



Template Method Statement to be used within a Great Crested Newt Development Licence Application

This template Method Statement is to be used to form part of your Licence Application for a European Protected Species Development Licence. It will be used to determine the impact of the application on the favourable conservation status of the species concerned (Regulation 53(9) (b) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010). It must be prepared by a consultant ecologist or other suitably qualified person. You are strongly advised to refer to the **Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines**¹. Please submit your Application and supporting Method Statement electronically to the contact details provided below.

Contact Details

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Method Statement Title:	Land off Ash Road South Wrexham Industrial Estate SCALES Consultancy Limited Ecologist Sarah Carver
Method Statement Version Number:	3.0
Method Statement Issue Date:	14/8/16
Site Address:	Land off Ash Road South, Wrexham Industrial Estate, Wrexham, LL13 9UG

¹ Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines (NEWT1) available from Natural England website

Background and Supporting Information

A Executive Summary.

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The proposed works involve the erection of a new warehouse, containing two levels of offices, accommodation and workshop areas, and a detached single storey dust extraction building, with associated storage, landscaping and hard standing for parking. The development is considered necessary to provide a new headquarters for ESL group at Wrexham Industrial Estate.

The proposed development will lead to the loss of approximately two thirds of the habitat on site which is currently suitable as terrestrial habitat for great crested newts. Mitigation would require the capturing and transporting of great crested newts to the receptor site at the eastern end of the site. A relatively low number of GCN is predicted to be present on the terrestrial habitat on site. The site is relatively isolated from potential GCN breeding ponds within 250m, with only one water body present to the west of Ash Road (South), and other habitat barriers such as existing development in the area.

The loss of terrestrial habitat is not considered to be significant to the conservation status of the local GCN population, and the proposals include an increase in breeding habitat with the creation of a pond suitable for GCN.

Mitigation provided includes the creation of a new pond suitable as GCN breeding habitat, two new amphibian hibernacula, tree and hedgerow planting, and a habitat management plan for 25 years to secure and enhance the site for GCN.

B Introduction

B.1 Background to activity/development

Include a brief summary of what the proposed activity is and why it is necessary.

The proposed development is located at land off Ash Road South, Wrexham Industrial Estate, Wrexham, LL13 9UG, and involves the erection of a new warehouse, containing two levels of offices, accommodation and workshop areas, and a detached single storey dust extraction building, with associated storage, landscaping and hard standing for parking. The development was considered necessary to provide a new headquarters for the international ESL group at Wrexham Industrial Estate.

B.2 Full details of proposed works on site that are to be covered by the licence

Please ensure sufficient detail is provided on the proposed works e.g. construction of buildings, roads, fences etc. Include current status of planning permission or other consents (if applicable) and any outstanding conditions/reserved matters. Include timescales and order of work.

The erection of a new warehouse, containing two levels of offices, accommodation and workshop areas, and a detached single storey dust extraction building, with associated storage, landscaping and hard standing for parking.

Full planning permission obtained.

The proposed construction period will be January 2017 – December 2017. The building is to be occupied by January 2018.

B.3 Actions requiring licensing

E.g. disturb, capture, translocate, damage or destroy breeding site or resting place (terrestrial and/or aquatic), kill. Briefly explain why these actions are necessary.

To disturb, capture, translocate and damage/destroy terrestrial resting places. These actions are required in order to prevent the fatality of great crested newts during the construction of the proposed development.

C Survey and site assessment

C.1 Existing information on great crested newts at the survey site.

Provide records from local environmental records centres, predictive modelling, local herptile groups, previous survey work by the applicant or others. Include records from within 2km.

No information was obtained from the local environmental records centre due to the known presence of great crested newts within the Wrexham Industrial Estate.

C.2 Statutory sites notified for the species (SSSIs or SACs) within 10km

There are numerous SSSIs and SACs within 10km of the site, of which Johnstown Newt Sites SAC (located approximately 7.4km southwest) was the only statutory site notified for great crested newts. The citation states under section '4.2 Quality and importance' that Johnstown Newt Site supports a population of "*Triturus cristatus* for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom."

C.3 Objectives of the survey

E.g. to determine presence/absence of all sub-populations of great crested newts likely to be affected, an estimate of population size and their usage of site (e.g. breeding, hibernation, and foraging).

An Ecological Assessment was conducted on 15th April 2015 which highlighted that whilst no water features were located on site, the immediate area and habitats were considered suitable for foraging great crested newts. Great crested newts are known to be present within the Wrexham Industrial Estate, with amphibian fencing being present on the adjacent site. As the site consisted solely of terrestrial habitats, no further surveys were conducted to determine a population size.

C.4 Scaled plan/map of survey area

This should be of appropriate scale and orientation with integral or separate location map at 1:50,000 or 1:25,000 scale and aerial photographs.

See Figures C4.1 and C4.2 attached.

C.5 Site/habitat description (relevant to great crested newts)

This should be based on day-time visits (to include description of site and habitat relevant to great crested newt ecology). Include annotated photographs if applicable.

The following habitats were recorded on the site.

1. Scrub with scattered trees
2. Ruderal/unimproved grassland

Scrub with scattered trees: The scrub is scattered across the site with denser areas towards the back (northern boundary) of the land. Species include hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, willow *Salix* sp dog rose *Rosa canina*. In the central area there are three oak *Quercus robur* trees with associated deadwood, cracks and splits etc., also a Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris* and other young willows.

Ruderal/unimproved grassland: The grassland areas are generally species rich with a variety of plants normally only found in areas of unimproved or abandoned habitat. Species include common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, birds foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, cowslip *Primula veris*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, creeping cinquefoil *Potentilla reptans*, teasel *Dipsacus fullonum*, wild strawberry *Fragaria vesca*, ox eye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, primrose *Primula vulgaris* and unidentified orchid species which are just starting to emerge. The damp ruts support small stands of common reed *Typha latifolia* and sedges *Carex* sp.

C.6 Field survey(s).

Include survey method (night counts, bottle trapping, egg surveys, site inspections), timings (day/evening), weather conditions (wind, rain, air and water temperature – tabulated for multiple survey visits), personnel involved (provide individual licence numbers, if held) and details of experience/competence in this type of work, and equipment used (type and power of torch). Also record any occurrence of non-native invasive plant species or fish, and structures or features that may cause incidental capture or killing, e.g. gully pots. Also include any constraints and justifications for departures from best practice.

Please see C.3 Objectives of the survey. As the site consisted solely of terrestrial habitats, only an Ecological Assessment was conducted, with no further surveys to determine population sizes.

C.7 Survey Results.

Summarise findings in table form (if appropriate); provide clear, annotated and cross-referenced maps/plans/photographs to show locations of breeding sites, and habitat maps. Raw data to be appended.

No GCN surveys have been conducted, owing to known presence of GCN population in the area.

The site is relatively isolated from potential GCN breeding ponds within 250m, with only one water body present to the west of Ash Road (South), and other habitat barriers such as existing development in the area.

C.8 Interpretation/evaluation of survey results (Great crested newt Mitigation Guidelines section 5.8)

Provide count/estimate of great crested newt numbers, status of site (e.g. breeding, foraging, resting or hibernating), population significance, constraints on survey (e.g. time of year, cold weather, access problems – justify as necessary).

The site was considered suitable for foraging terrestrial newts. As no population size estimate surveys were conducted, it was assumed that a small population of great crested newts would be affected (<10 individuals).

D Impact assessment – potential impact of proposed works in absence of mitigation/compensation. See Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines (section 6.2)

D.1 Short-term impacts: disturbance

E.g. artificial light, restricting access to feeding or breeding sites, sheltering habitats and dispersal corridors.

The construction of the proposed development places great crested newts at risk from injury or fatality due to preparatory groundworks and construction works. The erection of temporary newt fencing to prevent animals from entering the construction area could restrict/impede the movement of newts and the sites connectivity into the wider landscape. Overall, there is a minor negative impact on the population.

The site is relatively isolated from potential GCN breeding ponds within 250m, with only one water body present to the west of Ash Road (South), and other habitat barriers such as existing development in the area.

D.2 Long-term impacts: site modification

E.g. destruction or damage of part of breeding site or preferential sheltering/foraging habitats Note that impacts can be positive or negative as this is in absence of mitigation.

The main long term impact is the loss of moderate quality terrestrial habitat used for foraging, dispersing and sheltering great crested newts. The site has an area of 12,544m², with 6,272m² being converted into buildings and hardstanding. The remaining 6,272m² would be converted into amenity grassland.

D.3 Long-term impacts: site loss

Impact on different sub populations to be taken into account at 2km, 10km, local, regional, and national level.

At the local level, there will be a minor negative impact on the population owing to the loss of terrestrial habitat. There would be a negligible impact on the species status at 10km, local, county, regional and country level.

D.4 Long-term impacts: fragmentation and isolation

E.g. loss of ponds or terrestrial habitat including stepping stones and linear features such as hedges, tree lines, severance of migration routes by roads.

No fragmentation and isolation impacts identified.

D.5 Post-development interference impacts

E.g. gully pots or other features that could effect incidental capture or killing, predation, disturbance, including those associated with recreation and human pressure.

No impacts identified.

D.6 Predicted scale of impact

Include impacts on species status at the site, 2km, 10km, local, county, regional and country levels.

The site prior to mitigation would have a minor negative impact on great crested newts within 2km, through the potential injuring and killing of individuals, as well as the loss of foraging, dispersal and sheltering habitat. There would be a negligible impact on the species status at 10km, local, county, regional and country level.

Delivery Information - Mitigation, compensation and monitoring

Description of how the impacts will be addressed in order to ensure no detriment to the maintenance of the population at a favourable conservation status.

E Works to be undertaken

Please identify which works will be undertaken or supervised by a licensed ecologist

E.1 Great Crested Newt capture and exclusion (if applicable).

Timings, effort, methods to be employed, reasonable avoidance schemes or measures for great crested newts (fencing, fence maintenance, logging captures, inspection and maintenance of fences), locations of receptor sites etc. Include diagrams to show locations of draft and exclusion fencing, pitfall trap design and trap density. State if site based weather stations are used to demonstrate appropriate trapping conditions

Mitigation work will involve the erection of a one-way fence around two thirds (western end) of the site perimeter (Figure E1), two cross trap fences and the installation of 50 pitfall traps and 25 refugia. As it is assumed a small population of great crested newts occurs on site, reasonable effort will involve a minimum of 30 days trapping in suitable weather between September and October 2016. A destructive search will then be undertaken in order to ensure that no newts are left on site when works commence. Amphibian fencing will be inspected during each visit and maintained where necessary. The receptor site is located in the remaining one third (eastern end) of the site, which will be enhanced as detailed in E.2.1.

E.2 Great Crested Newt habitat

E.2.1 Receptor site modification, enhancement or creation.

Include details of new breeding sites and resting places e.g pond creation- design, layout, number, planting schemes, water supply and hydrology regimes, terrestrial habitat diversification or creation – design, habitat type, planting schemes, provenance of imported plants, consideration of biosecurity impacts.

Receptor site:

The eastern end of the site (4,027m²) will be used as a receptor site and features existing rough grassland, which will be enhanced with a pond, two hibernacula and hedgerow/tree planting.

Rough grassland:

The grassland area currently present, will be left as is and cut in rotation at 50% of the area per year to maintain suitability for great crested newts. Please refer to the management plan provided.

Pond:

The pond will have a surface area of 200m² (10m by 20m) and a maximum depth of 2.5m, with gradually sloping sides. A 1m deep shelf will be created in the southern section of the pond to provide a breeding area for newts. The pond will be created during the hibernation season (winter months) to avoid encountering great crested newts.

Hibernacula:

Two hibernacula areas will be located near the pond, but outside the construction site and with dimensions of 3m length x 1m width x 1m height. They will consist of an excavated hole, filled in with brick/rubble and overlaid with leaves/branch cutting. A geotextile layer will be placed over the top, exposing brick/rubble margins and covered with grass turf cut from the site.

Hedgerows/trees:

Native tree, shrub and hedgerow planting will be located around the edge of the receptor area, as not to shade the pond. Trees should consist of field maple, dogwood, guelder rose, crab apple, bird cherry and rowan. Hedgerows should consist of hawthorn, holly, dogwood and dog-rose.

E.2.2 Temporary loss of breeding sites, resting places

Provide details of all reasonable avoidance measures to be undertaken throughout the period of works

- The temporary fence will be inspected once a week and maintained where necessary.
- The pond will be created during the hibernation season (winter months) to avoid encountering great crested newts.
- Any excavations on the construction site will be covered during the night to prevent animals from falling in.
- Lighting of the construction site at night will be minimised as far as practicable, to reduce the risk of possible disruption to nocturnal animals.
- Construction materials will be stored off the ground on pallets, to prevent providing shelter for animals and subsequent harm when materials are moved.

E.2.3 Destruction of existing breeding sites, resting places

Full project programme including dewatering schemes(including filter specifications), programmes of terrestrial searches, fencing location and construction, transport methodologies, void infilling.

- Erection of fence and installation of pitfall traps/refugia
- Mowing of grass to a height of 10cm over a period of 2 weeks
- Trapping for a minimum of 30 days in good weather (above 5 degrees at night)

E.2.4 Scaled maps/plans

To show proposals for mitigation outlined above in relation to existing and proposed habitat features and in relation to the proposed development outline. A GIS data layer may be included with your application to illustrate locations of habitats in E.2.1 to E.2.3

- A map showing location of fences, pitfall traps and refugia is attached at Figure E1
- A map showing receptor site enhancement is attached at Figure E2
- GIS map to be produced once mitigation site is created and pond constructed

E.3 Mechanisms for ensuring delivery of mitigation and compensation measures

E.3.1 Measures to ensure compliance with this method statement.

This may require appointment of an external auditing scheme including audit key performance indicators, for medium, large scale or long term schemes e.g. residential development, pipeline construction or maintenance, way leaves for utilities, quarrying and mineral extraction.

Compliance will be undertaken by the site owner, ESL Group appointing an independent ecologist. See compliance audit document.

E.3.2 Ensure that sufficient land has been acquired for compensation purposes

Provide scaled maps/plans

Not applicable.

E.3.3 Ensure that designs of subsequent development are newt friendly

Do not include features likely to result in incidental capture or killing

Not applicable.

E.3.4 Provide sufficient resources

To ensure effective site management and associated wardening and monitoring where relevant.

Funding will be undertaken by the site owner, ESL Group via agreement and land transfer to Holding Habitats Ltd.

E.4 Mitigation contingencies

Describe any contingency proposals including circumstances when the contingencies will be instigated.

Compliance will be undertaken by an **independent ecologist**. Site population monitoring by the licenced ecologist will identify shortcomings in the short term and management is identified to be ELM/Holding Habitats organisation set up to manage mitigation sites on Wrexham Industrial Estate.

E.5 Biosecurity risk assessment

Consider presence of non-native species and disease on site and actions to be undertaken that will prevent their spread onto or off the site

Refer to separate biosecurity risk assessment.

F Post-development site safeguard

F.1 Habitat/site management and maintenance

Include ongoing land management proposals, details of who will be responsible for management and maintenance, on going running costs, site/structure ownership and monitoring development of new habitats.

Please refer to the management plan. The site's owner will engage 'Holding Habitats' to be responsible for maintenance, which will involve cutting the rough grassland in rotation at 50% per year and scrub control, litter clearance. Management and monitoring will be in accordance with the management plan.

F.2 Population monitoring

Include details of monitoring effort and timing, personnel involved and equipment to be used.

Monitoring will consist of three torch surveys of the pond outlined in the mitigation, per year, for a minimum of five years following its construction. The surveys will be conducted by SCALES Consultancy Ltd and be conducted between mid-March and mid-June.

Use of Cofnod methodology to be employed for monitoring/surveillance to be implemented. See management plan SCALES Consultancy Ltd August 2016. 3 GCN Torch counts in the pond along with H.S.I score and aquatic plant species and distribution.

F.3 Post-development mitigation contingencies

Describe the action that you will take if monitoring results are unfavourable.

The mitigation plans will be assessed to ascertain the reasons for unfavourable results. Pond and terrestrial habitat management will be amended as necessary and monitoring will continue.

F.4 Mechanism for ensuring delivery of post-development works

As appropriate e.g. Section 106 Agreement, to include details of who will undertake the work and reporting details, other covenants, contractual agreements or wardening schemes.

Mitigation site is owned by ESL Group. The site owner, ESL Group will be transfer the mitigation land for management for 25 years to Holding Habitats Ltd. an established ecological management body. This is in partnership with SCALES Consultancy for overseeing the management and monitoring to ensure that the management and monitoring outlined in the management plan are enacted accordingly.

Details of monitoring and management in accordance with the management plan will be provided annually.

G Timetable of works

Include timings of all capture, development activities and mitigation measures, monitoring and other post development works

Activity	Timing	Comments
Newt fence installation (perimeter fence and cross trap fencing)	Sep 16	
Newt capture (pitfall trapping)	Sep 16 – Oct 16	
Destructive searches (following completion of all other capture efforts)	Oct 16	After trapping has been completed
Receptor site pond creation	Nov 16 – Feb 17	
Receptor site terrestrial habitat works (e.g. hibernacula, refuges)	Nov 16 – Feb 17	Construction of two hibernacula
Construction period	Nov 16 – Oct 17	
Site checks and maintenance during construction	Nov 16 – Oct 17	
Newt/drift fence removal	Oct 17	
Monitoring	Mar – Jun 17 Mar – Jun 18 Mar – Jun 19 Mar – Jun 19 Mar – Jun 20	3 torch visits per year

H Land Ownership – Mitigation Site/Compensation Site

H.1 Mitigation Site/Compensation Site Ownership

If mitigation is to be undertaken at a location not owned by the applicant, you must provide the written consent of the relevant land owner(s). You must also provide details of how the mitigation is to be maintained in the long term (e.g. a legal agreement, transfer of legal interest).

Mitigation site is owned by ESL Group. The site owner, ESL Group will be transfer the mitigation land for management for 25 years to Holding Habitats Ltd. an established ecological management body. This is in partnership with SCALES Consultancy for overseeing the management and monitoring to ensure that the management and monitoring outlined in the management plan are enacted accordingly.

H.2 Mitigation Site/Compensation Ownership post construction

If the ownership of the mitigation site will change after construction please confirm the identity of the prospective owners/occupiers together with timescales associated with transfer of occupancy or other forms of legal interest. You must also provide details of how the mitigation is to be maintained in the long term (e.g. a legal agreement).

Mitigation site is owned by ESL Group. The site owner, ESL Group will be transfer the mitigation land for management for 25 years to Holding Habitats Ltd. an established ecological management

body. This is in partnership with SCALES Consultancy for overseeing the management and monitoring to ensure that the management and monitoring outlined in the management plan are enacted accordingly.

I References

Credits for source information.

Baker, J., Beebee, T., Buckley, J. Gent, T. and Orchard, D. (2011), *Amphibian Habitat Management Handbook*, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation: Bournemouth

English Nature (2001) *Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines*, Peterborough.

Gent, A.H. and Gibson, S.D. eds. (1998), *Herpetofauna Workers' Manual*, Peterborough, Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Griffiths, R.A., Raper, S.J., Brady, L.D. (1996). Evaluation of a standard method for surveying common frogs (*Rana temporaria*) and newts (*Triturus cristatus*, *T. helveticus*, and *T. vulgaris*). Joint Nature Conservation Committee Report No. 259.

Langton, T., Beckett, C. and Foster, J. (2001) GCN Conservation handbook. Froglife.

Oldham, R.S., Keeble, J., Swan, M.J.S. and Jeffcote, M. (2000), Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*). Herpetological Journal 10 (4), 143-155.

J Annexes

J.1 Pre-existing survey reports

Not applicable

J.2 Raw survey data

Not applicable