



Farmland Bird Compensation Strategy

Imberhorne Farm

Ecosupport Ltd
K4 Keppel,
Daedalus Park,
Lee-on-the-Solent
PO13 9FX

info@ecosupport.co.uk

VAT: 228 4314 18



Report	Farmland Bird Compensation Strategy - Condition 40
Site Name	Imberhorne Farm, East Grinstead
Author(s)	Abby Woolston BSc (Hon), MRes
Checked by	Lewis Lakudzala BSc (Hons), MRes
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brief

Ecosupport Ltd were commissioned by Vistry to produce a Farmland Bird compensation strategy (FBCS) for the development of the site known as 'Imberhorne Farm', in East Grinstead for the construction of 550 residential housing units associated with infrastructure and landscaping. This was requested to satisfy the discharge of condition 40 of the outline planning approval (DM/23/2699), which states the following:

'Condition 40 Farmland Bird compensation strategy: Prior to the commencement of development, including any site clearance works, a Farmland Bird Compensation Strategy shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority to compensate the loss or displacement of any Farmland Bird territories identified as lost or displaced. This shall include provision of offsite compensation in nearby agricultural land, prior to commencement.

The content of the Farmland Bird Compensation Strategy shall include the following:

- a) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed compensation measure*
- b) e.g. Skylark plots;*
- c) detailed methodology for the compensation measures e.g. Skylark plots must follow Agri-Environment Scheme option: 'AB4 Skylark Plots';*
- d) locations of the compensation measures by appropriate maps and/or plans;*
- e) persons responsible for implementing the compensation measure.*

The Farmland Bird Compensation Strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details, and all features shall be retained for a minimum period of 10 years.

Reason: To conserve protected and Priority species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended) and to accord with policy DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031.'

This document should be read in conjunction with the original Ecological Assessment reports (The Ecology Partnership, 2018 & 2021). Reports have been prepared in order to ensure the proposals fully comply with nature conservation legislation and policy where applicable.

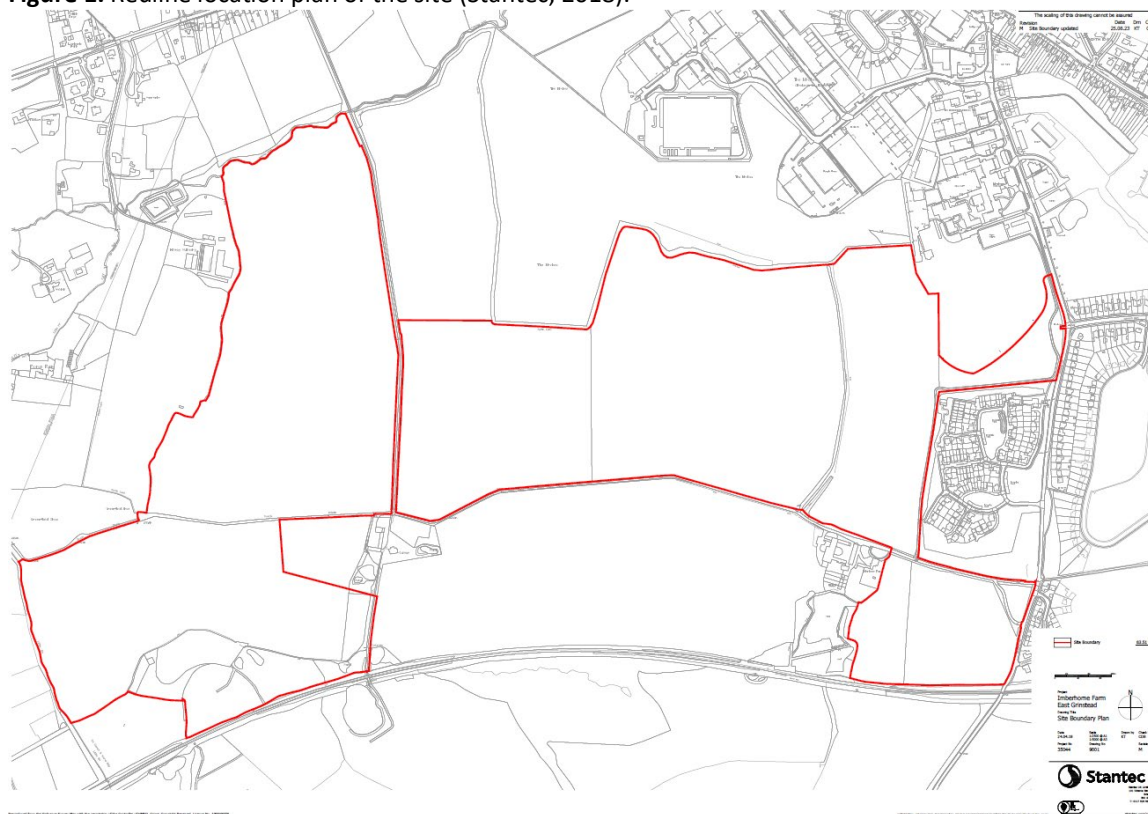
1.2 Aim

The aim of this report is to devise a site wide strategy to be implemented into the new development to mitigate impacts to Skylarks (*Alauda arvensis*) that were identified displaying over site. This will ensure all features of ecological value and their presence on site remained in perpetuity with targeted and proportionate recommendations for enhancements made.

1.3 Site Description

The site comprises of several arable parcels separated by boundary hedgerows and trees with a parcel of woodland on the southwest. The site is located to the east of Imberhorne Lane, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 1RP (centred on OS grid reference TQ 36810 38625) (**Figure 1**). The site is situated west of the town of East Grinstead and is immediately surrounded by woodland compartments, agricultural fields and residential development.

Figure 1. Redline location plan of the site (Stantec, 2018).



1.3 Proposed Development

Reserved matters application for the construction of 550 residential housing units with associated infrastructure and landscaping. The development will be considered in conjunction with the SANGS proposals to the east.

2.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

2.1 Legislation

2.1.1 *The Environment Act (2021)*

The Environment Act 2021 is the UK's new legislation for environmental protection in the UK, which includes protection of water quality, clean air, and biodiversity among other key protections. This Act provides the government power to set targets to reach long-term aims relating to the environment, which will be periodically reviewed and updated. This legislation also establishes a new environmental watchdog organisation, the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP), which will hold the government accountable on environmental issues.

The legislation also includes updates to existing environmental legislation, such as the NERC Act 2006, to strengthen biodiversity enhancement rather than just conservation and includes a requirement for local, or relevant, authorities to publish biodiversity reports. Further, The Environment Act places a requirement on responsible authorities to prepare local nature recovery strategies, which will outline nature conservation sites and priorities and opportunities for recovering or enhancing biodiversity within the local area. Within England, the legislation also provides Natural England with the power to publish 'species conservation strategies' and 'protected site strategies' to identify activities that may affect a species or site's status and outline their opinions on measures that would be appropriate to avoid, mitigate or compensate any adverse impacts.

2.1.2 *The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*

This transposes the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) into UK domestic law. It provides protection for sites and species deemed to be of conservation importance across Europe. It is an offence to deliberately capture, kill or injure species listed in Schedule 2 or to damage or destroy their breeding sites or shelter. It is also illegal to deliberately disturb these species in such a way that is likely to significantly impact on the local distribution or abundance or affect their ability to survive, breed and rear or nurture their young.

The EU Exit instrument makes changes to the three existing instruments which transpose the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives so that they continue to work (are operable) upon the UK's exit from the European Union (EU). These include The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and The Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This instrument also amends section 27 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to ensure existing protections continue.

The intention is to ensure habitat and species protection and standards as set out under the Nature Directives are implemented in the same way or an equivalent way when the UK exits the EU. There is no change to policy.

Sites designated under the Nature Directives previously contributed to the EU's Natura 2000 network. A national site network is created to retain the concept of a UK network of sites. The

‘national site network’ is defined as including Natura 2000 sites designated prior to EU exit and those Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated post EU Exit.

Current references to “European site”, “European Marine Site”, “Special Area of Conservation” and “Special Protection Area” are retained as there is no operability reason for these to change.

Management objectives are established for the national site network. Appropriate authorities are required to manage, and where necessary, adapt the national site network in cooperation with each other to meet the network’s management objectives. The management objectives are to:

- I. maintain or restore habitats and species listed in the Habitats Directive to a favourable conservation status; and
- II. contribute, in their area of distribution, to ensuring the survival and reproduction of wild birds and securing compliance with the overarching aims of the Wild Birds Directive.

2.1.3 The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)

This is the primary piece of legislation by which biodiversity is protected within the UK. Protected fauna and flora are listed under Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Act. They include all species of bats, making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb any bat whilst it is occupying a roost or to intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost. Similarly, this Act makes it an offence to kill or injure any species of British reptiles and also makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or to take, damage or destroy their eggs and nests (whilst in use or being built).

2.1.4 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)

This Act places a duty on Government Ministers and Departments to conserve biological diversity and provides police with stronger powers relating to wildlife crimes.

2.1.5 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)

This places a duty on authorities to have due regard for biodiversity and nature conservation during the course of a development.

2.2 Policy

The development seeks to comply with relevant Planning Policy at a local and national level.

2.2.1 National Planning Policy and Framework (2025)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2025) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

Chapter 15 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity, the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services, minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

The NPPF states that plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites and that the scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

To protect and enhance biodiversity plans should:

identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation;

and promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

The NPPF states determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b) development on land within or outside a SSSI, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of SSSI;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists;
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

2.2.2 Local: Mid Sussex District Council

Adopted in March 2018 the District Plan states nearly 50% of the District is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and over 10% is within the South Downs National Park. Mid Sussex is the tenth most wooded District in the South East and two-thirds of this

woodland is classified as 'ancient'. It also has many sites valued for their biodiversity including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, Local Nature Reserves and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.

Strategic Objectives to protect and enhance the environment include:

1. To promote development that makes the best use of resources and increases the sustainability of communities within Mid Sussex, and its ability to adapt to climate change
2. To promote well located and designed development that reflects the District's distinctive towns and villages, retains their separate identity and character and prevents coalescence
3. To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities
4. To protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities
5. To create and maintain easily accessible green infrastructure, green corridors and spaces around and within the towns and villages to act as wildlife corridors, sustainable transport links and leisure and recreational routes
6. To ensure that development is accompanied by the necessary infrastructure in the right place at the right time that supports development and sustainable communities. This includes the provision of efficient and sustainable transport networks

DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

The District Council will support the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows, and encourage new planting. In particular, ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees will be protected.

Development that will damage or lead to the loss of trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute, either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area, and/ or that have landscape, historic or wildlife importance, will not normally be permitted.

Proposals for new trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of suitable species, usually native, and where required for visual, noise or light screening purposes, trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of a size and species that will achieve this purpose.

Trees, woodland and hedgerows will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:

- incorporates existing important trees, woodland and hedgerows into the design of new development and its landscape scheme; and
- prevents damage to root systems and takes account of expected future growth; and
- where possible, incorporates retained trees, woodland and hedgerows within public open space rather than private space to safeguard their long-term management; and
- has appropriate protection measures throughout the development process; and

- takes opportunities to plant new trees, woodland and hedgerows within the new development to enhance on-site green infrastructure and increase resilience to the effects of climate change; and
- does not sever ecological corridors created by these assets.

Trees, woodland and hedgerows form part of the District's green infrastructure, and in particular, are important for health and well-being, biodiversity, and increasing resilience to the effects of climate change. Ancient woods are irreplaceable wildlife habitats with complex ecological conditions that have developed over centuries. They contain a wide range of wildlife including rare species, however, because the resource is limited and highly fragmented, ancient woodland and their associated wildlife are particularly vulnerable and must be protected from damaging effects of adjacent and nearby land uses that could threaten the integrity of the habitat and survival of its special characteristics.

The District Plan recognises this contribution and will support the protection of trees, woodland and hedgerows, as well as encouraging new planting. Development will be required to incorporate trees, woodland and hedgerows into the design and landscaping scheme.

All hedgerows on farmland and open land are protected and consent is required from the District Council to remove them. The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 also define 'important' hedgerows as being of particular archaeological, historical, wildlife or landscape value.

DP38: Biodiversity

Biodiversity will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:

- Contributes and takes opportunities to improve, enhance, manage and restore biodiversity and green infrastructure, so that there is a net gain in biodiversity, including through creating new designated sites and locally relevant habitats, and incorporating biodiversity features within developments; and
- Protects existing biodiversity, so that there is no net loss of biodiversity. Appropriate measures should be taken to avoid and reduce disturbance to sensitive habitats and species. Unavoidable damage to biodiversity must be offset through ecological enhancements and mitigation measures (or compensation measures in exceptional circumstances); and
- Minimises habitat and species fragmentation and maximises opportunities to enhance and restore ecological corridors to connect natural habitats and increase coherence and resilience; and
- Promotes the restoration, management and expansion of priority habitats in the District; and
- Avoids damage to, protects and enhances the special characteristics of internationally designated Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation; nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and locally designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, Local Nature Reserves and Ancient Woodland or to other areas identified as being of nature conservation or geological interest, including wildlife corridors, aged or veteran trees,

Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, and Nature Improvement Areas. Designated sites will be given protection and appropriate weight according to their importance and the contribution they make to wider ecological networks.

Policy DP38 'Biodiversity' reflects the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (section 11) where it relates to biodiversity and the natural environment. It takes into account the duty on the District Council to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Development proposals should be informed by local ecological and geological evidence and national guidance. Local ecological evidence should include protected and notable species as well as considering the potential effects of the development on the habitats and species on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 section 41 list.

DP17: Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

In order to prevent adverse effects on the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC, new development likely to have a significant effect, either alone or in combination with other development, will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures are put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects. Within a 400 metres buffer zone around Ashdown Forest, mitigation measures are unlikely to be capable of protecting the integrity of the SPA and, therefore, residential development will not be permitted.

Within a 7km zone of influence around the Ashdown Forest SPA, residential development leading to a net increase in dwellings will be required to contribute to mitigation through:

1. The provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to the minimum level of 8Ha per 1,000 net increase in population; or a financial contribution to SANGs elsewhere; or the provision of bespoke mitigation; and
2. A financial contribution to the Ashdown Forest Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) Strategy.

Large schemes proposed adjacent or close to the boundary of the 7km zone of influence may require mitigation for the SPA. Such proposals for development will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Where bespoke mitigation is provided, these measures will need to be in place before occupation of development and must be managed and maintained in perpetuity. The effectiveness of such mitigation will need to be demonstrated prior to approval of the development. Bespoke mitigation will need to be discussed and agreed by the District Council as the competent authority following advice from Natural England.

2.3 Biodiversity Action Plans & UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework

The UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework (JNCC & DEFRA, 2010) supersedes the UK Biodiversity Action Plan 1992-2012 (UKBAP), setting out goals relating to nature conservation at a UK scale, for example the reduction and reversal in the decline of threatened species and improving the status of biodiversity. The specific habitats and species contained within the UKBAP continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework, and are required to be a material consideration in the planning process under the 2021 NPPF.

3.0 BASELINE DATA

A desk-based assessment was carried out by Ecosupport as part of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SXBRC) was consulted in April 2024 for information on non-statutory designated sites and protected and notable species within the vicinity of the site.

The original extended Phase 2 habitat survey was carried out on 4th April 2024. The survey involved a walkover of the site to identify the habitat types present and to record evidence of the more commonly encountered protected species. The scope of the protected species was based on the habitats present with particular reference to bats, Badger (*Meles meles*), Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), breeding and wintering birds, reptiles, Great Crested Newt and invertebrates.

An updating extended Phase 2 habitat survey was carried out on 25th November 2025. This survey was aimed at providing assessment of the ecological features of the site to determine whether there had been any significant changes to the habitats present.

As part of the planning application the following surveys have been undertaken:

2016

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (The Ecology Partnership, May 2016)
- Bat Activity Surveys (The Ecology Partnership, Aug-Sep 2016)
- Dormouse Surveys (The Ecology Partnership, June-Nov 2016)
- Reptile Surveys (The Ecology Partnership, September 2016)
- GCN eDNA Survey (The Ecology Partnership, 2016)
- GCN Population Survey (The Ecology Partnership, 2016)

2017

- Breeding Bird Surveys (The Ecology Partnership, Feb-May 2017)

2018

- Bat Activity Surveys (The Ecology Partnership, Apr-Oct 2016)
- Dormouse Surveys (The Ecology Partnership, Oct 2018 – Oct 2019)
- Badger Survey (The Ecology Partnership)
- GCN eDNA Survey (The Ecology Partnership, 2018)
- GCN Population Survey (The Ecology Partnership, 2018)

2019

- Reptile Surveys (The Ecology Partnership, April-May 2019)

2021

- Updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (The Ecology Partnership, 2021)

2024

- Desktop Request Submitted to the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) (April 2024) (Ecosupport Ltd)
- Extended Phase I Habitat Survey (April 2024) (Ecosupport Ltd)
- Preliminary Roost Assessment (Trees) (April 2024) (Ecosupport Ltd)
- Reptile Surveys (2024)
- Dormouse Surveys (2024)
- Nighttime Bat Walkovers (NBW) (April-September 2024)
- Static Monitoring Surveys (April-September 2024)
- Breeding Bird Surveys (March-June 2024)
- Great Crested Newt presence/absence surveys (March-May 2024)

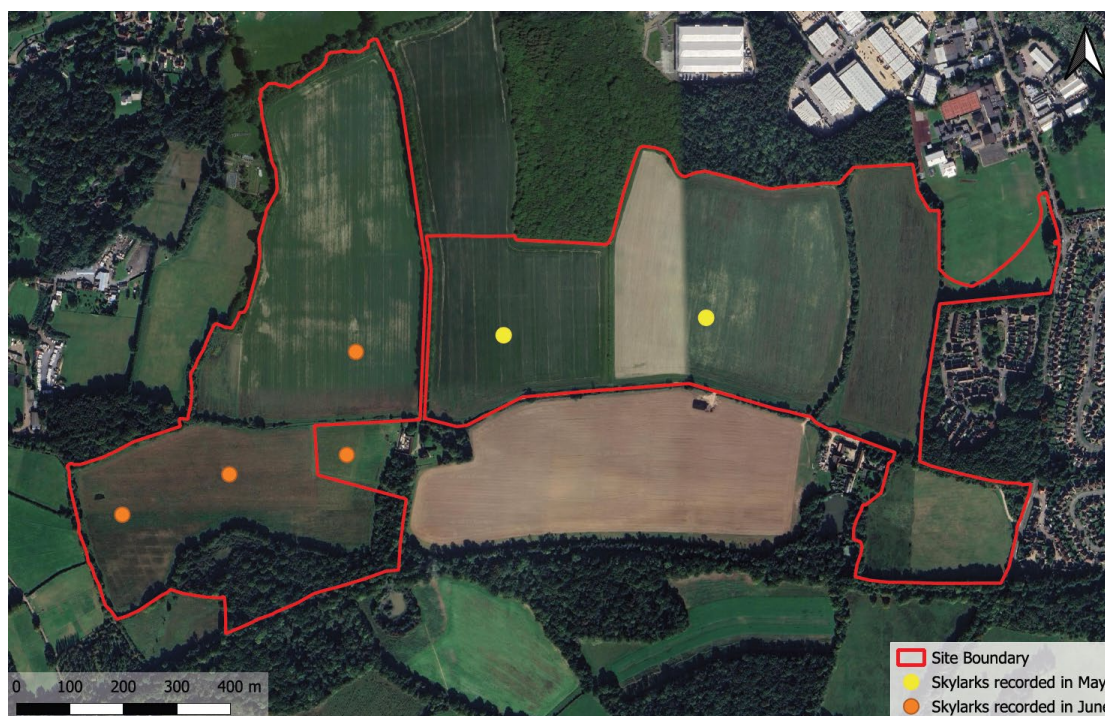
2025

- Updated walkover (November 2025)
- Habitat Suitability Indexes (HSIs) on ponds (November 2025)
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (November 2025)

3.1 Breeding Bird Surveys

During Breeding Bird Surveys (Ecosupport, March-June 2024) Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) activity was recorded across the whole site with fluidity in Skylark territories. In May male skylarks were recorded in the central fields with song-fighting males moving away from these fields after they were ploughed in late May. At least 2 remained in those central territories and 4 song-fighting males were recorded over the unploughed fields to the west of the site in early June. A total of at least 6 individuals were recorded across multiple locations within the redline boundary (**Figure 2**). No nesting or evidence of nesting was identified on site. As farmland species such as Skylark are not adaptive to semi-urban environments without a network of suitable open countryside, direct impacts as a result of development may lead to displace this species.

Figure 2. A map of the skylarks recorded during the breeding bird surveys (March-June 2024).



Although there is a network of open spaces and arable land within the wider area, to mitigate for the loss of foraging opportunities for farmland birds it is proposed to incorporate appropriate areas within open space in the western SANG to provide suitable breeding and foraging habitat for these species.

As the current arable habitat supports a limited species diversity it is considered the introduction of a winter weed mix will provide an increase in foraging opportunities for Skylarks also using habitats in the wider area. Recommended on-site mitigation also includes management of annual farmland weed species and wildflowers that will produce sources of seeds and invertebrates for foraging.

Further management practices are further described within this report in section 5.0.

4.0 SKYLARK ECOLOGY

4.1 Habitat Requirements

Skylarks are characteristic of agricultural landscapes and found on most areas of open farmland, preferring larger arable and grassland fields. They may also be found on pastoral fields with short growth crops or tussocky grass, making use of the nesting cover and bare ground for feeding that crops themselves provide throughout the year. Crops height between 20-50cm are preferred with cereal crops being the most favoured of the main arable crops.

To avoid predation from predators, Skylarks prefer open areas without tall or dense crops. Skylarks also avoid areas close to woods, arable-edge habitats, hedgerows and other vertical structures. Outside of the breeding season, Skylarks can be found in coastal marshes, pasture, fallow, stubble fields and fields with autumn-sown cereals or oil-seed rape. Due to the requirement for open habitat for foraging and nesting, field margins alone are not sufficient to sustain Skylark populations (Kuiper *et al*, 2015).

4.2 Diet

Skylarks are omnivorous and forage on the ground. Their diet consists of seeds of cereals and other crops, together with seeds of grasses and various weeds (EU Commission, 2007). Their diet is seasonal, with summer consisting of mainly insects and other invertebrates with a range of seeds and plant shoots including knotgrass, groundsel, fat hen and grasses consumed during winter. Chicks are entirely dependent on insects until fledging, favouring sawfly larvae, beetles, ants, spiders and grasshoppers.

4.3 Nesting & Courtship

Skylarks usually nest in a shallow hollow on the ground likely within partly concealed tussocks of grass or other vegetation but will avoid vegetation over 50 cm high (**Figure 3**). The depression, in which the nests are constructed, is lined with stems and leaves and the inner part is lined with finer materials like hair. Skylarks lay 3-4 eggs most commonly, however in some cases they may produce up to 5 eggs.

Figure 3. A Skylark nest located amongst tussocky grassland (image for illustrative purposes. Google Images, 2023).



Birds arrive at their breeding grounds from mid-February to early April, with breeding occurring from late March or early April to August and September. To maintain population densities, Skylarks need to produce up to three broods a season. For this reason, it is important that habitats are managed in a way to ensure suitable foraging and nesting habitat is available throughout most of the year. Winter-sown crops and silage fields are only suitable for a single brood, making buffer strips and spring crops essential to maintain adult populations over periods of time.

During courtship male Skylarks display several unique courtship behaviours, whilst the females do not. Males will sing throughout the day, starting in the dawn hours. Skylark song, on the ground or in flight, can be heard in the UK all months of the year. However, there are considerable seasonal fluctuations in the frequency and quantity of the song (Donald, 2004), with the song mostly heard February through July (Hyman, 2006). As a courtship display for females, males will begin their warbling vocal song and rise vertically 50-100m from the ground, where they will hover for several minutes before slowly spiraling down with periods of hovering in the air. These courtship behaviours can proceed for 10-15 minutes.

5.0 IMPACTS IN THE ABSENCE OF MITIGATION

5.1 Skylarks

5.1.1 Construction Phase

If completed during nesting bird season, stripping and removal of arable habitat is likely to result in disturbance to and destruction of the nests of ground nesting birds (including Skylark). In addition, permanent loss of this habitat will result in the loss of a breeding habitat and wintering foraging resource and potentially displace individuals using this foraging habitat.

With this considered, there will be a likely ***adverse impact at the local level.***

5.1.2 Operational Phase

New residential development has the potential for increases in domestic pets which may predate on Skylark eggs or young. Domestic pets (e.g. cats) may present risk to Skylarks using the whole site in addition to the neighbouring habitats however, it is more likely that cats will remain within the gardens and open space within the development boundary for the majority of the newly occupied houses. As a result, an ***adverse impact is likely at a local level.***

5.0 MITIGATION & ENHANCEMENTS

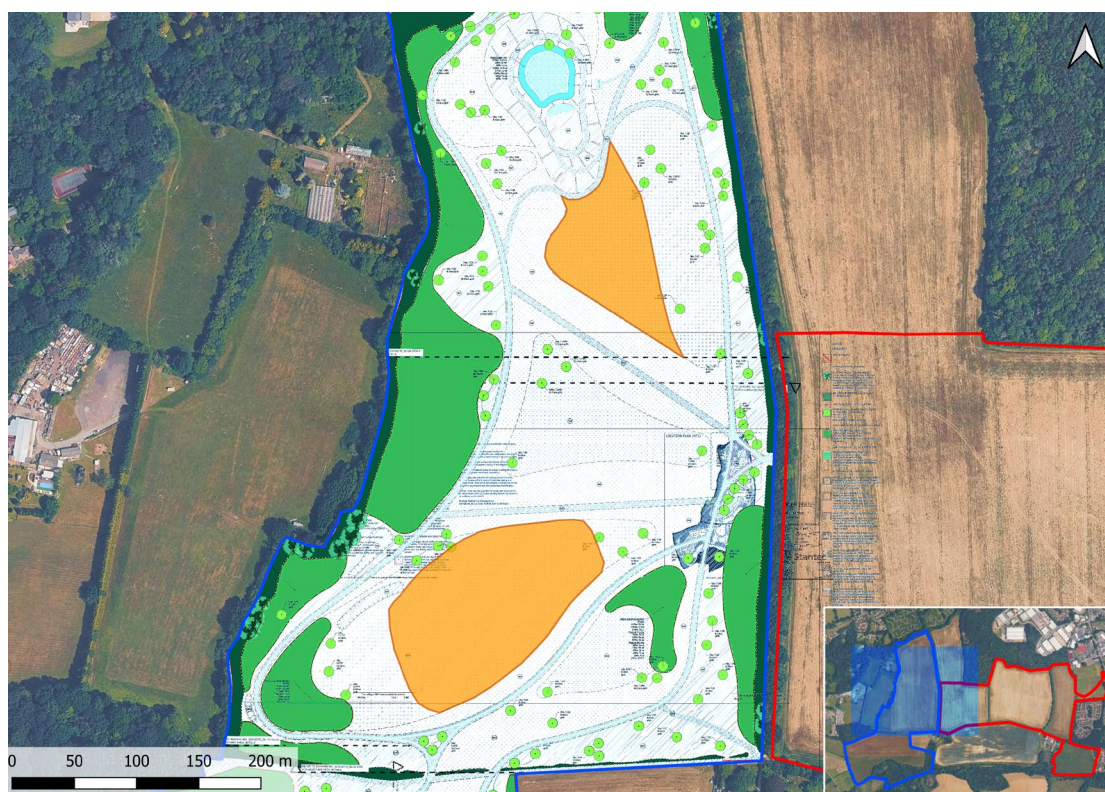
This section details the measures that will be implemented to mitigate against the impacts to Skylarks identified on site and provide targeted and proportionate ecological enhancements.

5.1 Skylark Plots

To provide nesting and foraging opportunities for Skylarks (*Alauda arvensis*) a series of skylark plots will be created within the two grassland areas within the SANG (**Figure 4**). The plots will provide open, short-tussocky sward habitat that is suitable to skylarks for nesting and breeding while remaining compatible with the wider grassland management regime.

The skylark plots will be mown patches (typically 10–20 m across) within the central grassland block, distributed to ensure good connectivity and avoid edge effects from surrounding trees and scrub.

Figure 4. The area of habitat on site which will be enhanced for Skylarks and planted with a winter seed mix (highlighted in yellow).



5.2 Habitat Creation

Habitats within the Skylark areas will comprise of open grassland with absence of boundary woodland or hedgerows. To provide a range of food for juvenile Skylarks, undisturbed border strips of 1-2m wide should be situated around the boundaries of the grassland, particularly in fields that support monocultures or low species-diversity in order to provide additional food

resources for late breeding individuals. Boundary habitats should be maintained at a length of 20-30cm (Piha *et al*, 2003) throughout the year.

5.3 Precautionary Measures

Any stripping of the arable habitats or boundary vegetation clearance will take place outside of bird nesting season (i.e. removal will not take place between March – August). If this isn't possible any removal will need to be supervised by an ecologist. In the case that a Skylark nest is identified during works it will be safeguarded with the implementation of a 50m buffer, within which no works will be able to take place until the Ecologist has confirmed the chicks have fledged and the nest is no longer active.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This document has been prepared to bring together all the existing ecological information for Land at Imberhorne Farm, East Grinstead, with the aim of providing a means to address a condition in regard to Skylark mitigation, and all ecological constraints identified. Current proposals aim to provide opportunities for enhancement that are consistent with the aims of national and local planning policy.

The key constraints identified included mitigation for the habitat loss of Skylarks (*Alauda arvensis*). Mitigation measures will include the provision of Skylark plots and a 50m buffer erected around any Skylark nests identified on site during works.

It is considered that should all aspects of this document will be implemented; adequate mitigation can be achieved to minimise impacts of existing population of protected and notable species and a net gain in the site's biodiversity value achieved.

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