TECHNICAL NOTE: LUDGERSHALL H1.1 ALLOCATION 20/06554/FUL. Skylark Mitigation Strategy Specification

Foreman Homes Ltd

June 2025

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This technical note has been prepared on behalf of Foreman Homes to provide a specification for skylark mitigation in relation to an approved residential development on Land at Empress Way Ludgershall (20/06554/FUL). As part of the approval, a bird mitigation strategy is required as specified in Schedule 11 of the Section 106 agreement to be signed between Foreman Homes and Wiltshire Council. Schedule 11 is worded as below (in its draft form).

Schedule 11 Bird Mitigation Measures

- The First Owner and the Second Owner covenant to the Council:

- That prior to Commencement of Development it shall submit the Bird Mitigation Strategy to the Council for approval.

- Not to Commence Development unless and until the Bird Mitigation Strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

- That prior to Commencement of Development it shall submit the Bird Mitigation Land Management Plan to the Council for approval.

- Not to Commence Development unless and until the Bird Mitigation Land Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

- That prior to Commencement of Development it shall implement the Bird Mitigation Strategy.Not to Commence Development unless and until the Bird Mitigation Strategy has been implemented in full (save for any ongoing maintenance and management) and written confirmation in writing of such implementation has been issued by the Council. A Breeding Bird Survey must be carried out and submitted to the Council within 12 months of Commencement of Development.

- The First Owner and the Second Owner shall maintain and comply with the Bird Mitigation Strategy and Bird Mitigation Land Management Plan and it is acknowledged that the Bird Mitigation Land will be bound by the obligations set out in Schedule 11 of this Deed for the lifetime of the Development

1.2 Bird mitigation for the loss of habitat from the development specifically relates to nesting skylark, which have been recorded on the land during surveys between 2020 and 2024. Therefore mitigation is targeted at skylark and this specification is relevant to this species only, although other farmland bird species will benefit from the provisions.

2.0 MITIGATION STRATEGY

2.1 It is agreed that skylark plots will be provided on land at Beacon Hill Farm, Cholderton, approximately 9.5km southwest of the site. The available area totalling 136ha is a matrix of arable fields which will be managed favourably for skylark by implementing skylark plots as per RSPB guidance. Proposed skylark plot areas are outside of the predicted noise impact zone from the nearby shooting school (approved under PL/2023/11131) as shown in plate 1 below.



Plate 1 – Orange line demonstrates land available for skylark mitigation plots. The blue line demonstrates the approved suitable land with <70 dB predicted noise impacts.

2.2 The number of plots to be implemented has been determined by the number of pairs recorded breeding on the approved application area during breeding bird surveys in 2025. As per the councils requirements for skylark mitigation, two plots will be provided per pair recorded using the phase 2 area. Three breeding bird surveys surveys took place on the 15th May, 5th of June and 19th June 2025. Specialist nest finding surveyors visited the site for four hours after dawn looking for evidence to confirm nesting behaviour. This included following back birds carrying food or watching back birds carrying faecal sacs away from nests. A picture of one nest with two chicks present is included below.



Picture 1- Skylark nest with two chicks

2.3 During the surveys a total of four skylark nests were found to be present. Eight skylark plots will be implanted on an annual basis at the Beacon Hill farm site. The proposed plot locations are shown in Figure 1 at the end of this document.

2.4 Skylark plots increase the number of chicks that skylarks can rear in winter cereals. Winter cereal fields with skylark plots hold more nesting skylarks throughout the breeding season than conventional cereal fields, especially late in the season when numbers in conventional fields tail off as the crop becomes taller and thicker[1]. A before-and-after study found an increase in skylark population on a farm after the creation of skylark plots; a replicated,

[1] http://www.rspb.org.uk/images/skylarkplot_tcm9-132769.pdf

controlled study found higher densities of skylarks on fields with plots, compared to those without[2].

2.5 It is best to create skylark plots in fields that are to be sown with winter cereals. The fields should be more than 5ha in size and have an open aspect. Fields bounded by trees or adjacent woods are not suitable unless they are larger than 10ha. Skylark plots are created by switching off the drill (or lifting it up) to create undrilled patches at least 3m wide. Aim for each plot to be between 16m^2 and 24m^2. Table 1 indicates the ideal length for plots created with different drill widths. A tail-off of cereal grain in the plot after the drill has been switched off or lifted up is to be expected.

Table 1: Guidance on the ideal plot length in relation to the width of the drill

Drill width (m)	Plot length (m)
3	6 to 8
4	4 to 6
6	3 to 4
8	3

The eight skylark plots will be implemented during the 2026 breeding season. A site visit will be made to confirm their presence and as per the wording of the S106 agreement, breeding bird surveys will be undertaken with a report of the findings submitted to the LPA in spring and summer 2026.

[redacted]

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[2] http://www.conservationevidence.com/actions/214

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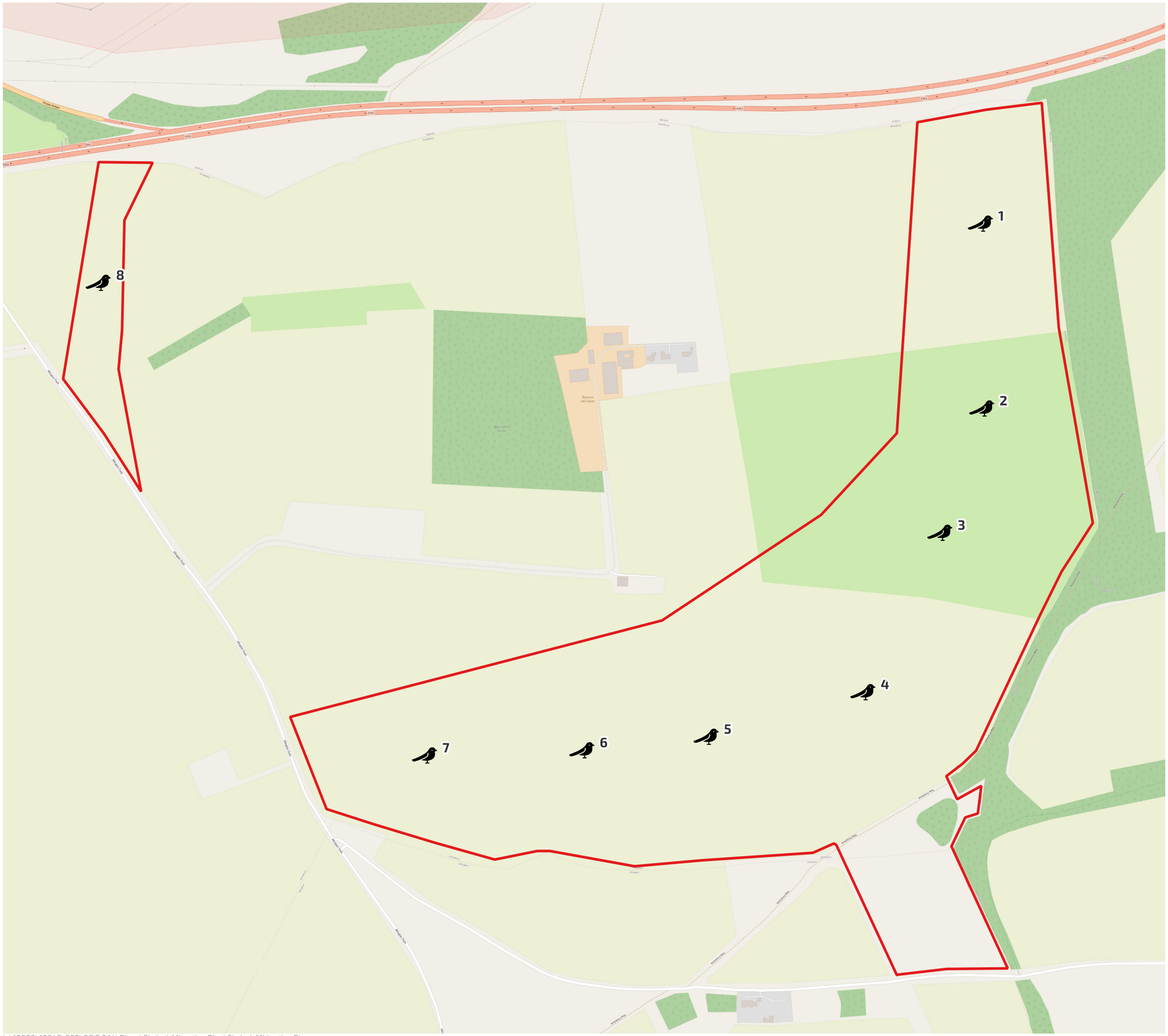

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0 100 200 m

Notes:

Skylark Mitigation Plots have been suggested in areas where predicted shooting noise is not expected to exceed 70 dB.

Skylark Mitigation Area

Skylark Mitigation Plots

date
20/06/25

drwn/chkd
EBH / APD

client
Master Land & Planning

project
Land at Empress Way
Ludgershall

title
SKYLARK MITIGATION PLAN

scale
1:10,000 @ A3

number
FIGURE 1

rev
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