

Great Crested Newt Low Impact Class Licence

Natural England

RPC rating: **validated**

Description of proposal

Great crested newts (GCNs) are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended), so licensing is required for anyone who will undertake work to disturb a (GCN) or to damage or destroy its habitat. Current licensing applications are very detailed, apply only to a single habitat, and have an estimated cost of £24.1 million each year. The GCN Low Impact Class licence (GCNLICL) was introduced in June 2016, for licensable situations where there is only a temporary impact and the risk of harm to individual GCN or to their habitats is low. Under the scheme, ecological consultants with the necessary experience and track record of compliance can register to use the Class licence. The information required for site registration is considerably less than that required for licensing, which also means that Natural England (NE) can process registration requests more quickly, reducing delays before works can take place.

Impacts of proposal

Since its launch in June 2016, 92 consultants have registered to use the Class licence, and NE received 23 site registrations between July 2016 and February 2017. The main benefits are financial savings from reduced application (time) costs and reduced costs of delay to works. Unpublished research by NE in 2013 identified that the average time taken to complete an Individual GCN licence application was 23 hours. The site registration form requires much less detail and takes around 4 hours to complete.

NE calculates an average application cost under the prior scheme of £2,732 based on four case studies from an earlier review of GCN licensing. At around 23 hours per application this suggests the hourly cost of the application was around £119. NE predicts that a class licence might apply to 80 site registrations per year during 2017 and 2018, but anticipates that this will reduce to around 50 each year after the GCN Strategic licence (which will provide a cheaper alternative in certain locations) is rolled out in 2017-20. The resulting saving per application is £2,. The cost saving per year for 80 GCNLICL site registrations is £180,480 and for 50 site registrations is £112,800. The RPC verifies the estimated equivalent annual net direct cost to

business (EANDCB) of £0.1 million. This will be a qualifying regulatory provision that will score under the Business Impact Target.

Quality of submission

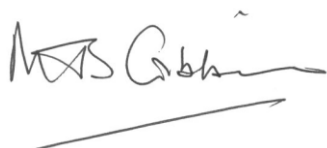
The submission is clear and proportionate, and provides enough information to support its estimate of the cost to business of the measure.

Departmental assessment

Classification	Qualifying regulatory provision
Equivalent annual net cost to business (EANDCB)	-£0.1 million
Business net present value	£1.10 million
Societal net present value	£0.0 million

RPC assessment

Classification	Qualifying regulatory provision
EANDCB – RPC validated ¹	-£0.1 million
Business Impact Target (BIT) Score ¹	-£0.5 million
Small and micro business assessment	Not required



Michael Gibbons CBE, Chairman

¹ For reporting purposes, the RPC validates EANDCB and BIT score figures to the nearest £100,000.