

APPENDIX 8.2 REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES (RAMS) METHOD STATEMENT

Amphibians and Reptiles

Summary of Method Statement

The following Method Statement outlines suitable measures to be implemented during construction works to avoid the potential for disturbance, injury or killing of individual great crested newt (GCN) and other more commonly recorded amphibian and reptile species.

Legislation

Great crested newts (GCN) and their habitat are fully protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Habitats Regulations.

The combined legislation makes it illegal to:

- Intentionally or deliberately capture, kill or injure a great crested newt;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used for shelter and protection including resting and breeding places, whether occupied by a great crested newt or not;
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a great crested newt when in a place of shelter;
- Possess a great crested newt, or any part of it, unless acquired lawfully;
- Sell, barter, exchange or transport or offer for sale great crested newts or parts of them.

Anyone carrying out activities which may affect a European Protected Species (EPS) must consider the presence, their breeding sites and resting places. If an offence cannot be avoided, then a EPS Mitigation licence should be sought from Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

Widespread reptile species namely the common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, grass snake *Natrix helvetica* and adder *Vipera berus* are protected against killing, injuring and sale under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Method Statement

The objectives of this Method Statement are therefore to:

- Avoid committing an offence under the above legislation; and,
- To ensure that favourable conservation status of amphibian (including GCN) or reptiles is maintained.

Any development related activities on the Site, such as vegetation clearance, removal or tidying up of rubble or other debris or excavations in areas of potentially suitable habitat may potentially affect GCN or other amphibian and reptile species. As a result, safeguards must be implemented and the Method Statement below details measures to be implemented to ensure these objectives are achieved.

The following measures will be adopted throughout the construction / operation of the proposed development:

- Site operatives will be informed by 'tool box' talk of the potential for protected species to occur on-site, what to look out for and what to do in the event that animal is found.
- If possible, the timing of the proposed clearance works (e.g. longer grass (>150mm) and scrub or other features potentially offering shelter or refuge) should avoid the hibernation period (November to February inclusive). This will reduce the likely presence of individual animals being disturbed during hibernation.
- Vegetation (e.g. longer grass (>150mm) and scrub) should be reduced (by hand trimmer) to a height of c.150mm prior to ground works commencing to aid visual searches and encourage individuals to temporarily move away from the working areas.
- Trenches and excavations should include an escape route for animals that might enter the trench, especially if left open overnight. Ramps should be no greater than 45 degrees in angle and can include wooden planks or ramped earth. Ideally, any excavations open for a prolonged period should be covered.
- All excavations left open overnight or longer should be checked for animals prior to the continuation of works or infilling.
- Any excavated material stored overnight should be searched prior to being used as infill.

Should a GCN be found at any point during construction, works within suitable habitat and/or potentially disturbing works in close proximity to the GCN must cease immediately and an ecologist contacted who will advise on the appropriate actions, including applying for a licence, if required.

Other amphibians/reptiles found during the visual inspection will be placed within a safe receptor area comprising of terrestrial habitats which will not be impacted by the proposed works and has excellent connectivity with surrounding terrestrial habitats.