

07 August 2019

Our ref: RFI 4730



Mr Brian Banks

request-589820-79227d15@whatdotheyknow.com

Legal Services
Access to Information
Sterling House
Dix's Field
Exeter
Devon EX1 1QA

Dear Mr Banks

Access to Information Request – Request No RFI 4730

Thank you for your request for information, which we received on 17 July 2019. Your request has been carefully considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("EIR's").

You specifically asked for:-

Natural England sent out a questionnaire to developers on the costs of mitigation for great crested newts. This was to justify changes in licensing approaches for mitigation for this species. The letter was not sent to ecologists who would know what they had charged for mitigation works. The questionnaire aimed to determine the costs of

- ***undertaking great crested newt surveys***
- ***completing and submitting the licence application***
- ***compliance with licence conditions eg exclusion of the species from site operations, creation of compensatory habitat, trapping and translocation or other mitigation activities***
- ***reporting back to Natural England***

I would like to request the results of this work, by developer and site as I wish to know if the figures were reported accurately.

In response, we have complied the information considered to answer this request and it is provided in the attached pdf. Natural England can confirm overall, 72 questionnaires were sent out to developers, for which we received 11 responses.

The information provided by developers through the questionnaire was part of a wider evidence base collected during 2016 to assess the emerging district level licensing business case. The primary purpose of the questionnaire was to collect individual site-based data on the costs of great crested newt licensing and to gauge developer perceptions of the Individual licensing process. The business case and evidence base was subsequently presented to Defra, Treasury and MHCLG for approval. The associated impact assessment (as required under the Enterprise Act 2016) was validated by the Regulatory Policy Committee in June 2017 and can be seen at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/722499/gcn-strategic-licensing-impact-assessment.pdf

Please note that the information we have supplied to you is subject to copyright protection under the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988. You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, for the purposes of research for non-commercial purposes, private study, criticism, review and news reporting.

You must re-use it accurately and not in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Natural England copyright and you must give the title of the source document/publication. However, if you wish to re-use all or part of this information for commercial purposes, including publishing and the information is not covered by the Open Government Licence you will need to apply for a licence. Applications can be sent to Enquiry Service, Natural England, Block B, Government Buildings, Whittington Road, WORCESTER, WR5 2LQ.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. As you may be aware, under the legislation should you have any concerns with the service you have received in relation to your requests and wish to make complaint or request a review of our decision, please contact me and I'll arrange for a colleague to conduct an internal review.

Under Regulation 11(2) this needs to be done no later than 40 working days after the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of that complaint or the internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the internal review procedure provided by Natural England.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Telephone: 0303 123 1113 (local rate), www.ico.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Kate Donovan, Adviser
Access to Information
Legal & Governance Team