

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET DELEGATED DECISIONS

COUNCILLOR DARREN PRICE

PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR REGENERATION AND PLANNING

Tuesday, 25 July 2023

2023/01 - DELEGATION OF DISTRICT LICENCE APPROVAL - GREAT CRESTED NEWTS

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION:

To grant delegated authority to the Executive Director (Place) and to the Head of Development Services for the issuing of authorisations under the Council's District Licensing Scheme for Great Crested Newts.

For completeness and the avoidance of doubt the report recommends ratifying approval for the Council's participation in the NatureSpace Partnership by way of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and NatureSpace.

ANY ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

The Council could opt not to participate in the scheme. Existing statutory protection for Great Crested Newts would continue to apply and developers and the Council as Local Planning Authority would need to progress planning applications in accordance with established processes. However, the Council would be missing a significant opportunity to both (i) assist developers with their proposals by offering an alternative more stream-lined licensing procedure in places subject to Great Crested Newt protections and (ii) to contribute to a significant new Great Crested Newt habitat creation and conservation management project of benefit to wider biodiversity.

If the Council were to opt not to participate in the NatureSpace Partnership it should be noted that Natural England at the behest of the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government is looking in any event to direct Local Authorities towards operating District Licensing in their areas. In this scenario the Council could be pressured into implementing a scheme of its own with attendant costs and staffing implications including very specific experience and knowledge requirements.

DECISION:

That the Portfolio Holder:

- 1) Approved the Council entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the NatureSpace Partnership ('NSP') to join the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Great Crested Newt District Licensing Scheme.
- 2) Delegated Authority to the Head of Development Services to sign the Memorandum of Understanding and enter into all other legal

agreements deemed necessary under the Memorandum to protect the Council's interests.

- 3) Delegated authority to the Council's Executive Director (Place) and to the Head of Development Services to issue authorisations under the Council's District Licensing Scheme for Great Crested Newts.

A RECORD OF ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARED:

None

A NOTE OF ANY DISPENSATION, IF GRANTED:

None