

District Licensing for great crested newts in the South Midlands

NatureSpace Partnership

District Licensing for great crested newts

Welcome & LPA perspective – Dominic Lamb, LPA Ecologist

Why did we sign up for the District Licence?

- ▶ Existing survey and licensing system creates significant delays in the determination of planning applications,
- ▶ Costs often not proportionate to the risks to GCN which brings unwelcome publicity,
- ▶ The long term outcome for newts is often questionable and is not delivering a conservation benefit.

The benefits of the District Licence:

- ▶ The District Licence will avoid long delays in determining applications, enabling development
- ▶ The District Licence will deliver better conservation of newts and other biodiversity benefits
- ▶ ‘One-stop shop’ – GCN Licence at the same time as planning permission, avoiding confusion and uncertainty

National context and overview

Tom Tew

The S Mids District Licence scheme arises through changes in national licensing policy

The District Licence:

- ▶ creates a one-stop shop for both licensing and planning
- ▶ funded by charges to developers, with advantages to developers
- ▶ authorised by Natural England through an organisational licence
- ▶ enabled by the Planning Authority through planning conditions & enforcement
- ▶ designed, managed, delivered and monitored by NatureSpace
- ▶ Newt conservation delivered by NGOs through a Community Benefit Society

Two year Licence for S Mids issued by NE Feb 2018, SW Mids to join 2019

The laws protecting newts **have not** changed



The South Midlands scheme



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SMNCP

**SOUTH MIDLANDS NEWT
CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP**

Central Bedfordshire

Bedford Borough

Milton Keynes

Aylesbury Vale

South Oxfordshire

Vale of the White Horse

Oxford City



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Delivering the new system

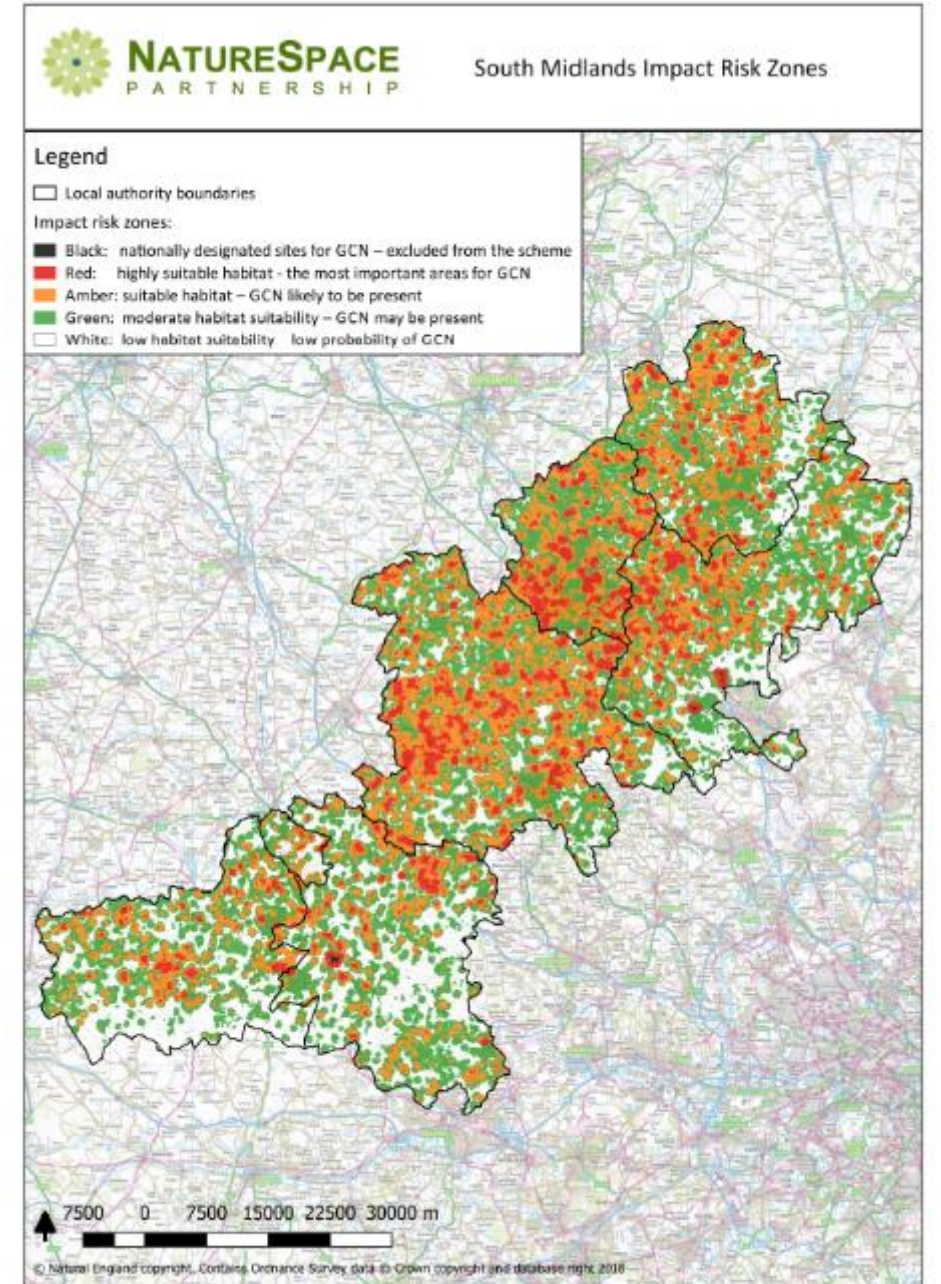
Regional mapping - gives indication of costs

Developers charged to act under licence - two stage payments that reduce delays and give both flexibility and certainty

Developer charges fund scheme operations and long-term newt conservation

Emphasis moves from on-site mitigation to off-site landscape scale conservation

Long term management, monitoring & reporting with endowment fund



How it works

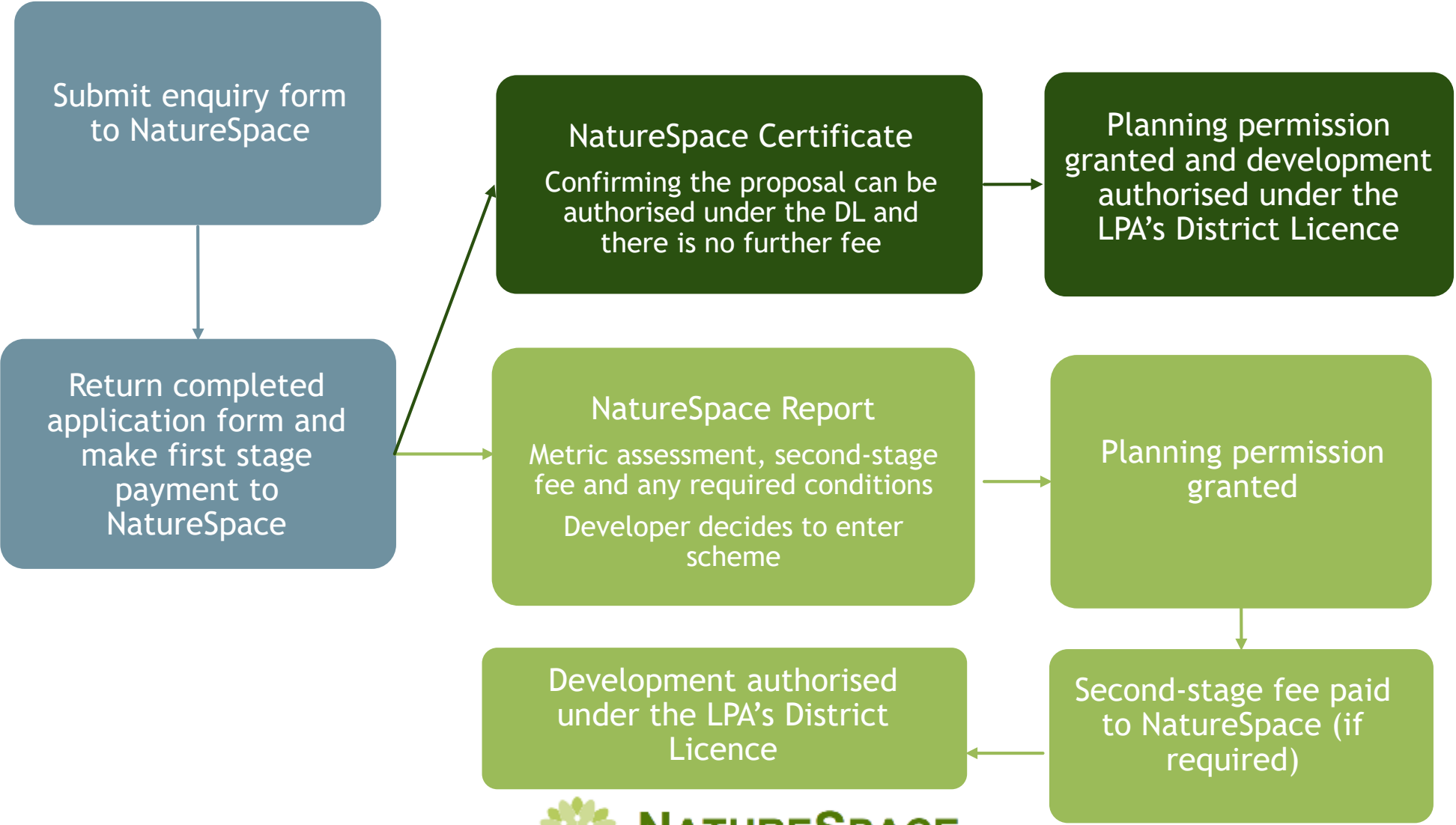
Sarah Garratt

- Compensation is delivered by NatureSpace and the SMNCP
- Developers pay into the scheme
- LPAs authorise developments under their own District Licence

Two-stage payment system

- ▶ **1st stage** – standard charges – determined by the size of the development and the risk zone
- ▶ **2nd stage** – where applicable, charges are variable – proportional to the impact of the development, determined by the ‘metric assessment’

The process

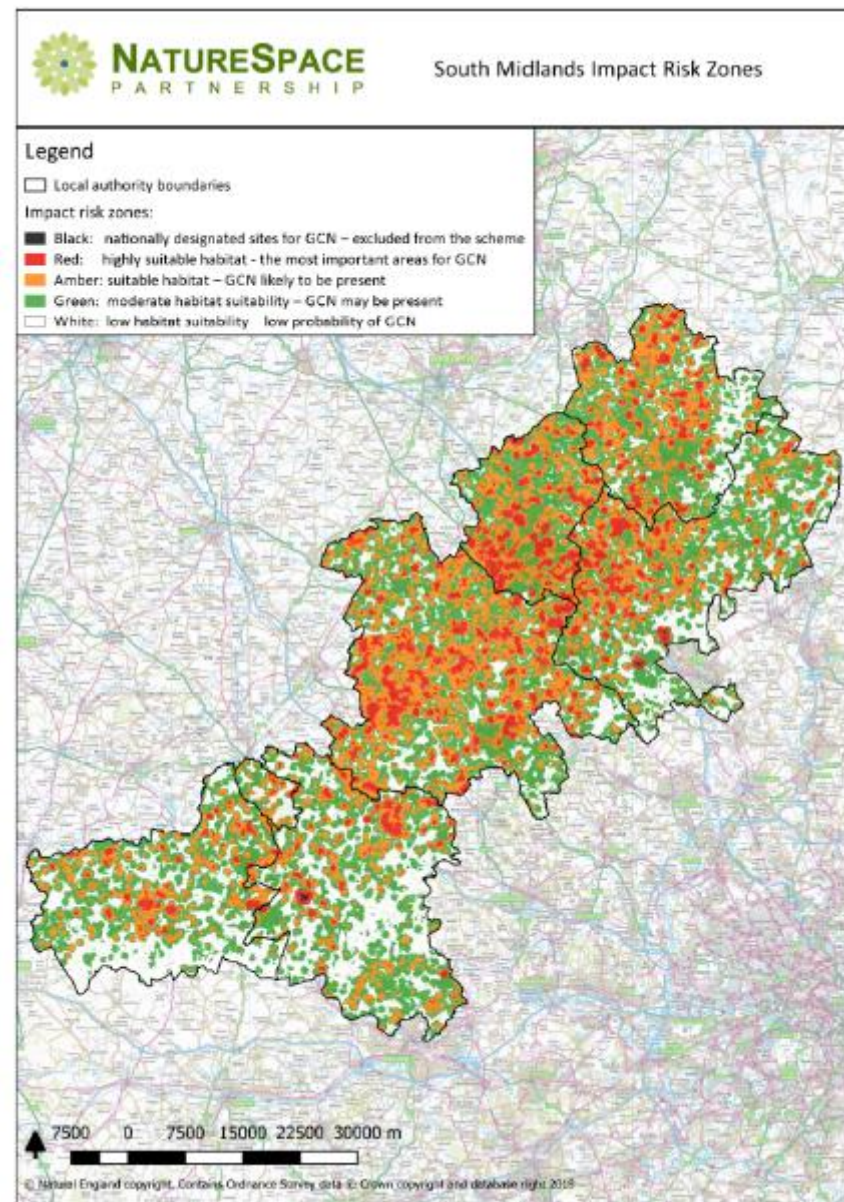


Map 'Zone'	Development scale		
	Minor	Major	
White	Single charge £1k	Single charge £1k	
Green	Single charge £1k	First charge £10k Second charge £0-50k	
Amber	First charge £5k Second charge £0-20k	First charge £10k Second charge £0-90k	
Red	First charge £5k Second charge £0-50k	Small scale First charge £10k Second charge £0-90k	Large scale First charge £10k Second charge not capped

Other categories

Infill residential (≤2 houses): standard single charge of £1k in all zones.

Householder applications: if a householder applicant wishes to opt in and have their householder development covered by the district licence (rather than having to follow the standard survey and licensing process), there is a standard fee of £500.



Conditions

Planning conditions:

- Two standard conditions (linking planning to licensing)
- Red zone condition – GCN Mitigation Principles + where required:
 - ▶ specific timing restrictions
 - ▶ on-site requirements

Licence conditions:

- Appropriate knowledge, training & experience
- Habitat impact unit score threshold
- Recording requirement – persons authorised and details of any GCN found

Benefits for developers

- ▶ **Avoid extensive newt surveys**
- ▶ **Maximise developable area**
- ▶ **One-stop shop – licensing and planning at the same time**
- ▶ **Certainty – you will know all newt requirements within 10 days - pre-planning**
- ▶ **Reduced mitigation requirements cf standard licensing requirements**
- ▶ **No long-term obligations for management or monitoring for developers (in most cases)**
- ▶ **25% stage 1 refund available if choose not to enter the scheme**

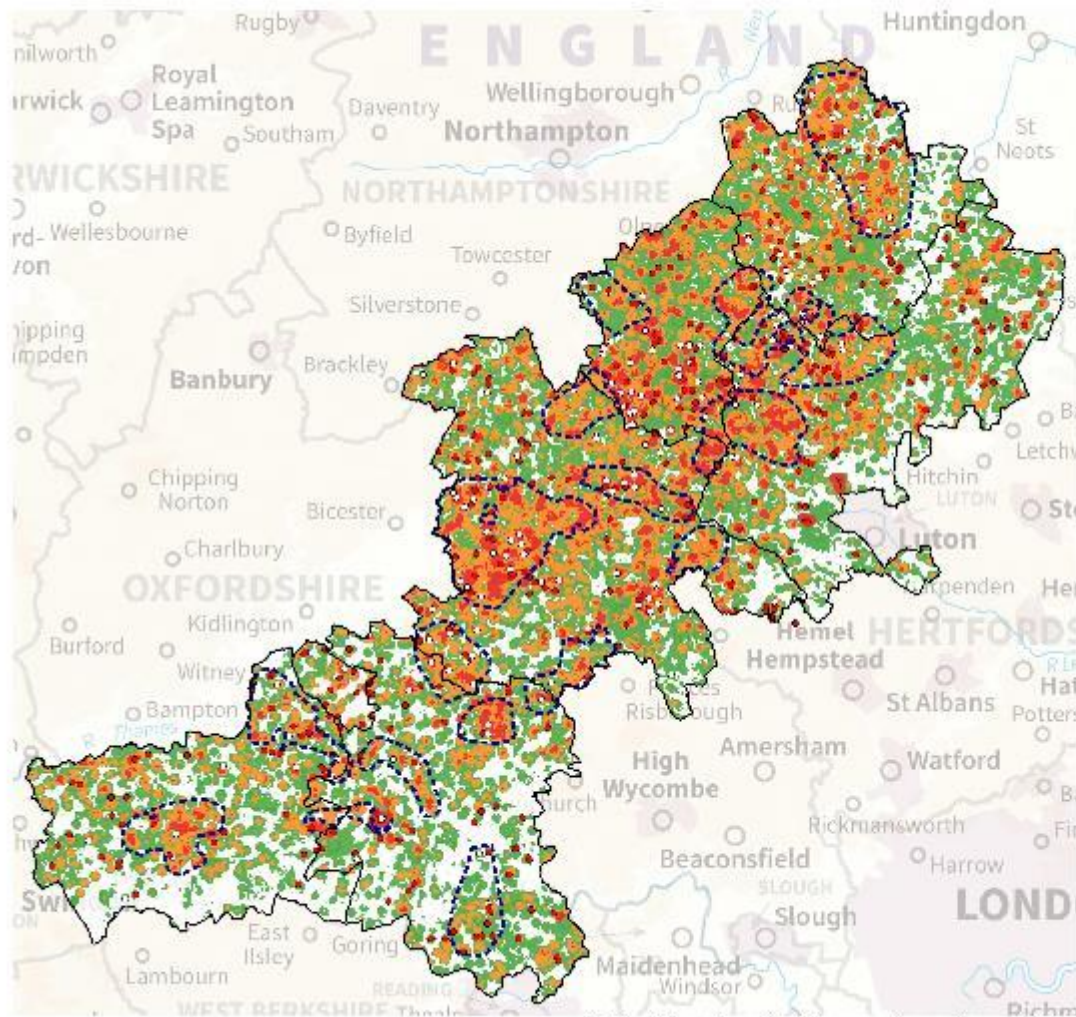
Habitat creation - SMNCP



SMNCP

**SOUTH MIDLANDS NEWT
CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP**

- ▶ Aquatic and terrestrial
- ▶ Landscape-scale focus, population connectivity
- ▶ 4:1 minimum ratio
- ▶ Excellent quality habitat creation and restoration
- ▶ Long-term and guaranteed through 25 year contracts with Natural England
- ▶ No delivery responsibility for developers

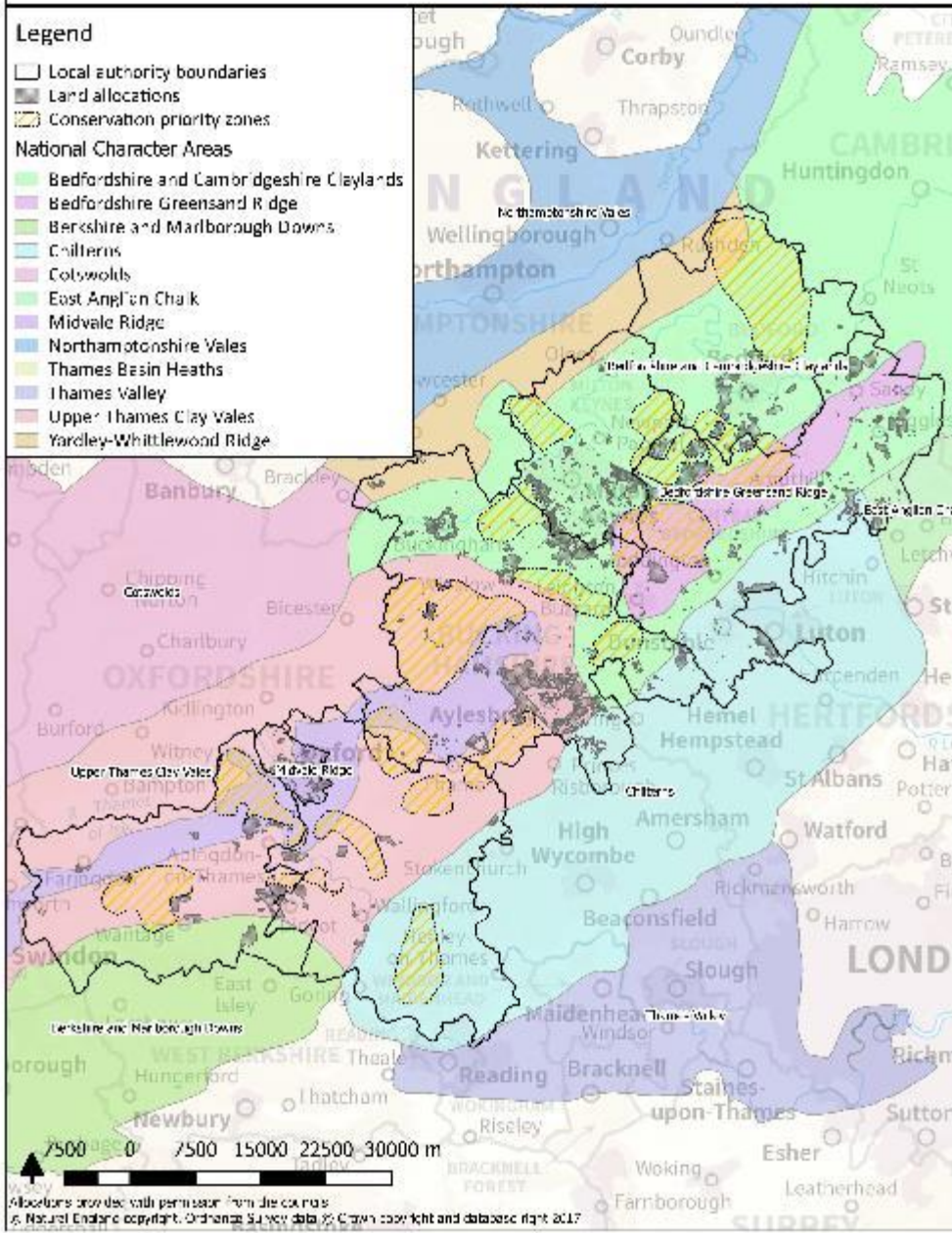


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Map 2. Priority great crested newt conservation landscapes

Map is simplified to show how conservation landscapes are designed to capture red zones of high importance for GCN and high concentrations of eDNA positive records.

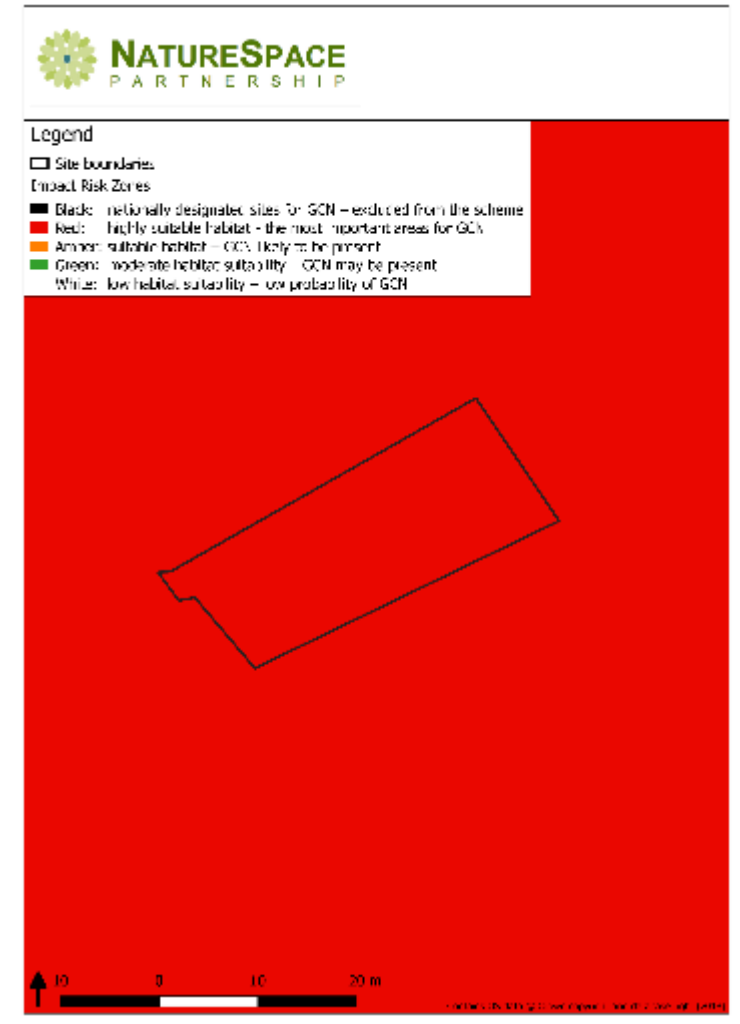
- Legend**
- Local authority boundaries
 - ▨ Priority GCN conservation areas
- Landscape zones of importance for GCN**
- Block
 - Red
 - Amber
 - Green
 - White
- eDNA Results**
- Positive
 - Negative



Casework example 1

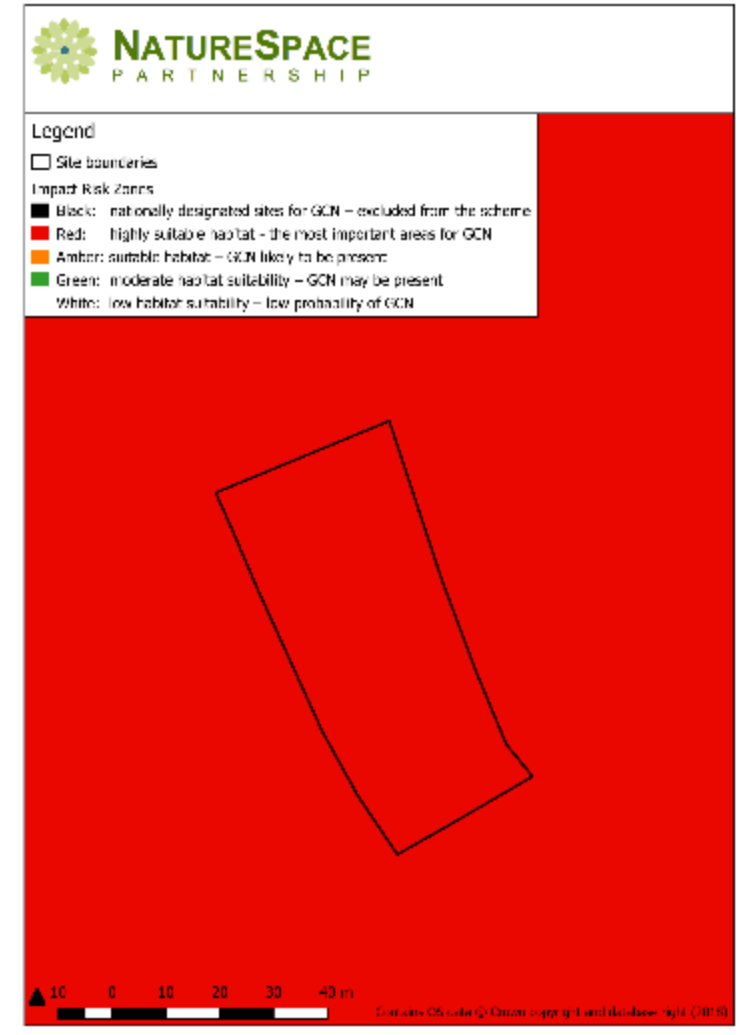
Mike Bull

- ▶ Single dwelling development
- ▶ Minor development
- ▶ Red zone
- ▶ £5,000 first-stage payment
- ▶ £2,270 second-stage fee
- ▶ Some on-site mitigation required
- ▶ No long-term management or mitigation



Casework example 2

- ▶ **Housing development – 5 dwellings**
- ▶ **Minor development**
- ▶ **Red zone**
- ▶ **£5,000 first-stage payment**
- ▶ **£6,697 second-stage fee**
- ▶ **On-site mitigation required**
- ▶ **No long-term management or mitigation**



Casework example 3

- ▶ ~7000 square metre industrial unit
- ▶ Large-scale major development
- ▶ Red zone
- ▶ £10,000 first-stage payment
- ▶ £25,640 second-stage fee
- ▶ On-site mitigation required
- ▶ No long-term management or mitigation



Casework example 4

- ▶ 6.8ha mixed use site
- ▶ Large-scale major development
- ▶ Red zone
- ▶ £10,000 first-stage payment
- ▶ £19,300 second-stage fee
- ▶ On-site mitigation required
- ▶ No long-term management or mitigation

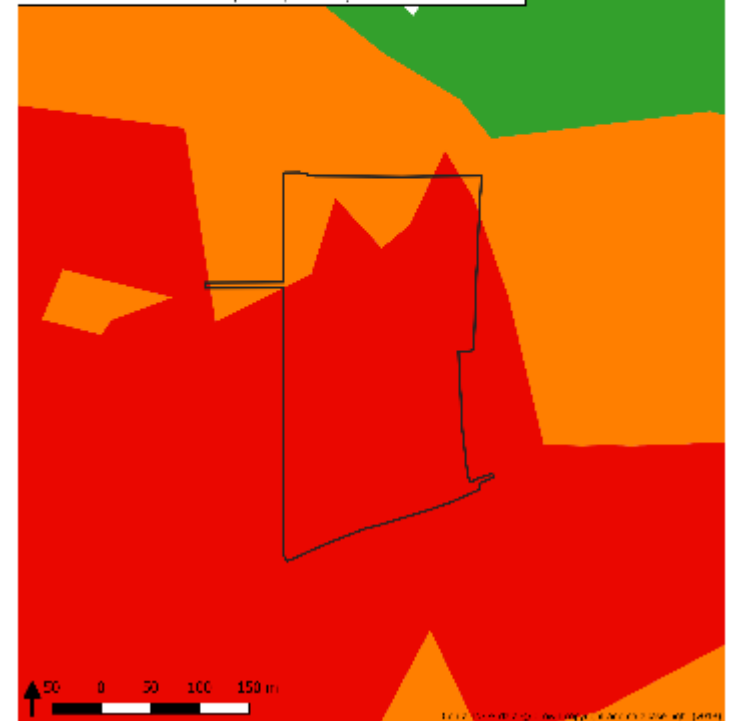


Legend

□ Site boundaries

Impact Risk Zones

- Black: nationally designated sites for GON – excluded from the scheme
- Red: highly suitable habitat – the most important areas for GON
- Orange: Amenity suitable habitat – GON likely to be present
- Green: moderate habitat suitability – GON may be present
- White: low habitat suitability – low probability of GON



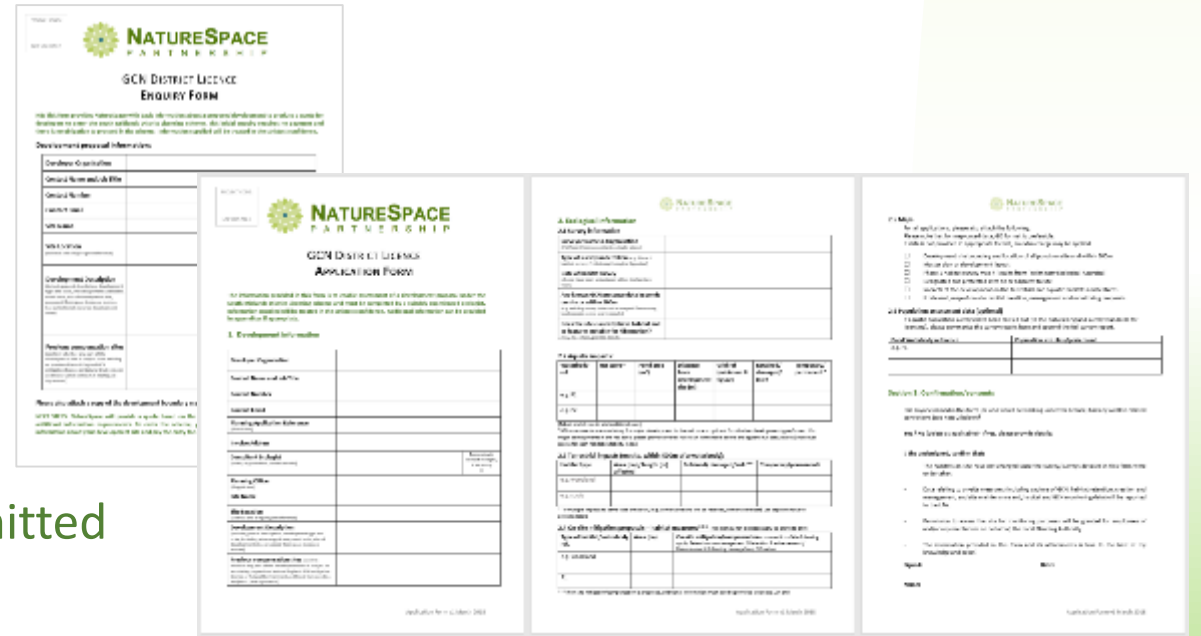
Casework example 5

- ▶ 6ha mixed use site
- ▶ Major development
- ▶ Amber zone
- ▶ £10,000 first-stage payment
- ▶ £9,583 second-stage fee
- ▶ No on-site mitigation required
- ▶ No long-term management or mitigation



Process - Start to finish

- ▶ Enquiry form submission
- ▶ Quote and proforma invoice returned
- ▶ Application form & first stage payment submitted
- ▶ Metric run and report/certificate returned
- ▶ Developers submit report/certificate to LPA with planning application
- ▶ If the report recommends payments and/or conditions these are applied as planning conditions
- ▶ Second-stage payments can be made at any time prior to commencement, then a certificate is received
- ▶ If developers find newts during works they are licensed to move them out of harms way



Income and costs



SMNCP

**SOUTH MIDLANDS NEWT
CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP**

£1.2m to set up S Mids and secure District Licence

Allocation of scheme income

- ▶ 20% SMNCP Habitat creation
- ▶ 20% SMNCP Endowment fund
- ▶ 25% SMNCP operational costs
- ▶ 35% NatureSpace operational costs

Uptake to date



SMNCP

SOUTH MIDLANDS NEWT
CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP

Location	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands	Amber	Major	Employment	
Milton Keynes	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands	Amber	Major	Employment	10
Aylesbury Vale	Midvale Ridge	Red	Small-scale major	Cycleway	5
South Oxfordshire	Upper Thames Clay Vales	Red	Large-scale major	Employment	10
Vale of White Horse	Berkshire and Marlborough Downs	Amber	Infill	Housing	1
Milton Keynes	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands	Red	Small-scale major	Industrial	10
Aylesbury Vale	Midvale Ridge	Amber	Minor	Housing	5
Milton Keynes	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands	Red	Small-scale major	Employment	10
Milton Keynes	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands	Red	Large-scale major	Employment	10
Milton Keynes	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands	Red	Small-scale major	Employment	10
Central Bedfordshire	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands	Green	Small-scale major	Housing	10
Milton Keynes	Bedfordshire Greensand Ridge & Bedfordshire	Red	Large-scale major	Industrial	10
Vale of White Horse	Upper Thames Clay Vales	Amber	Small-scale major	Leisure centre	10
Milton Keynes	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands	Red	Large-scale major	Housing (phased)	10
Milton Keynes	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands	Red	Small-scale major	Housing	10
Milton Keynes	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands	Red	Small-scale major	Housing	10
Aylesbury Vale	Upper Thames Clay Vales	Red	Minor	Housing	5
Bedford Borough	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands	Amber	Large-scale major	Employment	10
South Oxfordshire	Upper Thames Clay Vales	Amber	Large-scale major	Housing	10
Aylesbury Vale	Upper Thames Clay Vales	Red	Large-scale major	Infrastructure	10
Milton Keynes	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands	Red	Minor	Supporting Infrastructure (art)	5
Vale of White Horse	Midvale Ridge	Red	Minor	Housing (single storey dwelling)	5
Milton Keynes	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands	Red	Large-scale major	Mixed housing, employment and public	10
Aylesbury Vale	Upper Thames Clay Vales	Red	Minor	Housing	5
Aylesbury Vale	Upper Thames Clay Vales	Red	Minor	Housing	5
Aylesbury Vale	Upper Thames Clay Vales	Amber	Major	Housing	10
South Oxfordshire	Upper Thames Clay Vales	Amber	Minor	Housing	5
Aylesbury Vale	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands	Red	Minor	Housing	5
Central Bedfordshire	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands	Red	Large-scale major	Natural burial ground	5
South Oxfordshire	Upper Thames Clay Vales	Amber	Major	Student housing	10
South Oxfordshire	Upper Thames Clay Vales	Red	Large-scale major	Livestock market	10
Central Bedfordshire	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands	Red	Large-scale major	Housing, associated, employment	10
Vale of White Horse	Midvale Ridge	Red	Minor	Football pitch	5
South Oxfordshire	Upper Thames Clay Vales	Red	Large-scale major	Education Centre	10
Milton Keynes	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands	Red	Large-scale major	Business Centre	10
Vale of White Horse	Upper Thames Clay Vales	Red	Small-scale major	Housing	10
Milton Keynes	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands	Green	Major	Housing	10
Vale of White Horse	Upper Thames Clay Vales	Amber	Major	Housing	10



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District Licence benefits

For LPAs	For Developers	For newts
Control over licensing	One-stop shop	Huge increase in funding for a conservation strategy
Extra resources to implement	No seasonal survey delays	4:1 pond gain:loss ratio
Transparent and auditable demonstration of sustainable development	Certainty at application stage	Pond & terrestrial habitat creation scheme - at a landscape scale
Long-term local delivery partners	More flexible mitigation, greater net developable area	Long-term programme of habitat management and monitoring
Supported by the NGOs	No long-term responsibilities	Endowment fund for legacy