



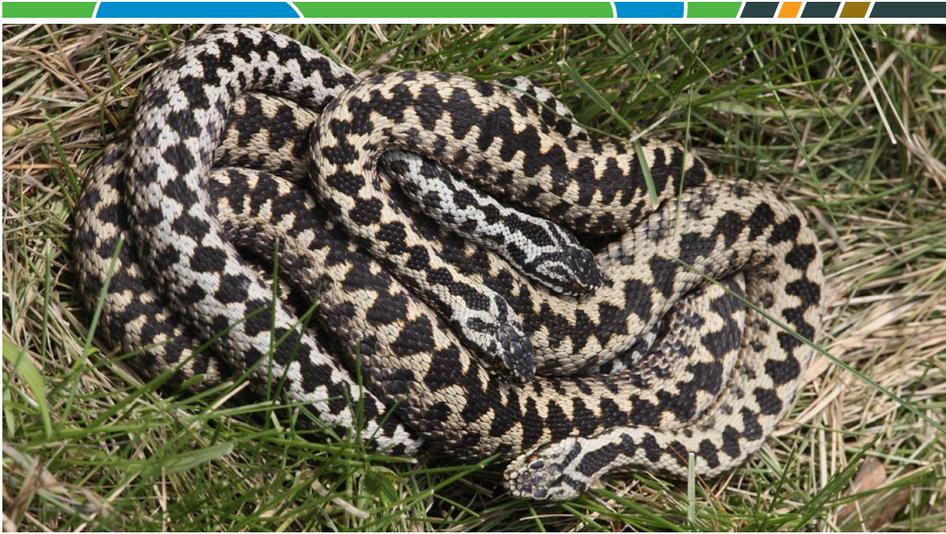
*Dunnock in hedgerow (Flickr)*

# HABITAT AND PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEYS AND BIODIVERSITY OFFSETTING FOR A PROPOSED EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



URBAN EDGE  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
CONSULTING

NATURAL PROGRESSION



Basking adders

## INTRODUCTION

We were commissioned to provide ecological surveys and impact assessment for a proposed education development on greenfield land. Following an initial Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey we recommended that further protected species surveys were required for great crested newts and reptiles.

## APPROACH

The Phase 1 survey consisted of a desk study and a walkover of the site. The desk study assessed records of protected species and designated sites within 2 km of the application site. The walkover survey classified every parcel of land in accordance with the JNCC (2010) habitat types, and assessed the site's potential to support protected species.

The Phase 1 survey highlighted the need for further reptile and great crested newt surveys due to the presence of suitable habitat on-site and ecological records for these species within 2km of the application site.

Great crested newt surveys were conducted to determine whether they were present within the application site. They targeted five ponds within 500m of the development area, which Habitat Suitability Index assessments had shown were suitable for breeding newts. Six surveys were conducted using egg searches, bottle trapping and torchlight surveys to determine whether newts were present and establish population estimates in each pond.

Rough semi improved grassland and woodland edge habitats within the application site presented suitable habitats for widespread reptiles. Surveys for this group involved targeted transects and searches of artificial refuges over the course of seven visits to site.

## OUR ADVICE

Although suitable habitat for reptiles was present, none were recorded during surveys and it was concluded that they were likely to be absent from site. Great crested newts were recorded in all ponds within 500m of the application site and a "Small" population was considered to be present. However, no negative impacts were predicted for any of the breeding ponds or non-breeding aquatic habitats, and the distance of the site from breeding ponds resulted in a low likelihood of their presence within the construction zone.

### PROJECT

Great crested newt and reptile surveys, and biodiversity offsetting for a proposed secondary school campus

### DATE OF INSTRUCTION

March 2015

### LOCATION

Buckinghamshire, UK

### CLIENT

Local authority



Unit 5 | Westergate Business Centre  
Westergate Road | Brighton | BN2 4QN

Tel: +44 (0)1273 686 766

Email: [enquiries@ueec.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@ueec.co.uk)

[www.ueec.co.uk](http://www.ueec.co.uk)

TO FIND OUT MORE CALL **01273 686 766**  
OR VISIT **WWW.UEEC.CO.UK**

**UE** URBAN EDGE  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
CONSULTING

# BIODIVERSITY OFFSETTING

We subsequently assessed the ecological impact of the proposal in line with the Biodiversity Impact Assessment Metric piloted by Defra, using the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull impact calculator. The development as proposed would have been likely to have a high residual ecological impact resulting from the loss of rough grassland and dense continuous scrub, and habitats for breeding birds.

We advised on design changes to the proposed landscaping plans to offset the loss of habitats of significant value. We recommended that development proposals included creating new areas of habitat of high ecological value within the site, such as hedgerows and wetland, and successfully demonstrated that this would significantly reduce the scale of impacts. Other enhancements were also recommended to improve the site's ecological value and address the residual impacts of development.

## OUTCOME

The planning application was successfully granted consent.



*Great crested newt*

TO FIND OUT MORE CALL **01273 686 766**  
OR VISIT **WWW.UEEC.CO.UK**



Unit 5 | Westergate Business Centre  
Westergate Road | Brighton | BN2 4QN

Tel: +44 (0)1273 686 766

Email: [enquiries@ueec.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@ueec.co.uk)

[www.ueec.co.uk](http://www.ueec.co.uk)

**UE** URBAN EDGE  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
CONSULTING