

Technical Note 05

Project: Land West of Turners Hill Road and North of Huntsland, including land at Hurst Farm, Crawley Down

Planning Ref: DM/26/0577

Date: May 2026

Additional Great Crested Newt eDNA Results and Consideration of Planning Consultation Response from Naturespace (dated 1st April 2026)

1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Aspect Ecology is advising Wates Developments in respect of ecological matters relating to Land West of Turners Hill Road and North of Huntsland, including land at Hurst Farm, Crawley Down. A planning application has been submitted at the site for new residential development (DM/26/0577).
- 1.1.2 A planning consultation response has been received from Naturespace in relation to the application (dated 1st April 2026), raising a concern that the applicant has not adequately demonstrated that there will be no impact to Great Crested Newts and their habitat, given surveys could not be completed at ponds P8, P9 and P10 due to ponds being dry at the time of survey and access availability.
- 1.1.3 Accordingly, this note provides the results of further Great Crested Newt survey work undertaken in April 2026 and consideration of the matters raised.

2 Additional Great Crested Newt Surveys

- 2.1.1 Given the comments raised, additional Great Crested Newt surveys were undertaken in April 2026 as set out below.

2.2 Survey Methodology

- 2.2.1 As set out in the Ecological Appraisal report, 2 ponds have been identified within survey area B within the site (P8 and P9), with a further 11 ponds within 250m of the survey area (see Plan 6482/ECO7 taken from the Ecological Appraisal report attached). The majority of these were surveyed in June 2024, although ponds P8 and P9 within the site were recorded to be dry when survey was attempted, whilst no access was granted to ponds P10 and P11.
- 2.2.2 Following the comments from Naturespace, the site was revisited in April 2026. Ponds P8 and P9 were recorded to hold water during this visit, and accordingly were subject to eDNA surveys to investigate the presence/absence of Great Crested Newt. Attempts were also made again to secure survey access to offsite ponds P10 and P11 (including knocking on resident's doors) although access was not granted.

- 2.2.3 Water samples were collected following the procedure outlined in the methods manual prepared for DEFRA by Biggs et al. (2014)¹ on 21 April 2026. The survey fell within the acceptable seasonal window set out by Natural England (15th April to 30th June)². Samples were collected by suitably licensed Aspect Ecology staff. The water samples were sent for laboratory analysis which was conducted by Cellmark and also followed the procedure set out by Biggs et al. (2014)¹⁴.

2.3 Survey Results

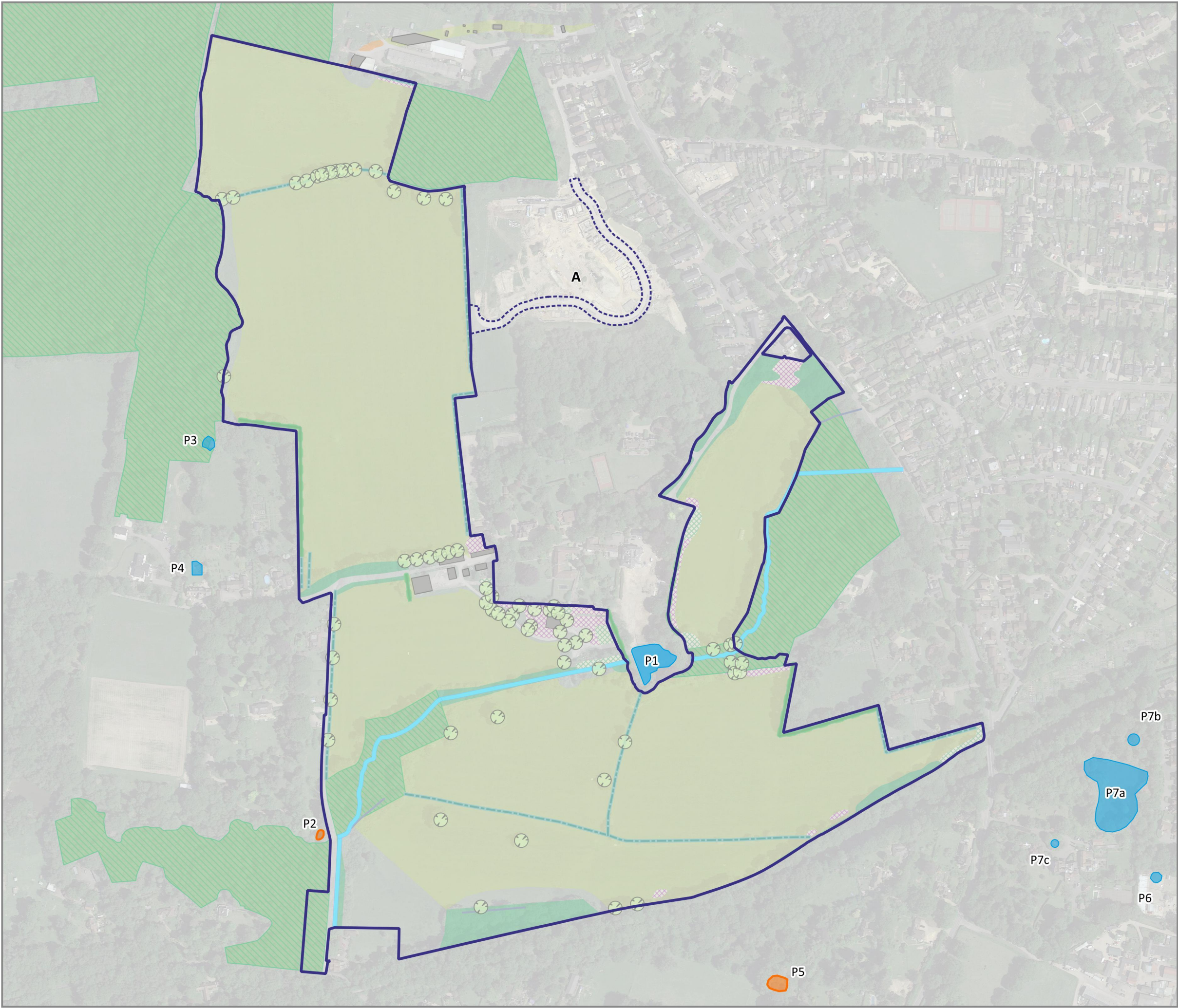
- 2.3.1 The eDNA survey returned a negative result for both ponds P8 and P9, indicating absence of Great Crested Newt from these ponds.

3 Assessment

- 3.1.1 Following the negative result returned for ponds P8 and P9, there are no positive records for Great Crested Newt for any ponds within 250m of the application boundary itself. Accordingly, Great Crested Newt is likely to be absent from terrestrial habitats within the site.
- 3.1.2 No access was secured to ponds P10 and P11, these located approximately 150m and 180m from the site respectively. These ponds are well separated from the site, with areas of wooded vegetation providing higher quality terrestrial habitat located between the ponds and the site. Pond P11 is also located on the opposite side of Turners Hill Road, forming a potential barrier to newt movement. On this basis, it is unlikely that development of the site would result in any significant impact on populations of newts associated with these ponds if present.
- 3.1.1 In any event, noting the presence of Great Crested Newt within the wider surrounds of the site, a precautionary approach is proposed during clearance of habitats as set out under mitigation measures MC15 and MC16 within the Ecological Appraisal report. As this sets out, if Great Crested Newt is encountered at any point during works, these should stop and a suitably qualified ecologist should be contacted immediately for advice and consideration given to licensing.
- 3.1.2 On the basis of the above, it is considered that Great Crested Newt are unlikely to be impacted under the proposals, whilst the mitigation measures set out under MC15 and MC16 provide an appropriate precautionary approach given the known presence of this species within the wider area.

¹ Biggs J., Ewald N., Valentini A., Gaboriaud C., Griffiths R.A., Foster J., Wilkinson J., Arnett A., Williams P. and Dunn F. (2014). 'Analytical and methodological development for improved surveillance of the Great Crested Newt. Appendix 5. Technical advice note for field and laboratory sampling of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) environmental DNA'. Freshwater Habitats Trust, Oxford.

² Natural England (2015) 'Great crested newts: surveys and mitigation for development projects. Standing advice for local planning authorities who need to assess the impacts of development on great crested newts'. Last updated at www.gov.uk on 24/12/2015.



- Key:
-  Survey Area
 -  Northern Access Link Area
 -  Pond within 250m of the survey area
 -  Ponds recorded to support Great Crested Newt

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Land West of Turners Hill Road,
Crawley Down
Great Crested Newt Survey Plan

PROJECT

TITLE

DRAWING

NO.

REV

DATE

QC



6482/EC07

B/BG

December 2024

DM/BG