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Ecological Excellence

Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd, Roselands, 3 Cross Green, Formby, L37 4BH

Amphibians & Mammals - Reasonable Avoidance Measures Statement (RAMS)

Application Site: Land off Victoria Avenue, Whitefield, Manchester, M45 6DP

Application Reference Number: 68691

Method Statement Objectives

The development entails the change of use of the application site (named above) to provide 30 new residential dwellings along with associated works including landscaping and provision of access from Victoria Avenue. Development related activities such as remediation, piling, vegetation clearance or excavation, in areas of suitable amphibian and small mammal habitat may potentially impact amphibians or mammals that may inhabit the local area. As a result, safeguards must be applied to protect these species; the Method Statement below outlines sequential measures to be implemented to ensure these objectives are achieved.

Before Any Works

- Before any works commence at the application site, all site contractors/stakeholders will be briefed 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 animals are found. This talk should cover identification aids and the legal ramifications of an offence through reckless behaviour.
- Contractors/stakeholders will ask any questions as required following the toolbox talk, before signing the Audit Form (see overleaf) which will be kept by the Ecologist/ECOW for audit trail.
- Following the toolbox talk an "Environmental Champion" will be appointed at the school, who will be responsible to report to the ECOW throughout the work schedule in the absence of ecological supervision.
- Photograph(s) will be displayed at the site office and/or kept by the contractor's personal being for visual reference purposes.
- Construction works are to only take place during daylight hours as opposed to the night-time, when amphibians are most active.

Pre Works

Timings

- Juvenile and adult amphibians & mammals are most vulnerable to harm during their **hibernation period which is considered to be November to February** inclusive. Site clearance / preparation works should avoid this sensitive period. If this is not possible works carried out during this sensitive period (between November – February) should take into account, the potential presence of hibernating wildlife.
- Pre-commencement check – a site walkover to take place by an Ecologist/ECOW before any vegetation clearance, in order to pinpoint areas in which there may be a higher chance of encountering herpetofauna.

Demarcation of buffer zones

- Any buffer zones should be demarcated out using hazard/coloured tape and/or signage to avoid any encroachment/over-management occurring from the development site within this sensitive area.

During Works

- Any clearance works to areas of shrubs/potential refugia as considered applicable by the Ecologist delivering the toolbox talk (such as brick/log piles, garden equipment, plant pots, etc) or loss of existing vegetative features (dense grass and tall ruderal etc.), should only commence after a careful visual

inspection (site walkover) and fingertip search has been carried out and the Ecologist has determined that no animals are present and is satisfied no animals are at risk.

- Any animals found, which are not Protected Species, will be removed from harm's way and placed into suitable buffer zones to the south of the site, species pending and following correct protocols/biosecurity measures.
- For the full duration, no works are to extend off site in the areas adjacent to the red line boundary or within agreed buffer zones. No pallets, skips or otherwise are to be placed upon areas of dense vegetation and should instead only be placed on flat, cleared ground to avoid animals getting underneath.
- The impact of works on adjacent habitats will be avoided by the clear demarcation of the works area. All work will be carried out adopting standard pollution prevention measures.
- Contingency/emergency plans should be drawn up to address chemical spillage, drainage, collision, etc.
- Machinery and materials to remain on bare ground and reasonable efforts must be made to avoid creating piles, or accumulated aggregates. Materials that require piling will be stored within areas of bare ground above ground level, using pallets to prevent mammals and amphibians from seeking shelter below.
- Any excavated materials or soils stored overnight will be searched prior to being used as infill.
- Where excavations/trenches are excavated - it should be ensured that they are not left open overnight to avoid amphibians and/or mammals falling into them and becoming trapped. If trenches cannot be filled in after the working day for whatever reason, an escape mechanism such as wooden planks of 5cm wide as a minimum should be placed in them at a 45-degree diagonal angle, to serve as an escape mechanism to small animals including mammals, reptiles & amphibians.
- Excavations should be checked in the morning on a daily basis for the presence of any animals that may have fallen in during the night.
- All site operatives will maintain a watching brief throughout the work schedule and report any issues, anomalies or discrepancies to the ecologist or wildlife champion as appointed.
- If an amphibian or mammal is found in the absence of supervision, work must stop immediately, and contact should be made with the assigned licensed, qualified ecologist / ECoW. At no point should any person handle a reptile without express consent from the qualified ecologist / ECoW.
- Any newts, frogs, toads or mammal (hedgehog etc.) found should be carefully caught by the Ecologist / ECoW, placed (where capture is possible and humane) in a ventilated box using dampened gloved hands and released into suitable nearby vegetation that will be unaffected by the proposed works. Toads should not be touched using non-gloved hands as they secrete a toxin through their skin, and they should not be handled for longer than is necessary.
- Plastic netting, wire coils or similar hazardous features should not be left on the ground, to avoid entanglement. Aggregates/constructional materials should be stored on pallets as opposed to the storing on the ground.
- If in the event a GCN is found work must cease; the Ecologist will be made aware of the finding and will appraise the situation providing further advice. Site staff must be made aware that if GCN are found there is a correct procedure in place to follow, and failure to halt works may result in committing an offence. At no point should any person handle a GCN or suspected GCN. Unlicensed handling is illegal and untrained handling may cause the newt unnecessary stress and injury.

Badger

In relation to badger, evidence in the form of a badger dropping was identified on site suggesting the site is occasionally used for commuting purposed by badger; no setts were identified to be present on the site.

RAMs to minimise construction disturbance and prevent harm or injury to commuting or foraging badgers must include:

- Materials that may cause entrapment such as plastic/metal fencing should not be left around the site following the cessation of daytime work/

- Trenches MUST be covered at the end of each working day, or include a means of escape for any animal falling in as badgers will continue to use established paths across a site even when construction work has started.
- Any excavations which cannot be covered will include ramps (at an angle of no more than 45°) to allow any animal that may become trapped to escape.
- Any temporarily exposed open pipe system MUST be capped in such a way as to prevent badgers gaining access, as may happen when contractors are off site.
- Any chemicals or harmful materials will be stored so that they cannot be accessed by badgers,
- No work will take place between sunset (or 6pm in winter) and dawn to avoid disturbing badger that may be commuting in the vicinity of the development site.
- Stock piling of spoil material MUST be left un-compacted and not allowed to grass over, as if grassed over and compacted, this may encourage badgers to excavate new setts and lead to costly delays.
- Fires must not be used as a means of the disposing of waste materials.
- In the event an underground void/potential sett entrance is exposed during the works, work must cease immediately; and an Ecologist must be contacted to determine if the opening forms part of a previously undiscovered tunnel network of a badger sett. If this cannot be ruled out, works will cease, and Natural England consulted for further advice.

A Guide to Timings

Operation	Months												Notes
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Early understanding													
Toolbox Talk	Any time prior to works												Soon as all site workers are on site
Appoint Wildlife Champion	Following toolbox talk												-
Pre-works													
Buffer zone demarcation & signage	Pre-habitat manipulation & site walkover												To avoid encroaching in sensitive areas
Site Walkover by Ecologist			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Prior to habitat manipulation
										Recommended timeframe		Y	

Identification Aids

Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*)



Identification Tips

- Largest Newt in the UK, up to 16cm in length, but juveniles are smaller,
- Big & Black animal with Rough, Warty skin,
- Orange/yellow colouring on Belly,
- Irregular black blotches on Belly,
- Toes banded Black/orange (Yellow toe nails),
- Male has a jagged crest on its back which sags when not in the water, and a separate smoother crest along tail, white stripe on tail too,

DO

If a GCN is discovered during works,
STOP ALL WORKS in the area, inform
your site manager and contact the
project ecologist **IMMEDIATELY**.

DON'T

Do not touch or handle a GCN they are very
delicate – and it is against the law.
Penalties for breaking the law include
unlimited fines, imprisonment and seizure of
equipment.

DO NOT RISK BREAKING THE LAW

For any questions call Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd

Tel: 01704 875 781

Toolbox Talk Audit Form

Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd



Site: Land off Victoria Avenue		Ecologist(s):	
I can confirm I have attended the formal Toolbox talk held by the named Ecological Consultant. I confirm I am aware of the legislation in relation to herpetofauna species that may be in the locale. I confirm I will endeavour, to the best of my capability, to follow the measures outlined in the RAMS to protect all animals from harm, and know what to do if I encounter protected species.			
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