

## Sharon Lowin

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**From:** Hannah Leary  
**Sent:** 13 April 2022 17:57  
**To:** caroline.ford@cherwell-dc.gov.uk  
**Cc:** rb@reviewpartners.uk.com; Eleanor Musgrove; Simon Boulter  
**Subject:** 31036-A3-NW Bicester-21/01630/OUT-Great Crested Newts

Apologies that it has taken me a while to revert to you on this, but I have now consulted our ecologist and can respond as follows:

Ponds within 250m of the site boundary were identified and assessed on their potential to support GCN. The justification for this survey area is provided in paragraph 2.3.18 (of our assessment):

*As a first step in identifying the potential presence of Great Crested Newt at the Site, a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) study was undertaken of all relevant water bodies within 250m<sup>13</sup> of the Site (based on a review of Ordnance Survey mapping and satellite imagery). Guidance set out within Natural England's Method Statement template, to be used when applying for a Great Crested Newt development licence, states that surveys of ponds within 500m of a site are only required when '(a) data indicates that the pond(s) has potential to support large Great Crested Newt population, (b) the footprint contains particularly favourable habitat, (c) the development would have a substantial negative effect on that habitat and (d) there is an absence of dispersal barriers.' Given that in this instance, none of the four points listed above are applicable to the Site, it is considered that survey of ponds within 500m of the Site boundary is not required, and that survey of ponds within 250m represents adequate survey effort.*

The pond on site was dry at the time of survey and only one other pond was noted within 250m of the site boundary. This was subjected to a habitat suitability assessment and subsequent eDNA analysis. Both undertakings were done following the correct methods and at the correct time of year. The results of the eDNA survey came back negative, indicating the absence of the species.

No background records were returned from the local records centre within 1km of the site. Surveys were undertaken by another consultancy of the wider development in 2010. No Great Crested Newts were recorded within 250m of the site boundary.

There is no evidence of GCN within 250m of the site boundary and, using Natural England guidance, this is considered an appropriate survey distance. Furthermore, the site comprises arable land at the western point (suboptimal for the species), is bound to the north by development and has watercourses on the southern and eastern aspects. Although the watercourses contain varying levels of water, these could also act as barriers to newt movements (should they be present in the wider landscape) during certain years or certain times of year. Given the above, we feel that sufficient information has been collected to guide the impact assessment and that surveys out to 500m, or submitting an application to join the District Level Licence, are not necessary or appropriate.

I trust this assists. Please let me know should you require any further information.

**Hannah Leary**  
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