
New Place Farm, Pulborough (1004404)

Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS) to address stated requirements of Condition 6 of Reserved Matters planning permission DC/24/1676

Date: August 2026

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Aspect Ecology Ltd is acting on behalf of Barratt David Wilson Homes (Southern Counties) in relation to ecological matters at the site, Land at New Place Farm, Pulborough, West Sussex (centred at grid reference TQ 05800 19154) hereafter referred to as 'The Site'.
- 1.2 Reserved Matters (Ref: DC/24/1676) was granted on 13/07/2026, which comprises details of 160 dwellings, together with associated internal access roads, parking and landscaping for areas east of the right of way.
- 1.3 The Reserved Matters approval is subject to a number of conditions, of which Condition 6 relates to Great Crested Newts (GCN). Condition 6 states:

"No development shall commence (including site clearance, vegetation removal, ground works and any works of demolition) until a Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS) for Great Crested Newts has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The PWMS shall be prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist and shall be based on the findings of the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey (or Preliminary Ecological Appraisal), taking into account that the most recent survey data is over 2 years old. The PWMS shall include, but not be limited to:

- a) An assessment of the suitability of the site for Great Crested Newts and an explanation of the precautionary approach;*
- b) A plan showing areas of potential risk and ecological constraints;*
- c) Detailed methods for site clearance, including directional clearance and destructive search techniques where appropriate;*
- d) Timing of works and any seasonal restrictions;*
- e) Toolbox talks for contractors;*
- f) Details of ecological supervision (Ecological Clerk of Works) during sensitive operations, where required;*
- g) Measures to avoid harm to Great Crested Newts during construction;*
- h) Procedures to be followed if Great Crested Newts are encountered, including cessation of works and contact with a licensed ecologist;*
- i) Any reasonable avoidance measures such as covering excavations overnight or provision of escape ramps.*

The development shall thereafter be carried out in full accordance with the approved PWMS.

Reason: As these matters are fundamental to safeguard the ecology and biodiversity of the area in accordance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), and to

enhance Protected and Priority Species/habitats and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species)."

Site Overview

- 1.4 The site is located at the northern edge of Pulborough in West Sussex. The site is bound by a railway line and associated woodland to the north, residential properties and an area of woodland to the west beyond which lies London Road (A29), existing residential areas and open space to the south, and farmland to the east.
- 1.5 The site is a former nursery, previously dominated by intensively managed nursery planting areas and polytunnels which have now been removed. Other habitats include short sward grassland, hedgerows, treelines, and a small reservoir.

Purpose of this report

- 1.6 The purpose of this Precautionary Working Method Statement is to assess the current suitability of the Site for Great Crested Newts and to set out the precautionary measures that will be implemented during site clearance and construction in order to minimise the risk of harm to this protected species.

2 Site Suitability

Previous survey data

- 2.1 Aspect Ecology's Ecological Appraisal (Ref: 4404 EcoAp vf3/JoC/DM, dated 22/12/2021) identified a single pond within the site, and a further off-site pond (with these waterbodies referred to as P2 and P1 respectively on the enclosed Plan 4404/PWMS1). Environmental DNA surveys were completed of these waterbodies in June 2021, which confirmed absence of Great Crested Newts.
- 2.2 Update eDNA survey work of the onsite pond, P2, was conducted in 2024 which confirmed the continued absence of GCN from this pond.
- 2.3 As part of the 2025 mitigation work, a reptile translocation was conducted, for which 140 refugia were deployed within the site. This translocation exercise is targeted to capture and relocate reptiles, though can provide incidental results of amphibian presence. No Great Crested Newts were recorded across the 30-day translocation and, as such, provides further supplementary information confirming the absence of Great Crested Newts from the site.

Current Site Suitability

- 2.4 The fields that dominate the site are largely clear of vegetation following the removal of polytunnels and nursery areas that were previously present, exposing the sandy substrate beneath. Some areas of vegetation are present within the fields, however these consist of isolated, sporadic areas of improved grassland that are very short sward in height offering low suitability for GCN. Furthermore, the site is subject to ongoing management and, as such, it is highly unlikely that suitable habitats will develop.
- 2.5 Given the absence of GCN records from the previous survey work, the lack of suitable terrestrial habitat present within the site, and the current management of the site, it is concluded that the site provides overall negligible suitability for GCN, with only some small patches of vegetation providing some very low potential suitable habitat.

3 Site Clearance Methodology

- 3.1 Although the site is considered unsuitable for GCN, the most recent species specific survey data is over two years old. Therefore, it is recommended that a precautionary approach to development be adopted to safeguard the species during construction.
- 3.2 A destructive search of any potentially suitable habitat (albeit limited in extent) will be conducted in order to minimise the risk of killing or injury of GCN, should they be present during construction. The habitat manipulation exercise will be conducted during the active terrestrial season (generally March / April to September / October, depending on prevailing weather). A suitably qualified Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) will supervise all sensitive operations. The exercise will be designed to encourage any GCN within the construction zone to move to suitable areas of retained / nearby habitat, prior to construction activities commencing, and will be undertaken in the following manner:

Toolbox Talk

- 3.3 Prior to the commencement of works, all contractors and relevant site personnel will receive a toolbox talk delivered by the supervising ecologist. The toolbox talk will outline the legislation protecting Great Crested Newt, alongside a brief methodology of works to be undertaken to safeguard species, including species identification (see Appendix 4404/1).

Precautionary Destructive Search

- The controlled removal of any point features (such as log or rubble piles, brash piles or other refugia) will be supervised by an experienced ecologist;
- Following the removal of point features, a flail mower (driven by a small machine with low pressure tyres) or hand operated strimmer will be utilised to reduce the height of grassland, scrub and ruderal vegetation. Should it be required, the flail mower or strimmer will be set to cut at an initial height of 15-20cm, thereby removing the majority of vegetation, though leaving sufficient sward that any remaining wildlife will not be accidentally injured or killed. A suitably qualified ecologist will walk ahead of the flail mower, providing a visual check for any Great Crested Newt within the upper areas of the grassland sward to ensure absence of this species;
- The initial cut is designed to make the habitat sub-optimal for GCN by removing the structure of vegetated areas (and thereby removing shelter and foraging opportunities). As such, it is anticipated that following this cut any remaining animals will be easier to identify for capture. Following the initial cut, the flail mower or strimmer will then be set to ground height, in order to remove all habitat. Again, a suitably qualified ecologist will walk ahead of the flail-mower / strimmer, visually checking for any remaining animals. Where the supervising ecologist considers that certain areas of the site would benefit from a more precautionary approach, strimmers only may be used to assist with this final clearance.

4 Construction Considerations

- 4.1 In order to safeguard individual Great Crested Newt that may access the site, it is proposed that the following best practice measures be implemented;

- All contractors and relevant site personnel will be fully briefed on the potential presence of GCN at the site and will maintain a watching brief for Great Crested Newts during works.
 - Vegetation within active work areas will be maintained at approximately 100–150 mm in height to discourage use by amphibians.
 - Any building materials, bricks, and pipes must be raised off the ground on pallets to prevent creating artificial areas of refuge that may attract newts.
 - Soil, rubble, and green waste must be placed directly into skips or removed from the site swiftly. They must never be left overnight to form a debris pile to prevent creating artificial areas of refuge that may attract newts.
 - If an excavation must be left open overnight, a shallow earth ramp or a wooden plank (tilted at an angle under 45°) must be placed inside so trapped newts can climb out;
- 4.2 In the unlikely event that a Great Crested Newt be encountered during construction then works must cease in that area and a suitably qualified ecologist (e.g. Aspect Ecology) contacted at the earliest opportunity for further advice. Works will only recommence following approval from the supervising ecologist or once a protected species licence or District Level Licence has been granted by the relevant organisation. The supervising ecologist or contractors must not handle newts unless they are considered to be at immediate risk of killing or injury.

5 Conclusion

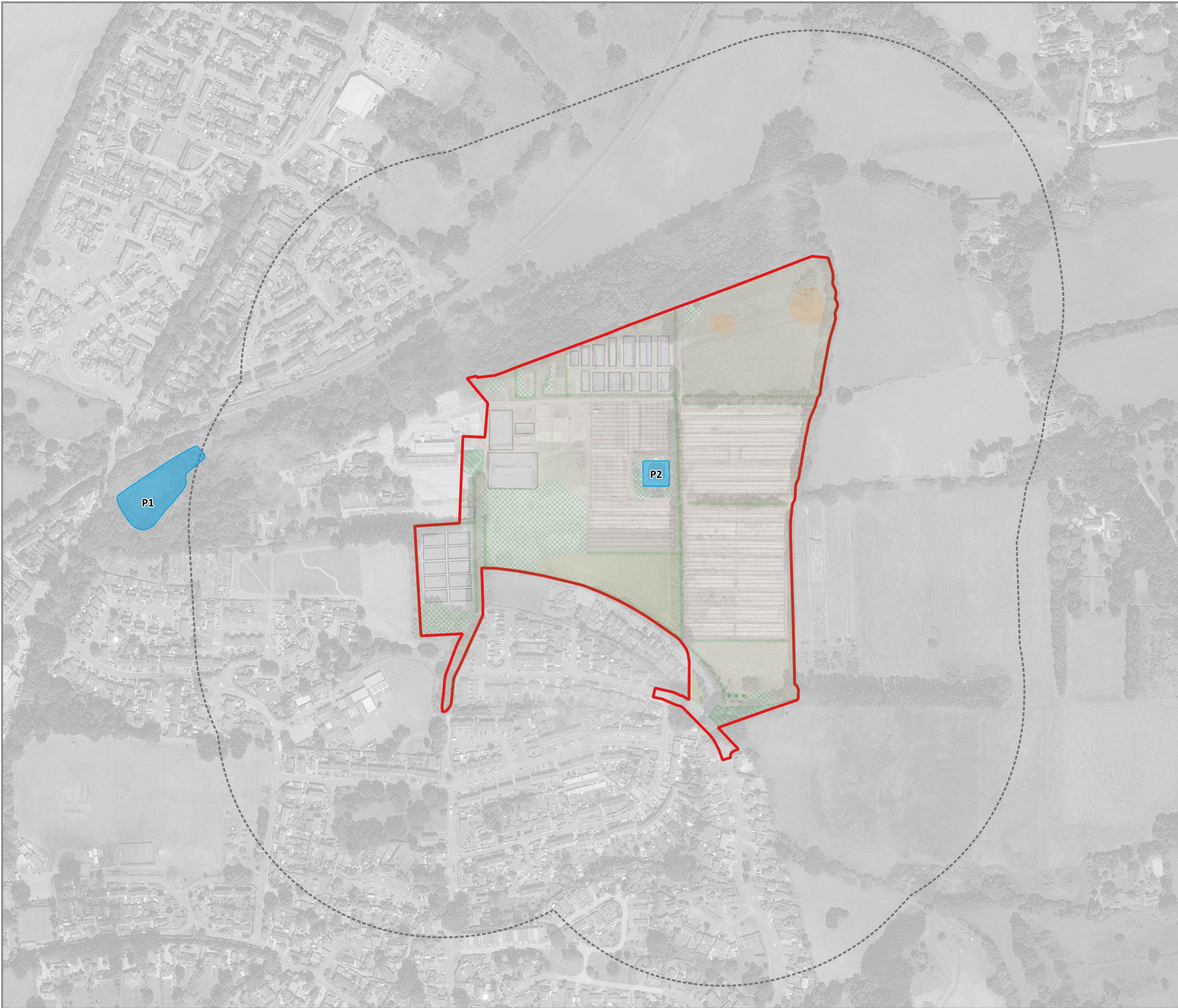
- 5.1 The site currently provides limited suitable terrestrial habitat for GCN, and previous survey data has confirmed the absence of the species from within the site. Nevertheless, as the most recent survey data is more than two years old a proportionate precautionary approach will be adopted during the site works.
- 5.2 Implementation of the measures described within this Precautionary Working Method Statement will minimise the risk of harm to Great Crested Newts and ensure that the development proceeds in accordance with Condition 6 of planning permission DC/24/1676.

Enclosed:

Plan 4404/PWMS1
Plan 4404/CEMPX
Appendix 4404/1

Plan 4404/PWMS1:

Pond Plan



- Key:
-  Site Boundary
 -  250m Site Buffer
 -  Pond (Negative eDNA Result)



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New Place Farm, Pulborough

PROJECT

Pond Plan

TITLE

4404/PWMS1

DRAWING
NO.

A/

REV

August 2026

DATE

JM

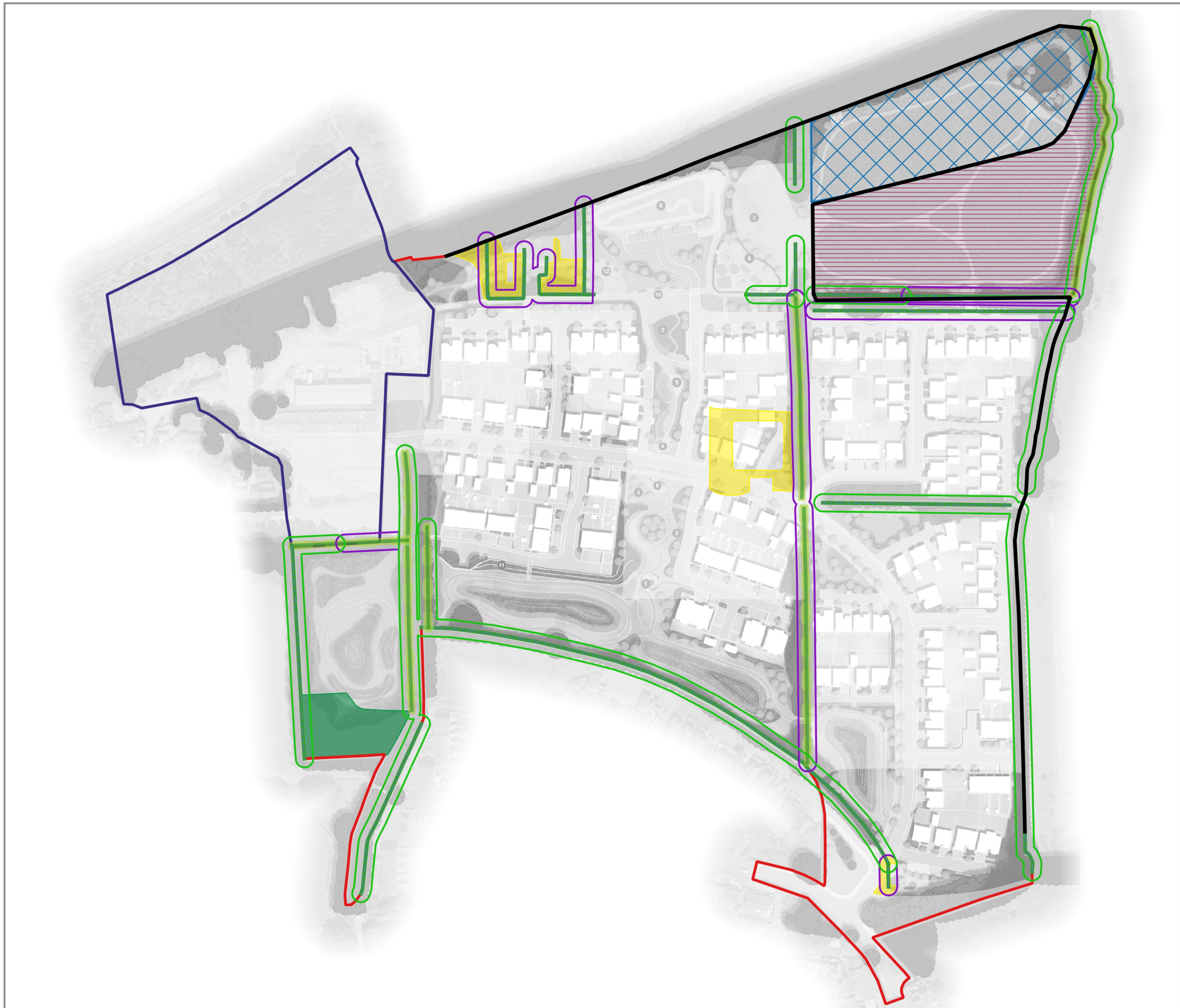
QC



Plan 4404/CEMP2:

Location of Habitats to be Cleared Under Ecological Supervision

P:\Project\Aspect Ecology Projects\ECO-4400\ECO-4400\Graphics\2024_RM_Application\GIS\4404 Reptile Survey.qgs



- Key:
- Site Boundary
 - Retained land outside of application
 - Habitats to be cleared under ecological supervision
 - Habitats to be retained
 - Hedgerows and treelines to be cleared under ecological supervision
 - Retained hedgerows and treelines, subject to suitable protection measures
 - Reptile receptor area
 - Utilised following completion of construction as suitable reptile habitat
 - Reptile Fencing

aspect ecology
APEM Group

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Land at New Place Farm,
Pulborough
Construction Environmental
Management Plan

4404/CEMP2

C/LS

August 2026

JB/LS

PROJECT

TITLE

DRAWING
NO.

REV

DATE

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Appendix 4404/1:

Toolbox Talk

On-Site Contractor Guidance & Toolbox Talk

Project: New Place Farm, Pulborough (1004404)

Great Crested Newt Method Statement

August 2026

Legal Protection of Great Crested Newts

1. Great Crested Newts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), making it an offence *inter alia* to:
 - Deliberately kill, injure or capture Great Crested Newts;
 - Deliberately disturb Great Crested Newts, including in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to reproduce or to hibernate, or migrate, or which is likely to affect significantly their local distribution or abundance;
 - Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of Great Crested Newts;
 - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of Great Crested Newts.
2. In addition, Great Crested Newts are listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which contains further provisions making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:
 - Disturb any Great Crested Newt while occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; orObstruct access to, any structure or place which any Great Crested Newt uses for shelter or protection.

Precautionary Safeguards Prior to and During Works

3. Due to the potential for presence of Great Crested Newt, a number of safeguards are provided below to avoid potential harm or disturbance to this species, thereby protecting them in line with the provisions of the relevant legislation. These safeguards are as follows:
 - The controlled removal of any point features (such as log or rubble piles, brash piles or other refugia) will be supervised by an experienced ecologist;
 - Following the removal of point features, a flail mower (driven by a small machine with low pressure tyres) or hand operated strimmer will be utilised to reduce the height of grassland, scrub and ruderal vegetation. Should it be required, the flail mower or strimmer will be set to cut at an initial height of 15-20cm, thereby removing the majority of vegetation, though leaving sufficient sward that any remaining wildlife will not be accidentally injured or killed. A suitably qualified ecologist will walk

ahead of the flail mower, providing a visual check for any Great Crested Newt within the upper areas of the grassland sward to ensure absence of this species;

- The initial cut is designed to make the habitat sub-optimal for GCN by removing the structure of vegetated areas (and thereby removing shelter and foraging opportunities). As such, it is anticipated that following this cut any remaining animals will be easier to identify for capture. Following the initial cut, the flail mower or strimmer will then be set to ground height, in order to remove all habitat. Again, a suitably qualified ecologist will walk ahead of the flail-mower / strimmer, visually checking for any remaining animals. Where the supervising ecologist considers that certain areas of the site would benefit from a more precautionary approach, strimmers only may be used to assist with this final clearance.
4. In addition to the above, the following general precautionary measures shall be implemented across the site to safeguard any Great Crested Newt that may be present during the site clearance and the construction phase of the development:
- All contractors and relevant site personnel will be fully briefed on the potential presence of GCN at the site and will maintain a watching brief for Great Crested Newts during works.
 - Vegetation within active work areas will be maintained at approximately 100–150 mm in height to discourage use by amphibians.
 - Any building materials, bricks, and pipes must be raised off the ground on pallets to prevent creating artificial areas of refuge that may attract newts.
 - Soil, rubble, and green waste must be placed directly into skips or removed from the site swiftly. They must never be left overnight to form a debris pile to prevent creating artificial areas of refuge that may attract newts.
 - If an excavation must be left open overnight, a shallow earth ramp or a wooden plank (tilted at an angle under 45°) must be placed inside so trapped newts can climb out;

What To Do If a Newt Is Found During Works

5. In the unlikely event that a Great Crested Newt be encountered during construction then works must cease in that area and a suitably qualified ecologist (e.g. Aspect Ecology) contacted at the earliest opportunity for further advice. Works will only recommence following approval from the supervising ecologist or once a protected species licence or District Level Licence has been granted by the relevant organisation. The supervising ecologist or contractors must not handle newts unless they are considered to be at immediate risk of killing or injury.

Great Crested Newt Identification

Great Crested Newt



- A large newt with textured dark brown / black skin. During the breeding season the male has a high jagged crest along its back and tail with a white stripe in the centre of each side of the tail. After the breeding season the crest and white stripe are lost.

Smooth Newt



- Smaller than Great Crested Newt (see left picture for size comparison) without the warty textured skin. During the breeding season the male smooth newt develops a high crest along its back to its tail and on the underside of its tail. The crest is undulating rather than jagged like the Great Crested Newt.

Should you have any queries on any of the above please contact **James Morton** or **Andy Holyoak** at Aspect Ecology;

Phone: 01295 279721, **Email:** james.morton@aspect-ecology.com or andrew.holyoak@aspect-ecology.com

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