

## **Precautionary Method of Working (PMoW) for Site Clearance (Ecology)**

The Precautionary Method of Working (PMoW) for site clearance predominantly relates to the protection of reptiles and nesting birds which may be present within the development site although requirements for otters and badgers have also been included for completeness.

### **General overview**

The construction site manager will ensure that anyone undertaking construction works on the site (including sub-contractors) is made aware of the potential for the site to support nesting birds, common reptile species and other protected species, where to expect them, their protected status and the procedure (see below) to follow in the unlikely event that nesting birds or common reptiles are discovered during works. Where applicable this advice will be given through site inductions, ecological tool box talks or similar.

Should any nesting birds, reptiles or other species be discovered during construction, which are likely to be effected by the development, works will cease immediately. The construction site manager will then seek the advice of a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist and works will only proceed in accordance with the advice they provide.

### **Reptiles**

Within the development's construction zone the following methods of working will be adopted:

- All clearance works will be undertaken when reptiles are likely to be fully active i.e. during the period March/April to September/October inclusive, but this is weather and temperature dependent;
- Where clearance works cannot be undertaken within this period, additional surveys and/or mitigation measures may be required to confirm the absence of reptiles prior to clearance works, and a suitably qualified ecologist (the project ecologist) should be on site during the works to inspect areas immediately prior to clearance;
- Clearance of dry stone walls, logs, brash, stones, rocks, or piles of similar debris will be undertaken carefully and by hand and supervised by a suitably qualified ecologist;
- Clearance of tall vegetation (any vegetation over 150mm) should be undertaken using a hand held strimmer or brush cutter with all cuttings raked and removed the same day. Cutting will only be undertaken in a phased way which may either include:
  - Cutting vegetation to a height of no less than 30mm, clearing no more than one third of the site in anyone day or;
  - Cutting vegetation over three consecutive days to a height of no less than 150mm at the first cut, 75mm at the second cut and 30mm at the third cut;
- Following removal of tall vegetation using the methods outlined in above remaining vegetation will be maintained at a height of 30mm through regular mowing or strimming to discourage common reptiles from returning;

- Ground clearance of any remaining low vegetation (if required) and any ground works will only be undertaken following the works as above;
- Any trenches left overnight will be covered or provided with ramps to prevent reptiles from becoming trapped and enable escape; and
- Any building materials such as bricks, stone etc. will be stored on pallets to discourage reptiles from using them as shelter. Any demolition materials will be stored in skips or small containers rather than in piles on the ground.

## **Nesting Birds**

Within the development's construction zone the following methods of working will be adopted:

- Vegetation clearance that is required will be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season (i.e. the works will be undertaken between September and February);
- Any demolition work that is required will be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season (i.e. between the works will be undertaken September and February);
- Where clearance works or demolition works cannot be undertaken out with this period, additional surveys may be required to verify absence of breeding birds prior to clearance works and an ecologist should be on site during the works to inspect areas immediately prior to clearance, or at least no less than 24 – 48 hours before the works commence. The area of inspection should extend for at least 500m from the area of works;
- Where felling outside the breeding season is not possible a sensitive felling methodology will be implemented, involving the identification of specific areas to be felled, followed by surveys for occupied nests (or nests being built) being carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist (the project ecologist) undertaken a maximum of 24 - 48 hours prior to the commencement of works) and extending over an area of at least 500m from the area of works;
- If active birds' nests are found within the following distances from site, the area should be roped off and no works should be undertaken in these exclusion areas until the birds have fledged and the nests are empty:
  - Common crossbill - 150m;
  - Nightjar - 500m;
  - Goshawk - 150m; and
  - All other species - 10m.
- Alternatively, liaison with Natural England may be undertaken to agree the approach to working within the exclusion zones of the nest sites specified above.

## **Other Protected Species**

Within the development's construction zone the following methods of working will be adopted:

- Dust minimisation methodologies will be implemented and adhered to at all times;
- Construction lighting will be directed away from areas of retained habitat wherever possible;
- Pollution prevention controls will be implemented and adhered to at all times; and
- All excavations will be covered every night to reduce the risk of otters, badgers or any other species falling into the excavations and becoming stranded or if this is not possible then a means of enabling their escape will be provided.