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GREAT CRESTED NEWT METHOD STATEMENT

For

Entrec
Redwither Road
Wrexham Industrial estate
Wrexham
LL13 9RD

NGR: SJ 38262 49487

Prepared for:	Oaktree Environmental Ltd
Written by:	Toby Leverett, UES Graduate Ecologist
Approved by:	Robert Mooney, UES Ecologist
	[redacted]
Date:	10th March 2025
UES reference:	UES03834/04

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Author and qualifications

This report is written by Toby Leverett BSc MSc, Graduate Ecologist for United Environmental Services Ltd (UES)

This report has been verified by Robert Mooney MSc, UES Ecologist

1.2 Proposed development and previous survey information

The applicant has been granted full planning permission (reference: P/2024/1638) by Wrexham County Borough Council for the siting of portakabin to act as an office at Entrec, Wrexham.

Entrec is located on Redwither Road in Wrexham Industrial Estate. There are numerous records of *Triturus cristatus* GCN reported in the immediate area surrounding the development. Some of these records are from the pond located north of the development.

The proposed development site will affect a small area of hardstanding in the centre of a 1.15 ha industrial site (see Appendix 2 – Proposed site plan). Terrestrial habitats such as the hedgerows surrounding the development site will be retained.

Given the small size of the working area, the unsuitability of the habitats to be affected, and the distance between the development and the ponds, it is considered highly unlikely that GCNs will be present within the working area at the time of the works and are very unlikely to be impacted by the proposed development. GCN surveys were not considered to be necessary; however, reasonable avoidance measures (RAMs) were included within the planning conditions to reduce any residual risk to GCNs. As such, a GCN method statement is required to minimise the risk of harm or disturbance to GCNs and other more common amphibian species.

1.3 Report objectives and structure

This document has been prepared in order to discharge condition 5 of planning permission P/2024/1638:

5. *No development, including site clearance, shall commence until a scheme of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) for Great Crested Newt has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan of reasonable avoidance measures shall include, but not be limited to:*

    - *proposals for the clearance of individuals from working areas;*
    - *details of timing, phasing and delivery of reasonable avoidance measures.*

    The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved RAMs scheme.

This document sets out all of the necessary procedures and mitigation measures to avoid impacts on GCNs and other common amphibians during the works on site, and to avoid any

potential breaches of protected species legislation. This report should be read in conjunction with appendices 1 & 2.

2 REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES

2.1 General

The GCN protection procedures are designed to provide site personnel with the necessary guidance and mechanism should any GCN be discovered during the development process.

The following points will form the structure of the method statement to safeguard any GCN in the unlikely event that they are present at the time of the development.

2.2 Timings

Given the small site area and the very low likelihood of encountering GCN on site, no timing restrictions are considered necessary in this case.

2.3 Site preparation

In accordance with condition 5, prior to the start of works on site the work area should be prepared in order to minimise the risk of amphibian presence when the development works commence.

2.3.1 Removal of refugia

Amphibians seek shelter beneath refugia such as piles of rubble, logs and spoil both during the active season and during winter. In order to remove the risk of direct harm to sheltering amphibians any potential refugia should be removed from the work area under the supervision of a licensed GCN ecologist.

2.3.2 Vegetation management

The proposed development site is unvegetated; however, should any areas of vegetation such as scrub, rough grassland or tall ruderal have developed within the working area prior to the start of works, this vegetation should be maintained at a short sward of <10cm in order to deter amphibians from foraging or crossing the site area, and make any amphibians present easier to see.

2.3.3 Ground management

Any loose or uneven areas of bare ground should be back bladed / compacted in order to create a smooth, compacted surface which offers no opportunities for sheltering amphibians. The area should then be maintained as bare ground.

2.4 Impact avoidance measures

The risk of disturbing or causing physical harm to newts will be mitigated against by the following measures:

- A pre-commencement walk-over survey and destructive search of any potential GCN habitats such as, rubble piles or sheet material on site is required by a suitably licensed GCN ecologist. Any amphibians found will be carefully relocated to suitable offsite habitat by the ecologist.

- Materials will be stored on pallets off the ground and bulk materials delivered on site should be used as soon as possible following delivery in order to reduce the risk of amphibians sheltering underneath them.

- No excavations are to be left open overnight and covered over with plywood with the edges sealed with sand or soil. If this is not feasible, a plank should be left within the excavation at a 45^{o} angle to allow amphibians to escape. Any open excavations should be checked for amphibians in the morning prior to the start of works on site. Any amphibians found will be carefully relocated to the artificial hibernaculum by the ecologist.

- **UES will remain on-call throughout the development and if any newts are encountered, work on site is to stop immediately and ecological advice is to be sought. UES can be contacted directly on 01565 757788.**

3 CONCLUSION

Given the location and small scale of the proposed development site, there will be no loss of habitat, fragmentation, isolation or long-term impacts on amphibians in the local areas a result of the proposed development.

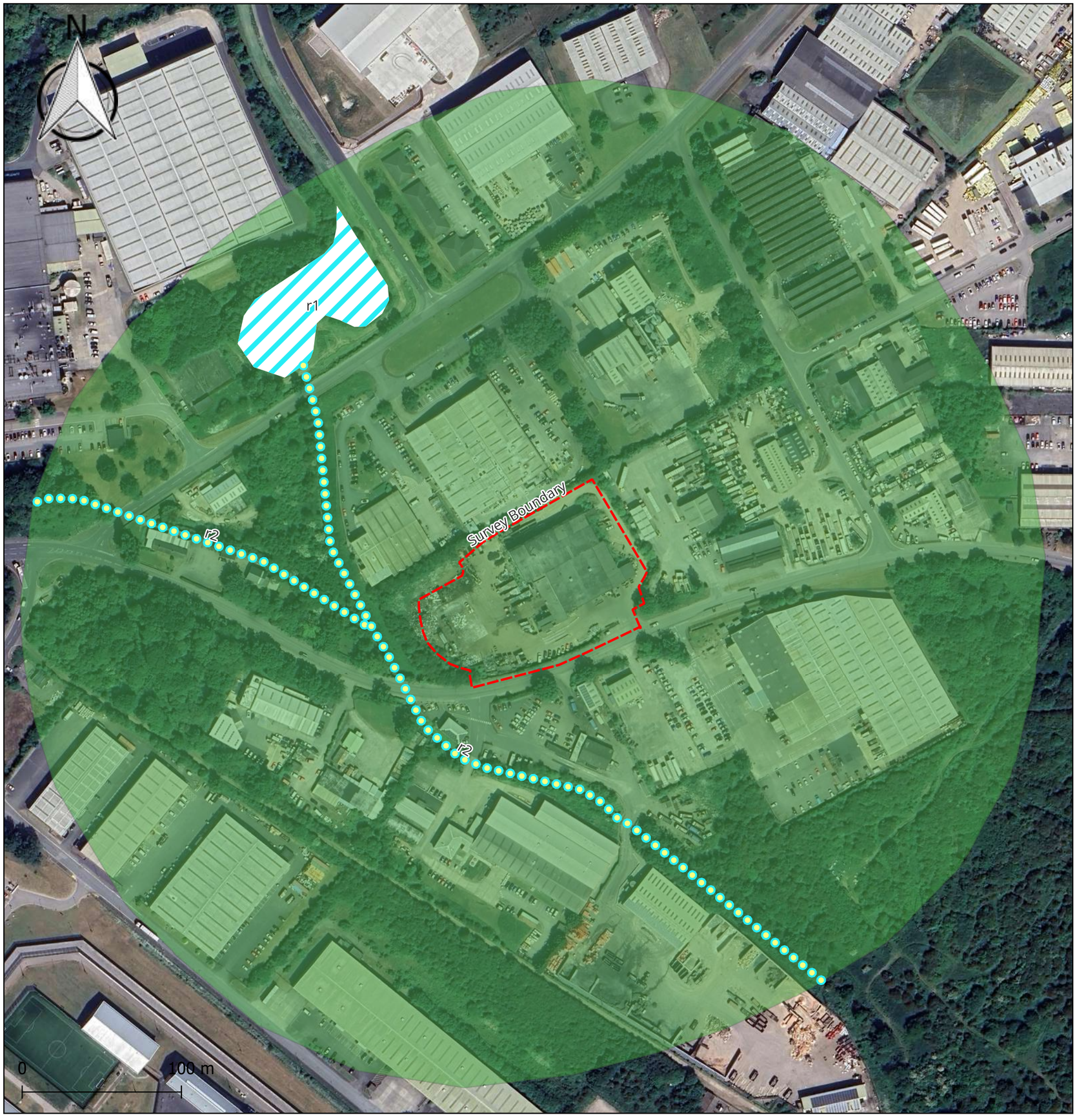
Given the small size of the working area, the unsuitability of the habitats to be affected, and the distance between the development and the ponds, it is considered highly unlikely that GCNs will be present within the working area at the time of the works and are very unlikely to be impacted by the proposed development. The measures detailed in this document will reduce the risk of harm to GCNs and other amphibians to negligible levels.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Pond plan

Pond Plan

Site: Entrec, Wrexham
NGR: SJ 38262 49487
Author: Toby Leverett
Date: 26/02/2025





KEY:

ponds

- r1 - standing open water and canals
- r2 - rivers and streams
- Survey Boundary
- 250m buffer

THIS PLAN IS BASED UPON MAP DATA © 2025 GOOGLE IMAGERY © 2025 GOOGLE.

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Appendix 2 – Proposed site plans

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REVISION HISTORY

Rev.	Date	Initials	Description
-	05.12.23	CF	Initial drawing

KEY

- Proposed permit boundary
- Waste storage areas
- Non-waste storage areas
- Restricted waste storage areas
- Non-waste fuels, oils and other liquids storage
- Pedestrian access routes
- Waste recycling / storage buildings (impermeable concrete floors)
- Other buildings or weighbridge offices
- Impermeable concrete surfaces
- Unsurfaced / hardstanding areas
- Bunding (segregation)
- Surface water drainage (silt separator)
- Foul drainage
- Soakaway / drainage
- Trade & surface water manholes
- Gullies / gulleys
- Above/below ground drainage (hatched)
- Water mains (indicative locations)
- Fire fighting equipment (indicative locations)
- Fixed firewall (indicative locations)
- Wall mounted & mobile fire walls
- Water shut off points
- Manual fire alarms (break glass / button)
- Spill kits (indicative locations)
- Access routes (for emergency services)
- Fire assembly points
- CCTV cameras
- 0.15m-0.8m wide concrete fire walls (height varies throughout)
- Banking / bunds (earth)
- Safety fencing and barriers

Oaktree Environmental Ltd
Waste, Planning and Environmental Consultants

DRAWING TITLE
SITE LAYOUT PLAN

CLIENT
Evitrac Ltd

PROJECT(S)
Redmither Road, Wrexham Industrial Estate, Wrexham LL13 9XD

SCALE @ A1	CLIENT NO.	JOB NO.
1:250	1865	004

DRAWING NUMBER	REV.	STATUS
R150/1865/01	-	Issued

DRAWN BY	CHECKED	DATE
CF	-	05.12.23

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Appendix 3 – Statutory and planning context

STATUTORY AND PLANNING CONTEXT

Ecological assessments

Ecological assessments play an important part within the planning context; they include an initial assessment which highlights any specific interests of a site. From the initial site assessment, the surveyor assesses the suitability of habitats within the site to support protected species and makes recommendations for further survey works if required. The following paragraphs provide a brief interpretation of the legislative protection that is relevant to the findings of this report.

Habitats

Section 7 of the Environment Act (Wales) places a duty on Welsh Ministers to publish, review and revise lists of types of habitats and species in Wales which they consider are of key significance to sustain and improve biodiversity. The Welsh Ministers must also take all reasonable steps to maintain and enhance the habitats published in these lists, and encourage others to take such steps.

Amphibians

<u>Great crested newts</u>

Great crested newts (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* and their habitat (aquatic and terrestrial) are afforded full protection by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. If both national and international legislation are taken together, it is an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture GCN
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb GCN in such a way to be likely to significantly affect:
- their ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture their young
- their ability to hibernate or migrate
- their local distribution or abundance
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly take or destroy the eggs of GCN
- Damage or destroy breeding sites or resting places of GCN
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb sheltering GCN, or obstruct access to their resting place
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead GCN, any part of GCN or anything derived from GCN

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

GCN are also protected by the Protection of Animals Act 1911, which prohibits cruelty and mistreatment. Releasing a GCN in such a way as to cause undue suffering may be an offence under the Abandonment of Animals Act 1960.

In addition to the above, there are various statutory provisions relating to the transport of animals, designed to ensure their welfare. GCN are also listed under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

It is important to identify the presence of GCN individuals and also to identify suitable habitat on sites so that legal obligations regarding this species can be observed. If a survey identifies the presence of GCN on the site, an assessment of the population size class is required. This can then inform a mitigation scheme, which would need to be developed in liaison with the local Natural Resources Wales (NRW) team, and which minimises direct threats to newts and compensates for any loss of habitat. A licence issued by NRW is required for the legal implementation of a mitigation scheme.

An NRW mitigation licence application requires a Mitigation Method Statement and a Reasoned Statement of Application. The Mitigation Method Statement contains details of the proposed mitigation works. The Reasoned Statement needs to provide a rational and reasoned justification as to why the proposed development meets the requirements of the Conservation (National Habitats & c.) regulations 1994, namely Regulations 44(2)(e), (f) or (g), and 44(3)(a).

Other amphibians

More common British amphibians, such as common frog *Rana temporaria*, common toad *Bufo bufo*, smooth newt *Triturus vulgaris* and palmate newt *Triturus helveticus* are protected only by Section 9(5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This section prohibits sale, barter, exchange, transporting for sale and advertising to sell or to buy.

The above named species are also listed as UK Species of Conservation Concern. Due to general declines in most British amphibian species in recent years, many local authorities require amphibian surveys as a planning condition, or as part of environmental information submitted as part of a planning application, even where the presence of GCN is ruled out.

Natterjack toad *Bufo calamita* and pool frog *Pelophylax lessonae* are also offered the same level of protection as GCN, through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Natterjack and common toad are also listed under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Water bodies that support all five (more common) species of British amphibians in high numbers, may be afforded protection in local plans, as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), or a similar equivalent, for sites of local importance. A site may require statutory protection as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Planning Policy

National planning guidance is issued in the form of Planning Policy Wales (PPW - 2018). The most relevant sections are included in Chapter 6: Distinctive and Natural Places. This chapter details the policies on issues such as the protection of trees, woodlands, species, and designated sites. The document is free and available to view online