HBF wishes to offer the following comments in response to the Leicestershire LNRS consultation:

HBF welcomes the efforts to progress Local Nature Strategies there are an important piece of the evidence base for Local Plans.

House builders recognise the importance of these documents and the role the industry can play making their contribution to help address the nature crisis.  As such we wish to be involved in their preparation at the earliest opportunity.

HBF note that on 19th Feb, mid-way through your LNRS consultation, the Government published new Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on how LNRSs and should inform plan-making, see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment#local-nature-recovery-strategies>

It will therefore be important for the Leicestershire LNRS to be very clear on the role and function of the document for the purposes of plan-making and planning applications.   It needs to be clear what the document does, that identified constraints and opportunities on ecology.  The LNRS will form part of the evidence base of the Local Plan and will therefore feed into the local plan making process.  It should also be clear what the document is not.  It will not determine where growth will be located, it does not allocate sites that have to be protected from development, and it should not be used to prevent development and such decision are, and remain, part of the Local Plan making and planning application processes, which have their own requirements for evidence gathering, decision-making, public consultation and engagement.

Delivery of Biodiversity Net again is one example of how new development can provide a win-win delivering improvements for nature as well whilst also addressing the housing crisis.  The LNRS provides an opportunity to help identify where efforts and resources to deliver BNG could best be concentrated, but this is in the context of delivering for nature and housing together, not using nature to stop house building.  This is very important given the requirements for 10% BNG.  It is therefore essential the industry is involved in finalising the strategy and implementing it.

HBF would welcome the opportunity the have further discussions on how the home building industry can continue to engage with the LNRS.   I would be happy to discuss these issues with you in greater detail or assist in facilitating discussions with the wider house building industry.