

VPI Immingham OCGT Project

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The Immingham Open Cycle Gas Turbine Order

Land to the north of and in the vicinity of the VPI Immingham Power Station, Rosper Road, South Killingholme, Lincolnshire, DN40 3DZ

Confirmatory Great Crested Newt Surveys Report

The Planning Act 2008



Applicant: VPI Immingham B Ltd

Date: May 2019

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GLOSSARY

Abbreviation	Description
CHP	Combined Heat and Power
DCO	Development Consent Order
eDNA	Environmental DNA
ES	Environmental Statement
HSI	Habitat Suitability Index
km	Kilometre
m	Metre
MW	Megawatt
NERC	Natural Environment and Rural Communities
NLC	North Lincolnshire Council
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
OCGT	Open Cycle Gas Turbine
PA 2008	The Planning Act 2008
PEA	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
PINS	The Planning Inspectorate
SoS	Secretary of State

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This report presents the results of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) surveys and has been prepared on behalf of VPI Immingham B Ltd ('VPIB' or 'the Applicant').
- 1.1.2 The terms of reference used in this report are consistent with those defined within the main chapters of the Environmental Statement (ES), submitted in support of the development consent order (DCO) application (Volume I, Application Document Ref.6.2). This Report is intended to be read in conjunction with Chapter 9: Ecology of ES Volume I, the Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA, Appendix 9A, ES Volume III) and the Great Crested Newt Surveys (Appendix 9B, ES Volume III).
- 1.1.3 The Applicant is seeking development consent for the construction, operation and maintenance of a new gas-fired electricity power station with a gross output capacity of up to 299 megawatts ('MW'), and other associated development (the 'Project' or 'Proposed Development') on land ('the Site') at and in the vicinity of the existing Immingham Power Station, Rosper Road, South Killingholme, North Lincolnshire, DN40 3DZ. The principal infrastructure of the power station would be a single Open Cycle Gas Turbine (OCGT).

1.2 The Purpose of this Document

- 1.2.1 The 'Study Area' for great crested newts included the Site and all land within 250 m of its boundary, as this is the typical terrestrial range of great crested newts from their breeding ponds (English Nature, 2001). A 250 m survey radius is widely accepted as an appropriate search area for breeding ponds within the potential zone of influence of a development. Natural England (Natural England, 2016) guidance states that requirements for great crested newt survey should be proportionate and risk based, and that surveys of ponds greater than 250 m distance (up to a maximum survey radius of 500 m) are only likely to be required where a specific combination of circumstances are met. Following review of this guidance, it was concluded that the Proposed Development was of a type whereby surveys of waterbodies more than 250 m from the Site were not necessary or proportionate.
- 1.2.2 Six ponds were identified either within the Site or within 250 m of the Site; the locations of these waterbodies are shown on Figure 9B.1.
- 1.2.3 Five ponds, (Ponds 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6) were subject to a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment (Oldham et. al, 2000) and environmental DNA (eDNA) sampling and analysis. Pond 3 was not subject to presence/absence surveys for great crested newts due to health and safety concerns restricting access to the pond (steep sided banks and deep water). There is only one safe accessible point of entry (via a small step way), which means that egg searches, bottle trapping, netting and eDNA surveys are not feasible and would not meet the survey method requirements when undertaking presence/absence surveys for great crested newts (English Nature, 2001 and Biggs et. al 2014).
- 1.2.4 An HSI assessment of Pond 3 was undertaken and terrestrial amphibian refugia surveys were undertaken around this pond. This is in accordance with advice from Natural England as reported in Chapter 9: Ecology (ES Volume I, DCO Application Document Ref. 6.2). The results of the HSI assessment for Pond 3 are included within Annex 1 of this Report and a photograph of Pond 3 can be found within Annex 2. Previous amphibian refugia surveys were reported within Appendix 9B, ES Volume III and further information

on the wider great crested newt surveys including background scope and findings, can also be found within Appendix 9B.

- 1.2.5 The survey commenced prior to the submission of the DCO and the results reported in Appendix 9B (ES Volume III). This Report presents the confirmatory findings following completion of this survey.

1.3 Relevant Legislation

- 1.3.1 The great crested newt is listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This legislation, when taken together, results in a level of protection that prohibits the intentional, deliberate or reckless:

- Killing, injuring, taking or disturbance of great crested newts;
- Damaging, destroying or obstructing any place used by great crested newts for the purposes of breeding, sheltering or protection; and
- Selling and/or advertising for sale a great crested newt or any part thereof.

- 1.3.2 The great crested newt is listed as a species of principal importance for nature conservation in England in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Section 40 of the same Act requires that local and regional authorities have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

2.0 METHODS

2.1 Refugia Surveys

2.1.1 A total of 70 amphibian refugia (carpet tiles) were installed around Pond 3 in suitable great crested newt terrestrial habitat on 19th March 2019 by two AECOM ecologists registered to use the Natural England great crested newt class survey licence. The amphibian refugia were checked twice a week for a period of 5 weeks between 26th March and 26th April 2019. The locations of the amphibian refugia are shown on Figure 9B.1. The purpose of the surveys was to record any great crested newts which may have emerged from their hibernation sites and were moving towards ponds for breeding purposes. This generally occurs in March and April.

2.2 Limitations

2.2.1 There were no limitations to the surveys presented within the Report.

3.0 SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Refugia Surveys

3.1.1 The results of the amphibian refugia surveys are presented within Table 1 below.

Table 1: Refugia Survey Results

Date	Results
26/03/09	One common toad (<i>Bufo bufo</i>).
28/03/19	One common toad.
02/04/19	Nothing recorded.
05/04/19	One smooth newt (<i>Lissotriton vulgaris</i>).
09/04/19	Two smooth newts.
12/04/19	Nothing recorded.
16/04/19	Nothing recorded.
18/04/19	One smooth newt.
23/04/19	Nothing recorded.
26/04/19	Nothing recorded.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND EVALUATION

- 4.1.1 None of the ponds within the Study Area that were subject to eDNA survey in 2018 returned positive results for great crested newt. If great crested newts were present in Pond 3, given the good habitat connectivity between this pond and Ponds, 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6, it would be reasonable to expect that great crested newts would be also present in those waterbodies.
- 4.1.2 No great crested newts have been recorded during the amphibian refugia checks around Pond 3 undertaken in March and April 2019. Common toad and smooth newt were recorded; this indicates that the survey method was effective as amphibians were recorded during the survey period.
- 4.1.3 It is therefore considered to be highly unlikely that great crested newts are present within the Study Area and no further surveys or mitigation is required in relation to this species.

5.0 REFERENCES

Biggs, J., Ewald, N., Valentini, A., Gaboriaund, C., Griffiths, R.A., Foster, J., Wilkinson, J., Arnett, A., Williams, P. & 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

English Nature (2001) Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature (now Natural England), Peterborough

Natural England (2016) Great Crested Newt Method Statement for EPS Licence Application. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/great-crested-newts-apply-for-a-mitigation-licence>

Oldham R.S., Keeble J., Swan M.J.S. & Jeffcote M. (2000). Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*). *Herpetological Journal* 10 (4), 143-155.

Annex 1 Habitat Suitability Index Pond 3

Table 1: HSI Survey Pond 3

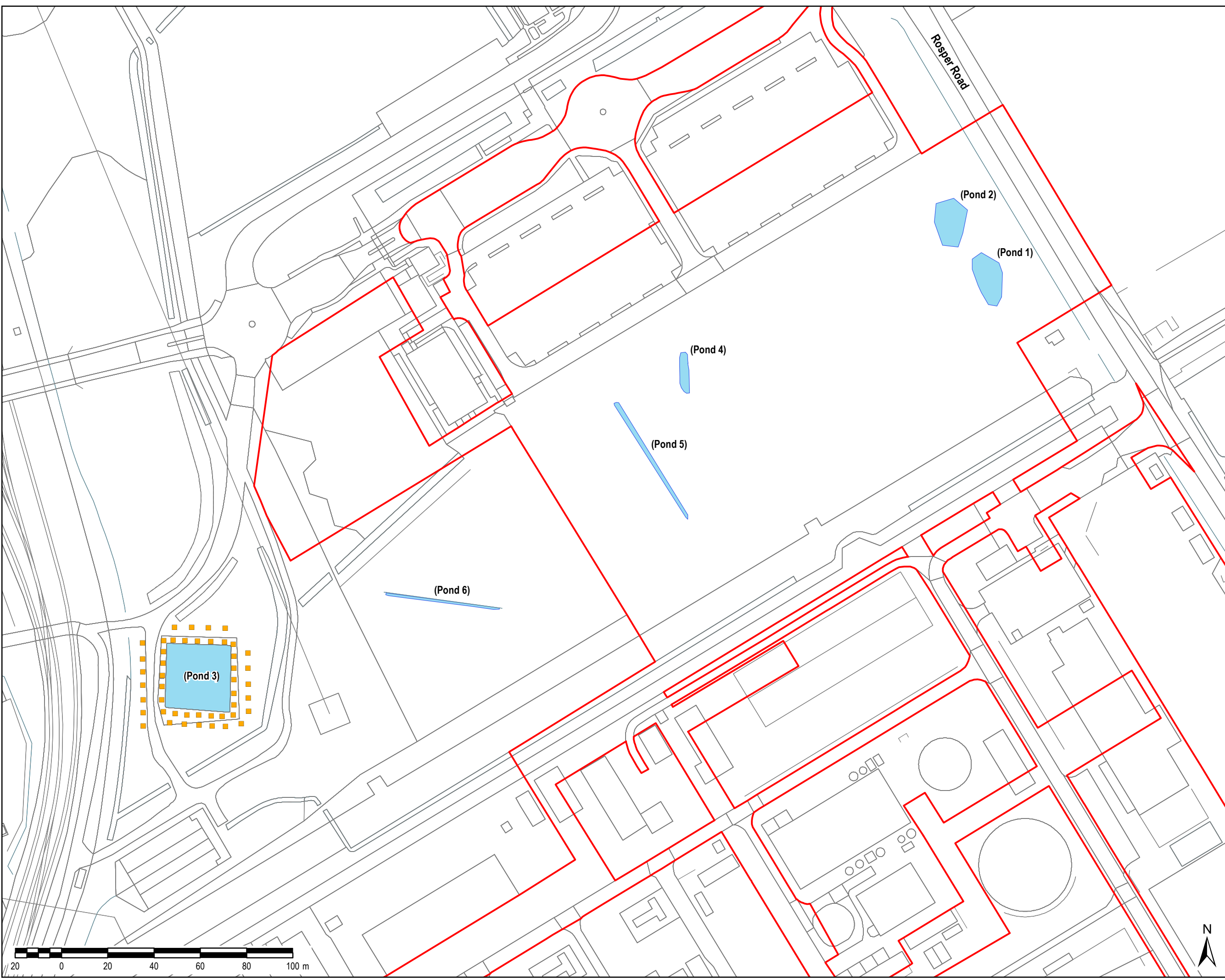
Suitability Index	Habitat Attribute	Field Score	SI Score
SI1	Location	A	1
SI2	Pond Area	576 m ²	1
SI3	Pond Drying	Sometimes	0.5
SI4	Water Quality	Poor	0.33
SI5	Shade	0%	1
SI6	Fowl	Absent	1
SI7	Fish	Absent	1
SI8	Ponds per km	11	0.97
SI9	Terrestrial Habitat	Moderate	0.67
SI10	Macrophyte Cover	0%	0.3
HSI SCORE			0.71 = Good

Annex 2: Photographs

Pond Reference	Photograph
Pond 3	 A photograph of a pond, identified as Pond 3. The pond is surrounded by tall, dry grasses and reeds. In the background, a white van is parked near a fence. The water in the pond is calm and reflects the surrounding environment. In the foreground, there is a metal railing structure, possibly a walkway or bridge leading to the pond.

Figure 1 Great Crested Newt Survey Locations

File Name: K:\5004 - Information Systems\60547702\Immingham Gas Pipeline\02_Maps\Power Plant Site\OCGT Full ES 2019\Ecology\PEA Appendix to the ES\Figure 9C.1 Great Crested Newt Survey Locations.mxd



THIS DRAWING IS TO BE USED ONLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ISSUE THAT IT WAS ISSUED FOR AND IS SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT

- LEGEND**
- Proposed Development
 - Location of Ponds
 - Standing Water
 - Location of Amphibian Refugia

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Purpose of Issue
CONFIRMATORY GCN REPORT

Client
VPI IMMINGHAM B LTD

Project Title
PROPOSED 299MW OCGT POWER STATION

Drawing Title
GREAT CRESTED NEWT SURVEY LOCATIONS

Drawn JW	Checked BB	Approved MS	Date 28/03/2019
AECOM Internal Project No. 60547702		Scale @ A3 1:1,500	

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AECOM
Midpoint
Alencon Link, Basingstoke
Hampshire, RG21 7PP
Telephone (01256) 310200
Fax (01256) 310201
www.aecom.com



FIGURE 1