



Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) Method Statement

Site: The Barn at Hollin Wood, Brierley Green, Buxworth

Author: C. Edmondson MSc MRSB

Date: 13th April 2026

Target Species: Reptiles and Amphibians; Breeding Birds

This method statement relates to Conditions 7 & 8 of Planning approval Ref HPK/2024/0125:

“7: No tree, scrub or hedgerow clearance shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless preceded by a nesting bird survey undertaken by a competent ecologist no more than 48hrs prior to clearance. If nesting birds are present, an appropriate exclusion zone will be implemented and monitored until chicks have fledged. No works shall be undertaken within exclusion zones whilst nesting birds are present.

8: No development (including any clearance of grassland, refugia piles, scrub or groundworks) shall commence until a Reptile Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority which shall include reasonable avoidance measures, seasonal timings and instructions in the event animals are discovered. The Method Statement shall be implemented in full prior. A statement of compliance prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist, shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in writing prior to first occupation of the dwellinghouse.

Reason: - In the interests of preserving ecological assets and protected species in accordance with Local Plan Policy EQ5 and relevant national policies contained under Chapter 15 of the NPPF.”

Summary of Method Statement

The following Method Statement outlines suitable measures to be implemented during construction works to avoid the potential for disturbance, injury or killing of individual reptiles and other amphibian and reptile species.

Legislation

Great crested newts (GCN) and their habitat are fully protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Habitats Regulations.

The combined legislation makes it illegal to:

- Intentionally or deliberately capture, kill or injure a great crested newt;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used for shelter and protection including resting and breeding places, whether occupied by a great crested newt or not;
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a great crested newt when in a place of shelter;
- Possess a great crested newt, or any part of it, unless acquired lawfully;
- Sell, barter, exchange or transport or offer for sale great crested newts or parts of them.

Anyone carrying out activities which may affect a European Protected Species (EPS) must consider the presence, their breeding sites and resting places. If an offence cannot be avoided, then a EPS Mitigation licence should be sought from Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

Widespread reptile species namely the common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, grass snake *Natrix helvetica* and adder *Vipera berus* are protected against killing, injuring and sale under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).



Method Statement for Reasonable Avoidance Measures

Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) - Method Statement in relation to:

- Reptiles
- Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) (GCN) and common amphibians
- Breeding birds

Objectives of the Method Statement

The objectives of this Method Statement are to:

- Avoid committing an offence under the above legislation; and,
- To ensure that favourable conservation status of amphibian (including GCN), reptiles and breeding birds is maintained.

Some development related activities on the site, such as excavation creation and removal of materials from site in areas local to otherwise suitable terrestrial habitat, has the potential to affect common amphibian and reptiles, or nesting birds (if carried out during the breeding season – 1st March to the end of August).

Therefore, safeguards must be implemented to protect these species and the Method Statement below outlines measures to be implemented in order to ensure this objective is achieved. Following these methods reduces the likelihood of negative impacts.

Timings – preferred timing of scrub clearance to minimise impact

- ***Nesting Birds:*** Outside the key breeding season which is 1st March – 31st August inclusive
- ***Amphibians and reptiles:*** Outside the hibernation period November to February inclusive

Before Any Works

- If scrub clearance is to be carried out during the bird breeding season, this must be preceded by a nesting bird survey undertaken by a competent ecologist no more than 48hrs prior to clearance. If nesting birds are present, an appropriate exclusion zone will be implemented and monitored until chicks have fledged. No works shall be undertaken within exclusion zones whilst nesting birds are present.
- If possible, the timing of the proposed clearance works (e.g. longer grass (>150mm) and scrub or other features potentially offering shelter or refuge) should avoid the hibernation period (November to February inclusive). This will reduce the likely presence of individual animals being disturbed during hibernation.
- Site operatives will be informed by 'tool box' talk of the potential for protected species to occur on-site, what to look out for and what to do in the event that animal is found.
- **Habitat manipulation** - vegetation that can support reptiles/GCN (e.g. longer grass (>150mm) and scrub) 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.
- After the hand search the vegetation is then to be cut to ground level and raked bare.
- **Refugia inspection** – any refugia e.g. log piles, rubble piles etc to be hand searched prior to their removal.

During Works

The following measures will be adopted throughout the construction / operation of the proposed development:

- For the full duration of the work, vegetation will be kept at ground level.
- No works are to extend off site in the areas adjacent to the red line boundary.
- The impact of works on adjacent habitats will be avoided by the clear demarcation of the works area.
- All work must strictly be in accordance with all of the relevant Pollution Prevention Guidelines published by the Environment Agency which may include, but is not limited to, PPG1 (general), PPG5 (works in, near, or liable to affect watercourses) and PPG6 (work at construction & demolition sites). Contingency/emergency plan should be drawn up to address chemical spillage, drainage, collision, etc.



- Machinery and materials are to remain on bare ground and reasonable efforts must be made to avoid the accumulation of material piles. Materials that do require piling will be stored within areas of bare ground above ground level using pallets in order to prevent animals from seeking shelter beneath.
- Any excavated material stored overnight should be searched prior to being used as infill.
- Where open vertical-sided trenches are excavated it should be ensured that they are not left open overnight to avoid amphibians or small mammals falling into them and becoming trapped. If trenches cannot be back filled after the working day planks of 150-200 mm wide should be placed in them at a 45 degree diagonal angle to serve as an escape mechanism.
- Excavations should also be checked in the morning on a daily basis for the presence of any animals that may have fallen in during the night. In the event that a protected species is located in trenches then it/they should be left in situ and the ecologist promptly contacted to identify and provide further advice.

If in the event a reptile or any other protected species is found work must cease; the ecologist will be made aware of the finding and can then appraise the situation providing further advice.

Site staff must be made aware that if a reptile or any other protected species are found there is a correct procedure in place to follow, and failure to halt works may result in committing an offence.

At no point should any person handle a reptile or other protected species. Unlicensed handling is illegal and untrained handling may cause the animal unnecessary stress and injury.

A Natural England European Protected Species Mitigation Licence may be required following the discovery of any protected species on site.