Reptile Presence/Likely Absence Survey 2025

Land South of Burleigh Lane

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Contents

LIABILITIES:

Whilst every effort has been made to guarantee the accuracy of this report, it should be noted that living animals and plants are capable of migration/establishing and whilst such species may not have been located during the survey duration, their presence may be found on a site at a later date.

The recommendations contained within this document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document, or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to or during works.

1.0 Introduction

Background

1.1 The Ecology Partnership was commissioned by DMH Stallard to undertake a reptile presence/likely absence survey of the land south of Burleigh Lane, Crawley Down, RH10 4LF, hereafter referred to as 'site'. This follows a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA; The Ecology Partnership, August 2025) which identified suitable reptile habitat onsite.

1.2 This report presents the results of the reptile surveys on site, which aim specifically to determine the presence or likely absence of reptiles on the site.

1.3 This report comprises:

- Introduction, including the legislative and planning context (Section 1);
- Assessment methodology (Section 2);
- Results of reptile surveys (Section 3);
- Discussion and recommendations (Section 4);
- Conclusions (Section 5).

Site Context

1.4 The site is located to the south of Crawley Down (TQ 35134 37154). The site covers approximately 1.7ha and consists of a grassland field, bordered by woodland. The immediate surroundings of the site consist of Burleigh Lane to the north and agricultural fields/ woodland to the east, south and west.

Figure 1: Approximate location of the red line boundary

Description of Proposed Development

1.5 The current proposals for the site are for the designation of eight new self-build residential plots, with associated parking and gardens. Access will be from the north west and involve the loss of some woodland habitat.

Legislation

1.6 In the UK, there are six native reptile species. The four widespread species are adder (*Vipera berus*), grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*), common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) and slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*). The two rare species are smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*) and sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*).

1.7 The widespread reptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) against intentional killing and injuring and the sale of a wild reptile or any part of such animal. The rare reptiles also receive legal protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 against deliberate injury, killing, capture or disturbance of a rare reptile and damage or obstruction of any place used for shelter or

protection.

1.8 All six reptile species are also listed as species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, which means local authorities have a legal duty to take their conservation into account.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 A terrestrial survey of the site for reptiles was carried out over seven survey visits between 20th August and 30th September 2025. Prior to the commencement of the survey, the site was set up with artificial refugia (roofing felt) for reptiles on 23rd July 2025, with a total of 50 mats placed through the site at 10m intervals. The approximate mat placement route is marked in yellow in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Approximate locations of the reptile mats during the survey (yellow lines).

2.2 The mats were left in place for a bedding-in period of four weeks prior to the commencement of the reptile survey.

2.3 The timing and number of surveys completed were based on guidelines produced by Froglife (1999), in which a total of seven survey visits should be carried out to check the refugia for the presence of reptiles within the recommended weather conditions of dry and between 8 °C and 18°C. On each visit to the site one circuit to check all refugia was carried out and a visual search was made of suitable habitat between the refugia. Surveys were completed over the months of August and September.

2.4 A total of 50 mats were placed out over an approximate area of 1.7ha, representing a density of 29/ha. As such, the density of refugia for the suitable habitat surveyed over the course of the seven visits far exceeded the recommended 10/ha of suitable habitat (Froglife 1999).

3.0 Results

3.1 Table 1 below documents the timing and weather conditions of the reptile survey visits, along with any reptiles identified on site during the survey.

Table 1: Reptile survey results

Visit	Date	Temperature (°C)	Weather	Species Findings
Refugia set-up	23/07//2025	-	-	-
1	20/08/2025	17°C	100% cloud, wind 3bft and dry	1x common frog
2	28/08/2025	16°C	30% cloud, wind 2bft and dry	No species found
3	04/09/2025	18°C	60 % cloud, wind 3bft and dry with recent rain	No species found
4	09/09/2025	16°C	10% cloud, wind 1bft and dry	No species found
5	17/09/2025	16°C	60% cloud, wind 2bft and dry	No species found
6	23/09/2025	15°C	90% cloud, wind 1bft and dry	1x common frog
7	30/09/2025	17°C	10% cloud, wind 1bft and dry	No species found

3.2 No reptile species were identified during any survey.

4.0 Discussion

4.1 No reptiles were identified on site during any of the seven survey visits. As such, it is assumed that reptiles are absent from the site and the development is not considered to be constrained by the species.

4.2 Whilst no reptiles were identified on site, a common frog (figure 3 below) was identified, and therefore likely that common amphibians are present around the site and the local landscape.

Figure 3: Common Frog

4.3 Reptile surveys on the development, land to the north of Burleigh Lane, were conducted between August and September 2023. The VES and ARS (including natural / pre-existing refuges) recorded a total of one grass snake across the survey period. The sole record was located toward the central northern boundary close the northern end of the derelict buildings. No other reptile species or signs of their presence (e.g., skin sloughs, eggs / egg-cases) were observed during the survey.

4.4 Both amphibians and reptiles have a preference for habitats that feature structural diversity provided by vegetation of different age, type and height. Planting the edges of the site with wildflower, grass and scrub species can encourage invertebrate prey and provide areas to bask and shelter from the sun. Grassland should be managed to form a

tussocky sward. Due to the presence of common amphibians and that grass snakes are known to be present in the local area, it is recommended that the grassland is managed to a short sward height in a two stage cut, to reduce the value of the site for reptiles and amphibians. Enhancements around the edges of the site have been recommended.

4.5 Log piles should be created within suitable areas of the site. It is recommended at least four log piles are put in place along the proposed retained edge of the site. The positioning of the log piles is important, placing them in close proximity to habitat features that connect to the wider landscape in a variety of shaded and unshaded locations. The log piles can be improved further by supplementing them with the arising's of any on-site scrub clearance as well as planting with creepers such as clematis and honeysuckle. Figures 4 below show some examples of log piles.

Figures 4: Design of log piles. Two of each of these should be incorporated into the site. These will be located on the edges of the site in proximity to the hedgerows.

4.6 It is considered that the enhancements detailed for common reptiles and amphibians will also be suitable for a range of other species including invertebrates.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 No reptiles were found onsite during the surveys between 20th August and 30th September 2025. A single common frog was identified within the red line boundary.

5.2 Reptiles are considered likely to be absent from the site and no further action/ mitigation is required in relation to reptiles.

5.3 General recommendations for common reptiles and common amphibians have been made, including enhancing edges of the site with wildflower mixtures, log piles and scrub planting. These habitat edges will be retained as robust linear features, for which a range of wildlife can utilise.

6.0 References

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