



Forest of Dean District Council

Precautionary Method of Working for Common Lizard, Slow Worm, Grass Snake and Adder

The purpose of this document is to set out a method of working for sites within the District where: suitable features for reptiles (such as rough grassland and previously developed sites) are present, but are very limited in extent, and are likely to be affected by development or; the risk of common reptiles being present and affected by development proposals is unlikely but cannot be ruled out. The Forest of Dean District Council's Sustainability Team can advise further about when it may be appropriate to condition this method of working in relation to a given planning consent.

In the Forest of Dean we are fortunate to have a network of sites that support common reptiles including slow worm, adder, grass snake and common lizard. These reptiles can be found in a range of habitats including rough grassland, previously developed land (known as brownfield sites), meadows, parkland and heathland. Common reptiles are protected against intentional killing and injury under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Please note that this document is not intended for use where European Protected Species of reptile such as Sand Lizard or Smooth Snake may be present and affected by development.

Where the Local Planning Authority considers it appropriate developers must adhere to the following requirements:

In general:

- i) The site owner/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 common reptiles, where to expect them, their protected status and the procedure (see ii below) to follow in the unlikely event that common reptiles are discovered during works. Where applicable this advice will be given through site inductions, tool box talks or similar. A copy of this Precautionary Method of Working will be kept on site and available for inspection at all times.
- ii) Should any common reptiles be discovered during construction, which are likely to be effected by the development, works will cease immediately. The owner/ 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.

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

- iii) All clearance works will be undertaken when common reptiles are likely to be fully active i.e. during the April to September period.
- iv) Clearance of dry stone walls, logs, brush, stones, rocks or piles of similar debris will be undertaken carefully and by hand.

- v) Clearance of tall vegetation should be undertaken using a 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:
 - o Cutting vegetation to a height of no less than 30mm, clearing no more than one third of the site in anyone day or;
 - o 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;
- vi) Following removal of tall vegetation using the methods outlined in v) remaining vegetation will be maintained at a height of 30mm through regular mowing or strimming to discourage common reptiles from returning.
- vii) Ground clearance of any remaining low vegetation (if required) and any ground works will only be undertaken following the works in v) above.
- viii) Any trenches left overnight will be covered or provided with ramps to prevent common reptiles from becoming trapped.
- ix) 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 similar containers rather than in piles on ground.

Further information about reptiles and development including their ecological requirements, protection and the planning development system can be found at www.naturalengland.org.uk