

# Great Crested Newt licensing factsheet



## Background:

- Great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) are a European protected species and a material planning consideration.
- Populations have decreased sharply in recent decades due to loss of habitat.
- Ponds are critical to great crested newts for breeding, but they are also dependent upon other suitable terrestrial habitats too. This includes woodland, hedgerows, rough grassland and scrub, most GCN are found within 500m of ponds.
- Developments which impact great crested newts and their habitat, require a licence from Natural England to make certain activities lawful.
- On 6 February 2018, Natural England granted the Council's individual district level organisational licences for great crested newts, which we are able to authorise development under. We work with **NatureSpace** to deliver this alternative licensing option.



## Licences

There are two ways to gain a newt mitigation licence; you can apply direct to Natural England or join the District Licence scheme authorised by us under the district licence already granted by Natural England.



## 1 The District Licensing Route

The development can become authorised under the Council's great crested newt district licence (approved by Natural England).

For this licensing route, developers do not need to undertake additional GCN specific surveys, as the likely impact on newts will have already been included within an upfront wider regional risk assessment. This licence option can be utilised all year round.

To enter the scheme, developers will need to contact the delivery body (**NatureSpace**), who conduct a specific site assessment to confirm that the development is eligible for this scheme. Developers will then pay for a certificate (or report) which they submit alongside their planning application.

All associated costs in joining the scheme are dependent on the development scale, location and net impacts as a result of the development proposal.

Off-site compensation, monitoring and long-term habitat management is delivered by The Newt Conservation Partnership.

Use of the Council's licence is authorised in writing, only when a developer has provided a NatureSpace Certificate to the Council and has gained a valid planning consent.

Once the use of the Council's licence has been authorised to the developer, you will be permitted to undertake activities as stated on your certificate and authorisation.



## 2 Natural England Licensing Route

Surveys will need to be carried out during the recognised breeding season (mid-March to mid-June) to confirm the presence of great crested newts. A population size class assessment may also be needed.

When presence of great crested newts is confirmed, details of surveys, impacts, mitigation and compensation will need to be submitted and agreed with the local planning authority as part of a planning application in order to comply with legislation as well as national and local planning policy.

Planning permission is usually required before a licence application can be made to Natural England.

Once planning permission has been granted, an application will need to be prepared and submitted to Natural England, including details of impacts, mitigation, compensation and monitoring. Great crested newt compensation habitats usually need to be created in advance and maintained on site. It is then the responsibility of the developer to manage these habitats moving forward.

If great crested newts were considered to be absent from a development site, but are then subsequently discovered during construction, all works must cease, and Natural England contacted for advice. A licence application may subsequently need to be submitted to Natural England and granted before works can recommence.

