthermore, none of the habitats present are considered by the guidelines eligible for consideration with regards to their breeding or wintering bird assemblages.
- 5.5 As such, the sites do not meet any of the relevant criteria and therefore do not qualify for selection as a LWS based on its breeding and wintering bird assemblage.

Breeding Bird Assemblage

Ashby Road Site

- 5.6 The agriculturally managed fields and their margins provided suitable foraging and/or breeding habitat for skylark, whereby a maximum of three territories were recorded, alongside smaller numbers of linnet and yellowhammer. All three of these species were considered to be probable breeding species within the Ashby Road site based on the behaviours observed. Although there is an abundance of suitable breeding and foraging habitat within the immediate surroundings, owing to the moderate number of skylark recorded in May, the site is considered to be of Local level importance for its farmland breeding bird assemblage.

- 5.7 The hedgerows which bound the Ashby Road site and delineate the field compartments were of most value to the breeding bird assemblage, including a range of common and widespread species such as tits, robins, blackbirds and finches. Notable species included stock dove, woodpigeon, whitethroat, wren, song thrush, dunnock and greenfinch. The surrounding habitat consists of an abundance of hedgerows which offer suitable breeding habitat to the species listed. It is therefore considered the Ashby Road site is of Local importance for its breeding bird assemblage.

Normandy Way Site

- 5.8 The modified grassland field supported a tall grassland sward at the time of survey and therefore did offer some limited potential breeding habitat for ground nesting birds, however no ground nesting birds were recorded during the survey. The Normandy Way site is considered to be of Site level importance for its farmland breeding bird assemblage.
- 5.9 The hedgerows which bound the site and delineate the field compartments were of most value to the breeding bird assemblage, including a range of common and widespread species such as tits, robins, and corvids. Notable species included stock dove, woodpigeon and wren. The surrounding habitat consisted of an abundance of hedgerows which offer suitable breeding habitat to the species listed. It is therefore considered the Normandy Way site is of Local importance for its breeding bird assemblage.

Winter Bird Assemblage

- 5.1 The arable habitats and associated margins within the Ashby Road site provided limited suitable foraging habitat for small a number of common species including buzzard and magpie. There is an abundance of similar suitable habitat in the surrounding landscape and therefore the Ashby Road site is considered to be of Site importance for its wintering bird assemblage.
- 5.2 The hedgerows provided suitable foraging and sheltering habitat for a number of common and widespread generalist species. Whilst this habitat did support the vast majority of notable species on the Ashby Road site, most occurred in low numbers and are not considered to be of conservation priority in Leicestershire as they are deemed Fairly Common to Abundant in the county. These include woodpigeon, wren, redwing and dunnock. There is an abundance of connecting hedgerows surrounding the site therefore the relatively common and widespread winter assemblage associated with the hedgerows are considered to be of Site level importance.

Individual Species

- 5.3 Table 6 summarises the bird species recorded within the sites that are at least Local importance based on the numbers recorded.
- 5.4 The other bird species recorded utilising the habitats within the sites were either recorded in small numbers and/or are considered common and widespread species nationally and/or locally. These species are recognised as being of only Site importance.

Table 6: Birds of Local Nature Conservation Importance or Higher

Name		Status		Nature Conservation Value
		WCA Sch.1	NERC S.41	
BoCC Red List				
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>		+	Local
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>			Local
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		+	Local
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>		+	Local
BoCC Amber List				
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>			Local
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>			Local
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>			Local
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		+	Local
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		+	Local

6.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The following section provides an assessment of the potential impacts of the proposals upon breeding and wintering birds. Where appropriate, recommendations are provided for mitigation and enhancement that take account of the likely ecological effects. Throughout the evaluation, any recommendations for mitigation have been informed by the most up-to-date Framework Masterplan.

Impact Assessment of Breeding Birds

- 6.2 The potential impact of the loss or change of habitat upon breeding bird species arising from the effects of development is based upon an understanding of each species' ecological requirements, the type of development, number of birds recorded on site, their nature conservation criteria based on legislation and current guidance and professional judgement.
- 6.3 The following potential impacts to the recorded bird populations and assemblage may result from the proposals:
- Direct loss/change of breeding habitat
 - Disturbance during construction and/or operation

Habitat Loss

- 6.4 The individual species recorded on the sites that are arguably the most vulnerable to impacts from the habitat loss or changes associated with this proposed development include the nine species considered to be of at least Local importance. These are notable species that are either specially protected, appear on the BoCC Red or Amber lists and/or are listed as a NERC priority species and were recorded in at least locally important numbers.

Ashby Road Site

- 6.5 The loss of the arable habitat on the Ashby Road site will likely lead to a total loss of skylark as a breeding species since this species requires expansive open areas with long lines of sight which would not be present post-development. However, the moderate numbers of skylark recorded in May are largely attributed to non-breeding males, considered likely to be foraging birds or defending foraging juveniles from any first broods present from both on and off-site territories, or are attributed to males establishing territories for second broods, with much smaller numbers of skylark recorded during both the April (peak count 5) and June (peak count 4) survey. The distribution and abundance of this species is strongly influenced by cropping regimes and agricultural management practices and therefore the sites suitability for this species changes depending on the annual crop rotation. The cultivated land within the site represents a small proportion of the available arable habitat within the local area, with extensive areas of arable land present to the north and west, which are likely to form part of this species wider foraging and breeding network. However, given the overall numbers present, this total loss is anticipated to represent a Minor Adverse impact on this species at the local level.
- 6.6 The loss of the arable fields will also reduce the overall availability of foraging resources for other species that frequent open habitats for foraging such as stock dove, woodpigeon, linnet and yellowhammer, plus other common and widespread corvids and gamebirds. Given the low numbers of these species identified on the Ashby Road site, their abundance in the county, and

the availability of similar habitat immediately adjacent to the site boundary, the proposed development is anticipated to have a Minor Adverse to Negligible impact on these species, as the habitat creation included in the scheme will provide some degree of suitable habitat for many of these species.

- 6.7 The majority of hedgerows and mature trees on the Ashby Road site are being retained, with some minimal loss to allow for access between field compartments. The species associated with these habitats are mainly common and widespread generalist species and are tolerant of moderate to high levels of anthropogenic disturbance. Some notable species including song thrush, redwing, linnet and yellowhammer may be impacted during the construction phase, however once development is complete, the enhanced greenspace (see below) will provide additional foraging and breeding habitat for these species. It is therefore considered the proposals will have a Minor Adverse to Negligible impact in the short term, through to Negligible to Minor Beneficial in the long term.

Normandy Way Site

- 6.8 The proposals will lead to a complete loss of the modified grassland field on the Normandy Way site, however, given the lack of farmland birds using this habitat, this total loss is anticipated to represent a Negligible impact on farmland species.
- 6.9 All of the hedgerows and the large majority of mature trees on the Normandy Way site are being retained. The species associated with these habitats are mainly common and widespread generalist species and are tolerant of moderate to high levels of anthropogenic disturbance. Some notable species including stock dove, may be impacted during the construction phase, however once development is complete, the enhanced greenspace (see below) and retained boundary habitats will provide additional foraging and breeding habitat for these species. It is therefore considered the proposals will have a Minor Adverse to Negligible impact in the short term, through to Minor Beneficial in the long term.

Habitat Mitigation

- 6.10 The proposed scheme includes creation of substantial greenspace around the northern, eastern and western boundaries of the Ashby Road site and adjacent to retained hedgerows which bisect the fields. Greenspace is also proposed within the western extent of the Normandy Way site.
- 6.11 To compensate for the loss of skylark foraging habitat a series of "beetle banks" will be incorporated through less disturbed and more lightly managed areas of the green infrastructure within the Ashby Road site. Banks should consist of a free-draining raised bank between 3-5m in width and at least 40cm high. These should be sown with a mixture containing native fine grasses such as red fescue *Festuca rubra* together with tussock-forming species including tall fescue *Festuca arundinacea*, Timothy *Phleum pratense*, and cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata* or similar. Fertilisers and pesticides are not to be used and grass should be cut and collected several times in the first year post-creation to aid establishment and thereafter be subject to one cut per year in late summer. This will increase foraging resources for many species but will be particularly beneficial for foraging skylark as chicks are entirely dependent on invertebrates.

- 6.12 It is recommended that less intensively managed areas, including areas where SuDS features are to be created, should include a species diverse seed mix to create alternative foraging provisions for species such as greenfinch, dunnoek, woodpigeon and stock dove. The provision of this new resource will also offer some replacement foraging habitat for two farmland specialist species, linnet and yellowhammer. This grassland should include seed mixes specifically designed to provide foraging resources for birds and be cut after mid-July to allow plants to set seed. The use of fertilisers and pesticides should be avoided. Recommended enhancements to achieve the above are:
- Native species tussock-forming grassland to be seeded wherever feasible throughout the on-site green infrastructure and site perimeter;
 - Native species-rich wildflower grassland to be seeded wherever feasible throughout the on-site green infrastructure and site perimeter;
 - Tree and hedgerow planting – using native species and good landscape planting, to strengthen existing boundary features and create substantive habitat corridors within and around the sites.
- 6.13 Boundary habitats including shrub and tree planting, should be managed in any proposed greenspace to create habitat gradients to encourage "edge effects" and micro-habitats. This, along with the creation of SuDS features, will increase invertebrate diversity and abundance, and therefore feeding opportunities for the local bird population including swallow, whitethroat, wren, dunnoek and song thrush.
- 6.14 Additional planting incorporated into the green infrastructure will prioritise the provision of native, fruit and seed-bearing species of local origin to provide an optimal foraging resource for a range of bird species recorded.

Disturbance Impacts

- 6.15 Construction operations have the potential to disturb birds using the development area of the sites for roosting, foraging, and breeding. Operations likely to disturb breeding birds include noise and displacement during vegetation clearance, initial ground works and some construction activities. During the breeding season disturbance may lead to nest desertion or the avoidance of the area and reduce the suitability of retained nesting areas, such as the retained hedgerows or mature trees. Whilst there is some potential for breeding success to be reduced, this is expected to have a Minor Adverse impact on the local conservation status of most of the bird species using the survey area for breeding.

Disturbance Mitigation

- 6.16 To avoid disturbance to breeding birds, ground and vegetation clearance works will be undertaken outside of the bird-breeding season (i.e. avoiding March to September, inclusive). If this is not possible, the area will be checked prior to removal of vegetation or ground works by an experienced ecologist. If active nests are recorded, vegetation will be left untouched and suitably buffered from works until all birds have fledged. Specific advice will be provided prior to undertaking the clearance. This would be a statutory requirement due to the protection of all nesting birds and their nests under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). A suitably qualified ecologist would need supervise this.

Enhancements

- 6.17 Provision of a variety of nest boxes throughout the sites will mitigate for the partial removal of suitable nesting habitats and ensure the availability of safe nest sites for a range of urban edge bird species in the long-term.
- 6.18 Enhancements that could be integrated with the on-going management of the sites include the erection of a mixture of nest box types within the mature trees, perimeter hedgerows, and the areas of green infrastructure. The following provides details of suggested suitable nest box types:
- A mixture of small hole (26mm and 32mm) boxes placed along the retained habitat around the proposed development area to provide nesting opportunities for a range of tit species. These boxes generally have a high uptake rate.
 - Small open fronted nest boxes placed throughout the sites, especially on trees which support a climber such as ivy which provides a degree of concealment. These boxes typically attract robin and blackbird.
 - Stock dove boxes, also suitable to provide opportunities for jackdaw, located on retained trees, at least 3m from ground level, with clear flight path, or where in closer proximity to urban edge, placed at 5m to encourage use.
 - Sparrow terrace nest boxes with 32mm hole placed on buildings, ideally fitted under eaves as this is preferred by house sparrows.
 - Consideration should be given to the inclusion of swift boxes on buildings, or swift bricks fitted into the walls of buildings, within the development to encourage these species which are able to take advantage of urban sites to breed. Swift boxes should be installed at least 5m high, with an unobstructed flight path. Swifts are gregarious, so installing several boxes in close proximity is beneficial. Swift bricks should be placed under shade-casting eaves at a height above 5m in groups of at least three. Sitting swift bricks and boxes above doors and windows should be avoided.
 - Although starlings were not recorded during the surveys, they readily take up nest boxes and habituate residential environs, therefore consideration should also be given to the provision of starling nest boxes. These should be designed with a 45mm entrance hole, placed 2.5m from the ground on the retained trees as well as on buildings. Ideally including 3 or more boxes in close proximity to encourage a loose colony.
- 6.19 Should any 'gapping up' of retained hedgerows be undertaken, consideration should be given to native and fruit/nut-bearing species, including, but not limited to, field maple *Acer campestre*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, dog-rose *Rosa canina*, elder *Sambucus nigra* and holly *Ilex aquifolium*.

APPENDIX A: ASHBY ROAD SITE BREEDING BIRD SURVEY RESULTS

Species: Common Name	Species: Scientific Name	Survey 1 30.04.24	Survey 2 28.05.24	Survey 3 17.06.24	Conservation Status & Protection	Breeding Status
Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>			2	Not Listed	Possible H
Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia f. domestica</i>	1 flyover		2	Green List	Possible H
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	6		1	Amber List	Possible H
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	27 + 4 flyovers	8 + 8 flyovers	11 + 1 flyover	Amber List	Possible S,H
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	2	2	1	Green List	Non- breeder UH
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	1		2	Green List	Possible H
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	8	3	6	Green List	Possible H
Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	7 flyovers	4 + 4 flyovers	2 flyovers	Green List	Non- breeder UH
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	1 + 2 flyovers	2	2	Green List	Non- breeder UH
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	8	4	8	Green List	Confirmed ON,FL
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	3	1		Green List	Possible S,H
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	5	22	4	Red List NERC S.41	Probable D,P
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	1		1	Green List LBAP	Non- breeder F
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	1			Green List	Possible H
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		1		Green List	Possible H
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	2	1		Green List	Possible S,H
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Curruca curruca</i>			2	Green List	Possible H
Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>	2	2	2	Amber List	Probable T,D
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>		2		Green List	Possible S,H

Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	9	8	4	Amber List	Probable T
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	4		2	Amber List NERC S.41	Possible S,H
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	6	5	4	Green List	Confirmed FL
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	12	4	5	Green List	Possible S,H
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	6	4	5	Amber List NERC S.41	Confirmed FL
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	2			Green List	Probable P
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>			1	Green List	Possible H
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	3	4 + 2 flyovers	3	Red List	Probable T
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	2			Red List NERC S.41	Probable P
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		11	5	Green List	Possible H
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	2		1	Red List NERC S.41	Probable P
Total Number of Species		24	18	23		

APPENDIX B: NORMANDY WAY SITE BREEDING BIRD SURVEY RESULTS

Species: Common Name	Species: Scientific Name	Survey 1	Conservation Status & Protection	Breeding Status
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	2 + 1 flyover	Amber List	Probable D
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	7	Amber List	Possible H
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	1	Green List	Non-breeder UH
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	1	Green List	Non-breeder UH
Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	4 + 1 flyover	Green List	Possible H
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	1	Green List	Possible H
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	2	Green List	Possible S,H
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	1	Green List	Possible S,H
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	3	Amber List	Possible S,H
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	2	Green List	Possible S,H
Total Number of Species		10		

APPENDIX C: ASHBY ROAD SITE WINTER BIRD SURVEY RESULTS

Species: Common Name	Species: Scientific Name	Survey 1 13.01.25	Conservation Status & Protection	Breeding Status
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	4 + 4 flyovers	Amber List	Non-breeder F
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	1 flyover	Amber List	Non-breeder F
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	1 flyover	Red List	Non-breeder F
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	1 flyover	Amber List	Non-breeder F
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	1	Green List	Non-breeder F
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	10	Green List	Non-breeder F
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	1 flyover	Green List	Non-breeder F
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	1	Green List	Non-breeder F
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	3	Green List	Non-breeder F
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	1	Amber List	Non-breeder F
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	23 flyovers	Red List NERC S.41	Non-breeder F
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	1	Amber List WCA Sch.1	Non-breeder F
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	9	Green List	Non-breeder F
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	1	Green List	Non-breeder F
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	4	Amber List NERC S.41	Non-breeder F
Total Number of Species		15		

APPENDIX D: BREEDING STATUS EVIDENCE CAN BE BROKEN DOWN INTO FOUR SECTIONS, EACH WITH THEIR OWN CODES, AS DEFINED BY THE EUROPEAN ORNITHOLOGICAL ATLAS COMMITTEE:

Confirmed breeder

DD – distraction display or injury feigning

UN – used nest or eggshells found from this season

FL – recently fledged young or downy young

ON – adults entering or leaving nest-site in circumstances indicating occupied nest

FF – adult carrying faecal sac or food for young

NE – nest containing eggs

NY – nest with young seen or heard

Probable breeder – Evidence accumulated during the survey indicates that the bird species is breeding on site.

P – pair in suitable nesting habitat

T – permanent territory (defended over at least 2 survey occasions)

D – courtship and display

N – visiting probable nest site

A – agitated behaviour

I – brood patch of incubating bird (from bird in hand)

B – nest building or excavating nest-hole

Possible breeder – Evidence accumulated during the survey indicates that the bird species could be breeding on site, but the evidence is less conclusive than that obtained for probable breeders.

H – observed in suitable nesting habitat

S – singing male

Non-breeder

F – flying over

M – migrant

U – summering non-breeder

UH – observed in unsuitable nesting habitat

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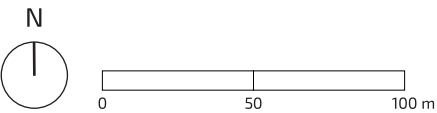
Company No. 07128076. [T] 01509 672772 [E] mail@fpcr.co.uk [W] www.fpcr.co.uk

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Key

Site Boundary

BoCC Amber List Species

- D Dunnock
- SD Stock Dove
- WH Whitethroat
- ST Song Thrush
- WP Woodpigeon
- WR Wren

BoCC Red List Species

- LI Linnet
- S Skylark
- Y Yellowhammer
- GR Greenfinch

NERC Species of Principal Importance

date 20/02/25 drwn/chkd EM2/LC

client Miller Homes
project Ashby Road, Hinckley

title BREEDING BIRD SURVEY RESULTS PLAN 1:2,500 @ A3
scale
- DISTRIBUTION OF NOTABLE SPECIES
number rev

FIGURE 1



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Key

Site Boundary

BoCC Amber List Species

SD Stock Dove

WP Woodpigeon

WR Wren

date
20/02/25

drwn/chkd
EM2/LC

client
Miller Homes

project
Normandy Way,
Hinckley

title
BREEDING BIRD SURVEY RESULTS PLAN 1:1,000 @ A3
- DISTRIBUTION OF NOTABLE SPECIES

number
FIGURE 2

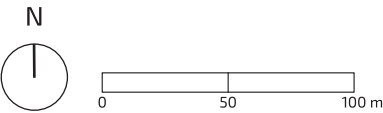
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- Site Boundary
- BoCC 5 Amber List Species
- D Dunnock
 - RE Redwing
 - WP Woodpigeon
 - WR Wren

date 13/04/26	drwn/chkd LC / RJS
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client
Miller Homes

project
**Ashby Road
Hinckley**

title WINTER BIRD SURVEY RESULTS PLAN - DISTRIBUTION OF NOTABLE SPECIES	scale 1:3,000 @ A3
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number FIGURE 3	rev -
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