

Fairways, Newton, Suffolk.

Non Licence Method Statement

The GCN appraisal and Risk Assessment has concluded that the development is unlikely to result in an offence under the wildlife legislation protecting GCN.

Residual risks associated with the development proposals with respect to GCN are the very low/negligible likelihood of accidental killing or injury of individual newts which could potentially utilise the site in very small numbers. While this is considered extremely unlikely, a Precautionary Method of Works is outlined below to address any residual risk of accidental harm to individual GCN.

Pre-commencement Checks

An ecological clerk of works (ECoW) will be appointed to oversee the development activities. Prior to site clearance or the commencement of earthworks the ECoW will carry out a nighttime torchlight survey of the site to confirm absence of GCN.

The survey should be undertaken in the period when newts are active (March to October), during mild weather (nighttime temperatures above 5°C) and ideally when there is light rain or there has been very recent rain so that conditions are optimal.

The survey will be carried out by a minimum of two people using high powered torches (at least 1 million candle power) with a systematic search of the application site and boundary features.

If no newts are found, then works can proceed following the measures outlined below. If GCN are encountered within the site, then the works would need to be covered by a Natural England EPS mitigation licence to allow the work to proceed lawfully.

Toolbox Talk

Although an encounter with this species is considered very unlikely, the site contractor teams will be briefed on the potential for GCN to be present, on the legal protection of GCN and on the precautionary working method that will be followed.

All site staff will be made aware of how to identify newt species and of what steps to take if a GCN is encountered.

Information will be provided during the toolbox talk which will be always retained at the site office for reference. This would include information amphibian identification, working method and contact details for the ecologist.

Precautionary Measures during Construction

Given that GCN are unlikely to visit the site, simple precautions will be sufficient to ensure that they do not exploit more attractive or useful habitat created there during development - such as piles of materials, excavations or sheltered areas beneath temporary structures such as cabins. Sympathetic working practices include:

Avoid creating potential refuges;

Amphibians will utilise stacked materials such as wood, stone, boards or metal sheets as refuges. Keep the site tidy and stored materials off the ground – for example on pallets where possible;

Should it be necessary to store materials such as topsoil on site then the stockpile should be smoothed to prevent access by amphibians into potential cavities;

Waste materials should be removed from site immediately or placed in skips.

No piles of rubbish or waste should be allowed to remain on site as this could create a potential shelter for amphibians which could then be disturbed in their removal.

Amphibians like to hide under refuges such as those discussed above. Staff should simply demonstrate awareness when working and moving materials. Should an animal other than a GCN be found it should be gently moved, for example in a clean bucket, to a suitable location within habitat well away from the working area.

This is a precautionary measure only, and the chance of newts moving to shelter under stored materials is very low.

Encountering Newts

Should a newt be encountered at any stage of the works all work should temporarily cease. If the ecologist is present then the animal will either be left in situ if it is safe and suitable habitat remains, or it will be moved to a place of safety within suitable terrestrial habitat outside of the site.

If there is no ecologist present, then work should cease, and an ecologist should be immediately contacted to confirm the identity of the animal and to advise on what further action should be taken.

If the newt is a GCN then the ecologist will liaise as appropriate with the local planning authority ecologist and Natural England. It is likely that the works would remain on hold until a Natural England EPS mitigation licence can be obtained to allow the work to proceed lawfully.

References

Aecom (2016). Buxton 2. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Chilwell, Nottinghamshire.

CIEEM (2013) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Winchester, Hampshire.

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (2017). Letter DWTHPK420, Dated 23rd November 2017. Glossop, Derbyshire.

Langton, t., Beckett, C., and Foster, F. (2001). Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook. Froglife, Halesworth, Suffolk.

Oldham, R. S., Keeble, J., Swan, M. J. S. & Jeffcote, M. (2000) Evaluating the Suitability of Habitat for the Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*). Herpetological Journal Vol. 10, pp 143-155.