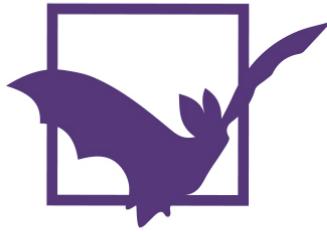


AKB Ecology



24-041 – Land off Lodge Road

23/04/2025

RE: Land to the East side of Lodge Road

To Whom it may Concern,

AKB Ecology were commissioned by Forays Homes to undertake a GCN survey at Land off Lodge Road, Hurst, RG10 0SG at central grid reference SU 79279 73580 to help inform the proposed development of the site.

A PEA was carried out on the site on the 20th January 2025 by Annika Binet, a GCN licenced ecologist. During this survey a ditch present along the eastern boundary of the site was identified, the ditch was holding water and contained some aquatic vegetation. It was considered to be of below average suitability for GCN given an HSI score of 0.55.

Whilst early in the season the January survey was carried out after the first reports by Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) and local Amphibian and Reptile Groups of breeding amphibians in the Southeast, an egg search was therefore carried out within areas of the ditch containing suitable vegetation. No eggs were identified during the survey.

Whilst a survey of an adjacent site in June 2024 had noted that the ditch was dry it was unknown as to when the ditch dries annually and as GCN are known to be present within the wider area further survey for GCN within the peak season was recommended to be carried out.

A site visit was carried out by Annika Binet on the 15th April 2025, this is during the peak breeding season and a time of year when eDNA survey to confirm presence or likely absence of GCN can be carried out.

During this survey the ditch was found to have already fully dried out, due to this it is considered that the ditch is unsuitable for use by breeding GCN due to the restricted presence of suitably wet conditions to allow eggs to be laid, hatch and embryos to develop prior to the ditch drying out.

The ditch is considered to not be a suitable as a breeding site, all other confirmed and potential breeding sites are located over 250m from the site. Based on the area of the site to be impacted, and the location of these water bodies to the site a Rapid Risk Assessment calculation carried out for the site identifies that if breeding GCN are present in ponds

identified within 500m of the site and where suitable mitigation is implemented to prevent impacts on individual newts the result shows Offence highly unlikely (Figure 1).

Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.1 - 0.5 ha lost or damaged	0.005
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
	Maximum:	0.005
Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY	

Guidance on risk assessment result categories

"Green: offence highly unlikely" indicates that the development activities are of such a type, scale and location that it is highly unlikely any offence would be committed should the development proceed. Therefore, no licence would be required. However, bearing in mind that this is a generic assessment, you should carefully examine your specific plans to ensure this is a sound conclusion, and take precautions (see **Non-licensed avoidance measures tool**) to avoid offences if appropriate. It is likely that any residual offences would have negligible impact on conservation status, and enforcement of such breaches is unlikely to be in the public interest.

FIGURE 1: RAPID RISK ASSESSMENT OF THE SITE EXCLUDING THE DITCH AS A POTENTIAL BREEDING SITE



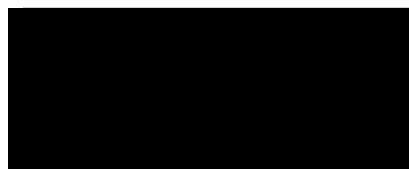
Based on the results of the rapid risk assessment there is very low likelihood of an offence being caused and it is considered that the risk posed from individual newts which may cross the site on occasion can be mitigated through a precautionary method statement for the works.

A reptile method statement was additionally recommended within the PEA report. A single method statement covering all reptiles and amphibian species is therefore recommended to be produced prior to the start of works.

It is recommended that a precautionary working method statement should be conditioned as part of any planning consent for the site. The method statement will detail the precautionary approach to site clearance that must be adopted and followed, this will include but not be limited to the following measures:

- Vegetation must be gradually cut down prior to site clearance.
- During the active season (March to September) the site can then be cleared; the top 10cms or so of topsoil must be removed by a toothed excavator under the supervision of an ecologist.
- Log piles, rubble piles and compost heaps should be dismantled carefully (by hand if possible).
- Any animals caught should be relocated to a safe area of suitable habitat beyond the development boundary.

Regards,



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Consultant and Bat Specialist Ecologist

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