

**THE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF STOCKPORT (HAZEL GROVE (A6) TO  
MANCHESTER AIRPORT A555 CLASSIFIED ROAD) COMPULSORY  
PURCHASE ORDER 2013**

**THE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF STOCKPORT (HAZEL GROVE (A6) TO  
MANCHESTER AIRPORT A555 CLASSIFIED ROAD) (SIDE ROADS) ORDER  
2013**

**THE HIGHWAYS ACT 1980**

**-and-**

**THE ACQUISITION OF LAND ACT 1981**

**THE HIGHWAYS (INQUIRIES PROCEDURE) RULES 1994**

**COMPULSORY PURCHASE (INQUIRIES PROCEDURE) RULES 2007**

**REFERENCE: LAO/NW/SRO/2013/40 and LAO/NW/CPO/2013/41**

**A proof of evidence relating to the GCN aspect of the  
A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road**

**-of-**

**Jamie Bardot**

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**on behalf of**

**The Metropolitan Borough Council of Stockport**

**acting on its behalf and on behalf**

**-of-**

**Manchester City Council**

**-and-**

**Cheshire East Borough Council**

**VOLUME 3 – Summary**

**Local Public Inquiry – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

## Summary Proof

1. This summary Proof outlines my evidence which provides justification and argument in support of:
  - The Metropolitan Borough of Stockport (Hazel Grove (A6) to Manchester Airport A555 Classified Road) (Side Roads) Order 2013 and
  - The Metropolitan Borough of Stockport (Hazel Grove (A6) to Manchester Airport A555 Classified Road) Compulsory Purchase Order 2013.
2. The great crested (or warty) newt *Triturus cristatus* is widespread across lowland England apart from the extreme southwest. Like most amphibians, it breeds in water and spends a large proportion of its life on land. For breeding it prefers small to medium sized ponds that are un-shaded, fish-free and have substantial aquatic plant cover. GCNs often form meta-populations, i.e. a series of sub-populations that are linked by dispersal of individual newts.
3. Great Crest Newts (GCN's) are a European Protected Species (EPS) afforded protection by the Habitats Directive which is the highest possible form of protection given to Wildlife in the European Union. The United Kingdom have transposed the requirements of the Directive into domestic regulations; the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.
4. The A6MARR scheme passes through several dense areas of GCN habitat therefore without mitigation, compensation and a licence an offence would be committed.
5. The scheme design set out several compensation areas and replacement ponds for habitat lost through the construction of the scheme. These compensation areas are in appropriate locations based upon the GCN surveys which formed part of the Environmental Statement for the scheme. The surveys were undertaken March – June 2013 (supported by previous work undertaken during February – June 2010). Further surveys have taken place in 2014.
6. The mitigation strategy for the A6MARR requires additional third party land so as to relocate GCNs off the footprint of the site while construction takes place (of the road and compensation areas) and then allow them to return naturally over time to the enjoy the compensation areas.
7. The 'compensation' for the scheme describes the 'end product' and the mitigation, in this case is the journey or the method by which that is achieved.

## Compensation

8. The compensation areas chosen for new ponds, which replace ponds removed due to the scheme at a ratio of 2:1, are located within 500m of the ponds to be lost which follows the guidance set out in Langton et al (2001). The ratio of ponds is chosen so as to ensure that the conservation status of the species is not compromised over the long-term.
9. New ponds will be created throughout the landscaped areas of the proposed scheme to replace existing ponds that will be lost. Replacement ponds will be designed to maximise ecological value, with each having a profile to maintain open water whilst providing areas for aquatic plants to root

and grow. Planting will allow ecologically valuable flora to develop and will be specified by a qualified ecologist. The design of these ponds will be included in the licence application to Natural England.

10. All compensation relating to the A6MARR scheme is accounted for within the red-line planning boundary of the scheme.
11. These compensatory habitats have been integrated into the landscape proposals which also serve to integrate the scheme into the wider landscape and screen sensitive visual receptors. Compensatory habitat includes species rich hedgerows, woodland, semi-improved species rich grassland and ponds.


### Mitigation

12. Mitigation can be defined as “practices which reduce or remove damage (e.g. by excluding bats from buildings scheduled to be demolished, or by capturing newts from a development footprint to avoid killing them)”. Mitigation is designed so as to ensure the conservation status of the species is not compromised.
13. The mitigation strategy and areas have been chosen following advice given by Natural England commenting on the ‘masterplan’ provided by Mouchel as part of the Styal Golf Course EPSL. The points it addresses are:
  - a. Avoid double handling of the GCNs. This means avoiding having to trap the same population twice. This aspect was mentioned several times through the document.
  - b. Combine the OPA pipeline diversion and the A6MARR works.
  - c. Limit fragmentation of the GCN populations caused by severance of the road, possibly through the use of tunnels.
  - d. A note, that any new ponds created should be done a minimum 6 months before any GCN is to use them. (Natural England do not specifically outline that ponds must be created before any are destroyed).
  - e. Secure management agreements for the compensation areas.
  - f. Provide post-scheme monitoring.
14. This mitigation strategy has been selected based upon previously licenced schemes and appropriate guidance.
15. Before an application for a licence can be submitted, any land subject to the proposed licensable activities, including any land used for mitigation or compensation as well as all receptor site(s), must be owned by the “developer”. Alternatively, if the “developer” does not own part or all of the land, it must be able to be demonstrated that the current landowner’s consent has been obtained for all licensable activities.
16. In this case, as part of the application Natural England would need a complete explanation of the land ownership situation within the method statement and reasoned statement, as well as a separate document containing the signed approval of the current landowner confirming that the developer can carry out all the proposed works.

17. The mitigation strategy for the A6MARR requires additional third party land so as to relocate GCNs off the footprint of the site while construction takes place (of the road and compensation areas) and then allow them to return naturally over time to the enjoy the compensation areas.
18. This is in preference to the following sequence of events:
- Trapping out, removing newts and displacing them elsewhere into the footprint of the A6MARR while the compensation areas establish themselves. It ought to be noted that there are not enough ponds untouched within the footprint of the works which could be made suitable to accept newts.
  - After this an optimum period of 1-2 years would need to be allowed for so the area can 'mature' and become suitable for GCNs.
  - The remaining footprint of the A6MARR would be trapped out – therefore trapping individual GCNs for a second time. The double handing of the species can be detrimental to its survival.

### Conclusion

19. The compensation and mitigation for the scheme has been developed following the advice given by Natural England in their comments on the Mouchel 'masterplan' and other guidance. The scheme is ecologically feasible and in accordance with guidance and based on precedent.
20. As demonstrated by the evidence in my main proof, the proposed compensation, mitigation, management and monitoring requirements with regard to GCNs are based upon methodologies and guidance which have previously been granted licences by Natural England. This gives confidence that a licence would be granted for this work. This evidence also justifies the land-take for the CPO and requirement for access to third party land.

Signed  .....

Dated 2/9/14 .....