

Over 70% of the South Midlands is within 500m of a pond, which means great crested newts will be a planning and licensing consideration for many proposed developments, especially those sited in the higher risk amber and red zones.

Now developments in the South Midlands can take advantage of the District Licensing scheme. This is an attractive new scheme which is highly beneficial for developments within amber and red zones, as you are covered under a District Licence which protects your development site from potential newt issues and the delays, climbing costs and legal issues that may arise with them.

### What are the costs?

For minor developments in the red and amber zones there is an initial payment of £5,000 and for major developments there is an initial payment of £10,000. This fee is to enable an assessment of the development, undertaken by NatureSpace to determine any planning and licensing requirements under the great crested newt district licence.

For some developments, this may then generate a second stage charge, dependent upon the impacts of the development - these are capped at certain thresholds\*.

Map 'Zone'	Development scale					
	Minor	Major				
Amber	First charge £5k Second charge £0-20k	First charge £10k Second charge £0-90k				
Red	First charge £5k Second charge £0-50k	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Small scale</th> <th>Large scale</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>First charge £10k Second charge £0-90k</td> <td>First charge £10k Second charge not capped</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Small scale	Large scale	First charge £10k Second charge £0-90k	First charge £10k Second charge not capped
Small scale	Large scale					
First charge £10k Second charge £0-90k	First charge £10k Second charge not capped					

**Infill residential (less than 2 houses):** standard single charge of £1,000 in all zones.

**Householder applications:** a standard fee of £500.

For developments within amber sites there are no further newt requirements – no newt surveys, no trapping, no separate application to Natural England, no delays. For some developments within the red zone there may be some mitigation required if the impact is significant.

### Where are the red and amber zones?

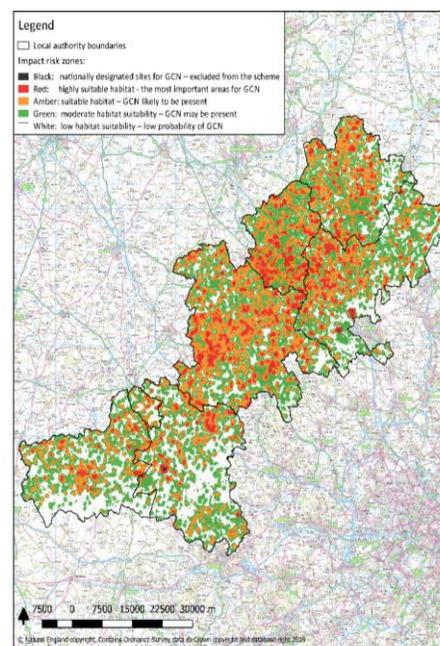
The South Midlands District Licence Impact Risk Zone Map is available to download [here](#). To confirm which zone you are developing in, to get a quote and/or site-specific advice, please get in touch.

Impact zones are classified as follows:

**Red zone:** very high habitat suitability with a high probability of newts – covers 10% of the region

**Amber zone:** suitable habitat - GCN often present – covers 30% of the region

**Green and white zones:** decreasingly suitable habitat and likelihood of newt presence – cover 40% and 20% of the region respectively - note this does *not* mean that newts are definitively absent, even in the white zone



## Could you benefit?

If your development site is in the red or amber zone, under the district licence:

- All newt requirements are known upfront, pre-planning and there are **no hidden costs**. The second stage payments (if there is one) is only due after planning permission has been granted.
- No need for newt surveys of ponds on and around your site - you **avoid the cost and delays** associated with traditional newt surveys, and the district licence includes year-round authorisation
- On-site mitigation is only required in the red zone – and where it does apply, there are **reduced mitigation requirements**
- In the amber (and green and white zones), there are **no mitigation requirements** – no fencing or trapping for months on end
- You retain **more developable** land – generally no on-site habitat creation/retention required
- There are usually no long-term management or monitoring obligations for you
- The scheme creates and manages new ponds and habitats across the region for newts, according to best practice and a regional conservation strategy
- The scheme is government endorsed and fully supported by national conservation organisations and your Local Planning Authority.

**The alternative option:** In the red and amber zones there is a significant risk of newts being affected by your development – even if there are no ponds on your site. Under the standard system you will need to survey to find out if you have newts, and if surveys are positive, you will need to present a report, impact assessment, mitigation and compensation plan, and long-term management and monitoring commitments, to your planning authority. Only after you get planning consent, can you then apply to Natural England for a site-based licence. This process can take several months following the grant of planning consent.

## Where does it operate?

The planning authorities operating the scheme are Milton Keynes, Aylesbury Vale, Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, South Oxfordshire, Vale of the White Horse and Oxford City.

## How do I enter the scheme?

All District Licence entrants simply provide a brief application form with their first-stage payment, filled in by a qualified ecologist summarising habitats on site.

For general information on the scheme, relevant forms and maps please visit our [background information](#) page.



### [Get in touch](#)

To enquire about your development or for general queries, please visit [www.naturespaceuk.com](http://www.naturespaceuk.com)

or contact  
Mike Bull, South Midlands Project Officer  
[mike.bull@naturespaceuk.com](mailto:mike.bull@naturespaceuk.com) 07557 115729