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APPENDIX 3: REPTILE REPORT

Client

Hargreaves Land Limited

Project

**Lincolnshire Lakes (North),
Scunthorpe**

Date

January 2025

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-	Issue	JS / CAG / 13.12.24	AJB / 17.12.24

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following report has been prepared by FPCR Environment & Design Ltd. on behalf of Hargreaves Land Limited. This report details the results of reptile surveys at the Lincolnshire Lakes (North) Site in Scunthorpe, located around central OS grid reference SE 86470 09734, herein referred to as the 'Site' (see Figure 1 of the EclA for location).
- 1.2 This document is an appendix to the Ecological Impact Assessment (FPCR, 2024) and provides the baseline assessment for reptile species and outlines mitigation based on the presence of a small population of common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*.

Study Objectives

- 1.3 The purpose of the surveys and subsequent assessment were to ascertain the presence/likely absence of reptiles on the Site, and where necessary:
- determine the size of any reptile populations identified.
 - determine any likely impacts on reptiles as a result of the development.
 - present a strategy for mitigation in order to minimise any impacts to reptiles during construction.

2.0 LEGISLATION

- 2.1 All common reptile species, including slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, common lizard and grass snake *Natrix natrix*, are partially protected under Sections 9(1) and 9(5) of Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This legislation protects these animals from:
- intentional killing and injury;
 - selling, offering for sale, possessing or transporting for the purpose of sale or publishing advertisements to buy or sell a protected species.
- 2.2 Reptiles native to the UK are also classified as a species of principle importance under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Desktop Study

- 3.1 In order to compile existing baseline information, a desktop survey was undertaken for existing ecological data regarding the presence of reptile species within 2km of the Site. Desk study data were received from Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre (LERC).
- 3.2 Further inspection, using colour 1:25,000 OS base maps and aerial photographs (www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk), was also undertaken in order to provide additional context and identify any features of potential importance for reptiles in the wider countryside.

Field Survey

- 3.3 The reptile presence / likely absence survey was undertaken across the Site and wider area considering the methodologies detailed in a range of published guidance^{1,2&3}. This involved the placement of 0.5m² refugia tiles made from roofing felt. These were placed in locations that offered the most suitable habitat for common reptiles, i.e., structurally diverse vegetated habitats close to areas of bare ground/short vegetation. The survey also included habitats adjoining the Site because at the time the exact application area had not been confirmed.
- 3.4 The refuges were then left to 'bed-down' for at least a two-week period. Figure 3.1 shows the distribution of refugia across the Site.
- 3.5 Following the 'bed-down' period, a series of seven surveys involved a search for basking reptiles on or under the refugia, on or under naturally occurring refugia and within suitable habitat such as rubble piles.
- 3.6 Guidelines recommend that reptile surveys be undertaken during the following periods:
- air temperatures of between 9°C – 18°C; and
 - on sunny/cloudy days with little or no wind.
- 3.7 In addition, the surveys also followed the guidelines' recommendations by:
- using regularly spaced roofing felt as artificial refugia, with a black upper side;
 - approaching refugia from downwind and avoiding casting a shadow and with care so as to not disturb basking animals when checking; and
 - that lifting and replacing tins, to check for the presence of reptiles underneath in hot weather is undertaken with care, to avoid potential harm to any animals underneath.
- 3.8 Reptile mats were placed out on the Site on the 12th April 2023. The first survey commenced 3rd May 2023 and surveys were completed by mid-June 2023. Surveys were undertaken by suitably qualified ecologists.
- 3.9 The surveys were undertaken during suitable weather conditions when the ambient air temperature was between 9°C and 18°C, avoiding periods of heavy rain. On each visit the prevailing weather conditions were recorded, including relative wind speed; cloud cover; ambient temperature; and any other notable conditions. These are presented in Table 1 below. Reptile refugia were collected in after the final survey in June 2023.

¹ Edgar, Foster & Baker, (2010), *Reptile Management Handbook*, Amphibian and reptile Conservation, Bournemouth

² Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the United Kingdom (2018) Advice Note 10 Reptile Survey and Mitigation Guidance for Peatland Habitats

³ Froglife (1999) Reptile Survey: *An introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation*. Froglife Advice Sheet 10.

Table 1: Date and Weather Conditions during Reptile Surveys

Survey No.	Date	Surveyors	Start Time	Temp (°C)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (Beaufort)
1	03/05/2023	REL & EM	9:15	10	20-30	2/3
2	09/05/2023	REL & EM	8:11	14	50-60	1/2
3	15/05/2023	CG & EG	9:11	11	50-60	1/2
4	18/05/2023	CG & JS	9:05	14	80-90	1/2
5	22/05/2023	EM & CG	9:04	13	70-80	1/2
6	05/06/2023	EM & CG	9:30	12	50-60	2/3
7	13/06/2023	REL & EM	5:59	13	0-10	1/2

Assessment

- 3.10 Reptile populations were assessed in accordance with population level criteria as stated in the Key Reptile Site Register (HGBI, 1998). This system classifies populations of individual reptile species into three population categories assessing the importance of the population (Table 2). These categories are based on the total number of animals observed during individual survey occasions.

Table 2: Key Reptile Site Survey Assessment Categories (HGBI 1998)

Species	Low Population (No. of individuals)	Good Population (No. of individuals)	Exceptional Population (No. of individuals)
Adder	<5	5 - 10	>10
Common lizard	<5	5 - 20	>20
Grass snake	<5	5 - 10	>10
Slow worm	<5	5 - 20	>20

Survey Limitations

- 3.11 Two of the surveys were carried out in early June, just outside of the optimum survey months of April and May. However, all surveys were carried out during suitable weather conditions and the results are therefore considered sufficient to adequately assess the presence or likely absence of reptiles and their population size (if present).
- 3.12 Thirteen of the reptile mats were recorded as missing on the seventh survey (see Figure 8), presumably lost due to wind or human interference. Given the small number of mats involved, and the fact their loss occurred after six of the seven visits, this is not considered a constraint to the surveys.
- 3.13 The reptile surveys were designed prior to the confirmation of the application boundary, as such, the extent of the distribution of reptile mats extended across a greater area and omitted habitat south of Brumby Common Lane. The omission of this habitat is not considered to be a significant constraint as the arable fields do not provide suitable habitat for reptiles.
- 3.14 In accordance with CIEEM's "Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys"⁴, survey data older than 18 months may require reassessment based on specific ecological

⁴ CIEEM (2019). *Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

factors. Following the 2023 reptile surveys, professional ecologists from FPCR have conducted multiple site visits in 2024, most recently in November 2024. These assessments confirmed that the habitat and its management have remained consistent, with no significant changes observed. Consequently, we conclude that the survey data remains valid and reliable for informing the proposed reptile mitigation strategy.

4.0 RESULTS

Desk Study

- 4.1 The desk study returned 1 reptile record within 2km. This is a record for common *Lizard Zootoca vivipara*, located within the 1km grid square which incorporates a small part of the northern part of the Site. The record does not refer directly to the Site.

Table 3: Reptile records

Species	Legislation/ policy	Count	Description
Bufo bufo Common toad	NERC S41 UKBAP	9	Four records occur within the 1km grid square 8610, incorporating the northern part of the Site
Zootoca vivipara Common Lizard	WCA Sch5 NERC S.41	1	Records occur within Grid square 8610, incorporating the northern part of the Site

Field Survey

- 4.2 One adult common lizard was recorded on Site during one of the reptile survey visits, on the 22nd May 2023, along the northern boundary adjacent to woodland - Brumby Common West. This equates to a "low" population within the Site, as per Table 2.
- 4.3 Incidental observations of common toad *Bufo bufo* were made during the surveys, including juvenile and adults. These were recorded under the reptile survey mats across the survey area; a peak count of 22 individuals was recorded on fourth visit. As such, it can be assumed that common toad is breeding within or near the Site boundary.
- 4.4 Table 3 provides a summary of results for all reptile surveys undertaken.

Table 4: Survey results

Survey	Date	Common lizard	Toad	Comments
1	03/05/23	0	17	Field voles recorded during the survey; high numbers of ant nests under the reptile mats
2	09/05/23	0	21	Field voles recorded during the survey; high numbers of ant nests under the reptile mats

Survey	Date	Common lizard	Toad	Comments
3	15/05/23	0	11	Field voles recorded during the survey; high numbers of ant nests under the reptile mats
4	18/05/23	0	22	Field voles recorded during the survey; high numbers of ant nests under the reptile mats
5	22/05/23	1	6	Juvenile field voles recorded during the survey; and ant nests under the reptile mats
6	05/06/23	0	7	High numbers of ant nests under the reptile mats
7	13/06/23	0	1	One field vole recorded during the survey

5.0 DISCUSSION

- 5.1 The following section provides an evaluation of the results, an assessment of the potential impacts that may arise as a result of the design proposals and details of mitigation and compensation to address those impacts.
- 5.2 All common reptile species, including adder, slow worm, common lizard and grass snake, are partially protected under Sections 9(1) and 9(5) of Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This legislation protects these animals from killing, injury, and sale. The partial protection does not directly protect the habitat of these reptile species. Where these animals are present on land that is to be affected by development, the implications of legislation are that providing that killing can reasonably be avoided then an operation is legal.
- 5.3 The common toad is listed as a priority species of S41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

Designated Sites

- 5.4 No statutory or non-statutory sites occur within the search area which include reptile populations as part of their designating features.

Evaluation

- 5.5 The Key Reptile Site Register was designed as a mechanism to provide an objective evaluation of the importance of the reptile populations on a site and promote the safeguard of important reptile sites.
- 5.6 To qualify for the Key Reptile Site Register, the site in question must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- (1) supports three or more reptile species
 - (2) supports two snake species
 - (3) supports an exceptional population of one species (see Table 3)
 - (4) supports an assemblage of species scoring at least 4 (see Table 3)
 - (5) does not satisfy 1-4 but is of particular regional importance due to local rarity (e.g. in the East Midlands of England, adders are very rare so even "low" populations should be designated as Key Sites)
- 5.7 The surveys confirmed that the Site supports a "low" population of common lizards in the general vicinity of the Site, with a peak count of 1 individual observed on one occasion, on the northern Site boundary.
- 5.8 As the population is classed as "low" the Site does not qualify for the key reptile site register on criteria 1 to 4. Given the widespread distribution of common lizards it is considered that the population is of no more than local value and therefore does not qualify under criteria 5 of the Key Reptile Site Register.
- 5.9 As the presence of a low population extends across the general vicinity of the Site, the mitigation measures discussed below apply, to prevent killing and injury of reptiles.

Reptile Mitigation Strategy

- 5.10 Reptiles hibernate overwinter and are active typically in the period March to November, although this can be affected by periods of warmer/colder weather than expected at each end of the active season. Overwintering habitat typically presents a constraint during this period unless conditions are unseasonably mild. The clearance of habitat suitable for hibernation (fallen logs/ tree roots/ rocks / etc) should be avoided during this period to avoid potential harm to reptiles. During the active season habitat should be cleared under supervision following the methods detailed below.
- 5.11 It is considered that the methods outlined below will provide sufficient protection of common toad.

General methods

- 5.12 Prior to works commencing an ecologist will carry out a walkover survey to confirm that no changes in the baseline conditions that would necessitate additional mitigation have occurred in the intervening period between the initial ecological assessment and the start of the works.
- 5.13 Any suitable common lizard habitat (grassland/ scrub / tree roots etc) should be walked by the project's Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW), the appointed Site Manager, Agent, and other relevant parties as necessary to highlight areas of ecological interest as identified during the walkover survey.
- 5.14 Prior to the removal of any vegetation, the Site Manager/Agent should contact FPCR/ the ECoW to arrange supervised removal, providing as much notice as possible.
- 5.15 All Site workers will be briefed on the potential ecological constraints on Site, associated legislation and their responsibilities within it at induction.

- 5.16 All workers should work with due care and attention with respect to the potential presence of protected species on Site and any observations of such species reported immediately to the Site manager or an appointed Site worker. Any queries will be escalated by the Site Manager/Agent or their appointed representative to the Site Ecologist immediately so that appropriate action can be taken as necessary.

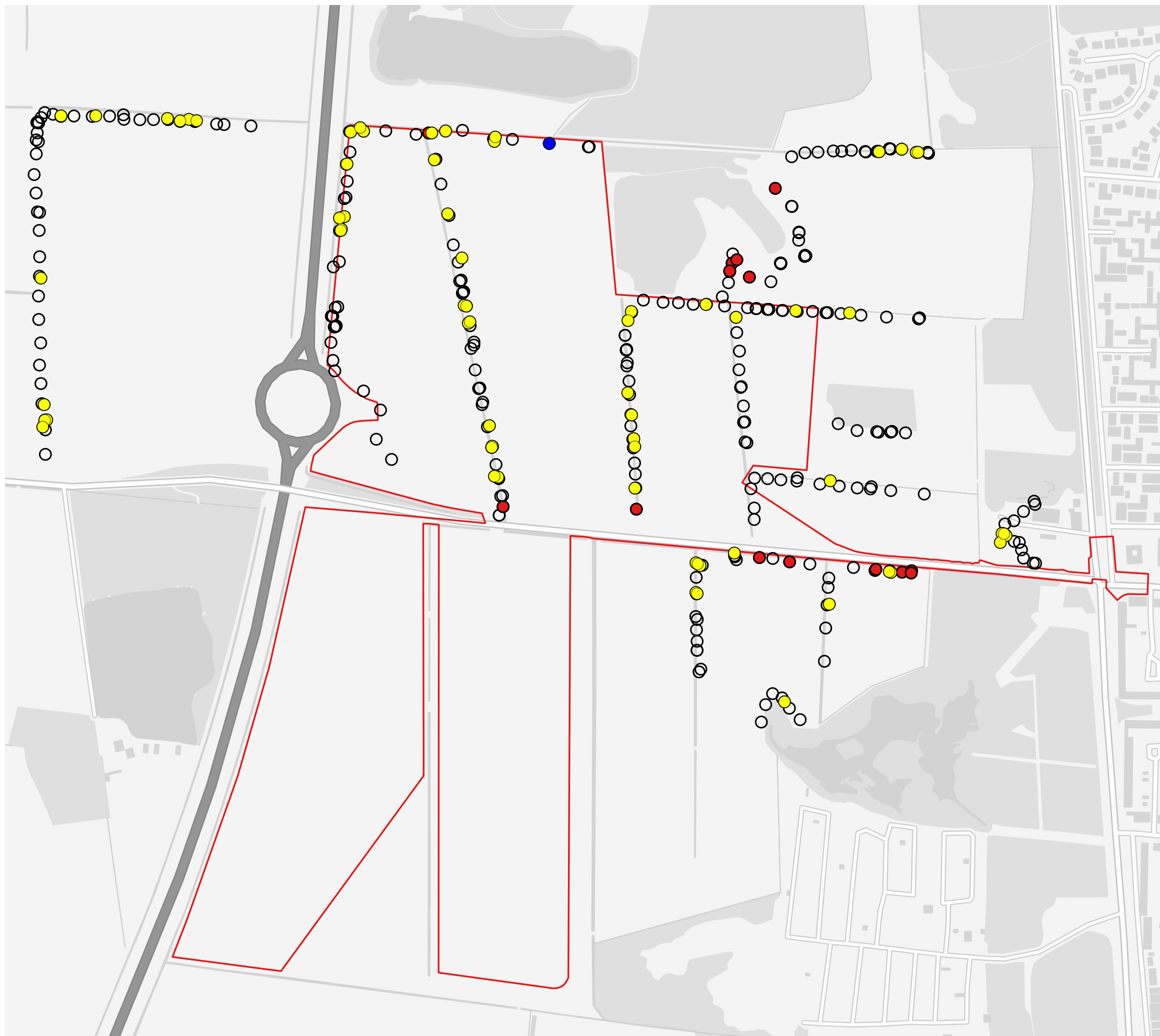
Passive Displacement

- 5.17 Given the low populations of common lizards in the vicinity of the Site, passive displacement of reptiles is deemed sufficient to prevent a wildlife offence being committed and as such, no works will take place within suitable reptile habitat, unless undertaken subsequently and in accordance with the below methodology.
- 5.18 Passive displacement will only occur when the weather is suitable and avoid any combination of the following conditions:
- temperature below 9°C;
 - rain or dense fog; and
 - strong winds/blustery.
- 5.19 Where necessary, any removal of woody vegetation may only occur to a height of 200mm above ground during the reptile hibernation period (mid-October to mid-April), and following a pre-commencement check for nesting birds (if carried out during March or April).
- 5.20 All arisings from any woody vegetation clearance must be removed from the working area at this time to prevent the incidental creation of reptile hibernacula and habitat. This will ideally be used to create log piles on the Site as part of the green infrastructure/ habitat enhancement provision.
- 5.21 Woody habitats can be cleared under supervision during the reptile active season (mid-April to mid-October). Areas will first be thoroughly inspected by a suitably experienced ecologist to ensure that no reptile are present within the working area. Any reptile found at this time will be removed to suitable unaffected habitat along the western, northern or eastern boundary of the working area and linked to off-site suitable habitat.
- 5.22 Following this, an ecologist will supervise the directional strimming or cutting of any suitable ground vegetation initially to 200mm. Arising would be removed. A second trim or cut would be completed no less than 1 hour later to 50mm, towards retained and unaffected habitats allowing reptiles to move into these areas.
- 5.23 Following cutting, any potential hibernation/refuge sites such as rubble, tree roots or wood piles present within the working area shall be removed carefully under supervision of the ecologist. Any reptiles caught will be relocated to suitable offsite habitat.

Compensation

- 5.24 Although not specifically managed for reptiles (and amphibians), new greenspace in the area surrounding the proposed development – including neutral grassland, balancing facilities and water vole wetland habitats – will provide suitable habitat for these species.

Log piles from felled vegetation should ideally be retained on Site as part of the green infrastructure provision, to provide opportunities for reptiles.



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- Site boundary
- Common lizard
- Common toad
- Reptile tin location
- Missing tin location

date 16/01/25 drwn/chkd
CAG / ET

client
Hargreaves Land Limited
project
**Lincolnshire Lakes (North)
Scunthorpe**

title **REPTILE SURVEY RESULTS PLAN** scale
1:9,000 @ A3

number **FIGURE 3.1** rev
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