Homes for Nature Annual Report

Year 1 2025/26



Future Homes Hub

Homes for Nature

Introducing Homes for Nature

Homes for Nature is a voluntary industry initiative developed by the Future Homes Hub's On-Site Nature Measures Working Group, to enhance biodiversity on new housing developments beyond the requirements of Biodiversity Net Gain regulations. Created in collaboration with leading conservation organisations including the RSPB, Action for Swifts and Hedgehog Street, the initiative provides practical guidance to help homebuilders integrate simple yet effective measures for wildlife into new communities.

Since its launch, Homes for Nature has secured the support of 28 homebuilders collectively delivering more than 100,000 homes each year. Participating companies have committed to installing a bird nesting brick or box for every new home built and providing hedgehog highways as standard on developments entering planning from 1 September 2024. Together, these commitments represent a significant contribution towards creating hundreds of thousands of new nesting opportunities for swifts and other bird species, while helping reconnect habitats for hedgehogs and other wildlife.

Alongside these core measures, the initiative encourages the adoption of additional features such as bat roosts, insect bricks, hibernacula, pollinator-friendly landscaping and nature-led sustainable drainage systems. By embedding nature into the design of new developments, Homes for Nature demonstrates how the homebuilding industry can play a meaningful role in creating thriving places where people and wildlife can flourish together.

Our Signatories

BARGATE
Barratt Redrow
Bellway
BLOOR HOMES
CALA
CARR
CARBON NEUTRAL HOMES
CLARION HOUSING GROUP
CREST NICHOLSON
Croudace HOMES GROUP
DH DEANFIELD HOMES
DUCHY of CORNWALL
DURKAN HOMES
HOPKINS HOMES
HAYFIELD
Keepmoat
LIONCOURT HOMES
LOVELL
miller homes
Lucy Developments
Vistry Group
strata
NEILCOTT
orbit homes
THAKEHAM
SEVEN DEVELOPMENTS
Persimmon Plc

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1. Executive summary

Homes for Nature is a five-year voluntary commitment by homebuilders to incorporate measures for wildlife into new developments. Since September 2024, signatories have committed to include universal integral nest bricks, hedgehog highways and planting for nature in new planning applications, alongside a wider set of recommended measures.

This first annual report provides an early picture of delivery. In 2025/26, signatories reported 14,553 universal integral nest bricks, 748 continuous hedgehog highway routes, 2,424 measures for insects and 5,233 bat features. Of the nest bricks reported, 3,542 were installed because of Homes for Nature, and of the hedgehog highways reported, 216 were installed because of Homes for Nature - rather than an existing local planning requirement - providing early evidence of additionality.

Homes for Nature tracks measures that have been built and installed, rather than those included in planning applications or permissions. This provides a robust picture of delivery but creates an inevitable lag: many homes being completed today were planned before Homes for Nature began. Annual reporting over the five years will build a clearer picture of delivery and allow the Hub and signatories to learn from implementation and refine the approach.

The policy context has also moved on significantly. The 2026 NPPF introduces stronger expectations for nature in new development, including features for species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs. The Hub worked with government as this policy was developed, drawing on the experience of Homes for Nature and its signatories. As the new policy takes effect, Homes for Nature reporting can provide an early picture of how these measures are being implemented in practice by developers.



Jo Stott
Associate Environmental Sustainability Director, Miller Homes



Gemma Jerome
Head of Nature, Future Homes Hub

1.1 Programme Commitments

The Homes for Nature initiative combines clear technical standards with practical, on-site advice from wildlife experts, to support UK homebuilders with the delivery of on-site nature measures on their new developments.

- **Timeline:** A five-year initiative encompassing all completed plots from September 2024 to September 2030.
- **Mandate:** Signatories commit to an annual review of progress and outcomes, working with the Hub to collect data relating to delivery of mandatory on-site nature measures.
- **Mandatory Measures:** Equivalent of one universal integral nest brick per plot installed in line with the British Standard BS 42021:2022, with an adapted ratio for apartments, as well as one beneficial hedgehog highway route per development footprint or completed phase.
- **Voluntary Measures:** Further on-site measures are actively encouraged, such as provision for bats (roosting tiles, boxes and bricks), and provision for insects (bee bricks, insect bricks, and bee towers).
- **Site-specific:** The location, number, distribution and type of measures are decided on the basis of professional ecological advice for each site.
- **Coordinated by the Hub:** The Future Homes Hub coordinates the programme, supports signatories and publishes aggregated results.



2. Year 1 – What We Know So Far

Homes for Nature tracks measures that have been built, giving a clear picture of what is being delivered on the ground.

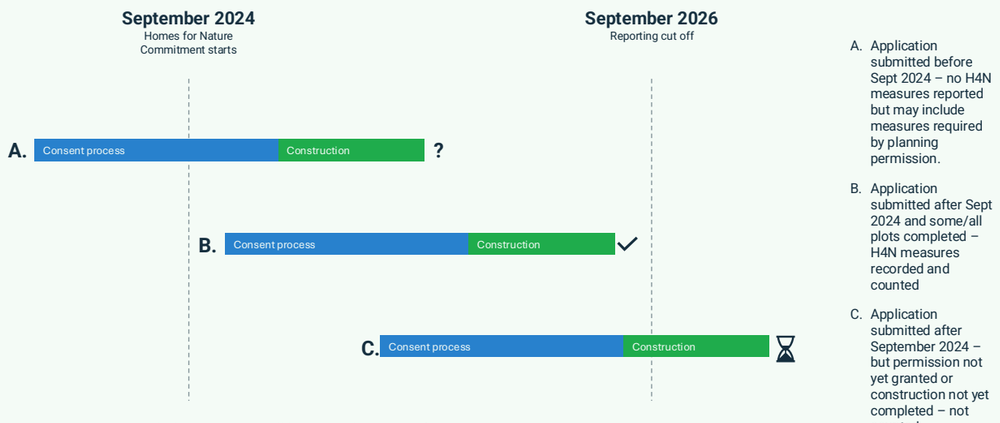
2.1 Interpreting the First-Year Data

The Year 1 Reporting Guidance sets out what signatories are required to do, what they are encouraged to do, and what they must report on. This report presents figures aggregated across all signatories.

2.2 The Planning Pipeline Lag

Because the Homes for Nature commitment applies to new planning applications submitted after September 2024, there is a natural two-to-three-year lag before these sites reach physical completion on the ground. Developments commenced before the start of the Homes for Nature scheme, may also run for several years and may not include the measures required by the Homes for Nature scheme. Consequently, Year 1 data captures schemes submitted before 2024 where on-site measures were already required by planning, plots completed on schemes submitted for planning after September 2024, and plots completed where homebuilders are voluntarily going ahead with on-site measures in line with their Homes for Nature commitment. This is an evolving project that the entire sector is actively learning from.





Measures recorded in year one will be a combination of:
a) schemes submitted before 2024 where measures were already required by planning and
b) plots completed on schemes submitted for planning after Sept 2024

2.3 Summary of Year 1 Delivery

14,553
UNIVERSAL INTEGRAL NEST BRICKS REPORTED

5,233
BAT FEATURES

3,542
NEST BRICKS INSTALLED BECAUSE OF HOMES FOR NATURE

2,424
MEASURES FOR INSECTS

748
CONTINUOUS HEDGEHOG HIGHWAY ROUTES

216
HEDGE HOG HIGHWAYS INSTALLED BECAUSE OF HOMES FOR NATURE



House Sparrow using a Manthorpe Brick
John Day, RSPB



Ridge roost for bats
Bat Conservation Trust





3. Mandatory Measures & Reporting Framework

Homes for Nature resulted in additional nest bricks on developments where planning did not require them.



3.1 Universal Integral Nest Bricks & Additionality

- **Year 1 delivery:** During Year 1, signatories reported 14,553 universal integral nest bricks across 76,050 low-rise plots, 2,031 small apartment buildings, and 2,783 large apartment buildings. Local planning policies or conditions mandated 11,011 of these installations. Consequently, the Homes for Nature initiative resulted in the delivery of 3,542 additional bricks where they were not already required through planning, creating additional nesting opportunities for swifts and other cavity-nesting birds.

- **Meeting the technical standard BS42021:** The Homes for Nature commitment aims to deliver universal integrated nest bricks at an equivalent ratio of one brick per plot, adhering to the BS42021:2022 technical standard. This target does not require a strict 1:1 allocation on every plot; instead, bricks can be distributed flexibly across a development – ranging from zero on some plots to a maximum of six on others – to achieve the overall 1:1 average. Whilst current completion data reflects a gap in meeting this ratio due to planning pipeline lags, this baseline is projected to scale toward the target by Year 4 or Year 5 as post-September 2024 planning approvals transition into active construction.

3.2 Hedgehog Highway Routes

- **Year 1 delivery:** In Year 1, signatories reported 748 continuous hedgehog highway routes. Of these, 532 were required through local planning policy or planning conditions, while 216 were installed as a result of the Homes for Nature commitment.

- **Defining a Single Route:** The Homes for Nature commitment is to deliver at least one continuous hedgehog highway route per development or completed phase. A single route is defined as a continuous, unbroken network of garden connectivity across a group of plots. For example, if a site-wide web of 13cm x 13cm fence holes allows a hedgehog to traverse an entire residential block without encountering an impermeable barrier, this is logged as a single route. To help signatories to install, monitor and collect data on these continuous networks, the Hub will introduce light-touch updates to reporting templates ahead of Year 2 data collection cycle. This will support site teams in logging cohesive routes, rather than the individual features (such as 'hedgehog holes') that comprise them.



4. Recommended Measures

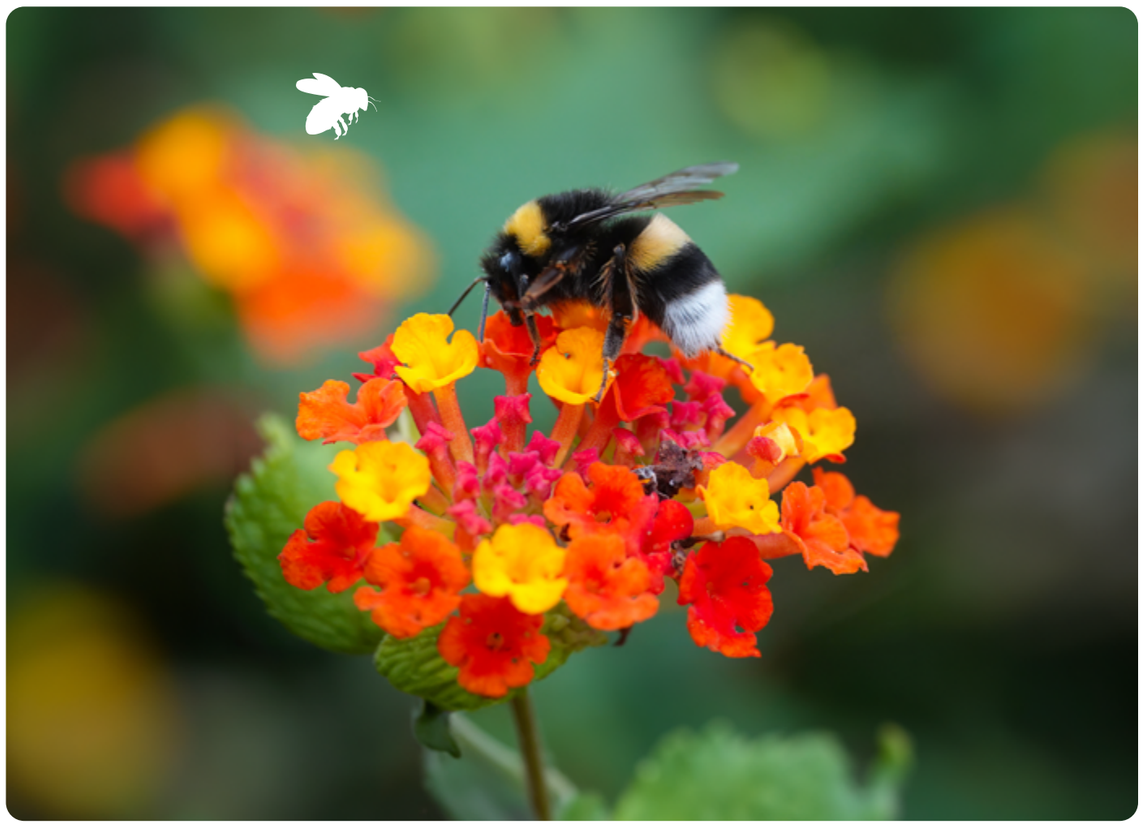


In addition to mandatory targets, the Homes for Nature Guidance Document also sets out recommended measures. These are voluntary and support a wider range of species:

- **Provisions for Insects:** Signatories delivered 2,424 insect measures (including specialised solitary bee bricks, insect bricks and bee towers).

- **Bat Features:** Signatories installed 5,233 bat features (including integrated bat roost tiles, boxes and tiles).

- **Nature-Led SuDS Design:** Installing Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), where appropriate, that incorporate soft landscaping and nature-rich planting, incorporate the whole management train, and align planting with good practice guidance to combine surface water management with wetland creation, and associated biodiversity and climate benefits (RSPB and WWT, 2012).







LIONCOURT HOMES

5.1 Case Study: Early Adoption by an SME Homebuilder

Developer: Lioncourt Homes

Scheme Focus: The Croft, Keresley (Coventry) – 171-home residential development.

The Approach: Lioncourt Homes incorporated the full set of Homes for Nature measures into a live development at an early stage, despite these features not being specifically required by the local planning authority. Working with Ethos Ecology, the completed scheme will include:

- Birds & Bats: 78 integrated nest bricks and 5 non-integral bricks for swifts, paired with 72 dedicated bat boxes.
- Highways & Insects: 10 continuous hedgehog routes woven through garden boundaries, paired with 5 integrated bee bricks.

Key Lessons Learned:

- Lioncourt noted that implementing HfN standards on a site where they were not legally required demanded additional coordination across design, ecology, and technical delivery teams.
- Early collaboration from the outset is critical to identifying suitable structural locations and maximising biodiversity outcomes.



> "Implementing Homes for Nature measures on developments where they were not a planning requirement presented additional challenges and required close coordination between our design, ecology and delivery teams. As the programme was rolled out, building awareness and understanding of the requirements across project teams took time, but it has also provided valuable learning. We found that early collaboration between urban design, ecology and technical teams is essential to identify the most suitable locations and maximise biodiversity benefits. Equally, establishing clear tracking and monitoring processes from the outset helps ensure effective delivery and robust reporting of Homes for Nature measures."
>
> **Gemma Corrigan, Senior Urban Designer, Lioncourt Homes**

Barratt Redrow

5.2 Case Study: Swift Bricks at Scale



Developer: Barratt Redrow

Scheme Focus: Creating homes for swifts at scale – across new developments nationwide, from low-rise housing to high-rise apartment buildings.

- **Evidence in use: Honeyman's Helm, Highworth** - Swift occupation has been confirmed in a Manthorpe swift brick at a David Wilson Homes development at Highworth, Swindon, providing a clear example of features being used by the target species.

The Approach: Since 2016 Barratt Redrow has worked with the RSPB to incorporate swift bricks into new homes, providing permanent nesting spaces within external walls. More than 9,000 bricks have been purchased for installation so far, but ultimately, the aim is to provide the equivalent of a universal swift nesting brick for every home built as we progress through the five-year commitment.

Key Lessons Learned:

- **Universal bricks support more than one species**
  - Integral nest bricks provide durable nesting opportunities within new homes.
  - They can support swifts and other cavity-nesting birds, including house sparrows.
  - They help raise public awareness of declining species and the importance of protecting nesting sites.
  - The findings show the wider value of incorporating simple, cost-effective wildlife measures from the start of planning.
- **Challenges**
  - Swift occupation can take time, so long-term monitoring is needed to build a strong evidence base.
  - Swift bricks can benefit other cavity-nesting species even before swifts occupy them.
  - Installation should form part of an integrated approach to nature, rather than being viewed as a standalone measure.
  - Clear communication is needed for consultants, customers and Local Planning Authorities to explain how the Homes for Nature commitment applies as developments move from planning to construction.



> "One of the key lessons from this initiative is that nature needs time. Swift occupation may not happen immediately, which is why long-term visions are so important to understand how these measures are working and to build robust evidence over time. We have also seen that swift bricks can provide benefits for other cavity-nesting species even before swifts move in. But individual features are only part of the picture. They work best when they form part of a wider approach to creating nature enriched places, with habitats and Homes for Nature measures considered together. Clear communication with consultants, customers and Local Planning Authorities is also critical to ensure that the intent behind our Homes for Nature commitments is understood and carried through from planning and design into construction and delivery, and within time, wildlife using such features."
>
> **Mel Arthur, Head of Biodiversity, Barratt Redrow**

6. Policy Context



6.1 Homes for Nature in the NPPF

Homes for Nature measures align closely with the new expectations in the NPPF (Policy N2) and the updated Natural Environment PPG (paragraph 017). The Homes for Nature Guidance, which combines technical standards such as BS 42021:2022 with practical advice from ecologists, can help homebuilders meet them.

6.2. The Bigger Picture: Resident Engagement & Long-Term Success

The long-term value of Homes for Nature measures depends on the maintenance and protection once homes are occupied. Both residents and management companies have a role to play in this ongoing stewardship.

- **Securing Long-Term Success:** To ensure local wildlife benefits from on-site measures into the long term, signatories are actively raising awareness of their functionality and value at the community level. For example, developers are installing signage at wildlife access points to increase awareness (e.g. “Hedgehog Highway – Please Keep Open”) and embedding clear, engaging biodiversity guides in homeowner welcome packs.

- **Growing Nature Connection:** Moving forward, developers are exploring new opportunities for communities to participate in ‘citizen science’ initiatives. This includes encouraging residents to log local wildlife sightings via digital tools such as Swift Mapper. Beyond fostering a personal connection with local nature, this active participation contributes valuable data to local and national environmental records centres, as well as Natural England. These engagement activities build public trust in homebuilders’ commitments to nature recovery and boost the health and wellbeing benefits of nature connection for individuals and communities.

- **Role of Management and Monitoring:** Designing and installing on-site measures adds inherent complexity and cost to residential developments. Securing these long-term benefits requires dedicated operational capabilities, including consistent funding and skilled management, to monitor and maintain integrated features.

  Management companies are vital to this process, incorporating these requirements into their site-wide approach to regularly inspect features and resolve defects. This applies to both on-plot and off-plot measures, such as bat roosting trees and nest boxes. Complexity and cost can be reduced if long-term management informs design decisions from the outset, rather than being dealt with at handover: for example, making sure there is suitable access for mowing. Homes for Nature measures can also be built into wider long-term biodiversity commitments on site, such as Habitat Monitoring and Management Plans (HMMPs).



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Future Homes Hub

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futurehomes.org.uk

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