



Title	Skylark Plot Schedule of Maintenance
Date	10 February 2021
Client	Bloor Homes Eastern
Site	Station Road, Long Melford
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Introduction

Southern Ecological Solutions Ltd (SES) was commissioned by Bloor Homes Eastern to prepare a schedule of maintenance to comply with the approved details contained in the Technical Note: Skylark Mitigation Strategy produced by FPCR (April 2019) for the proposed development of up to 150 residential dwellings on land off Station Road, Long Melford, Suffolk (hereafter referred to as the “site,” Appendix 1).

This document is intended to provide sufficient information to discharge Condition 6 of the Decision Notice (Application reference: DC/18/00606, dated 1 April 2020) and details measures for the creation and ongoing maintenance of skylark *Alauda arvensis* plots for a minimum of a ten-year period and should be read in conjunction with the Technical Note: Skylark Mitigation Strategy produced by FPCR (April 2019).

Condition 6

“All mitigation measures for Skylarks shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details contained in the Technical Note: Skylark Mitigation Strategy (FPCR, April 2019), with the approved Skylark plots retained for a minimum period of 10 years from the date that development commences and no development shall commence until those plots have been provided.”

Site Description

The Ecological Appraisal (FPCR 2018) described the site as 8.23ha of arable land with an area of poor semi-improved grassland, a dry ditch and small areas of dense scrub and tall ruderal. It lies to the south of the village of Long Melford, with additional residential housing to the west and arable land to the south and east, The River Stour was present c.180m west.

Proposed Skylark Mitigation

Previous breeding bird surveys undertaken by FPCR (2018) identified a peak count of two singing skylark males within the site. The technical note produced by FPCR details the requirement for four skylark plots to mitigate the loss of suitable ground nesting habitat (arable) to the proposed development. The aim of the creation of plots is to provide the local skylark population with access to suitable nesting habitat and foraging areas which are to be maintained for a minimum period of 10 years. The Technical Note states that the plots will be:

- Minimum 3m x 6m in size;
- Incorporated within a suitably-sized (10ha minimum where fields are bounded by trees) arable parcel of land;
- Placed at a minimum density of two per hectare (minimum of 2ha required for four plots) within fields containing winter cereal;
- Positioned at least 50m from field boundaries and margins, and between tramlines wherever possible;
- Located within fields where skylarks are present or have been in the past.

The plots will be created either by:

- turning off the drill during sowing to leave an unsown plot, or
- sowing the crop as normal and spraying with herbicide to create the plot by 31 December.

Upon creation, the plots can be managed in line with the remainder of the field. There is no requirement to keep the plots weed-free, however spot-treating with herbicide in April can help skylarks to access the nesting sites where weeds are becoming problematic. Mechanical weeding of crops containing skylark plots is not recommended as this may destroy any nests present.

Outside the 2 hectares of winter cereal in which the plots will be provided, the remaining 9 hectares of the field will remain under standard arable cultivation as required by the landowner.

Over the ten year maintenance period, the 2ha required for the skylark plots could remain static or the location could be rotated to other areas of the field providing the 2ha area is over 50m from any boundary treatments and is cultivated using winter cereal.

Schedule of Works

The table overleaf summarises the proposed schedule of works including the creation and maintenance of four skylark plots over a ten year period.



Table 1: Work Schedule

Management Prescriptions	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10
Four 4x4m created at a density of 2 p/ha prior to starting works on site.	✓									
Spot treatment of plots with herbicide in April (where necessary)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maintenance of original plot or creation of new plots to ensure a minimum of four plots at any one time (2 p/ha) at least 50m from boundaries between March and August in any year		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Compliance monitoring by suitably qualified ecologist in 3 of the 10 years at random										

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