

## Reasonable Avoidance Strategy

The following Method Statement sets out the reasonable avoidance measures required to avoid i) killing, injuring or disturbing a Great Crested Newt ii) destroying, damaging or causing deterioration of a resting place used by a Great Crested Newt.

### Pre-construction phase

- Prior to works commencing, the land on and surrounding the main site footprint, **will** be continually kept clear of vegetation (i.e. continually mowed), 'cover objects' and other materials in the months leading up to the development.
- To ensure the protection of newts, an experienced ecologist **will** carry out a toolbox talk immediately prior to any ground-works commencing.

### Operational phase

- Timing of works: Ideally all ground works should be carried out between November 1<sup>st</sup> and January 31<sup>st</sup> when there are fewer works constraints. This covers the period when newts are unlikely to be active in open sterile habitats away from their hibernation sites, and are therefore less likely to fall into trenches etc. If this is not possible (the likely scenario on this site where large amounts of top soil will be stored for some months before re-location), works can be carried out at any time of the year but with a higher level of works constraints. This timing carries a higher risk of disturbing or capturing Great Crested Newt; therefore, works **will** be conducted with a higher level of diligence as follows.
- The ground-works period **will** be carefully planned to run in a quick and orderly succession with the absolute minimum of delays incurred.
- Ground disturbance will be limited solely to unsuitable or sterile habitats comprising areas of bare earth and grazed/mown vegetation. No spoil or other materials **will** be pushed into more suitable fringe habitats (e.g. amongst shrubs and trees) and there **will** be no associated damage to such areas (through the manoeuvring of heavy machinery etc). Any suitable habitats to be protected from site construction works. Temporary plastic barrier to be installed during construction works, to protect the newts from straying onto the site.
- Excavated soil **will** be removed from the site immediately – unless backfilled or used as fill during the same day. The subsoil off the main site **will** be moved immediately and compacted down at the end of each day.
- Alternatively excavated soil **will** be stored in raised skips, trailers or containers on raised palettes (e.g. in tonne bags, on raised boards or in raised tarpaulins folded up and secured around the edges; see below).
- Trenches and pits **will** be opened, closed and/or backfilled during the same day where possible. Alternatively, excavations **will** be carried out in achievable daily sections with all soil backfilled before nightfall. Where this is not possible (and only in the very short term), any loose soil lining the trench or pit base **will** be compacted before nightfall e.g. using the underside of a digger bucket, tamper or vibrating plate. Gently sloping dirt ramps or sloping diagonal scrapes **will** be created regularly along the edges to ensure trapped animals have a means of escape.
- Pits or trenches that remain open for extended periods of time **will** be avoided. Where smaller excavations are to remain open the trench lip **will** be rebated and a covering board slotted in so that this lies flush at ground level. Once complete the board edges **will** be covered with a layer of fine pea shingle.
- All open excavations **will** be inspected at the start of each day to check for the presence of trapped amphibians.
- Most construction materials, such as rubble, timbers, steels, claddings etc. provide artificial cover objects under which migrating newts can potentially shelter, particularly if stockpiled for extended periods of time. Therefore, construction materials **will** be brought to site daily or, if stored over time, then on a) raised

palettes or timber bearers b) in trailers or in raised containers c) in raised tonne bags or tarpaulins folded up and secured around the edges. Wooden pallets, or other such storage surfaces, **will** be raised on low diameter timber bearers. No storage **will** take place on heavily vegetated areas or in close proximity to pools, shrubs, trees or hedgerows. Instead storage **will** occur on bare or hard standing surfaces as far from the pools as possible.

- Where MOT, hardcore or rubble substrates are required, these **will** be spread and compacted before nightfall in achievable daily sections. These materials **will** be brought to site daily and not stockpiled (unless stored in a suitable area or a suitable manner; see above). Furthermore, geotextiles or membranes used in association with these types of sub layers **will** be laid, surfaced and compacted before nightfall.
- If newts are encountered at any point works **will** cease immediately and a licensed ecologist **will** be contacted to identify the species present. If it is suspected or confirmed that a Great Crested Newt has been encountered at any time during the development, works will cease and Natural England will be contacted to advise.