

Client Name: Mellor Homes
Site Name: Land off Longclough Drive, Glossop
Project Ref: Mello-842-003316
Date: 09/02/2023

Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) Method Statement: Amphibian & Reptiles

Method Statement Objectives

This Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) Method Statement outlines suitable measures to be implemented during ground works and construction phase of proposed residential development, to avoid the potential for disturbance, injury or killing of individual amphibian (including great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*) and reptile species, if present. These RAMs will also protect other species potentially present or occasionally using habitats within the Site including hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*.

The objectives of this Method Statement are therefore to:

1. To ensure that no amphibians (including great crested newt) or reptile species are harmed or disturbed by the proposed works; and,
2. To avoid committing an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Habitats Regulations as applicable.

Safeguards must be implemented to protect potential sites and habitats potentially used by these species and the Method Statement below details measures to be implemented to ensure these objectives are achieved.

Site Context

A Protected Species Appraisal was prepared by Arc Ecology in 2016¹, this was an updated appraisal which focused on the Site's potential to support roosting bats and herpetofauna (amphibian and reptiles, notably grass snake *Natrix helvetica*).

The Site was described as being primarily covered with scrub vegetation comprising bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, nettle *Urtica dioica* and rosebay willow-herb *Chamerion angustifolium*, with a limited ground flora consisting of ivy *Hedera helix* and dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*. There are also scattered shrubs and other flora species present including laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, bamboo *Bambusa* sp. and other non-native garden escapees.

The north-eastern boundary where it borders Primrose Lane, comprised a grassed bank with scattered bramble, nettle and horsetail *Equisetum* sp. A second area of outgrown grassland was present within the western part of the Site containing nettle, rosebay willow-herb, plantain *Plantago lanceolata* and meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*. A number of individual and grouped trees were also present within the Site including sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, silver birch *Betula pendula*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, oak *Quercus robur*, Lyland cypress x *Cuprocypressus leylandii*, goat willow *Salix*

caprea, hazel *Coryllus avellana*, rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, balsam poplar *Populus balsmifera* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. A shallow stream flows through the Site from east to west.

The surrounding landscape comprises existing residential properties and domestic gardens in all directions.

In relation to the Site's potential to support amphibians, there are no ponds within the Site and no ponds have been identified within 250m of the Site boundary. As such, it is unlikely that the Site will be used by great crested newt, although widespread amphibian species could still be present in small numbers. Reptile potential was considered likely to be restricted to grass snake; however, limited foraging opportunities within the Site mean it is unlikely the Site would support grass snake, other than occasional individuals. The Site lacked features such as rubble piles, dead wood that could provide over wintering refuge for both amphibian and reptile species, although dense scrub would provide some shelter opportunities.

The Protected Species Appraisal recommended the adoption RAMs during the site clearance and construction phase of the development as there were records of grass snake in the vicinity of the Site.

Method Statement

This Method Statement should be followed during the proposed vegetation clearance works. Minor associated works will also follow this Method Statement to ensure legal compliance and to avoid the potential for disturbance, injury or killing of amphibians and reptile species (and other wildlife such as hedgehog).

Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs)

Measures to ensure the favourable conservation status of the species during the proposed works must reflect legislation and guidance applicable at the time. The following measures will be adopted throughout the construction period of the proposed development:

- Site operatives are to be informed of the potential presence of amphibian and reptile species on Site, what to look out for and what to do if animal is found. An informative to be used in Site inductions is presented in **Appendix 1**.
- Vegetation clearance works (e.g., removal of dense vegetation or tall grassland) should only commence after a visual inspection has determined that no animals are present. Taller vegetation should be reduced (by hand trimmer) to a height of c.150mm prior to ground works commencing to aid visual searches and encourage individuals to temporarily move away from the working areas.
- The proposed timing of any initial ground works involving the removal of tree stumps etc. should be timed to avoid the hibernation period (November to February inclusive) in order to prevent disturbance to hibernating animals including amphibians, reptiles and other wildlife such as hedgehogs.
- No vehicle movement should be permitted within areas supporting tall or dense vegetation prior to it be cut as described above.

- Trenches and excavations should include an escape route for animals that might enter the trench, especially if left open overnight. Ramps should be no greater than 45 degrees in angle and can include wooden planks or ramped earth. Ideally, any excavations open for a prolonged period should be covered.
- All excavations left open overnight or longer should be checked for animals prior to the continuation of works or infilling.
- Any excavated material stored overnight should be searched prior to being used as infill.
- materials and equipment should be stored on hard-standing, bare ground or raised on pallets to avoid the potential for amphibians and reptiles (and other wildlife) to shelter beneath it.

Should an amphibian or reptile (or signs of) be found at any point during construction, works within suitable habitat and/or potentially disturbing works in close proximity to the animal must cease immediately and an ecologist contacted who will advise on the appropriate actions, including applying for a licence, if required.

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Appendix 1 – Species Informatives



Toolbox Talk: Great Crested Newts

LEGISLATION

The great crested newt is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. It is illegal to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly capture, injure or kill a great crested newt;
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a great crested newt;
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a great crested newt;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a great crested newt while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

WHERE GCN CAN BE FOUND

- Within rough grassland or clumps of vegetation like rush
- Semi-natural/unimproved pasture
- Hibernacula such as log and rubble piles
- Ponds and marginal vegetation;
- Hedgerows
- Ditches / slow flowing streams



WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE

GCN are the largest newt in the UK, growing up to 16cm in length.

- Big and black;
- Rough, warty skin;
- Orange/yellow colouring on belly;
- Irregular black blotches on belly;
- Toes banded with black/orange;
- Female: bottom edge of tail orange;
- Male: large jagged crest on back, separate, smoother crest along tail, white tail stripe, often visible at night.

DO

If a GCN is discovered during works, **STOP ALL WORKS** in the area, inform your site manager and contact the project ecologist **IMMEDIATELY**.

DON'T

Do not touch or handle a GCN they are very delicate – and it is against the law. Penalties for breaking the law include unlimited fines, imprisonment and seizure of equipment.

DO NOT RISK BREAKING THE LAW

Toolbox Talk: Reptiles

LEGISLATION

Reptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) It is illegal to:

- Intentionally killing, injuring and trade any individual
- Intentionally disturbance while occupying a place of shelter or protection;
- Destruction of these places
- Sale, barter, exchange, transporting for sale and advertising to sell or buy.



WHAT REPTILES ARE LIKELY TO BE PRESENT

Wales supports the following reptile species which are likely to be present within the vicinity of the Site:

- Common lizard;
 - Grow up to 135mm long and various shades of brown. Young lizards are black or dark copper.
- Slow worm;
 - Grows up to 400mm long. Males are various shades of grey or brown, sometimes with blue spots. Females also show a vertebral stripe. Young are either a light grey-silver or golden/peach colouration.
- Grass snake;
 - Grow up to 750mm long and olive green with small black lines. Yellow or orange colour at the neck. Not poisonous.
- Adder
 - Grow up to 550m long, brown with a dark zig-zag strip down the back. Females are brown where males tend to be grey.

WHERE REPTILES CAN BE FOUND

- Within rough grassland, semi-natural/ unimproved pasture or clumps of vegetation like rush;
- Woodland edge;
- Heathland;
- Rubble piles, scree;
- Marginal vegetation and ponds;
- Ditches & banks;
- Scrub vegetation, hedgerows and woodland;
- Over winter 'hibernacula' such as log and rubble piles, the base of hedgerows and mammal burrows.

WHEN REPTILES ARE FOUND

Mostly active during the day in spring, summer and autumn and the hibernate most winters. Activity is influenced by weather conditions and temperature. Mating takes place between April and June and young hatch around July.

DO

If any reptile is found during works, **STOP ALL WORKS** within the area and inform your site manager and contact the project ecologist **IMMEDIATELY**.

DON'T

Do not touch or handle a reptile, they are very delicate.
Penalties for breaking the law include unlimited fines, imprisonment and seizure of equipment.

DO NOT RISK BREAKING THE LAW