

**The Examining Authority's written questions and requests for information (ExQ2):
Issued on Friday 22 May 2026**

BIO 2.4

District level licensing approach for great crested newt (GCN)

In response to the ExA's EXQ1 BIO 1.18, the applicant in [REP3-074] has stated that a signed Impact Assessment and Conservation Payment Certificate for GCN has been obtained from Natural England and that you have signed it, confirming that the applicant will apply for a GCN District Level Licensing. Please either provide a copy of this or confirm that you are satisfied with the applicant's approach in relation to GCN.

Natural England is satisfied with the approach being taken by the applicant.

BIO 2.7

Applicability of NatureScot best practice guidance

In its response to ExQ1 BIO 1.12 the applicant in [REP3-074] has cited guidance from NatureScot, 2017, updated 2025, 'Recommended bird survey methods to inform impact assessment of onshore windfarms', that in turn is referenced as being broadly similar in terms of survey requirements and methodology in the NatureScot, 2025, guidance 'Assessment and mitigation of impacts of power lines and guyed meteorological masts on birds', to justify its approach to not specifically surveying for, in particular, farmland bird species. Comment on the applicant's approach and the applicability of NatureScot's guidance in relation to the location and nature of this proposed development, such as an energy grid connection project in eastern England.

Natural England does not routinely provide detailed advice relating to survey methodology and has provided standing advice to support decision making bodies in assessing survey requirements.¹

With regards to this project, the applicants work has been viewed and assessed by Natural England's bird specialists who have not raised concerns either with the survey methodology or with the conclusion drawn. However, it should be noted that our comments in this regard relate only to designated species associated with international and national designated habitat sites (i.e. Special Protection Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Ramsars).

Farmland bird populations that are not qualifying features of a designated site were not considered by us either in preapplication or during the examination and are not considered to fall within our core remit. We broadly endorse NatureScots' work and, in principle, we consider that it is appropriate to apply their guidance in the absence of other appropriate instruction, however, other representors may be better placed to comment on this matter given our lack of previous involvement.

Natural England - 10 June 2026

¹ [Protected species and development: advice for local planning authorities - GOV.UK](#)