

NOTICE OF MOTION FOR FULL COUNCIL

See [Part D of the Council's Constitution – Council Procedure Rules](#) – for the rules on motions

Title of Motion:	Mandating Swift Bricks in New Developments
Date of Council meeting:	15th July, 2025
Proposer of Motion: (Name, and signature if hard copy submitted)	Councillor Emma Oldham
Seconder of Motion: (Name, and signature if hard copy submitted)	Councillor Claire Penny

Background/supporting information (maximum 300 words):

- The UK's population of swifts, house martins, house sparrows and other cavity-nesting urban birds is in steep decline, with four of the eight species known to use swift bricks now on the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern (Common swift, House martin, Common starling, House sparrow).
- Modern construction techniques, insulation schemes and sealed buildings are accelerating the loss of natural nesting sites.
- Swifts and similar species are 100% reliant on buildings for breeding and are site-faithful, returning to the same location each year.
- Swift bricks provide a proven, low-cost (Approx £25), zero-maintenance solution to support multiple cavity-nesting bird species in built environments.
- The update of biodiversity features in housing developments remains inconsistent and largely unenforceable under current planning guidance alone.
- There is a British Standard for integral bird nest boxes, making the technology of 'swift bricks' feasible and operable at scale.
- An amendment to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, currently passing through Parliament, seeks to mandate the inclusion of swift bricks in all new housing developments, and that, without inclusion in legislation or Building Regulations, the action remains optional and unenforceable.
- Other elements, such as air bricks, are already regulated via Building Regulations, proving that small design features like swift bricks can and should be included.
- Studies consistently demonstrate the wellbeing benefits of everyday access to nature – including urban birdlife – for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Motion to be proposed (active section):

This Council acknowledges the significant and ongoing decline in swift and other cavity-nesting bird populations across the UK, with four species known to use swift bricks now on the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern. These species, including swifts and house martins, rely entirely on buildings for breeding and are rapidly losing nesting sites due to modern construction practices and insulation schemes that seal off access to traditional cavities.

Council therefore resolves to:

1. **Formally support the call to mandate swift bricks** through an amendment to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill and/or via changes to Building Regulations.
2. **Write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities**, the local MP for Newark, and relevant Ministers at DEFRA, urging the UK Government to:

- Accept or table an amendment to the Bill requiring mandatory installation of swift bricks in all suitable new housing developments
- Commit to updating Building Regulations to incorporate integral nest bricks for cavity-nesting birds as standard.

3. **Ask officers to explore** the implications of mandating swift bricks across all new HRA suitable properties and NSDC commercial buildings and report to Cabinet as soon as practicable.
4. **Ask Arkwood to consider committing to installing swift bricks across all suitable properties**, complementing those planned for Lowfield Lane.
5. **Encourage developers within Newark and Sherwood District** to install swift bricks in all suitable new residential developments and publish guidance on best practice placement.
6. **Support the Planning Policy team to continue exploring opportunities** to embed swift bricks within local planning policy or supplementary planning guidance—such as in future iterations of the Newark Town Centre Design Code—and report back with options for their inclusion in upcoming Local Plan updates and biodiversity net gain assessments.

Date and time received:

(for completion by Democratic Services)

3 July 2025 – 16.48