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GREAT CRESTED NEWT METHOD STATEMENT

At

Plot 3A

Wrexham Industrial Estate
Bryn Lane
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NGR: SJ 339340 350457

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Author and qualifications

This report is written and compiled by Daniel Smith BSc MScRes, Ecologist for United Environmental Services (UES) Ltd. Daniel is licensed as an accredited agent by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to disturb, take and handle great crested newts (GCNs) *Triturus cristatus* under Toby Hart's survey licence (licence number S086784/1).

The report has been verified by Kathryn James BSc MRes MCIEEM, UES Ecology Project Manager. Kathryn is licensed by NRW to disturb, take and handle GCN under licence number S091414/1.

1.2 Proposed development and previous survey information

GCN presence / absence, population size class assessment and eDNA surveys were undertaken of the proposed development site and surrounding ponds by UES across March to June 2022 (see report reference UES03448/09). The objective of the surveys was to establish the presence or likely absence of GCNs in the ponds onsite and within 500m of the proposed development site boundary (where accessible) and, if present, assess the size of the population within each pond, in order to inform the necessary mitigation measures for the development to proceed.

Six ponds and four ditches were identified within the site boundary, and a further forty-seven mapped ponds and nine mapped ditches were identified within 500m of the proposed development site. During the surveys a medium population of GCNs was recorded in Ponds 3, 4, 5, 6, 24 and 26 (combined peak adult count of forty-nine). However, several ponds did not have access granted, therefore, it is likely the GCN population in the area will be higher.

The peak count of adult GCN onsite was thirty-three individuals which infers that the development site hosts a "medium" GCN population. GCNs were recorded onsite in Ponds 3 – 6; of which only Pond 4 is due to be removed and Ponds 3, 5 and 6 are due to be retained as part of the proposed development.

The development proposals are for the construction of three industrial units with associated parking and access roads. The proposals include the retention of a significant area of habitat within the southern section of the site and an additional area within the eastern section of the site, hereby referred to as the ecological compensation area. This ecological compensation area will be subject to enhancement measures and managed as a community nature reserve, with access granted to the public or special interest groups by permit.

As GCNs are known to be present on site, a European protected species (EPS) mitigation licence will need to be granted by Natural Resources Wales to allow the works to commence. This EPS licence can only be granted once planning permission has been secured and will need to be in place prior to the start of any works on site. Natural Resources Wales aim to process licence applications within 30 working days.

1.3 Report objectives and structure

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 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2.1 Impacts without mitigation

The GCN surveys showed that the site supports a medium-sized population of GCNs with max counts of eight, six, thirteen and six individuals in Ponds 3, 4, 5 and 6, respectively. No GCNs were recorded within onsite Ponds 1 and 2, which both returned negative eDNA results, nor were they recorded within any of the ditches at the site boundaries.

GCNs were also observed within two offsite ponds; Ponds 24 and 26. Ponds 24 and 26 both support a small-sized population of GCN with a peak count of eight individuals each. However, it is considered that Ponds 3, 4, 5, 6, 24 and 26 all form part of a wider meta-population within the industrial estate and the surrounding landscape.

The development proposals are for the construction of three industrial units with associated parking and access roads. Ponds 1, 2 and 4 will be removed, whereas Ponds 3, 5 and 6 will be retained as part of the proposed development. All onsite ditches will be retained, except for a small section that will be culverted.

Without mitigation, the development could have the following impacts on GCNs and their associated habitats:

- Killing or direct harm
- Disturbance
- Loss of terrestrial habitat
- Loss of aquatic habitat, including breeding habitat

2.2 European Protected Species mitigation licence

Due to the anticipated impacts on GCNs without mitigation, works will need to proceed under the mitigation and compensation measures detailed in sections 3 and 4 of this report. Works will not commence until an EPS mitigation licence has been obtained from Natural Resources Wales.

The information provided below will be used by Natural Resources Wales to determine whether the proposed activity affecting the European protected species meets the requirements of Regulations 55(2)(e), 55(9)(a) and 55(9)(b) within The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. These are known as the 'purpose', 'no satisfactory alternatives' and 'favourable conservation status' tests.

2.2.1 Consideration of Regulation 55(2)(e): The 'Purpose' Test

Regulation 55(2)(e) "in the interests of preserving public health or public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment".

The development is proposed in part for reasons of overriding public interest and for socio-economic reasons. The site has been allocated for employment development in Wrexham's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1996-2005 (adopted February 2005). The UDP 'provides for a significant amount of employment land at a variety of locations to ensure sufficient potential for inward investment, service sector diversification and the expansion/relocation of existing businesses. Its employment policies, together with other policies, which seek to maximise



access to local facilities, are consistent with the Council's aims of reducing poverty and unemployment and promoting equal opportunities.'

The benefits arising from the proposal predominantly include the provision of long-term employment opportunities in an area of high unemployment. The proposed works will also indirectly benefit the local community, for example bringing work and custom to local tradesmen, shops and restaurants / cafes, both in the construction and operational phases of the development.

2.2.2 Consideration of Regulation 55(9)(a): The 'No Satisfactory Alternative' Test

Regulation 55(9)(a) "that there is no satisfactory alternative."

The UDP seeks to identify sufficient land to meet the future employment requirements of the County Borough. The site has been allocated for development in planning policy E3 of the UDP. Planning policy E3 states that '*land is allocated at Owens Corning Fibreglass, Wrexham Industrial Estate for a major single user employment project that requires a site of over 30 hectares for an employment development that cannot be accommodated on allocated employment land or employment land with planning permission.*'

It is considered that there is no satisfactory alternative as the UDP has already identified specific locations for major development which is essential for positive economic growth. In selecting locations for employment development, the UDP gives consideration to other plan policies, especially those relating to protection of high-quality agricultural land, green barriers and countryside.

There is also considered to be no satisfactory alternative when considering site design. Whilst a reasonably large proportion of the site will be used for construction, the development has been designed to retain habitats where possible, including the habitats of the highest value, including the habitat of Principal Importance that are present on site, in addition to the retention of ecological corridors at the site boundaries. Of the six ponds present on site, four are used by GCNs, only one of which will be removed to facilitate the proposals.

2.2.3 Consideration of Regulation 55(9)(b): The 'Favourable Conservation Status' Test

Regulation 55(9)(b) "that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range."

The mitigation measures detailed in this document will ensure that GCNs are safeguarded throughout the development. Large areas of the site will be retained or subject to habitat creation and enhancement. This includes the creation or planting of wildflower grassland, woodland, hedgerows, an orchard, ditches, tussocky rough grassland, ponds and hibernacula. Significant habitat creation and enhancement will be undertaken within the ecological compensation area, which will be managed long term with an emphasis on its suitability to support GCNs. There will be no fragmentation or isolation as a result of the proposed development, so the movement of GCNs within the local area will not be detrimentally affected.



3 MITIGATION MEASURES

As GCNs are known to be present on site, an EPS mitigation licence will need to be granted by Natural Resources Wales to allow the works to commence. This EPS licence can only be granted once planning permission has been secured and will need to be in place prior to the start of any works on site. Natural Resources Wales aim to process licence applications within 30 working days.

Fencing and pitfall traps

As part of a licence, the proposed working area will need to be fenced with temporary amphibian fencing prior to the start of any works on site and the fencing will be maintained throughout the development. The fencing will prevent amphibians from entering the construction area during the development. A newt grid will be required at any points of site access which will enable vehicular access whilst preventing amphibians from accessing the site. See Appendix 1 – Amphibian fencing plan.

Drift fencing will also be used to compartmentalise the site and therefore maximise the capture probability of amphibians on the site. The proposed fencing plan at Appendix 1 has been designed to reduce impacts on GCNs prior to trapping, by avoiding densely vegetated areas to reduce the amount of vegetation clearance that will be required to install the fencing, hence reducing the risk of disturbance or injury to GCNs. Some vegetation clearance will be required to facilitate the fence installation, which will only be undertaken once the EPS has been granted and will be undertaken under the supervision of a licenced ecologist who will perform a pre-commencement fingertip search and a destructive search of any potential refugia. Drift fencing will also be installed around the three onsite ponds that are due to be removed. Pitfall traps will be installed at a rate of one per 5-10m along the interior of all perimeter fencing, and on both sides of internal drift fencing. With a minimum of one per 5m within pond compartments. In addition, carpet tile refugia will also be installed adjacent to pitfall traps to further increase the capture rate.

The pitfall traps will be open for a period of 60 nights (based on a medium sized population of GCNs) where temperatures and weather conditions are suitable for GCN trapping (i.e. above 5°C and without frost). Trapping will only be undertaken when newts are active and will not be undertaken when newts are potentially hibernating and will be avoided during November – mid-February inclusive. The traps will be checked daily by a suitably licensed and experienced ecologist. Any GCNs or other amphibians found in the traps will be released into suitable areas of cover within the retained ecology areas which will act as a GCN receptor site. Trapping will continue until 5 consecutive nights without capture have taken place i.e. more than 60 nights trapping will be required unless nights 56-60 have no captures.

Removal of drift fencing and pre-commencement mitigation

Following the completion of the trapping and translocation period, but prior to any vehicle or plant access, or the commencement of any works on the site, a toolbox talk will be given to all staff and contractors. The talk will include species identification, ecology and legal protection of UK amphibians. Site staff and contractors will be instructed not to interfere or access the ecological compensation area or the retained habitats within the southern section of the site, unless with the permission of the site manager or ecologist, or to undertake habitat enhancement works as previously approved. Additionally, a final destructive search of any features which could shelter GCNs will be undertaken to ensure that no amphibians are present within the fenced area. The drift fencing in the centre of site will then be removed in suitable weather conditions (i.e. outside of the winter hibernation period which runs from



November to Mid-February inclusive and when night time temperatures exceed 5°C) under ecological supervision.

The amphibian ring fencing at the perimeter of the site will be left in place until the works on site are complete, and it will be checked daily by the site manager, with monthly checks by the project ecologist. If any amphibians are found within the construction area during the works, they will be moved to the GCN receptor site within the ecological compensation area.

Trapping of ponds

Pond 4 which was found to contain a small population of breeding GCNs (max count of 6), will be removed to facilitate the proposals. In addition to compartmentalisation of this pond using drift fencing and the trapping of this compartment with pitfall traps and refugia, the pond will also be subject to a period of aquatic bottle trapping and netting. Between mid-February and August inclusive, the pond will be subject 30 nights of bottle trapping, in addition to netting of the pond immediately prior to setting traps and immediately after checking traps. The bottle traps will be deployed at a density of at least one trap per 2m of shoreline and will only take place when night-time air temperatures are greater than 5°C. Bottle trapping will continue until 10 consecutive nights without capture have taken place i.e. more than 30 nights trapping will be required unless nights 21-30 have no captures.

It is considered that the proposed level of aquatic bottle trapping and terrestrial pitfall and refugia trapping is sufficient given the small number of GCNs observed using this pond during the population size class assessment surveys (max count of six individuals).

No GCNs were observed within Ponds 1 or 2 and both ponds returned negative eDNA results, indicating that GCNs are not using either pond. Despite this, the ponds were using by common amphibian species such as smooth newts, common frog and common toad, and their remains some, albeit limited potential for GCNs to use these ponds once the site has been compartmentalised with drift fencing, due to a temporary reduction in habitat availability. As such, the above methodology being applied to Pond 4 will also be applied to Ponds 1 and 2 but with a reduced survey effort and only 10 nights of trapping will be undertaken. Bottle trapping will continue until 5 consecutive nights without capture have taken place i.e. more than 10 nights trapping will be required unless nights 6-10 have no captures.

Following the completion of both aquatic bottle trapping and pitfall trapping within pond compartments, the ponds will be drained and infilled. All ponds will be subject to netting prior to draining and all drainage works will be overseen by a licenced ecologist. Screens with a fine mesh (<1.5mm) will be fitted to any pumps used to drain the water, to prevent any remaining newts (or other wildlife) from being drawn through the pump. Following drainage and prior to infilling, the basin of the pond and vegetation and other debris will be searched for amphibians.

Operational phase of the development

During the operational phase of development, gully pots will be installed on site and will either be set back, covered with a mesh to prevent amphibians from falling within or will be fitted with a means of escape such as an amphibian ladder. The exact location details are to be confirmed in an EPS mitigation licence application and will therefore be agreed with Natural Resources Wales.

The above measures will also ensure the protection of all common amphibian species using the site.



4 COMPENSATION MEASURES

The proposed development will result in the loss of areas of suitable foraging and commuting habitat for great crested newts, namely dense scrub and grassland. Despite this, the layout for the site has been designed to incorporate significant habitat retention, including the retention of habitats at the site boundaries, which will continue to act as ecological corridors and commuting routes for amphibians. Ponds 1, 2 and 4 will be removed as part of the development, however only Pond 4 was found to be in use by GCNs, the other two being used by common amphibian species only.

The measures set out below detail how this loss will be compensated for so that GCNs are provided with long-term terrestrial habitat which fulfill their requirements. Full details of the proposed habitat creation and management can be detailed within a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP), which can be secured through a suitability worded planning condition. The habitat creation and compensation measures will also form part of the EPS mitigation licence application and will therefore be agreed with Natural Resources Wales.

4.1 Pond creation

To compensate for the loss of Pond 4, which is a GCN breeding pond, and Ponds 1 and 2 that are used by other common amphibian species, an additional thirteen ponds of varying shape, size and depth will be created within the ecological compensation area. These ponds will be designed and managed to provide a range of ecological niches, from shallow ponds that dry out on occasion to deep ponds that retain water all year round. Through a mix of initial planting, translocation of material from ponds that are being removed and natural colonisation, it is anticipated that the ponds will support a range of botanical communities, ensuring an abundance and diversity of egg laying opportunities and invertebrate prey on which GCNs and other amphibians can forage.

In addition to these ponds, two ponds / shallow ephemeral scrapes and three swales will also be created within the open mosaic habitat within the southern section of the site. Although these aquatic features aren't being designed solely for amphibians, it is expected that they will provide some foraging and breeding opportunities.

It is considered that fencing and trapping of the pond creation areas or retained habitats is not necessary given that the associated works will be localised and will solely involve habitat creation and enhancement works, with no construction related activities. The installation of fencing around the retained habitats would isolate these areas from use by the GCNs (and other amphibians) within the wider meta population within the surrounding landscape. It is considered that the potential adverse impacts of reducing availability of foraging and breeding opportunities and the severance of commuting corridors associated with the installation of fencing is outweighed by the low likelihood of amphibians being present within the localised areas at the time of the works. Despite this, the following mitigation measures will be implemented to protect amphibians in the unlikely event that they are present within the working areas at the time of the works:

- All excavation works associated with pond or ditch creation will be overseen by an appropriately licenced and experienced ecological clerk of works.
- The grassland or any other vegetation within the proposed working areas will be mown or stirmed to a height of 10cm at least 24 hours prior to the start of any excavation or



ground clearance works. This is to encourage amphibians (and other wildlife) to disperse from the working area prior to the commencement of works.

- If any excavations are left open overnight (e.g. ponds that have not yet filled with water) they will either be designed and shaped so that amphibians (and other wildlife) can escape if they fall in, or a plank of wood will be provided at a 45° angle to allow wildlife to escape.

4.2 Terrestrial habitat creation and enhancement

The linear features at the site boundaries and a 10m buffer are to be retained as part of the site layout, in order to provide ecological linkages for GCNs and other amphibian species to continue commuting between the site and offsite habitats within the wider landscape. Whilst areas of suitable GCN and amphibian terrestrial habitat will be lost in the form of semi-improved grassland, dense scrub, hedgerows and small sections of woodland, large areas of suitable habitat within the southern section of the site will be retained and enhanced. In addition, the eastern section of the site is being subject to significant habitat creation and enhancement to create an ecological compensation area that will be managed long term with an emphasis on its suitability to support GCNs.

Of the 25.4ha development boundary, approximately 11.4ha (45%) of the site will be retained or subject to habitat creation and enhancement. This includes the creation or planting of wildflower grassland, woodland, hedgerows, an orchard, ditches and tussocky rough grassland. Additionally, the retained area of open mosaic grassland and unimproved lowland meadow within the southern section of the site will be retained and enhanced. All of the proposed habitat creation and enhancement will provide high-quality terrestrial habitat for GCNs and other amphibians.

4.3 Hibernacula

As an additional ecological enhancement targeting GCNs, ten amphibian hibernacula will be created on site, six of which will be located within the ecological compensation area and the other four within the retained open mosaic habitat within the southern section of the site.

They will be created by excavating pits in the ground (500mm depth, 2000mm length, and 1000mm width). Ideally, these pits will then be filled using materials already present on site, including hay, brash, cut timber / logs and brick / rock hard-core, or the materials can be sourced from elsewhere if necessary. The pits will be piled up to a height of approximately 1000mm above ground level. Hibernacula will then be loosely capped with topsoil and turfed over, ensuring that access is still available through to the lower layers at the margins. These works will need to take place during the winter when amphibians are hibernating, or under ecological supervision.

The following diagram provides a visual representation of the hibernacula, with the only additional requirement to the diagram being that a pit is first excavated.

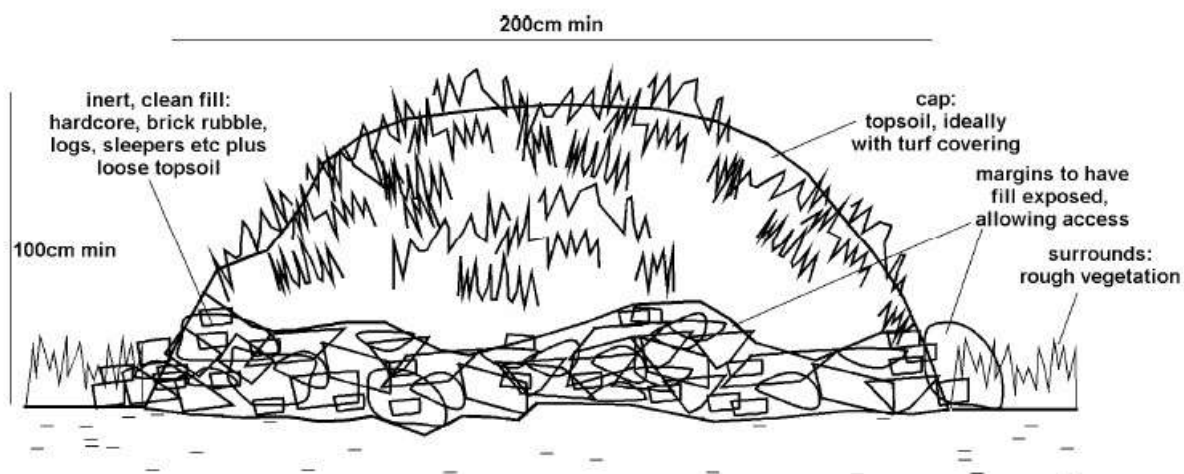


Figure 1 – Hibernacula design.



5 MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 Monitoring

Following the completion of the trapping and translocation exercise, the retained and newly created ponds will be subject to monitoring surveys for a period of 30 years, to assess whether the great crested newt population has responded favourably to the mitigation, and to inform ongoing long-term habitat management. Monitoring surveys will start the next available survey period following the completion of the trapping and translocation exercise. Monitoring will involve population size class assessment surveys, utilising the industry standard bottle trapping, netting and torching methodology, for all retained and newly created ponds, involving six survey visits each year across mid-March and June (inclusive). The results of the monitoring surveys will be submitted annually to Natural Resources Wales and the local ecological records centre COFNOD.

The responsibility for commissioning ecological monitoring lies with the site management / owner, and must be undertaken by suitably qualified and licensed GCN ecologists.

5.2 Management

Each habitat on site will require a certain level of establishment, maintenance and monitoring to ensure that they are providing the ecosystem function required of them. Full details of the proposed habitat management can be detailed within a LEMP, which can be secured through a suitability worded planning condition. The habitat creation, enhancement and management outlined in the LEMP will be maintained and monitored for a period of 30 years. Habitat management will also form part of the EPS mitigation licence application and will therefore be agreed with NRW.

The responsibility for the initial habitat creation works lies with the landowner and the contractors appointed to carry out those works at the time of the development. They will be responsible for ensuring that the habitat creation works are carried out in accordance with the LEMP and GCN EPS mitigation licence issued by NRW. A separate planning application will be submitted for the habitat creation works within the ecological compensation area which will allow the works to be completed ahead of the main application.

An ecological monitoring review will be undertaken in the third year following initial habitat creation, to allow for a review of the ongoing management plan and to allow for remedial changes to the management plan to be implemented based on an informed assessment of the conditions on site. This ecological monitoring will involve a walkover and detailed botanical survey by a suitably experienced ecologist. Information recorded during the walkover survey will be submitted to the local records centre and can be provided to the LPA upon request.

Subsequent management of the habitats on site will be the responsibility of the appointed management company / owners of the site. They must ensure that the ongoing measures detailed within the LEMP are implemented. They will also be responsible for monitoring the establishment of habitats as well as monitoring them for any changes affecting their quality or function. An annual meeting must be held to discuss these issues and whether any remedial works are necessary to restore the habitats to a satisfactory standard. This meeting should be held from late summer to winter, so that the habitats can be assessed when in flower (e.g. wildflower meadows) and to allow for the required remedial works to be arranged. The results of the GCN monitoring surveys will also be used to identify the need for remedial measures and changes to the management plan to benefit GCNs.



6 CONCLUSION

A medium population of breeding GCNs is present within the proposed development footprint, which will require the loss of terrestrial and aquatic GCN habitat.

The development proposals will retain and enhance approximately 42% of the site which includes suitable habitat for breeding, commuting and foraging GCN, although the loss of semi-improved grassland, dense scrub, hedgerows and small sections of woodland will impact terrestrial GCNs. Three ponds will also be lost as part of the proposed development, one of which supports breeding GCNs.

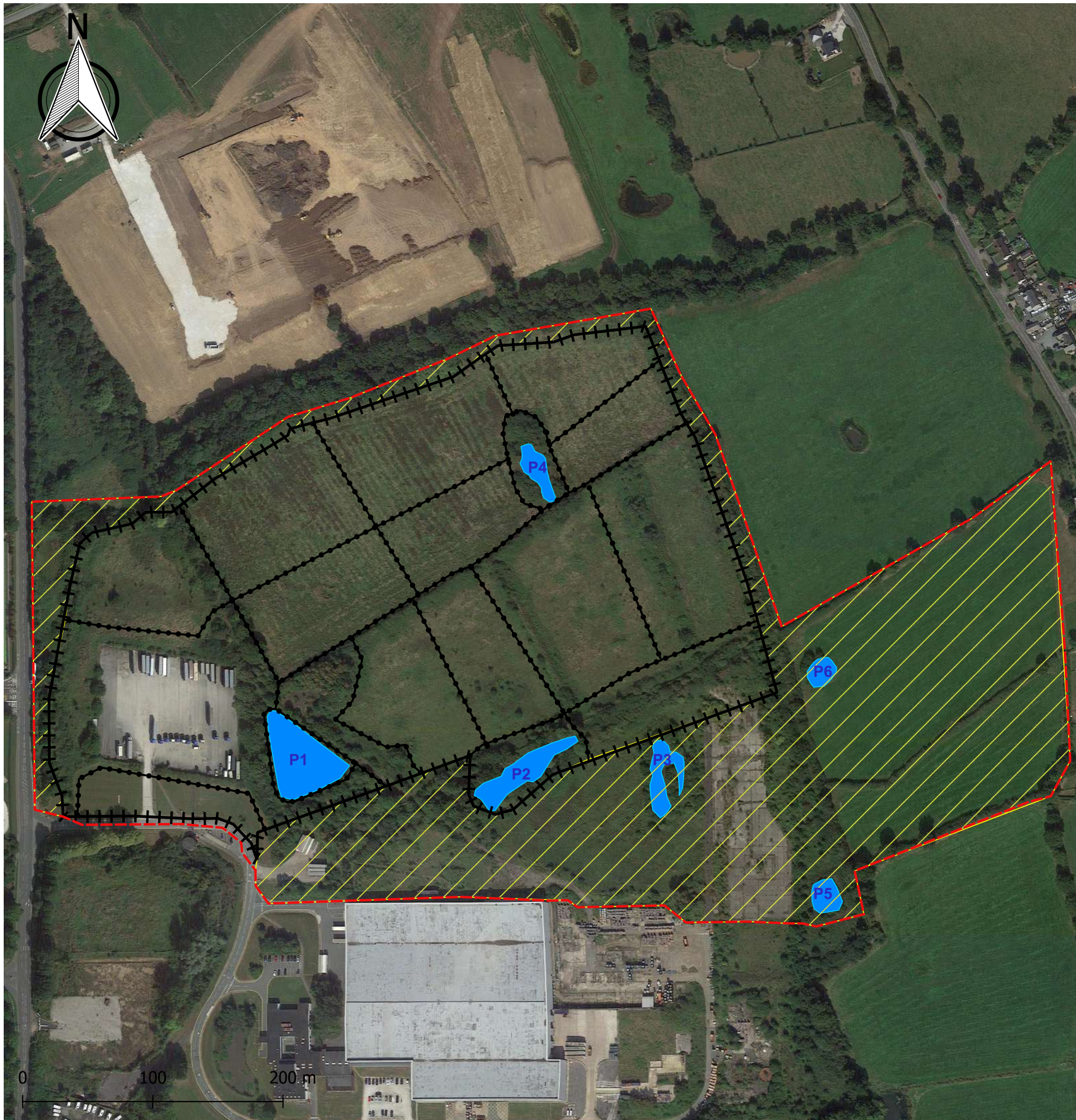
The measures detailed in this document will reduce the risk of harm to GCNs and other amphibians to negligible levels. They ensure that site staff have the knowledge and processes required to avoid breaches of legislation, and that suitable amphibian habitat is in place for the long-term future. No works will take place until an EPS mitigation licence is obtained from Natural Resources Wales.

The proposed landscaping of the site will maintain habitat linkages for amphibians and other wildlife around the site. There will be no fragmentation, isolation or long-term impacts on amphibians in the local areas as a result of the proposed development.



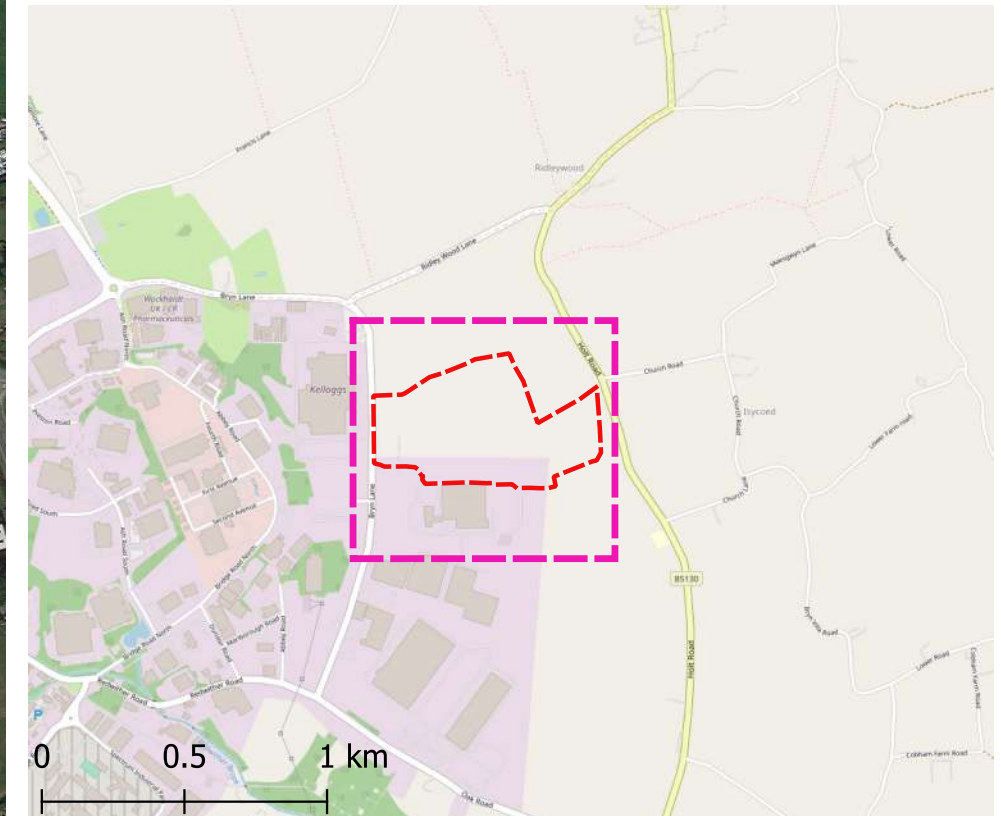
APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Amphibian fencing plan



GCN Fencing Plan

Site: Plot 3a, Wrexham Industrial Estate
NGR: SJ 39340 50457
Author: Tom Kenwright
Date: 10/10/2022



KEY:

- Site boundary
- + + + Perimeter ring fencing (in place for entire construction period)
- . . . Drift fencing (in place for trapping period only)
- / / / Retained ecology area and GCN translocation zone

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Appendix 2 – 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

Great crested newts

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