Great Crested Newt Survey Report

of

Scraptoft North, Leicestershire

on behalf of

Parker of Leicester Developments Limited

Reference:	DFCP 3788
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1.0 Summary

1.1 A HSI assessment undertaken by DF Clark Bionomique Ltd in 2016, identified waterbodies within 250m of the site (Area 1 to 3) with the potential to support great crested newts. It was therefore recommended that further surveys of nine waterbodies, Ponds 1 to 6, 8, 9 and 14 (see Appendix 1) be carried out to determine presence/absence of great crested newts. A population estimate was undertaken where they were found to be present within 250m of Area 1.

1.2 The results of this survey found that a breeding population of great crested newts were present in Pond 8, with a small population of great crested newts found in Pond 14. No onsite ponds were found to contain great crested newts, although smooth newts and common toad were recorded in a number of these ponds. Pond 8 is not considered further within this report due to it being located over 500m from Area 1, for which this report is prepared. Further mitigation will however be necessary when future works are to be considered for Area 2 and 3.

1.3 To ensure that the small population of offsite great crested newts found within Pond 14 (103m SE) are protected during future construction works, two options have been proposed for incorporation into a masterplan as follows:

***Option 1*:-** Full retention of habitat within 250m of Pond 14, with no works to be located within this retained habitat. With no works within 250m of pond 14 and the habitat retained/enhanced this approach would not require a European Protected Species Mitigation licence. Future development work would however be incorporated into a Non-Licensed Method Statement approach. The NLMS will detail all working requirements under which the proposed development would abide. Habitat enhancements are recommended under this option to provide an ecological benefit as a result of any development. Refer to Appendix 3.

or

Option 2**:** - Remove habitat and develop within 250m of Pond 14. This may require a European Protected Species Mitigation licence to be obtained prior to future site activities. This will highlight precautionary measures and proposed mitigation to be undertaken prior to any proposed site clearance and construction activities to ensure there will be no impact on the favourable conservation status of great crested newts from any future development. With this approach it is likely that a vegetated corridor be created to maintain connectivity on the south boundary of the south east corner of the proposed development site. Additional habitat enhancement will also be required under this approach. Refer to appendix 3.

1.4 Habitat creation and enhancement recommendations have also been made within this report which include the planting of hedgerows, creation of log piles and for a pond to be included as part of mitigation or as an enhancement. This will provide aquatic habitat connectivity for the benefit of amphibians including great crested newts.

1.5 Recommendations with respect to new planting to benefit amphibian habitat connectivity to the wider environment have been made to feed into the development of a masterplan to ensure that the site will maintain biodiversity or provide biodiversity gains for amphibians.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Instruction and background

2.1.1 D F Clark Bionomique Ltd were commissioned by Andrew Hiorns on behalf of Parker of Leicester Developments Limited to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of Scraptoft North, Leicestershire (approximate central grid reference: SK 652 062). The site is approximately 74ha and comprises predominantly of an existing golf course and a Local Nature Reserve. The site supports a network of managed hedgerows, mature scattered trees, semi-improved grassland and buildings.

2.1.2 No specific development proposals have yet been put forward for the site. This report will be used to inform scheme design and will be updated once the design is fixed.

2.1.3 The great crested newt surveys were initially recommended following a preliminary Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment of waterbodies within 250m of the site (Areas 1 to 3), which was conducted on the 31st March 2016. The HSI assessment identified six ponds on-site, and three off-site ponds as having the potential to support great crested newts (see Appendix 1).

2.1.4 Following the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and HSI assessment, the subsequent report recommended presence/absence great crested newt surveys and where necessary population estimate surveys of these waterbodies.

2.1.5 Recommendations included within this report are the professional opinion of an experienced ecologist based on the site surveys.

2.2 Competency

2.2.1 Each survey was carried out by experienced ecologists with at least one Natural England licensed great crested newt surveyor present on each occasion.

2.3 Aims

2.3.1 The objectives of the surveys and report are to:

- Confirm the presence/likely absence of great crested newts onsite; and
- Based on the results of each survey, make mitigation recommendations to feed into the masterplan design for Area 1 and in the future development proposals for the site.

2.3.2 A summary of relevant wildlife legislation and planning policies can be found in Appendix 4.

2.4 Site details

2.4.1 The site is split into three parts, as part of a phased masterplan development (see Appendix 2). The results of this survey and other assessments will help to inform the masterplan for the first phase of any likely development within Area 1. It is understood that a masterplan for Areas 2 and 3 will be developed in later years.

2.4.2 The site (Area 1) is located to the west of Beeby Road and was dominated by Scraptoft Golf Course and Scraptoft LNR. The golf course supported closely mown semi-improved grassland, with rough grass and scrub areas, mature boundary trees, hedgerows and seven ponds. The LNR supported closely grazed semi-improved grassland with areas of dense scrub, a pond and an eastern boundary hedgerow. The site also supported closely grazed horse paddocks with mature boundary trees.

2.4.3 The site is located adjacent the village of Scraptoft, Leicestershire. The wider local landscape comprises a mosaic of arable farmland and heavily grazed pasture with pockets of woodland and managed hedgerows, as well as suburban residential areas.

3.0 Methods

3.1 Great Crested Newt Survey

Habitat Suitability Index Assessment

3.1.1 Following standard methods described in Oldham R.S. et al. (2000), HSI assessments of six onsite waterbodies and three offsite waterbodies within 250m of the site had previously been undertaken during the DF Clark Bionomique Ltd Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey on the 31st March 2016.

Pond Surveys

3.1.2 The suitable onsite and offsite waterbodies within 250m of the site, connected by suitable terrestrial habitat, were surveyed up to six times during 2nd May and 6th June 2016, with three of these surveys undertaken during the peak aquatic activity period of mid-April to mid-May. The survey followed standard best practice methodology as described in the *Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines* (English Nature, 2001). During each survey occasion, bottle trapping and torching were carried out, with a search for great crested newt eggs also undertaken.

3.1.3 Searching for great crested newt eggs involved the systematic examination of submerged vegetation within each waterbody for eggs wrapped in the leaves of aquatic plants or leaf litter. Once a great crested newt egg is identified in a water body, no further examination should be undertaken to avoid unnecessary disturbance of eggs.

3.1.4 Bottle trapping involved setting a number of traps within the margin of each pond at an approximate density of one trap per two metres. The traps were set at or just before dusk and left overnight, with the number of newts in each trap recorded and released the following morning.

3.1.5 Torching was carried out between dusk and midnight, by walking slowly around the edge of each waterbody, focusing attention on clear, open pond margins and associated vegetation. A one million candlepower torch was used, and the pond was only surveyed in this way on warm nights (pond temperature >5°C) with little/no wind and no rain.

3.2 Survey limitations

3.2.1 No limitations were identified as the protected species surveys were carried out at an appropriate time of year for great crested newts. It is considered that there are no ecologically significant limitations to the effectiveness of the survey conducted. or the conclusions and recommendations of this report, given current information.

4.0 Results

4.1 Great Crested Newt Survey

Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Assessment

4.1.1 The full results of the HSI assessment can be found in the 2016 DF Clark Bionomique Ltd Phase 1 Habitat Survey report. Details of ponds selected for further survey within 250m of Area 1 are summarised in Table 1 below.

4.1.2 The HSI results for Ponds 8 and 9 are not included within this report, as they are found over 250m away from Area 1, and are therefore not included within the scope of this report.

Table 1: HSI assessment results of ponds surveyed for great crested newts within 250m of Area 1.

Pond number	Pond location	OS Grid Reference	HSI score	Pond suitability
1	On golf course	SK646066	0.58	Below Average
2	On golf course	SK648065	0.66	Average
3	On golf course	SK649066	0.63	Average
4	On golf course	SK649065	0.64	Average
5	On golf course	SK651067	0.85	Excellent
6	On golf course	SK651065	0.61	Average
14	On adjacent housing estate	SK651059	0.79	Good

Pond Survey

4.1.3 The results of the great crested newt surveys carried out in May to June 2016 can be found in Table 3 overleaf, with temperature and weather conditions recorded in Table 2.

Pond 1 and 6

4.1.4 No amphibian species were recorded from these ponds.

Ponds 2, 3 and 4

4.1.5 This pond contained smooth newts *Triturus vulgaris* in low numbers on all survey occasions during torching and bottle trapping. Smooth newt eggs were recorded. Common toad *Bufo bufo* tadpoles were found in Ponds 2 and 3. No great crested newts were recorded in any of these ponds.

Pond 5

4.1.6 This pond contained smooth newts in moderate numbers on all survey occasions during torching and bottle trapping. Smooth newt eggs were recorded. Common toad tadpoles were found in this pond. No great crested newts were recorded in this pond.

Pond 8

4.1.7 This pond contained smooth newts and great crested newts in low numbers. A great crested newt egg was found in this pond during a survey visit, which confirmed the ponds breeding status and no further egg searches were conducted. Smooth newt eggs were also recorded in this pond. Surveys were restricted to presence/absence surveys only, as this pond fell outside of the 250m perimeter of Area 1.

Pond 9

4.1.8 This pond contained smooth newts in very low numbers on some survey occasions during torching and bottle trapping. No great crested newts were recorded in this pond.

Pond 14

4.1.9 This pond contained sticklebacks, smooth newts in low numbers and single numbers of great crested newt i.e. two individual male were present on two separate occasions. It is likely that this was the same male on both occasions although this cannot be confirmed.

4.1.10 Detailed surveys were not undertaken on other ponds within 250m of the site identified during the earlier HSI assessments (see Appendix 2), because they were considered unsuitable for supporting great crested newts, with the HSI scores below average/poor or, the waterbody was separated from the proposed development site by barriers to dispersal.

4.1.11 Details of the weather conditions for each survey can be found in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Weather conditions

	Date	2-3 May	9-10 May	19-20 May	25-26 May	31-01 May/June	5-6 June
Temp. 'C	Min	5	13	9	11	9	10
	Max	10	15	13	16	14	13

Table 3: Results of the great crested newt surveys

	Date	2nd/3rd May			9th/10th May			19th/20th May			25/26th May			31st May & 1st June			5th/6th June		
Pond	**Species**	**T**	**B**	**E**	**T**	**B**	**E**	**T**	**B**	**E**	**T**	**B**	**E**	**T**	**B**	**E**	**T**	**B**	**E**
1	Great Crested Newt	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**
2	Smooth Newt	**2M, 1F**	**1M**	**Y**	**3M, 2F**	**4M, 1F**		**1m, 2f**	**3m, 2f**		**3m**	**6m, 2f**							
	Toad		**Y**																
3	Smooth Newt		**4m, 1f**	**Y**	**1m, 1f**	**3m**		**3m, 2f**	**5m, 1f**		**1m, 1f**	**3m**							
	Toad		**Y**																
4	Smooth Newt	**3m, 1f**	**6m, 2f**	**Y**	**1m**	**2m**		**2m**	**3m**		**1m, 1f**	**2m, 1f**							
5	Smooth Newt	**5m, 2f**	**11m**	**Y**	**41m , 4f**	**33m, 2f**		**20m,3 f**	**12m, 4f**		**8m, 2f**	**6m**							
	Toad		**Y**																
6	Great Crested Newt	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**
8	Great Crested Newt		**3m, 3f**	**Y**	**2m**	**6m, 2f**		**1m**	**2m**		**2m, 1f**	**3m**							
	Smooth Newt		**1m**	**Y**	**3m**	**14m, 2f**		**1m,1f**	**5m,1f**		**1f**	**2m**							
9	Smooth Newt		**1f**		**1m**	**1f**						**2m**							
14	Great Crested Newt													**1m**			**1m**		
	Smooth Newt													**1m**			**2m**		

T = Torching; B = Bottle trapping; E = Egg search; m=male; f = female; N=Not recorded

5.0 Conclusions, Recommendations and Mitigation

5.1 Conclusions

5.1.1 Great crested newts and their habitat are fully protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). Great crested newts were identified within 250m of the proposed development site.

5.1.2 A breeding population of great crested newts was confirmed within Pond 8 with the presence of great crested newt eggs. Surveys for a population size class estimate did not take place, as this pond is within Area 2 to the east and beyond 250m of Area 1. Further surveys and any recommended mitigation with respect to great crested newts and Pond 8 will only be required prior to the development of the masterplan for Area 2, and will not be considered further within this report.

5.1.3 A small population of great crested newts was confirmed within Pond 14, which is found within 103m of Area 1. Given the distance of the pond from the proposed works, the quality of terrestrial habitats onsite and the presence of suitable connecting terrestrial habitat to the pond, there is the potential for great crested newts to be present in terrestrial habitats onsite. As such, there is a potential impact on the favourable conservation status of great crested newts from the proposed development in the absence of mitigation.

5.1.4 It is considered likely that the same male was identified on two separate occasions although this cannot be confirmed. As only a single male, or two separate individual male great crested newt was identified, Pond 14 is not considered to be a breeding pond. The habitat closest to Pond 14 (103m NW) is considered of limited suitability due to the heavy poaching and arable field further limiting the potential of the site for great crested newt. Connective hedgerows are however present which are of potential for use by commuting newts.

5.2 Potential Impacts

<u>Loss / Damage to Breeding Pond</u>

5.2.1 The development of the site will not lead to the loss of a breeding pond. There is no hydrological link from the site to Pond 14 located 103m to the east of the site, and as such there will be no direct or indirect impact upon the pond.

Loss of Foraging Habitat

5.2.2 The site covers an area of 74ha and comprises varying quality terrestrial amphibian habitat, with areas of horse poached and arable fields found close to Pond 14. Such habitat are of low quality to great crested newts. However, areas of habitat upto 250m such as hedgerows are also found between Pond 14 and the site, which are of moderate quality and therefore potentially used by great crested newts. As such, the loss or temporary disturbance of the terrestrial habitats on site is a potential factor in the absence of mitigation.

Disruption to Dispersal and Migration

5.2.3 The majority of Area 1 is located beyond 250m from the pond. The level of impacts on dispersal and migration routes will be dependent upon the development of the masterplan and choice of selected mitigation options. In the absence of mitigation there is the potential for disruption to dispersal and migration.

Long-Term Impacts

5.2.4 There is the potential for great crested newts to be impacted in the long term through isolation from surrounding ponds. Mitigation options will seek to minimise these impacts by incorporating suitable mitigation within the masterplan. Depending on the masterplan and without mitigation, there is potential for a long term impact on great crested newts.

5.3 Mitigation options

5.3.1 Mitigation is defined as measures to minimise and/or avoid impacts. Compensation is defined as measures to compensate for unavoidable impacts. The term mitigation is frequently used to combine these two elements and is used in that context in this report.

5.3.2 The terrestrial habitats onsite and within 250m of Pond 14 fall within an existing Local Nature Reserve, Scraptoft LNR. This is a statutory designated site declared by the local authority under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, as amended by Schedule 11 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. However, mitigation within this report will focus on great crested newts and the habitats that support them.

5.3.3 Given that there is suitable habitat onsite for great crested newt, absent mitigation, there is the potential for any development to result in harm tor damage to their resting places if large development takes place within 250m of Pond 14. If this were to occur this would potentially result in an offence being committed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) or the Conservations of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

5.3.4 It is therefore recommended that to inform the development of the masterplan for Area 1, two options are made available. The first option involves avoiding the loss or disturbance of terrestrial habitats within 250m of Pond 14, and therefore negating the need to apply for a European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) derogation licence from Natural England. The second option involves the loss of habitats to development within the east half of the Scraptoft LNR, which may require the application for an EPSM derogation licence from Natural England.

Option 1 – Retention of terrestrial habitats within 250m of Pond 14.

5.3.5 This option requires that the boundary habitats to the south and east of the Scraptoft LNR are retained and an area within the east of the LNR retained and enhanced. (see Appendix 3).

5.3.6 Maintaining a 10m boundary strip along the south of the Scraptoft LNR and planting a new native hedgerow will ensure terrestrial connectivity is maintained between Pond 12 and Pond 14, which will provide a dispersal route for great crested newts between the two ponds. Pond 12 was scoped out of further great crested newt surveys following an HSI assessment, which found that it was unsuitable for great crested newts. It is therefore recommended that Pond 12 is subjected to habitat improvements once any future development has been completed to make this pond more suitable for great crested newt colonisation.

5.3.7 The edge habitats to the east of the Scraptoft LNR will also need to be retained, with the native species hedgerow augmented with a second line of planting to thicken the hedgerow. It is recommended that the interior habitats of the poached horse field are not allowed to develop until completion of any future construction activities within Area 1. The habitat within 250m of Pond 14 will need to be fenced off with Heras fencing to provide protection and separate it from any development areas.

5.3.8 Under this option it is recommended that a precautionary Non-Licensed Method Statement (NLMS) is completed that details; how to mitigate for and reduce the risk to great crested newts, how the existing habitat will be retained and enhanced and, what to do in the unlikely event that a great crested newt is found during the works. In doing so it will be possible to minimise any potential disturbance and harm to all amphibians.

5.3.9 With this option great crested newts are considered unlikely to be present within the proposed development areas, and no further works are recommended. However, in the unlikely event that a great crested newt is found on site, all works will need to cease immediately and a great crested newt licenced ecologist consulted.

Option 2 – Removal of onsite terrestrial habitats and development within 250m of Pond 14.

5.3.10 This option will require the removal of terrestrial habitat that is potentially used by great crested newts from Pond 14 (see Appendix 3). The loss of terrestrial habitats that are suitable for use by great crested newts will require an EPSM derogation licence to be sought and obtained from Natural England. This will allow activities affecting great crested newts to be undertaken that would otherwise be illegal under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

5.3.11 A detailed method statement and reasoned statement taking into account the layout, build schedule etc. of the proposed development will be required for the Natural England great crested newt licence application.

5.3.12 There will not be a requirement to provide a replacement pond, as the offsite Pond 14 will be retained. However, the loss of terrestrial habitats within 250m of his pond will require mitigation. The level of mitigation will be dependent on both the quality of habitats lost and amount of habitat lost within 250m of the development. Typically this will require either enhancement of retained habitats to improve their quality or, provide additional terrestrial habitats for great crested newts.

5.3.13 It is therefore recommended that a habitat corridor is created on the southern boundary of the Scraptoft LNR, the width of which will be dependent on the amount of terrestrial newt habitat lost within 250m of Pond 14. For example, this habitat can be improved with the planting of a native species hedgerow, the creation of a new pond, or the incorporation of log piles for sheltering great crested newts. Dependent on other recommended protected species surveys (e.g. reptiles), there may be a requirement to enhance the habitats within the west of the Scraptoft LNR for the benefit of great crested newts.

5.3.14 Upon receipt of an EPSM licence the site will require fencing with amphibian exclusion fencing to prevent newts entering the site. In appropriate areas i.e. not within negligible newt habitat, additional lengths of fencing and pitfall traps will need to be provided and a programme of trapping and translocation undertaken. It may be necessary to use damp carpet tiles, sand bags or paving stones as refugia within the areas of gravel and hard standing.

5.3.15 Any trapped newts should be relocated into the west of Scraptoft LNR. This habitat should be enhanced for newts at a time which is appropriate to the mitigation programme.

5.3.16 Technically the presence of a small sized newt population within 103m of the site dictates that a 30 day trapping period is required. Whether this can be reduced to fewer days, but continuing until 5 clear days without newts are recorded needs to be discussed with Natural England. A good case for a reduction exists due to the relatively small areas of good quality habitat onsite within 250m and the low numbers of great crested newts recorded in Pond 14, i.e. two individuals male, one on two separate occasions, or the same male twice (unconfirmed).

5.3.17 Following completion of the trapping, habitat destruction should take place under the supervision of an ecologist, to include hand searches of some areas.

5.3.18 Works to capture newts – fencing installation, trapping and translocation – can only take place between March and October inclusive under licence. Trapping can only take place during periods of weather conducive to newt movement i.e. warm and damp.

5.4 Habitat Creation and Enhancement Recommendations

5.4.1 It is recommended that a waterbody is created as part of the proposed development (e.g. a pond) to provide suitable onsite aquatic habitat for amphibians that would not otherwise be available. The location of a new pond will be dependent on the development of the masterplan for Area 1, although the placing of a pond between the existing ponds 12 and Pond 14 will boost habitat connectivity.

5.4.2 It is recommended that Pond 12 is subject to maintenance to improve habitats for amphibians including great crested newts. Pond maintenance is recommended between November and January when great crested newts are likely to be in their terrestrial habitats.

5.4.3 Ponds 2, 3 and 5 were all found to contain common toad tadpoles. The common toad is listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 as a species of principal importance in England. With this in mind, it is recommended that these ponds are retained as part of the development proposal masterplan. If this is not possible that they are replaced on a like for like basis to enable connectivity between aquatic habitats to be maximised and habitat for common toads to be maintained onsite.

5.4.4 The creation of new connecting onsite vegetation and green corridors to the retained marginal habitats as part of a landscape proposal will enhance the site for amphibians including great crested newts. Providing new terrestrial habitats onsite suitable for sheltering and hibernating amphibians and providing habitat connectivity to the wider landscape.

5.4.5 Onsite wooded areas, connected hedgerows and species rich grassland will provide higher quality terrestrial foraging and sheltering habitats that are favoured by great crested newts and also provides habitat for other wildlife that would not otherwise be available.

5.4.6 The overall of biodiversity value of Area 1 for amphibians can be significantly enhanced if the recommendations above are built into the masterplan.

6.0 References

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English Nature (2001) *Great crested newt mitigation guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough Emery, M. (2008) Effect of Street Lighting on Bats. Urbis Lighting Ltd.

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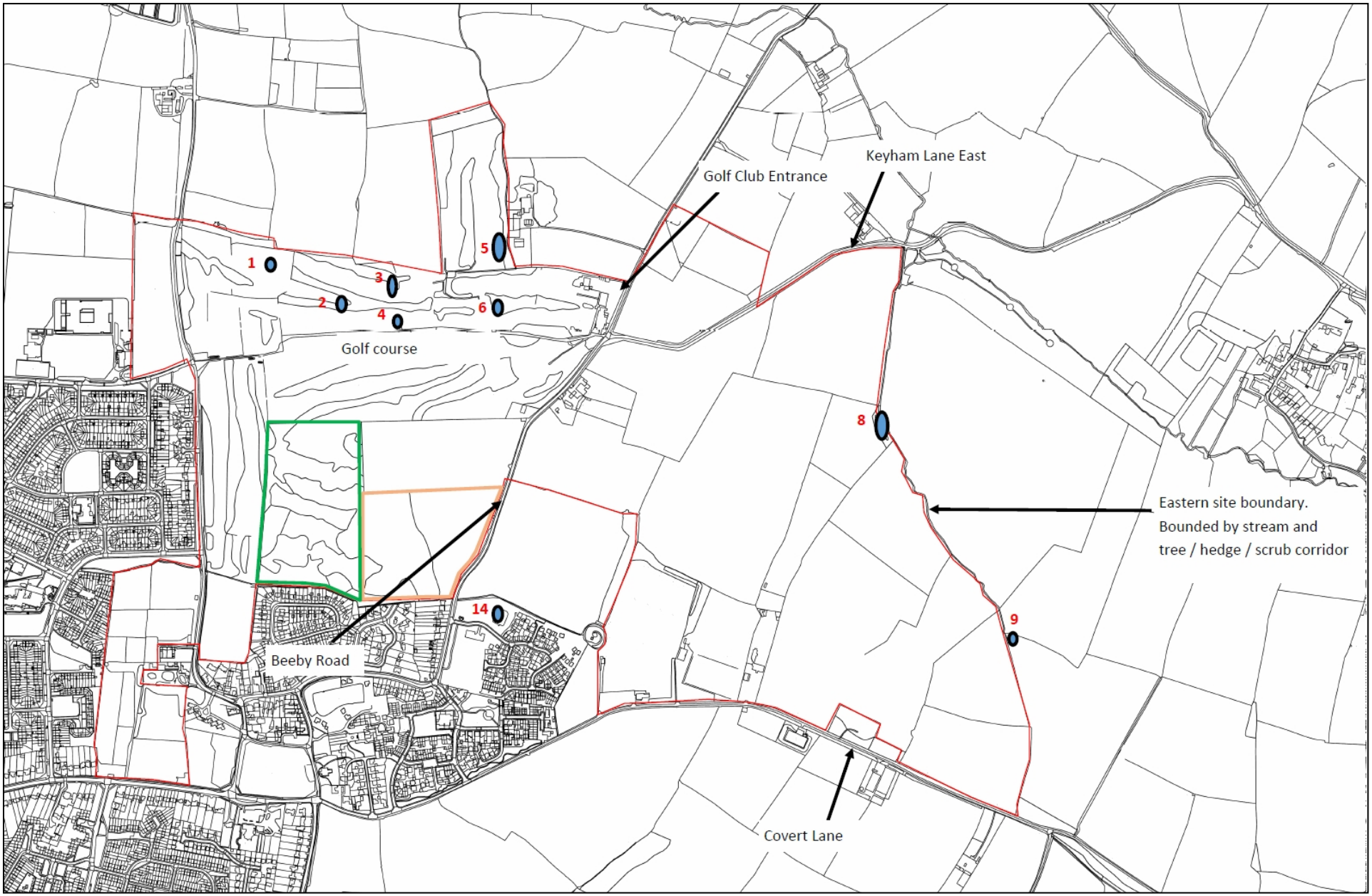
Oldham R.S., Keeble J., Swan M.J.S. & Jeffcote M. (2000). *Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the Great Crested Newt* (*Triturus cristatus*). Herpetological Journal 10 (4), 143-155.

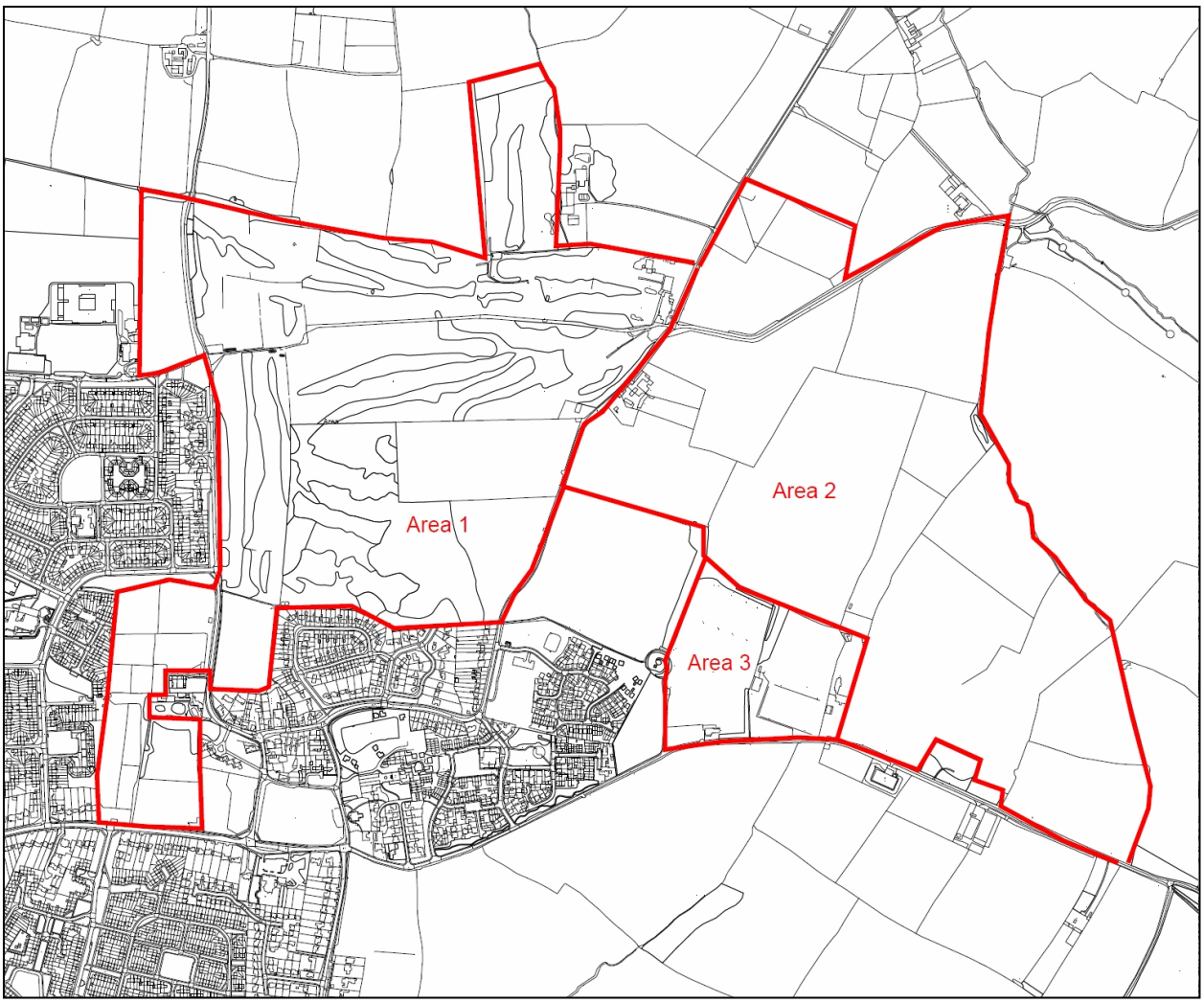
Appendix 1:

Pond Locations


Golf Club Entrance
Keyham Lane East
1
2
3
4
5
6
Golf course
8
Eastern site boundary.
Bounded by stream and
tree / hedge / scrub corridor
9
14
Beeby Road
Covert Lane

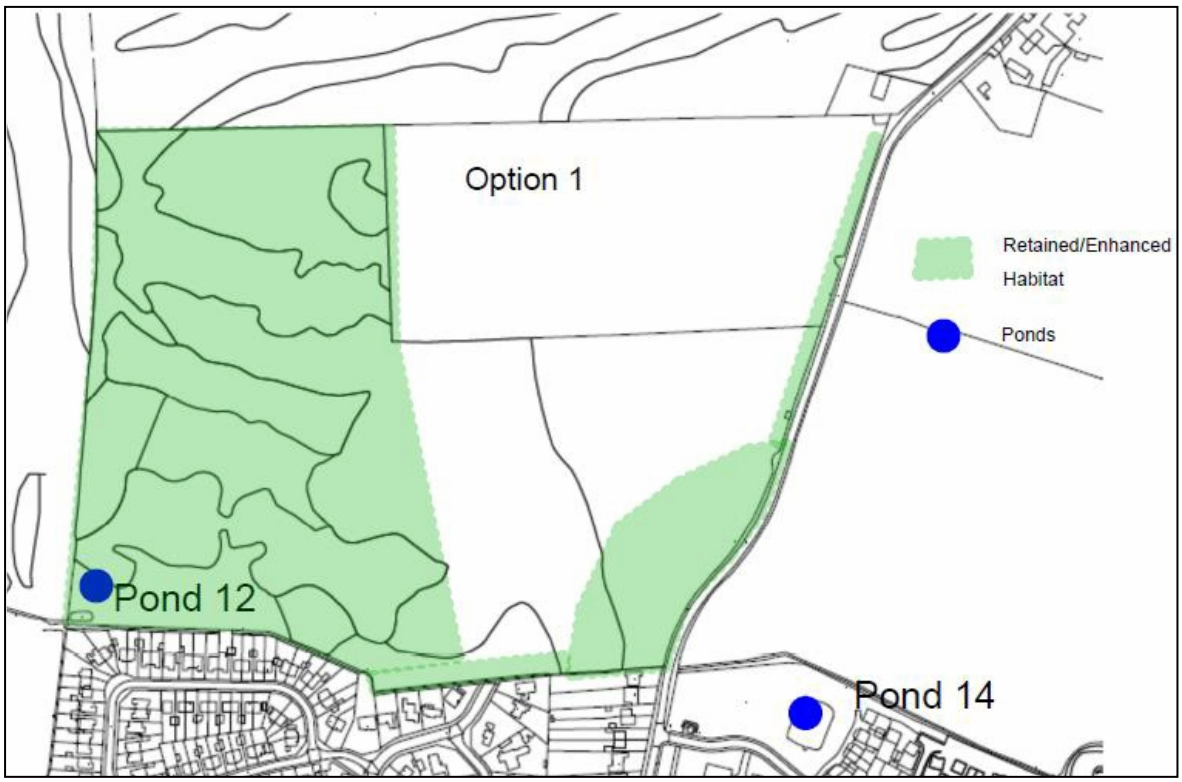
Appendix 2:

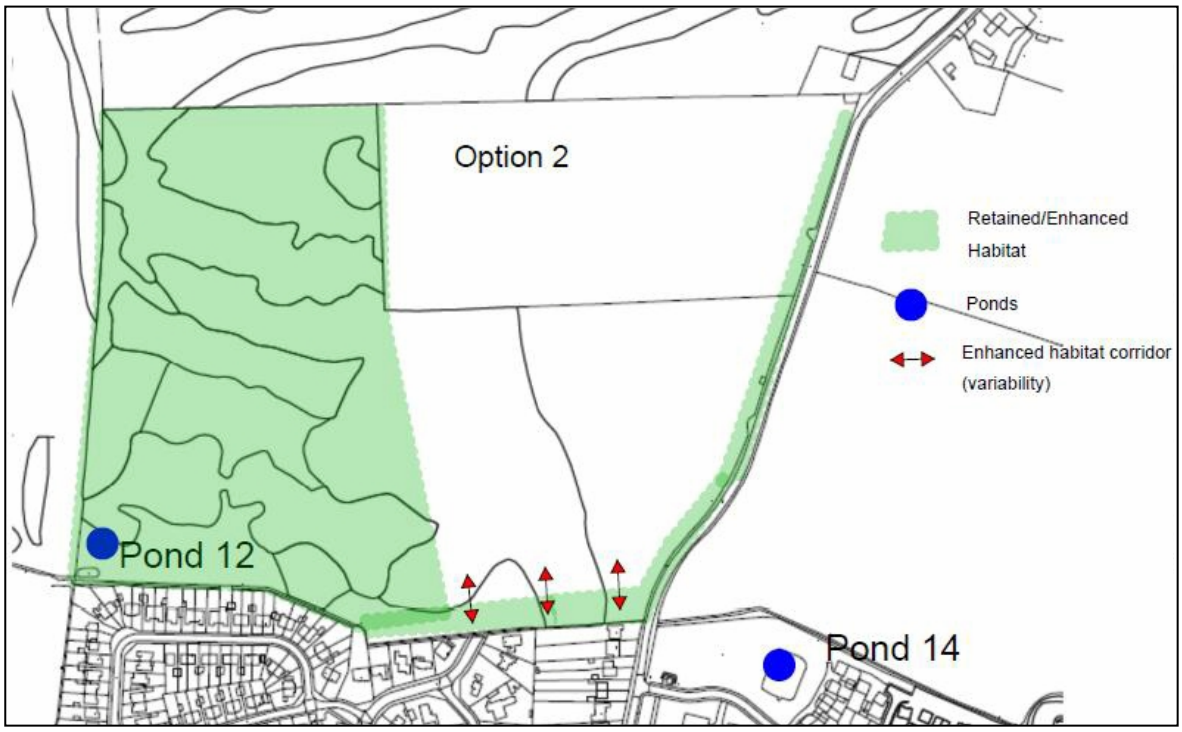
Site Boundaries (Areas 1 to 3)


Area 1
Area 2
Area 3

Appendix 3:

Mitigation Options


Option 1
Retained/Enhanced Habitat
Ponds
Pond 12
Pond 14


Option 2
Retained/Enhanced Habitat
Ponds
Enhanced habitat corridor (variability)
Pond 12
Pond 14

Appendix 4:

Summary of Wildlife Legislation and National Planning Policy

Legislation

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) and the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 confer various degrees of legal protection on species including bats, reptiles, great crested newts, otters, dormice, water voles, badgers and birds. A full list of protected species and their specific legal protection is provided within the schedules of the legislation. This legal protection overrides all planning decisions.

The level of protection varies depending on which schedule of the legislation applies; however, typically any activity that would injure, kill, ill-treat, intentionally damage or destroy any protected species or their place of shelter may be a criminal act. It is also an offence to deliberately disturb a European protected species in any way which would affect its ability to survive, breed or rear its young, or affect its local distribution.

Under certain circumstances licences can be granted by the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (Natural England in England) to permit actions that would otherwise be unlawful.

In addition to the above legislation, the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 provides protection for all wild mammals from certain cruel acts including crushing and asphyxiation, which can have relevance for methods employed during site clearance works.

Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) refers to invasive species such as signal crayfish, grey squirrel and Japanese knotweed and makes it an offence to release them or, in the case of plants, to cause them to grow in the wild.

National Planning Policy

The UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework forms the government response to the 2010 Convention on Biological Diversity, and replaces the UK Biodiversity Action Plan with five internationally agreed strategic goals and targets, including reducing pressures on biodiversity and safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity. The government's Biodiversity 2020 strategy aims to halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services by 2020, to include restoration where feasible. These are used as a guide for decision makers such as local authorities to fulfil their obligations under sections 40 and 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity in carrying out their duties.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states *the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by...minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains where possible.* Furthermore, the NPPF states *when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity...* and *opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.*

Effectively this means that the total biodiversity value of a site rather than purely in relation to protected species should be considered prior to determining a planning application and councils are recommended to refuse planning permission where inadequate information is provided.

Arboriculture Ecology