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APPENDIX F: GREAT CRESTED NEWT REPORT

Client

Hallam Land Management

Project

Land south of Longsight Road

Langho

Date

October 2025

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION 1

2.0 LEGISLATION, POLICY CONTEXT AND STATUS 1

3.0 METHODOLOGY 4

4.0 RESULTS 7

5.0 CONCLUSION 13

APPENDIX 4A – HSI RESULTS 14

TABLES

Table 1: HSI score and suitability for supporting Great Crested Newts

Table 2: Description of waterbodies and HSI scores

FIGURES

Figure F-1: Pond Location Plan

Rev	Issue Status	Prepared/Date	Approved/Date
-	Draft	HK / 04.06.25	AJB / 20.06.25

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following report has been prepared by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd on behalf of Hallam Land Management. It provides the results of Great Crested Newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* surveys undertaken at Land south of Longsight Road, Langho (Central OS grid reference: SD7024034440), herein referred to as 'the Site' (see Figure 1 of the EclA for location).
- 1.2 This document is provided as an Appendix to the Ecological Impact Assessment (FPCR, 2025) and provides the ecological assessment for Great Crested Newts.

Study Objectives

- 1.3 The purpose of the surveys and subsequent assessment were to:
- Ascertain the presence/likely absence of GCN in waterbodies within 250m of the Site.
- 1.4 And where necessary:
- Determine any likely impacts on GCN as a result of the development; and
 - Present a strategy for mitigation in order to minimise any impacts to GCN during construction.

2.0 LEGISLATION, POLICY CONTEXT AND STATUS

Legislation

- 2.1 Great Crested Newts are afforded full protection at a European and UK level under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 2.2 Under Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) it is illegal to:
- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European Protected Species (EPS);
 - Deliberately disturb wild animals of an EPS (affecting ability to survive, breed or rear young) – disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young;
 - Deliberately disturb wild animals of an EPS (impairing to migrate or hibernate) – disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability in the case of hibernating or migratory species to hibernate or migrate;
 - Damage or destroy a breeding Site or resting place of an EPS.
- 2.3 Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is illegal to:
- Recklessly or intentionally disturbs any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection;
 - Recklessly or intentionally obstructs access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection.

Derogation

- 2.4 Although the law provides strict protection to European Protected Species (EPS), it also allows derogation from this protection under Regulation 55 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) through the issuing of EPS licenses for development works. These licenses in England are currently determined and issued by Natural England.
- 2.5 In such circumstances, where a lawful operation is required to be carried out, which is likely to result in one of the above offences, an EPS licence may be obtained from Natural England to allow the operation to proceed.
- 2.6 As part of the licence applications process a number of 'Tests' have to be met by the application.
- 2.7 Natural England Guidance Note: European Protected Species and the Planning Process – Natural England's Application of the 'Three Tests' to Licence Applications (March 2011) states:
- "In determining whether or not to grant a licence Natural England must apply the requirements of Regulation 53 of the Regulations and, in particular, the three tests set out in sub-paragraphs (2)(e), (9)(a) and (9)(b).*
- (1) Regulations 53(2)(e) states: a licence can be granted for the purposes of "preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment".*
- (2) Regulation 53(9)(a) states: the appropriate authority shall not grant a licence unless they are satisfied "that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range."*
- Conservation status is defined as "the sum of the influence acting on the species concerned that may affect the long-term distribution and abundance of its population within its territory". It is assessed as favourable when:*
- *Population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and*
 - *The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and*
 - *There is, or will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.*
- 2.8 These tests must not only reach agreement with Natural England when assessing a Licence application, they must also be considered by the planning authority when determining a planning application to the extent that the LPA must be satisfied that a licence is likely to be granted should one be required.

Policy

- 2.9 Great Crested Newts are listed as Species of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC).

- 2.10 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024¹ sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.
- 2.11 With regards to conserving and enhancing the natural environment the NPPF 2024 is concerned with protection through the planning system of statutory and non-statutory Sites of biodiversity and/or geological conservation value, as well as habitats and species protection and biodiversity conservation in the wider environment.
- 2.12 The Government Circular ODPM06/2005 provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact on the planning system and states that the presence of a protected species is:
- A material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal which, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat.
- 2.13 Great Crested Newts are also listed as a priority species in the Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan.

Distribution

- 2.14 The species is widely distributed across northern and central Europe. However, the UK holds a significant proportion of the species in Europe and therefore worldwide. GCN are widespread over Britain but are found predominantly in the lowlands and are much rarer in Scotland, the south-west and Wales and they are absent from Ireland².

¹ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2024). National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>.

² Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) (n.d.) SAC Selection: Species Accounts – S1166 Great Crested Newt. Available from: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/species.asp?FeatureIntCode=S1166>

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Desk Study

3.1 In order to compile existing baseline information, a desktop survey was undertaken for existing ecological data regarding the presence of GCN and other amphibians within 1km of the Site.

3.2 This included a review of:

- Biological records requested from Lancashire Environment Record Network (LERN) (LERC)
- Granted EPS licences for GCN from <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.html>
- Statutory designated sites that include GCN as part of their designation from <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.html>
- Publicly available aerial imagery showing connectivity across the site and to the wider landscape

Habitat Suitability Survey

3.3 A GCN habitat suitability index assessment for was undertaken on accessible waterbodies on Site and within 250m of the Site on 15th April 2025.

3.4 These assessments provide a measure of the likely suitability that a waterbody has for supporting GCN. Whilst not a direct indication of whether or not a waterbody will support GCN, generally those with a higher score are more likely to support GCN than those with a lower score, and there is a positive correlation between HSI scores and waterbodies in which GCN are recorded. Ten separate attributes are assessed for each waterbody to calculate the suitability of the waterbodies to support GCN:

- Geographic location
- Pond area
- Pond drying
- Water quality
- Shade
- Presence of waterfowl
- Presence of fish
- Number of linked ponds
- Terrestrial habitat
- Macrophytic coverage

- 3.5 A score is assigned for each attribute and a total score is calculated between 0 and 1. Pond suitability is then determined according to the scale in Table 1.

Table 1: HSI score and suitability for supporting Great Crested Newts

HSI Score	Pond Suitability
<0.5	Poor
0.5-0.59	Below average
0.6-0.69	Average
0.7-0.79	Good
>0.8	Excellent

Presence/Absence Surveys

- 3.6 Survey methods followed those recommended by Natural England as detailed in the Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines³. To determine the presence or absence of GCNs, four individual survey visits were undertaken on the following dates.

- 15th April 2025
- 28th April 2025
- 8th May 2025
- 15th May 2025

- 3.7 Where possible, three of a possible four different techniques were employed (bottle trap, torch, egg search, and sweep net). A summary of these techniques is detailed below.

Bottle Trapping

- 3.8 Involves the placement of traps, comprising inverted two-litre plastic bottles fixed in place with bamboo canes, at an average of one every two metres around the margins of the pond. The traps are partially submerged with an air bubble trapped inside. The traps are then checked for the presence of amphibians early the next morning, with any captive animals released back into the pond and the traps removed. Care was taken to ensure that trapping did not occur during excessively warm weather, when the temperature inside the trap could rise considerably, reducing oxygen levels and potentially suffocating the newts.

Torching

- 3.9 Torching is carried out after dark using high-powered torches. Surveyors slowly walk around the perimeter of each waterbody and searched by torchlight for amphibians in the shallows and the deeper areas used by GCN for courtship display. Approximately 15 minutes was spent torching each 50m of shoreline.

Egg Searching

- 3.10 Newts lay eggs singly on leaves of aquatic plants or other suitable pliable material, after which the material is folded over the egg to protect it. GCN eggs can be distinguished from those of the other newts by their size, shape and colour. Submerged and floating vegetation and leaf

³ ADAS (n.d.) ADAS: Experts in Agricultural and Environmental Consultancy. Available from: <https://adas.co.uk/>

litter is examined for folded leaves containing newt eggs. Once a GCN egg is identified at the waterbody, no further egg searching takes place, as evidence of breeding has then been confirmed, and so as to minimise further disturbance.

Sweep Netting

- 3.11 Using a long-handled dip-net the pond edges are swept for approximately 15 minutes per 50m of shoreline. This technique is one of the least effective for capturing adult newts, and cannot be used to estimate a population size, although can be very effective for detecting newt larvae, especially later in the season.

Surveyor information

- 3.12 The HSI assessments, and presence/absence surveys were undertaken by appropriately experienced ecologists and designed and overseen by a surveyor who holds a current Natural England Class Licence CL08 (surveying for Great Crested Newts for scientific or education purposes). The relevant licence reference number is 2022-10439-CL08-GCN.

Limitations

- 3.13 Due to the transient and complex nature of ecosystems, no investigation can provide a complete representation or prediction of the natural environment present, however every effort has been made to ensure an accurate description of the Site in presented following best practice guidance, experience and professional judgement.
- 3.14 Data provided by third party sources collated during the desktop study is generally made up from a wide range of sources including (but not limited to) those submitted by ecological consultancies, wildlife conservation organisations and Volunteers. As such, this data is typically focused on areas of known nature conservation, is reliant upon formal surveys having been undertaken within an area or the presence of an expert within the locality (particularly for invertebrate records) and as such this data can never be fully relied upon as a complete ecological dataset for any given area. Rather, this data is used as a guide to likely presence of notable ecological features and can never be relied upon for likely absence.
- 3.15 Ponds 1-7 were dry at the time of surveying so no presence absence surveys were undertaken.
- 3.16 Pond 9 was not survey because access was not granted by the homeowner, presence absence.
- 3.17 The survey methods conducted at pond 8 were limited to egg searching, torching because the pond contained pet fish and was covered by a grill preventing access.

4.0 RESULTS

Desk Study

- 4.1 Six records of Great Crested Newts were returned by the desk study within 2km of the Site boundary. All records were 1.91km NNE from the Site boundary in 2017. A search of MAGIC identified no EPS mitigation licences issued for Great Crested Newts within 2km of the site.
- 4.2 No statutory or non-statutory sites occur within the search area which include GCN populations as part of their designating features.

4.3 The desk study identified nine ponds within 250m of the Site boundary (ponds 1-9).

Field Survey

HSI Assessment

4.4 Suitable terrestrial GCN habitat is present on Site, within areas of grassland, woodland, scrub, ditches and hedge and tree bases.

4.5 Of the nine ponds within 250m of the Site, eight ponds were granted access, with pond nine having no access. However, ponds 1-7 were not surveyed due to being dry at the time of the surveys.



4.6 Details of scores from the HSI assessment of surveyed waterbodies are provided in Appendix F-1 and a summary, along with a description of each, is provided in Table 2, below.



- Pond 8 returned a HSI score of "poor"



Presence/absence Surveys



4.7 The presence/absence surveys confirmed absence of GCN in pond 8.

Table 2: Description of waterbodies and HSI scores

Ref	Photo	Description	Approx. Distance from Site Boundary	HSI Score	Suitability for GCN
P1		<p>Pond situated on the woodland edge at the north-east corner of site. Pond was dry at the time of surveying.</p>	0m		
P2		<p>Pond situated in on-site field. Pond was dry at the time of surveying.</p>	0m		

Ref	Photo	Description	Approx. Distance from Site Boundary	HSI Score	Suitability for GCN
P3		<p>Pond situated in on-site field. Pond was dry at the time of surveying.</p>	0m		
P4		<p>Pond situated in on-site field. Pond was dry at the time of surveying.</p>	0m		

Ref	Photo	Description	Approx. Distance from Site Boundary	HSI Score	Suitability for GCN
P5		<p>Pond situated in on-site field. Pond was dry at the time of surveying.</p>	0m		
P6		<p>Pond situated in on-site field. Pond was dry at the time of surveying.</p>	0m		

Ref	Photo	Description	Approx. Distance from Site Boundary	HSI Score	Suitability for GCN
P7		<p>Pond located within field surrounded by trees. Pond 7 is situated offsite, north-east of the site boundary. Pond was dry at the time of surveying.</p>	115m		
P8		<p>Pond situated in the garden of a residential house south-west of the site boundary and south of the railway line. Pond was fully covered over by wire netting.</p>	165m	0.38	Poor

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- 5.1 During the field survey it was found that all ponds within the Site boundary were dry and considering the general vegetated state of these, with the absence of much bare ground, aquatic or emergent vegetation, they are likely to be ordinarily dry. As such it is concluded there are not likely to be any GCN breeding ponds within the Site boundary.
- 5.2 Two further ponds were identified within 250m of the Site boundary both of these were domestic garden ponds. Pond 8 which due to the presence of fish was considered to provide poor suitability for GCN but was subjected to aquatic surveys comprising torchlight surveys and egg searching and no evidence of GCN was identified. Pond 9 which is also a garden pond is located approximately 36m to the southwest of the Site boundary. Access was not granted to survey this pond. From aerial photographs this pond appears to be an ornamental pond is most likely also stocked with fish in addition there are no other ponds which are likely to support GCN within 250m. As such the likelihood of it supporting an isolated population GCN is considered to be very unlikely.
- 5.3 In consideration that the nearest GCN record is almost 2km from the Site and on account of the above survey results, it considered that there is negligible risk of GCN utilising the site and therefore GCN are unlikely to present a constraint to the proposed development no further surveys are considered necessary to inform an application.

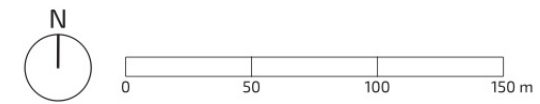
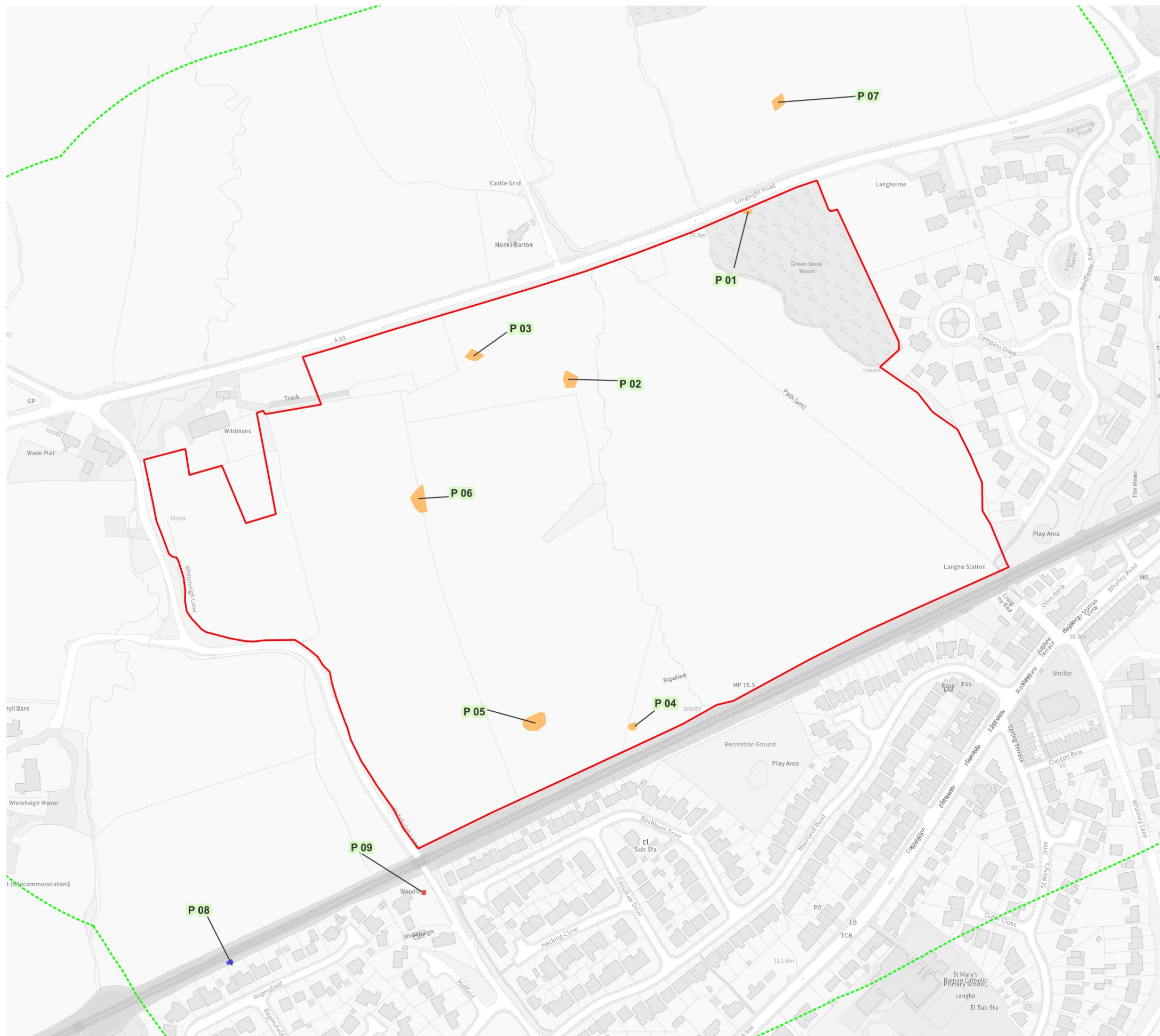
APPENDIX F-1 – HSI RESULTS

Pond	SI -1		SI -2		SI -3		SI -4		SI -5		SI -6		SI -7		SI -8		SI -9		SI -10		HSI score	Pond suitability
	geographical location		pond area		pond drying		water quality		shade (perimeter)		fowl		fish		ponds		terrestrial habitat		macrophytes			
	Field result (A, B, C)	SI score	Field result (m2)	SI score	Field result	SI score	Field result	SI score	Field result (% cover)	SI score	Field result	SI score	Field result	SI score	Density per km	SI score	Field result	SI score	Field result	SI score		
P8	A	1.0	1	0.05	Never	0.9	Good	1.0	10	1.0	Absent	1.0	Major	0.01	1	0.4	Moderate	0.67	25	0.55	0.38	Poor

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- Site Boundary
- 250m Buffer
- Pond Location (with reference)
- Pond
- Dry Pond
- Pond with No Access

date 10/10/25 drwn/chkd
DV / ET

client **Hallam Land Management Ltd**
 project **Land South of Longsight Road Langho**

title **POND LOCATION PLAN** scale
1:3,000 @ A3

number **FIGURE F.1** rev
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