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Able Marine Energy Park Environmental Statement

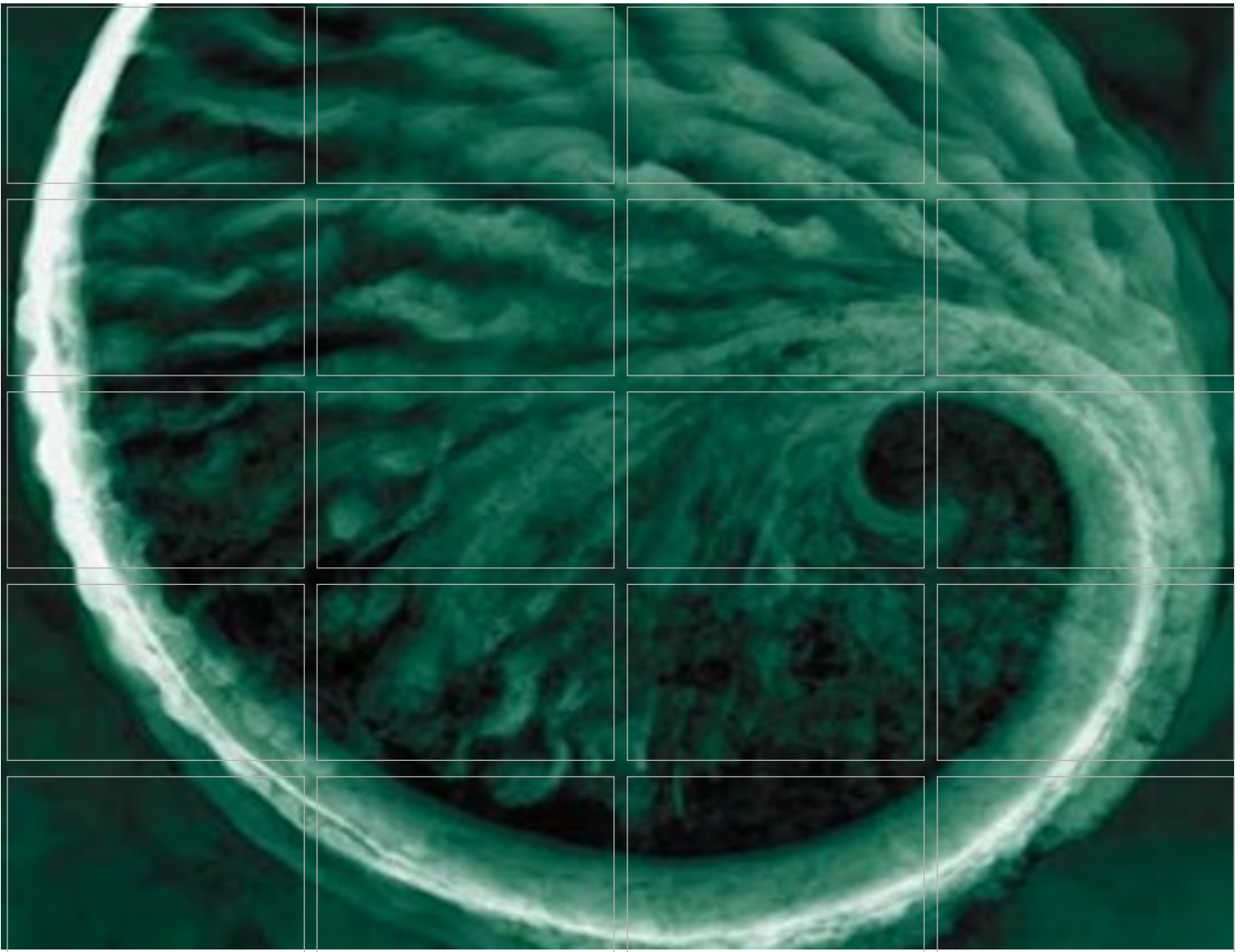
Location of Replacement Ponds for Great Crested Newts

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November 2011

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ERM



Able Marine Energy Park (AMEP) – Location of Replacement Ponds for Great Crested Newts

FINAL REPORT

November 2011

Able UK Ltd

**Able Marine Energy Park (AMEP) -
Location of Replacement Ponds for Great
Crested Newts**

FINAL REPORT

November 2011

Prepared by: Andy Coates and Kate Thomson

For and on behalf of Environmental
Resources Management

Approved by: Steve Purnell

Signed:



Position: Partner

Date: 30 November 2011

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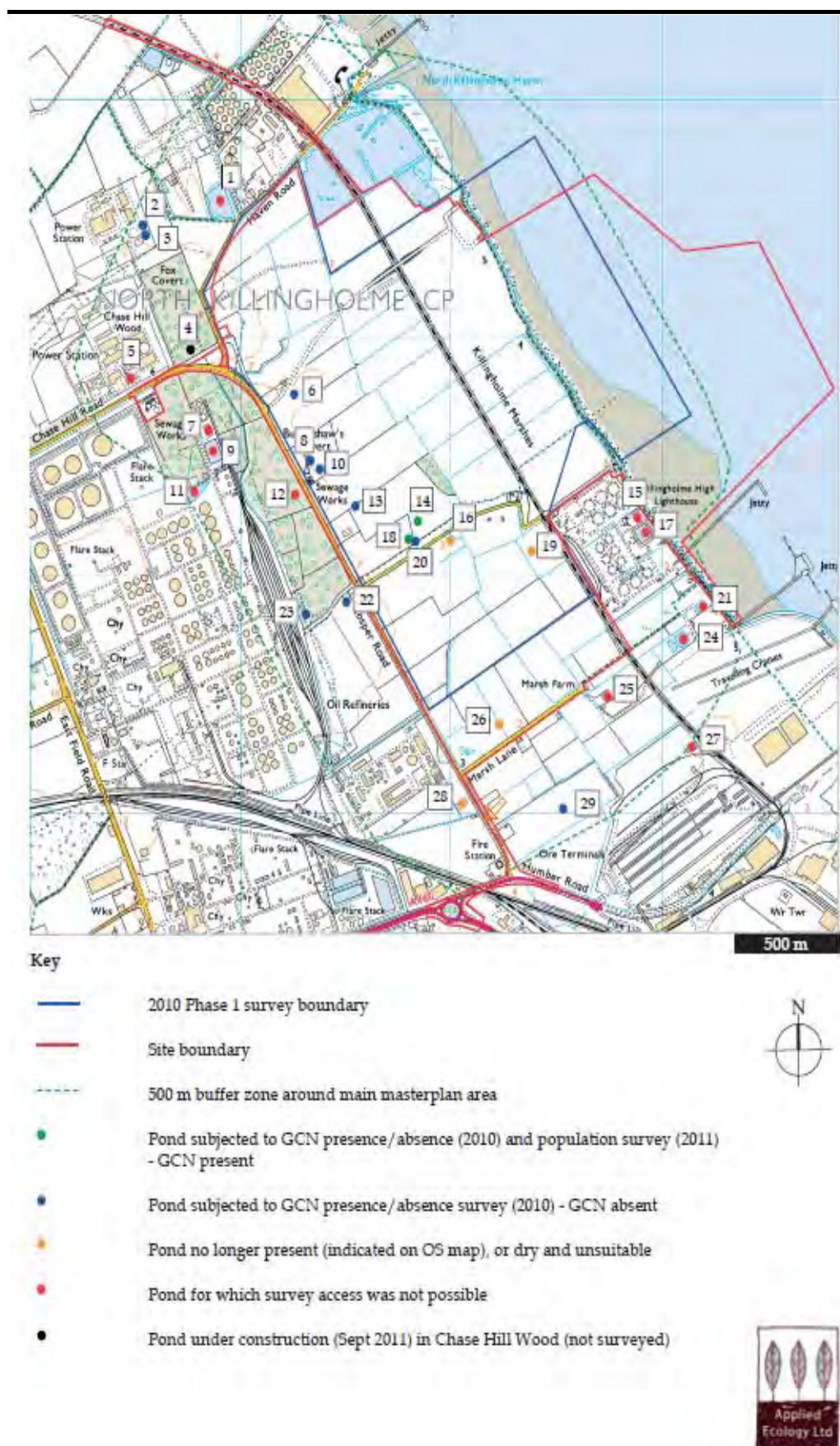
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The Able Marine Energy Park (AMEP) development will result in the loss of farmland habitat in an area which contains ponds. In 2006 Just Ecology carried out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey ⁽¹⁾ within the local area and identified one pond within the AMEP development that had a medium to good potential to support great crested newts. A Phase 1 Habitat Survey, carried out by Applied Ecology (AE) in 2010 (Applied Ecology, 2010 ⁽²⁾) and an update survey in 2011 (unpublished, 2011) identified 29 ponds that had the potential to support breeding great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) within the AMEP site and a radius of 500 m around it (see *Figure 1.1*). This buffer includes all terrestrial habitats within 500 m of the AMEP red line boundary. It does not include 500 m from the railway to the north or 500 m from Humber Road and Rosper Road to the south, see *Figure 1.1*. These areas were not included in the survey area as the planned works are not anticipated to cause any negative impact on great crested newt habitat. Work will involve standard maintenance of the railway and all work to the road will be within the highway corridor. Where access was not possible ponds were identified using aerial photography and OS maps.

(1) Just Ecology Consultancy Ltd (2006) *Great Crested Newt Survey* Report for Able UK Ltd

(2) Applied Ecology Ltd (2010) *South Killingholme Phase 1 Ecology Survey* Report for Institute of Estuarine and Coastal Studies (IECS)

Figure 1.1 Location of ponds within 500 m (Applied Ecology 2011)



Source: unpublished, Applied Ecology (2011)

There are a number of drains cross the AMEP site. During the surveys in 2010, the drains assessed were found to support sticklebacks. It is known that the presence of predatory fish is unfavourable to breeding great crested newts as they prey on newt larvae ⁽¹⁾. Hence they were considered to be unsuitable for great crested newts and were not subject to subsequent presence/absence surveys (*pers. comm.*, Duncan Painter Applied Ecology Ltd, 2011). Just Ecology (2006) carried out a suitability survey of a selection of drainage ditches within the site boundary which also suggested unsuitability for great crested newts.

Surveys undertaken in 2010 (Applied Ecology, 2010 ⁽²⁾) confirmed the presence of great crested newts in the pond identified by Just Ecology in 2006 ⁽³⁾. One other pond surveyed also supported great crested newts with a third unoccupied pond in close proximity. A six visit survey carried out in 2011 by Applied Ecology ⁽⁴⁾ found these ponds to support a medium sized breeding population. These three ponds will be lost as a result of the AMEP development and new replacement ponds will be provided as per Natural England Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines ⁽⁵⁾ and *pers. comm.* Kathryn Murray of Natural England (11/11/11). No other ponds were identified within 250 m of these ponds, reaffirming the findings of the 2006 survey. *Table 1.1* shows the survey results of the presence/absence survey carried out in 2010.

Table 1.1 *Presence/Absence survey results from Applied Ecology (2010)*

Survey dates			12/13 th May 2010		13/14 th May 2010		17/18 th May 2010		18/19 th May 2010	
Pond no.	HSI Score	No. of traps	SN	GCN	SN	GCN	SN	GCN	SN	GCN
1	0.35*	No access								
2	0.47	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	0.65	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4		New pond								
5	0.35	No access								
6	0.54*	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	0.39*	No access								
8	0.53	3	1	-	4	-	2	-	-	-
9	0.29*	No access								
10	0.71	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	0.32*	No access								
12	0.49*	No access								
13	0.65	5	9	-	3	-	5	-	-	-
14	0.67	4	5	-	9	1m	16	2f	8	1f
15	0.43*	No access								
16		Not surveyed- pond dry/absent								
17	0.43*	No access								

(1) English Nature (2001) *Great crested newt mitigation guidelines* Version August 2001

(2) Applied Ecology Ltd (2010) *South Killingholme Phase 1 Ecology Survey* Report for Institute of Estuarine and Coastal Studies (IECS)

(3) Just Ecology (2006) *Extended Phase 1 and Scoping Study*. Report for Able UK Ltd

(4) Applied Ecology Ltd (2011) *Able Marine Energy Park Protected Species* Report for Able UK Ltd

(5) English Nature (2001) *Great crested newt mitigation guidelines* Version August 2001

Survey dates			12/13 th May 2010		13/14 th May 2010		17/18 th May 2010		18/19 th May 2010	
Pond no.	HSI Score	No. of traps	SN	GCN	SN	GCN	SN	GCN	SN	GCN
18	0.71	7	3	9m; 13f	2	7m; 14f	6	4m; 4f	1	6m; 3f
19		Not surveyed-pond dry/absent								
20	0.40	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
21	0.33*	No access								
22	0.55	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
23	0.53	3	9	-	3	-	Not trapped- pond dry			
24	0.45*	No access								
25	0.80*	No access								
26		Not surveyed-pond dry/absent								
27	0.64*	No access								
28		Not surveyed-pond dry/absent								
29	0.23	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Applied Ecology (2010) *South Killingholme Phase 1 Ecology Survey*. Report for Institute of Estuarine and Coastal Studies (IECS). Pond numbers updated by Applied Ecology as a result of walk over survey in November 2011.

* HSI score calculated remotely using Google Earth (or distant site views) *pers. comm.* AE (17/11/11)

Records highlighted in blue will be lost to the AMEP development

The purpose of this document is to summarise the rationale for the use of the receptor site as a suitable location for these replacement ponds as requested by Natural England. *Section 1.2* presents information about the current location of the existing ponds and the great crested newt survey findings. *Section 1.3* considers the new location, and explains why it appears to be a suitable location for the new ponds.

The loss of the three ponds, the design and creation of the new ponds, the approach to trapping and movement of great crested newts, and subsequent monitoring will all be subject to the requirements of any licence issued by Natural England. Applied Ecology Ltd will be preparing the licence application on behalf of Able UK Ltd, and will be consulting with Natural England about the details.

2.1 POND 14 – EXISTING TERRESTRIAL HABITAT

Pond 14 is 28.6 m² in area and is located in the western extremity of an arable field, which at the time of survey in 2010 was a winter-sown crop of oilseed rape. This pond is fringed with common reed (*Phragmites australis*) (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 *Photograph of Pond 14 in April/May 2010*



In the wider area up to a radius of 250 m from the pond, the dominant habitat type remains arable; with a smaller percentage of more favoured habitat types including tall ruderal, scattered and dense scrub, woodland and semi-improved neutral grassland (see Figures 2.2 and 2.3)

Figure 2.2 *Percentage Habitat Cover of Pond 14 within 250 m*

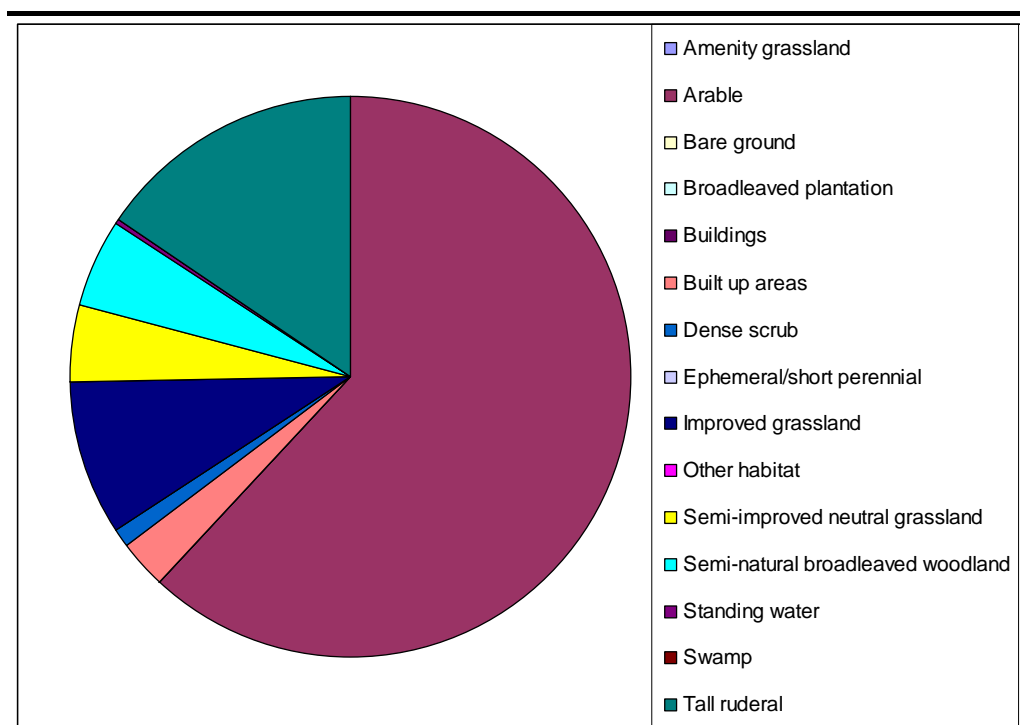
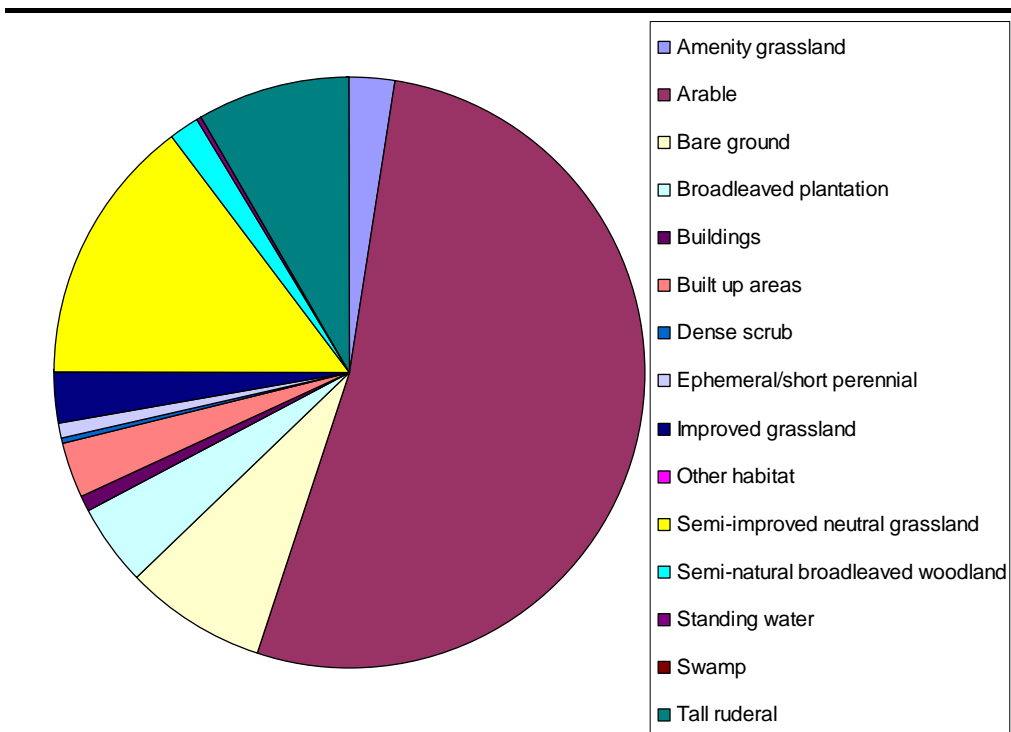


Figure 2.3 *Percentage Habitat Cover of Pond 14 within 500 m*



Pond 18 is 85.5 m² in area and is located within a small section of scrub within an area of tall ruderal habitat, believed to be an abandoned arable field ⁽¹⁾ (see *Figure 2.4*).

In the wider area (up to a radius of 250 m), the vast majority of the habitats are ones which are not favoured by great crested newts (eg arable, built up areas, amenity grassland), with only small areas of semi-improved grassland and dense scrub) and short stretches of species poor hedgerow (see *Figure 2.5*). Arable continues to be the dominant habitat type present up to a radius of 500 m from the ponds (see *Figure 2.6*).

Descriptions of these habitat types are provided in Applied Ecology Ltd (2010).

Figure 2.4 ***Photograph of Pond 18 in April/May 2010***



(1) Applied Ecology Ltd (2010) *South Killingholme Phase 1 Ecology Survey*. Report for Institute of Estuarine and Coastal Studies (IECS)

Figure 2.5 *Percentage Habitat Cover of Pond 18 within 250 m*

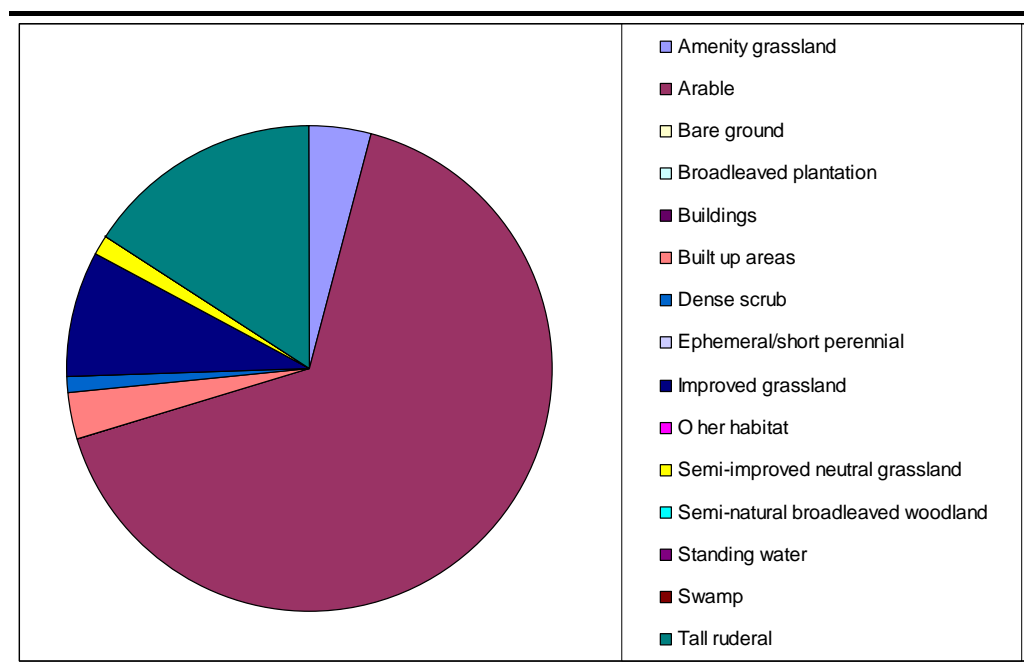
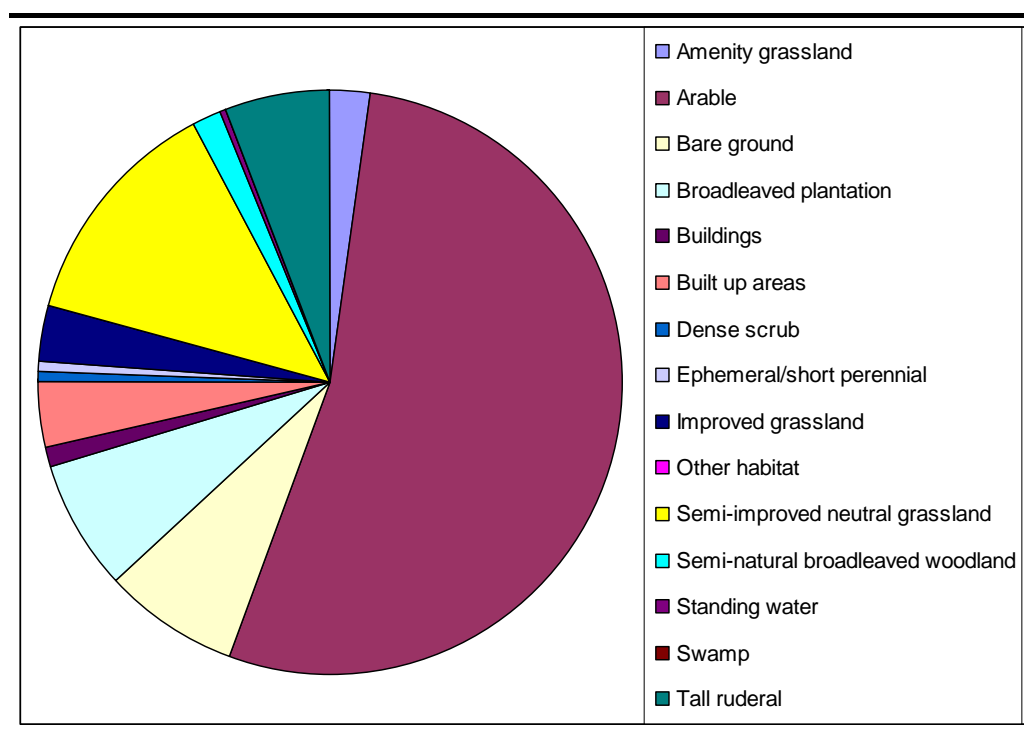


Figure 2.6 *Percentage Habitat Cover of Pond 18 within 500 m*



2.3 POND 20 –EXISTING TERRESTRIAL HABITAT

Pond 20 is situated within scrub habitat of an abandoned arable field, beside Pond 18, see Figure 1.1.

Applied Ecology (2010) ⁽¹⁾ identified seventeen ponds within the AMEP development vicinity, access was possible to twelve of these ponds, and these were subject to a four survey visit presence/absence survey between 12th and 19th May 2010. The results for eleven of these ponds are reported in Applied Ecology (2010) ⁽²⁾ and the results of Pond 29 were received *pers. comm.* Martin Brammah (16/11/11). Two of these ponds (Ponds 12 and 13 as reported in Applied Ecology (2010) ⁽³⁾, Ponds 14 and 18 in *Figure 1.1*), which lie within predominantly arable farmland just north of Station Road and in 2011 were found to support a medium population great crested newts. Pond 14 of 0.65 and Pond 18 had an HSI score of 0.71 (Applied Ecology Ltd, 2011) ⁽⁴⁾.

The surveys recorded between 0 and 2 great crested newts in Pond 14, and between 8 and 22 great crested newts in Pond 18, with a peak on any one visit of 22 great crested newts. These two ponds lie approximately 80 m apart with no obvious barriers to prevent dispersal, and hence the newts they support are considered to be part of a meta-population (see *Figure 3.1*). No great crested newts were recorded at the remaining ten ponds surveyed.

As both of these ponds will be lost due to AMEP, and in accordance with Natural England guidelines ⁽⁵⁾, a six visit survey was carried out at them in 2011 (between 4th April and 17th May) to assess the size of the GCN breeding population ⁽¹⁾. The surveys recorded between 0 and 7 in Pond 14 and between 8 and 16 great crested newts in Pond 18 (in funnel traps). A maximum of 19 individuals (7 in Pond 14 and 12 in Pond 18) was recorded on the survey visit on 11th/12th April. The breeding population has therefore been classified as of medium size (Applied Ecology Ltd, 2011) ⁽⁶⁾.

Of the remaining seventeen ponds, four ponds were surveyed and found to be no longer present or dry (see *Table 1.1*), twelve ponds could not be accessed including two ponds within Ministry of Defence (MOD) land to the south east of the AMEP site, ponds 15 and 17, and Ponds 1, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 21, 24, 25 and 27 (see *Figure 1.1* and *Table 1.1*). Pond 4 is a new pond that is under construction in the proposed Chase Hill and Fox Covert LNR; it was unfilled as of 10th of November 2011 (*pers. comm.* Martin Brammah, Applied Ecology Ltd).

(1) Applied Ecology Ltd (2010) South Killingholme Phase 1 Ecology Survey Report for Institute of Estuarine and Coastal Studies

(2) Applied Ecology Ltd (2010) South Killingholme Phase 1 Ecology Survey Report for Institute of Estuarine and Coastal Studies

(3) Applied Ecology Ltd (2010) South Killingholme Phase 1 Ecology Survey Report for Institute of Estuarine and Coastal Studies

(4) Applied Ecology Ltd (2011) *Able Marine Energy Park Protected Species* Report for Able UK Ltd

(5) English Nature (2001) *Great crested newt mitigation guidelines*. Version August 2001

(6) Applied Ecology Ltd (2011) *Able Marine Energy Park Protected Species* Report for Able UK Ltd

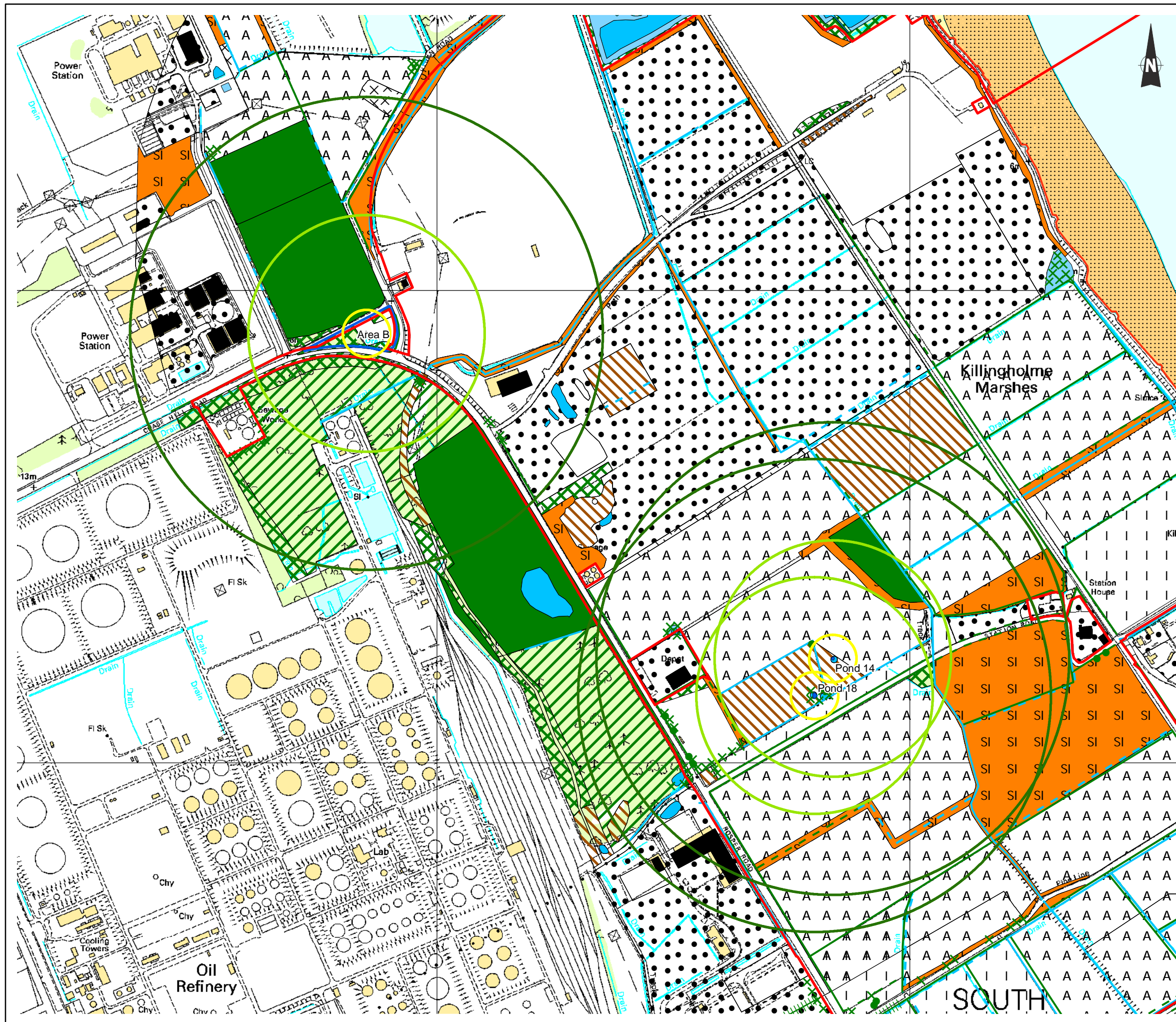
3.1 GENERAL

When creating new ponds to replace ones lost, there are a number of factors to be considered including:

- is the new site close to the original location and within 1km (*ie* within the natural range, *pers. comm.*, Natural England)?;
- can the new location accommodate great crested newts and the new ponds?;
- is the new site designated in any way?;
- are there landownership issues?;
- will the new habitat created (aquatic and terrestrial) mitigate for that lost?; and
- will the site be safeguarded and monitored?

The proposed location for the new ponds is a triangular shaped area of land (0.73 ha) between Chase Hill Wood and Rosper Road, and lies approximately 1 km away from the breeding ponds (Ponds 18 and 14) (see *Figure 3.1*) ⁽¹⁾. *Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3* illustrate the percentage habitat cover around this location.

(1) The new pond location is shown in *Figure 1.8* as Area B



Key

Application Boundary

50m Buffer

250m Buffer

500m Buffer

Area B

Pond 14 & 18

X

Scrub - scattered

●

Broadleaved Parkland/scattered trees

- - -

Defunct hedge - species-poor

- - -

Dry ditch

|||||

Hedge with trees - species-poor

—

Intact hedge - species-poor

—

Running water

—

Wall

Bare ground

Broadleaved woodland - plantation

Broadleaved woodland - semi-natural

Buildings

A

Cultivated/disturbed land - amenity grassland

A

Cultivated/disturbed land - arable

A

Cultivated/disturbed land - ephemeral/short perennial

Improved grassland

Intertidal - mud/sand

Introduced shrub

SI

Neutral grassland - semi-improved

Other habitat

Other tall herb and fern - ruderal

Scrub - dense/continuous

Standing water

Swamp

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PROJECTION: British National Grid

A	24/11/2011	Preliminary Issue	MTC	WB	WB
Rev	Date	Comments	Drw	Chk	App



Project:	ABLE Marine Energy Park
Client:	ABLE UK Ltd
Title:	Figure 3.1 Great Crested Newt Ponds and Receptor Site

PRELIMINARY			
Scale:	Drawn	Checked	Approved
8,000@A3	MTC	WB	WB
Date	24/11/2011	24/11/2011	24/11/2011
Drawing No.	Revision: A		
ABLE_GCN_Ponds.mxd			

File 01008724HP_MarineEnergyParkGIS_MTC_MKMAPSABLE_Template Maps\ABLE_GCN_Ponds.mxd

Figure 3.2 *Percentage Habitat Cover within 250 m of receptor location*

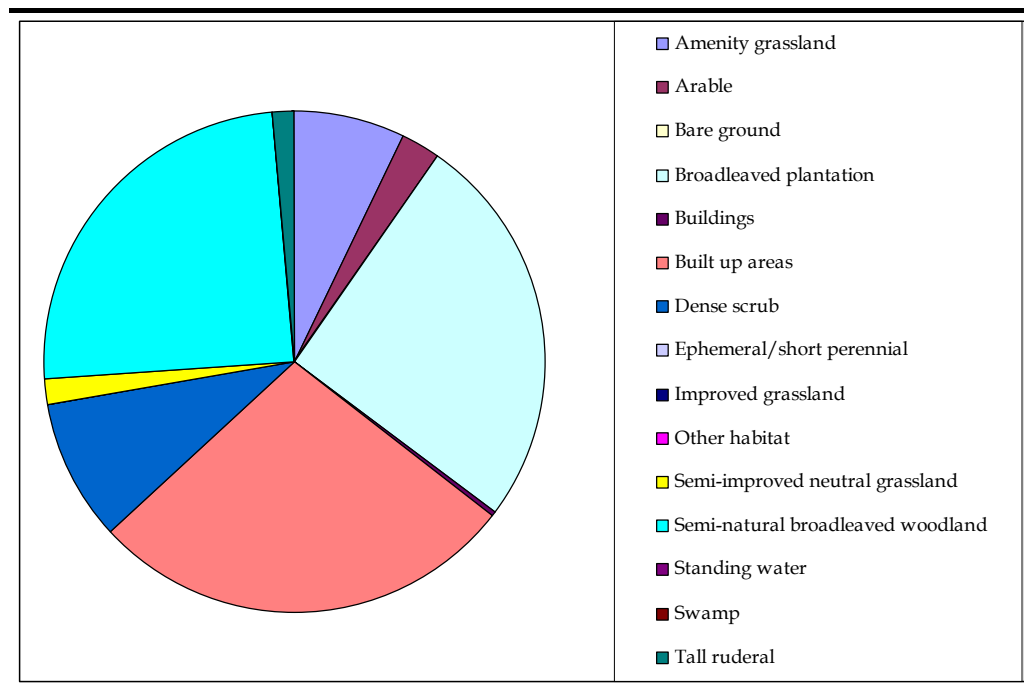
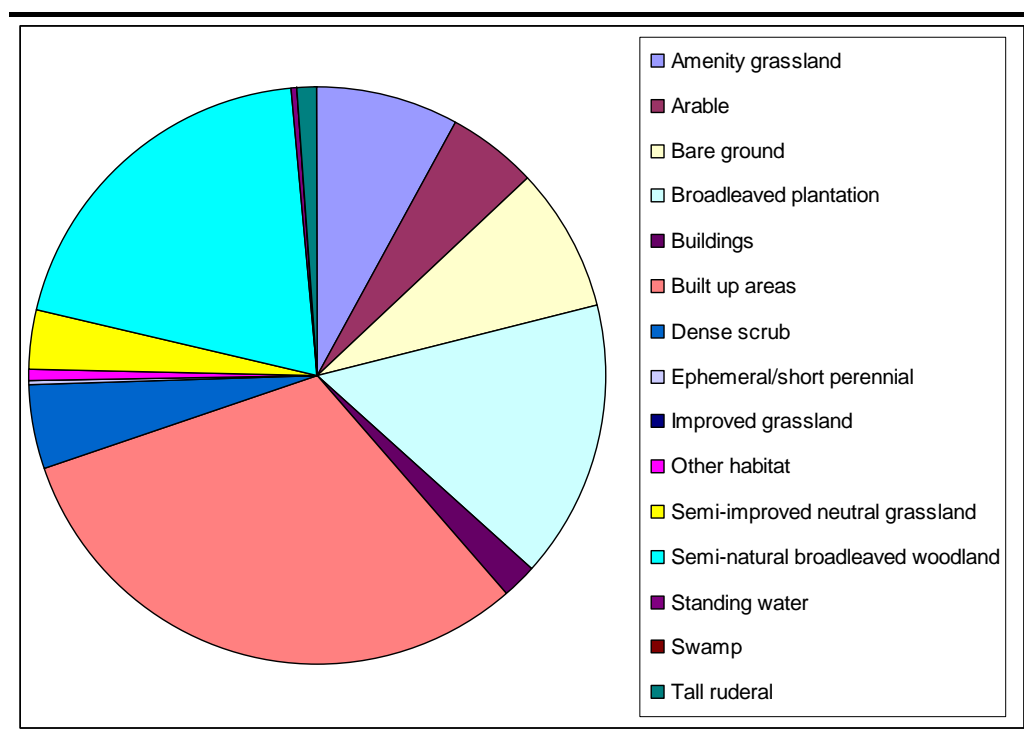


Figure 3.3 *Percentage Habitat Cover within 500 m of receptor location*



3.2 *DISTANCE FROM EXISTING PONDS*

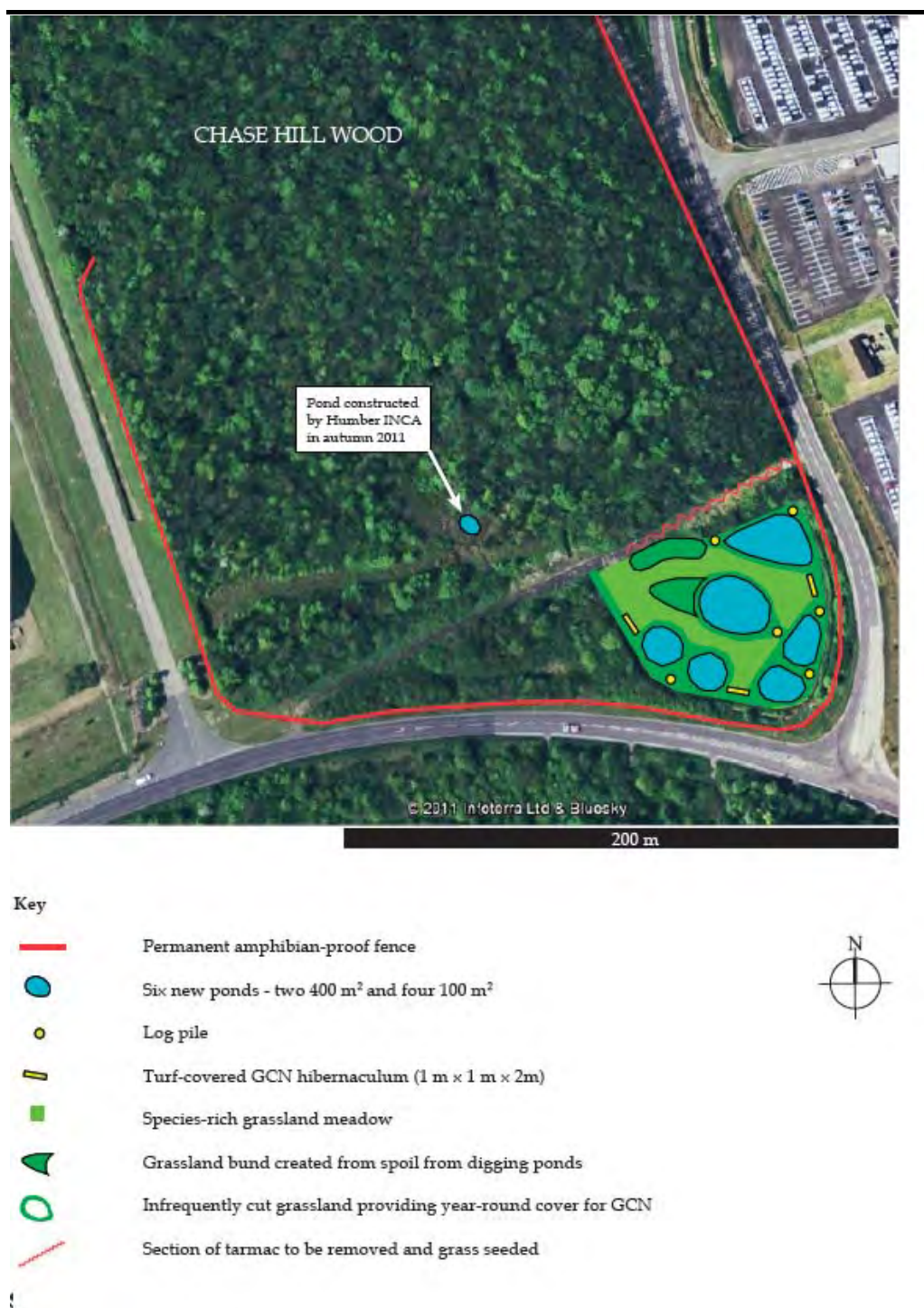
The proposed location for the new ponds is approximately 1 km from the existing ponds and is considered to be within acceptable limits.

3.3 *ACCOMMODATING PONDS AND GREAT CRESTED NEWTS*

There are no ponds within the proposed location and no ponds within 500m of the receptor site (incorporating Chase Hill Wood) known to support great crested newts. The nearest known great crested newt population occurs over 1,200m to the west of Chase Hill Woods western boundary as identified by Just Ecology in 2006. Therefore, there are no breeding populations of great crested newts in the immediate area. There is a known population of great crested newts approximately 1.6 km away, see *Section 3.5*. The existing habitat comprises an arable field and scrub habitat (0.73 ha) where there will be sufficient space to accommodate six small ponds. The ponds will be located in pairs, and the pairs will be within 250 m of each other to create a meta-population (see *Figure 3.4*). Within the adjacent Chase Hill Wood and Foxhill Covert LNR a new pond has recently been created (see *Figure 1.1*, Pond 4 and *Figure 3.4*). This was dug in September 2011 ⁽¹⁾ and is currently filling with water. It is unlikely to have been colonised by great crested newts, and is approximately 100 m away from the proposed pond locations. Applied Ecology recently completed a walk over survey and deemed the pond potentially suitable to support great crested newts subject to it filling with water and being planted (*pers. comm.* Duncan Painter, Applied Ecology). It could therefore provide further suitable breeding habitat for great crested newts within this area and would be managed for great crested newt alongside the receptor ponds to the south.

(1) Humber Industry Nature Conservation Association (2010) Chase Hill Wood & Fox Covert Local Nature Reserve Management Plan Final Consultation Draft

Figure 3.4 *Habitat Creation, Restoration and Enhancement Measures*



Source: Unpublished, Applied Ecology, 2011

3.4 DESIGNATIONS AND LAND OWNERSHIP

The proposed location is not designated, although it does form part of a proposal for incorporation into the proposed Chase Hill Wood and Foxhill Covert LNR (see *Section 3.5*). The land is under the control of the applicant.

In accordance with the guidance set out in the Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines (English Nature, 2001) ⁽¹⁾ the two breeding ponds lost (Pond 14, 28.65, Pond 18, 85.5 with a total area of 114.10 m²) will be replaced by four new ponds in the receptor area. Due to the proximity of Pond 20 (90 m²) to the known breeding pond locations, this pond will also be mitigated for, with the creation of two further ponds in the receptor site. The total number of replacement ponds in the receptor site will therefore be six.

The design of the ponds and planting specification will reflect the ponds that are lost and will be agreed with Natural England. See *Figure 3.4* for proposed aquatic and terrestrial planting specification. It is proposed that two ponds will measure 400 m² (as per Natural England's advice, 23/11/2011) and four ponds 100 m², therefore the total surface area of aquatic habitat created will be 1200 m². This will provide more than adequate replacement habitat for the 114.10 m² of breeding aquatic habitat to be lost. The proposed area and number of replacement ponds adheres to and exceeds the current guidance of an area of 100 m² to 300 m² for replacement ponds ⁽²⁾. Given the small surface area of the ponds to be lost the proposed ponds to be created, this will more than compensate for the loss of the three ponds.

Pond 4, which is within Chase Hill Wood and in close proximity to the replacement ponds, will provide additional aquatic habitat. The new ponds will be created and provide suitable aquatic habitat to support breeding great crested newts 1 year in advance of any translocation works and subsequent loss of the existing ponds.

Terrestrial Habitat

The existing habitat in the proposed new location is dominated by an arable field, which is separated from the adjacent Chase Hill and Haven Roads by a species poor hedgerow and roadside verges. The field is bordered to the west by blackthorn thicket, which is in the process of succession into woodland, and existing water filled drains. To the north there are drains and scrub which has formed along the verges of the former route of Chase Hill Road. The former route of Chase Hill Road does not form a significant barrier to newt movement between the receptor area and Chase Hill Wood to the north, and the receptor area and Chase Hill Wood will be included in one management plan area aimed specifically at conserving great crested newt and other wildlife as highlighted below.

The proposed receptor site lies within the AMEP development site boundary, but is included solely as an area to provide compensation to help offset some of the effects of AMEP on ecological interests. Additionally, proposals have been drawn up by Humber Industry Nature Conservation Association

(1) English Nature (2001) Great crested newt mitigation guidelines Version August 2001

(2) English Nature (2001) Great crested newt mitigation guidelines Version August 2001

(HINCA) for the inclusion of this land into the proposed Chase Hill Wood and Fox Covert Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

The proposed receptor site is connected by way of semi natural habitat northwards where there is a further meta-population of GCNs. One meta-population was recorded in 2006 (grid reference, TA 14256 19390; approx. 1.6 km from the proposed new pond location) in a man made lake and two associated ponds ⁽¹⁾. Therefore there is the potential to further increase/maintain genetic diversity of GCNs within the region. The habitat enhancement and creation measures proposed as part of the AMEP scheme would contribute to the value of this land as part of the LNR designation. There is direct habitat connectivity in the form of hedgerows and scrub between the northern boundary of Chase Hill Wood and the wider countryside.

The Consultation Draft of the Management Plan for Chase Hill Wood and Fox Covert LNR prepared by the Humber Industry Nature Conservation Association (HINCA) highlights the benefits to the LNR if the arable field within the receptor site was changed to meadow habitat ⁽²⁾. It also states that *“a pond would add markedly to the value and diversity of the LNR”*. Both of these aspirations would be addressed by the AMEP mitigation proposals which include for the conversion of the arable field into permanent grassland, and the location of the new ponds to replace Ponds 14, 18 and 20 which will be lost to the development. The location of replacement ponds in the, currently, arable section of the field is also sympathetic to the Chase Hill Wood and Fox Covert Local Nature Reserve’s management plan to enhance the area of blackthorn thicket within this field, this habitat will also be favourable for the great crested newt population.

Chase Hill and Haven Roads border the new proposed site and are likely to form a barrier to the movement of great crested newts to the south and east (see *Figure 3.5*) due to the presence of kerbs and traffic volume. However, given that much of the land to the east is currently used for car storage the absence of access in this direction is of less concern. To both the north and west of Chase Hill Wood and Fox Covert there are areas of amenity grassland and industrial development including Conoco Philips Power Station and E.ON’s Killingholme Power Station. Other habitats to the north are largely arable farmland, although there are some hedgerows and areas of scrub, rough grassland and ruderal which are likely to be favoured more by great crested newts. Due to the proximity of the road the mitigation proposal includes recommendations for a permanent amphibian proof barrier around the woodland edge to the south, west and east extending up to 250 m from the new ponds in order to minimise the risk of great crested newt mortality (see *Figure 3.5*).

(1) Just Ecology Consultancy Ltd (2006) *Great Crested Newt Survey* Report for Able UK Ltd

(2) Humber Industry Nature Conservation Association (2010) *Chase Hill Wood and Fox Covert: Local Nature Reserve Management Plan - Final Consultation Draft* Report for E ON UK HINCA

Whilst the roads clearly place a greater restriction on the movement of great crested newts than at the existing locations of Ponds 18, 14 and 20, the existing locations of Ponds 18, 14 and 20 are in areas which are dominated by arable habitat and other less favoured terrestrial habitats for great crested newts as described in *Section 1.2*. Within 500 m of Pond 18, 14 and 20 there are small areas of broad-leaved semi-natural woodland (0.0002 ha) and scrub habitat (0.00005 ha), both of which are favourable to great crested newts.

Despite the more restricted area which is available to great crested newts in and around the new location, there is an equivalent if not greater area of favoured habitat within 500 m due to the more extensive areas of broad-leaved semi-natural woodland (0.002 ha), scrub (0.0005 ha), verge and hedgerow habitat (see *Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3*). Able UK Ltd's mitigation proposals are also to convert the existing arable field into permanent grassland and improve the surrounding hedgerows and verges. In addition refugia (eg rock piles, rubble, wood piles) will be created within the core area (ie a 50m radius of the pond) of the great crested newt's territory to supplement the terrestrial habitat. The proposals are likely to result in an increase in the present medium population given the increased area of suitable habitat in the receptor area.

The proposed enhancement measures will increase the area of terrestrial habitats favoured by great crested newts within the important core area around the new ponds. The majority of the terrestrial habitats that are likely to be used by great crested newts are either part of, or proposed to be part of, the Chase Hill Wood and Fox Covert LNR, and are likely to be subject to an agreed management plan, which will take account of the needs of great crested newts. It is unlikely that habitats within the LNR will be to subject to the degree of change than can result to habitats in agricultural environments and therefore the exclusion, capture and translocation of the GCN to this safeguarded long term receptor site, will result in the favourable conservation status of the species being maintained.

The surveys undertaken have shown that two of the ponds to be lost for AMEP support a medium meta-population of great crested newts and the adjacent pond which currently does not support newts.

A new area of land has been identified in which new replacement ponds will be created. This area will provide suitable terrestrial habitat for the great crested newts, through both the existing terrestrial habitat in the area and enhancements as part of the AMEP proposals. The enhancements will be undertaken prior to any translocation of great crested newts. The AMEP proposals also fit in well with existing management proposals for the Chase Hill Wood and Fox Covert LNR, being developed by HINCA, and would provide for long term management which would to the benefit of the meta-population.

All proposals will be subject to consultation and agreement with Natural England as part of the licence application process, and implementation will be subject to the requirements of any licence granted by them.

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