

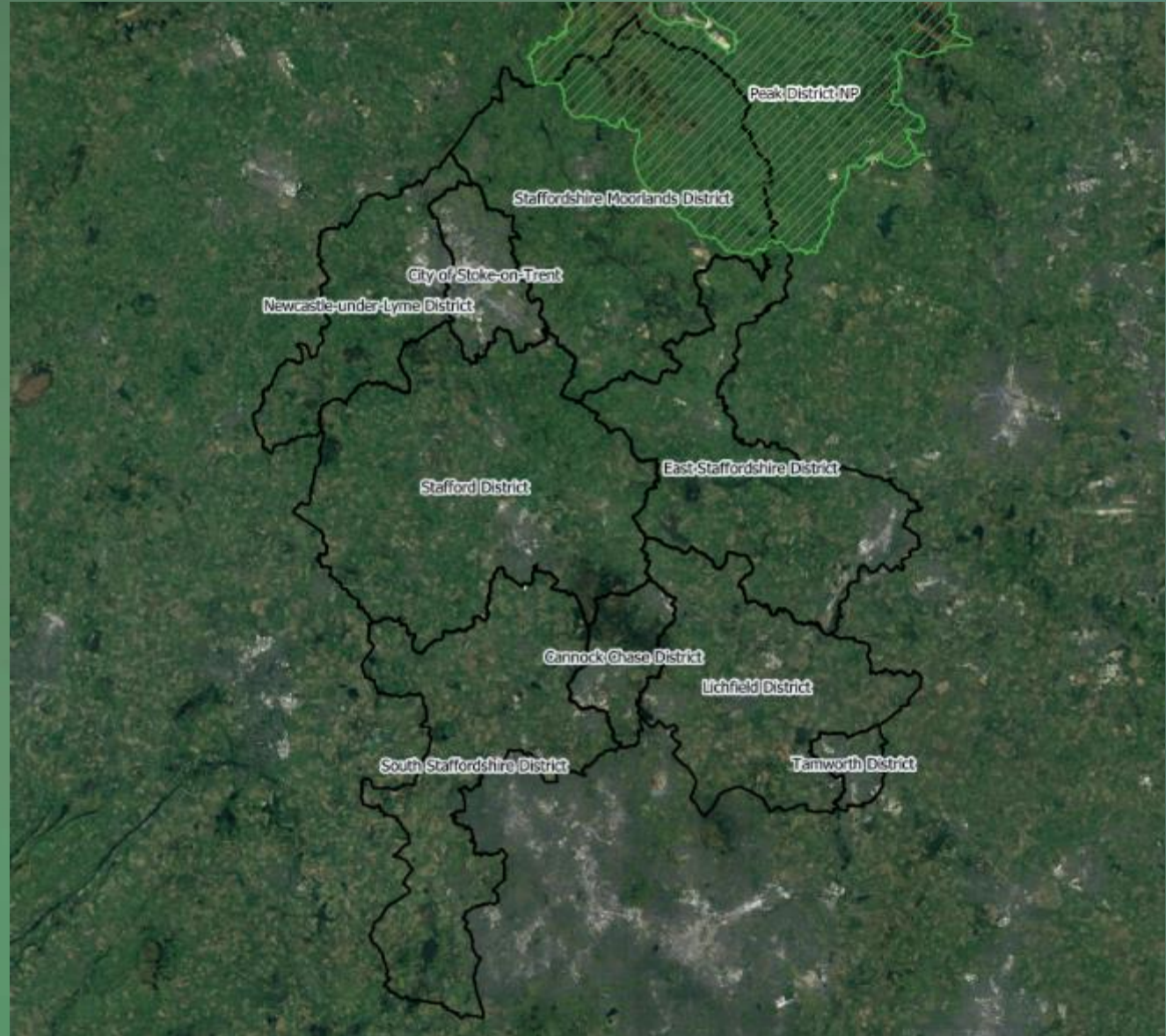
A black newt with white spots is resting on a bed of green moss. The newt is positioned on the left side of the frame, facing right. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting a natural habitat. A semi-transparent white circle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text.

# District Licensing in Staffordshire - great crested newts



**NATURESPACE**  
PARTNERSHIP

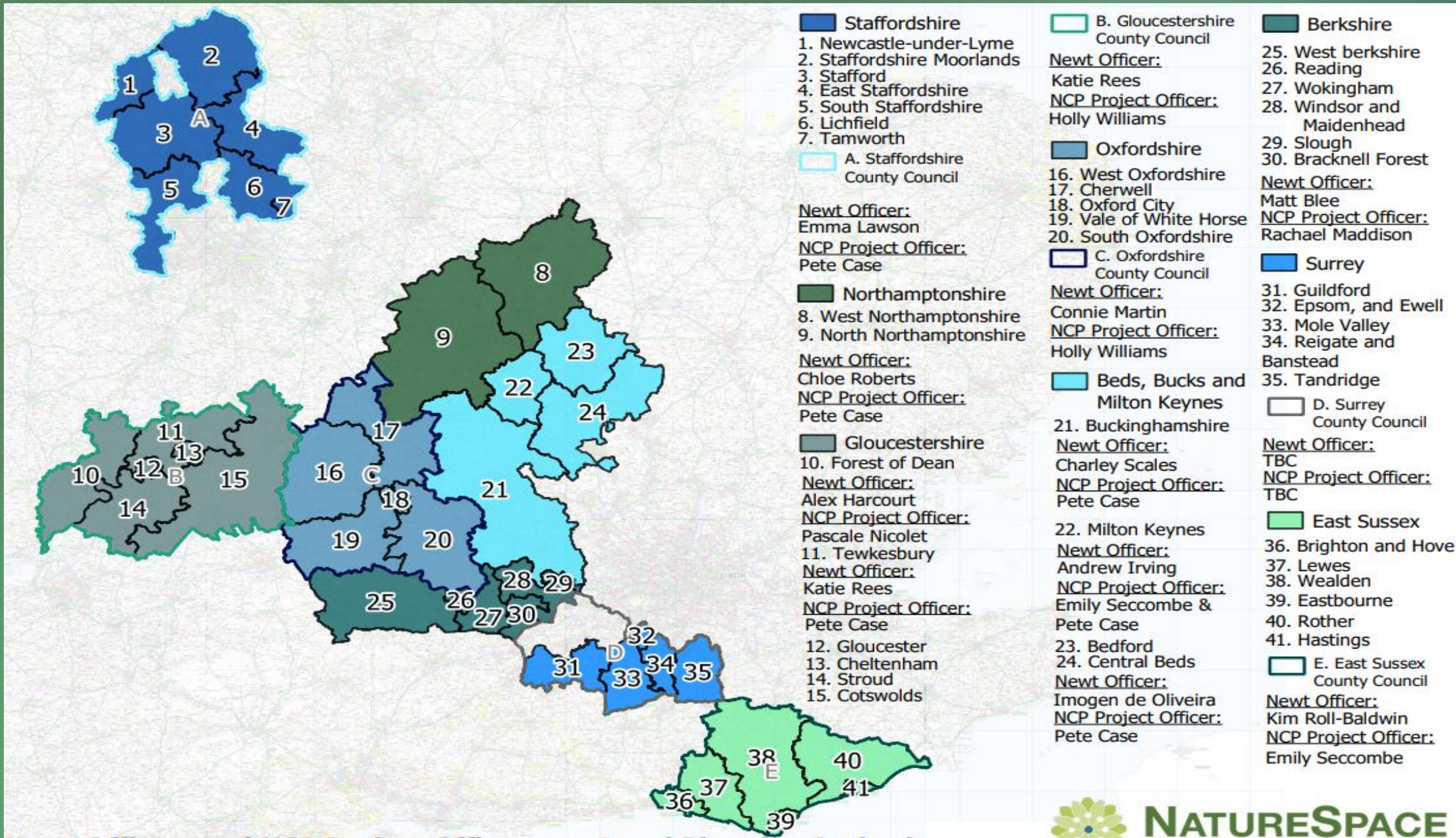
# A warm welcome to Staffordshire Planning Authorities & Councillors



# District Licensing – the NatureSpace approach

- An extra *licensing option* for developers, helping them meet their legal obligations – it also helps LPAs meet their legal and policy requirements
- Natural England remains the regulatory authority. The ‘District Licence’ is granted to the Planning Authority by Natural England and is renewed every two years
- Integrates planning and licensing - each LPA may authorise developers to work under the District Licence – with planning requirements and protocols
- Partnership approach – NSP, NCP, NGOs, LPAs - designed and delivered by NatureSpace and NGOs to deliver better conservation for great crested newts
- Compensation fees paid into the scheme by developers are used to deliver up-front, high-quality habitat compensation (and cover LPA resources)





**Newt Officers and NCP Project Officers per Local Planning Authority**

# Why do we need District Licensing?

Standard licensing is still an available option but...

- Pre-planning delays
- Post-planning delays
- On-site, pre-development habitat work
- Post development obligations for the developer
- Costs often not proportionate
- Despite all this...little evidence of good conservation outcomes!



# How is the District Licence better?

- Up-front, region-wide survey & modelling exercise
- 'One-stop shop' for planning & licensing
- Costs proportionate to the impacts (detailed impact assessment – mitigation hierarchy)
- More money for compensation
- Upfront, high quality habitat creation – by expert conservationists
- Long-term management & monitoring obligations (25 years) – secured via legal agreement
- Better conservation outcomes for newts (plus other biodiversity benefits)



# The IRZ map & new statutory guidance on newts

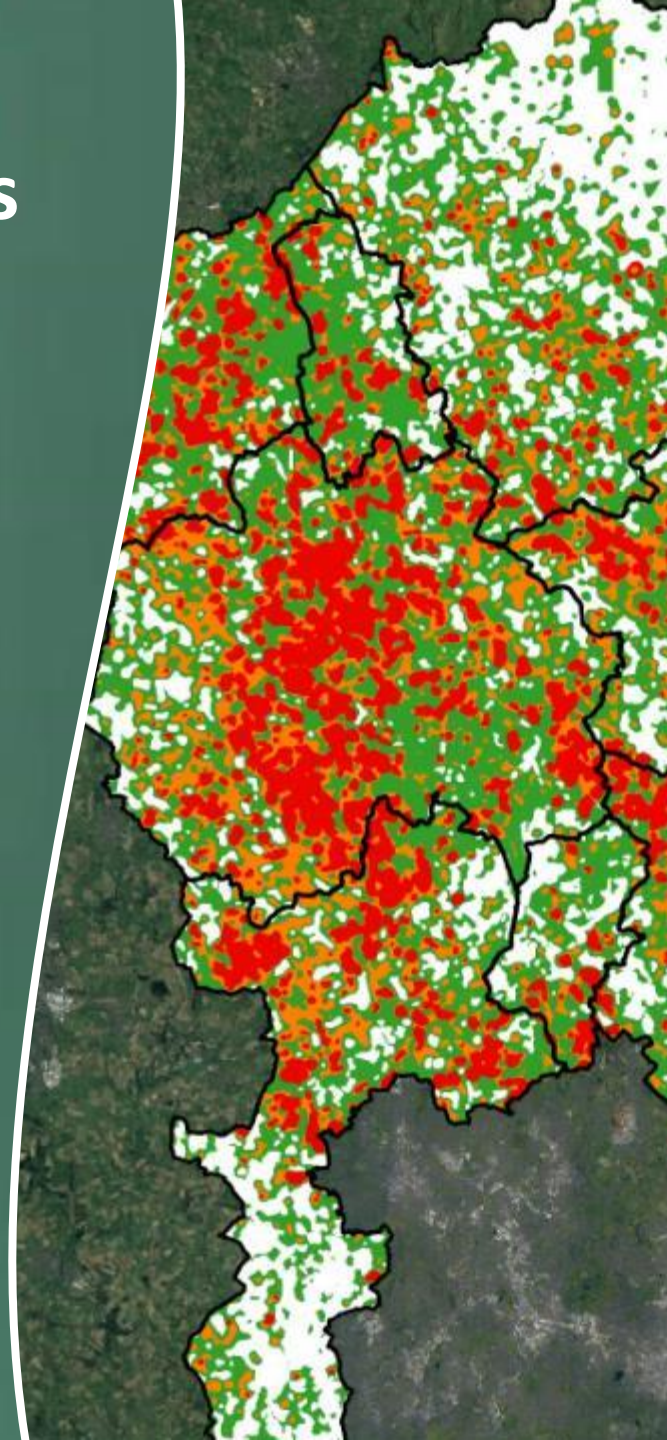
NE Guidance issued Jan 20 & March 21

This confirms that:

- NE is satisfied the DL scheme meets the legal tests
- LPAs can rely on NatureSpace reports and certificates
- LPAs should use the Impact Risk Map to identify likely impacts
- In the red/amber zones developers must prove no risk to GCN

**Red zone / Amber zone** - developers must submit a NatureSpace report/certificate, or comply with NE's Standing Advice

**Green zone or White zone** – LPAs should consider whether habitats or features are present within 500m of the development which warrant survey



# How does it work – for development?

- Modelling - creates a 'risk map' for newts, to identify and quantify suitable habitats for GCN
- Planners and developers use the impact risk zones to quickly and easily identify developments which may impact GCN
- NE Guidance on GCN & DLL – in the red/amber zones there is a requirement to consider potential impacts on GCN
- Developers pay proportionately into the scheme according to their impacts
- LPAs add planning conditions to planning permissions to facilitate use of the DL option & authorise individual developments





# The process

Potential for GCN on development site?

Developer decides: DL scheme or standard surveys (etc.)



If developer opts for the DL -> submits application to NSP



Within 10 days NSP issues report/certificate

Developer submits report/certificate to LPA



If PP is approved and the developer has a NSP certificate they can be authorised by the LPA



Developer is covered by the District Licence - GCN can be moved, and development can continue - no delays

Compensation is delivered offsite by the Newt Conservation Partnership - following a strategic, landscape-scale conservation strategy

## Benefits for developers

- It's **simple** – a 'one-stop-shop' for developers
- It's **quick** - no need for extensive (seasonally restricted) newt surveys
- It gives **certainty** – early engagement, pre-planning
- Developers can maximise their developable area
- Reduced mitigation requirements vs standard licensing
- Developers avoid long-term obligations
- Delivers net gain
- Developers contribute to a **sustainable** and long-term conservation scheme



# Benefits for Local Authorities & Developers

*"We pride ourselves on being a forward-thinking city, consistently seeking ways to innovate and improve our function. Being one of the first Local Planning Authorities to enter partnership with Nature Space is something we are proud of and have seen a wealth of benefits from. "*

**Cllr. Emily Darlington, Portfolio Holder for Public Realm, Milton Keynes Council**

*"The NatureSpace Team were extremely helpful in guiding us through the process. Their courteous staff were very efficient in providing the necessary documentation to facilitate an expedient solution to dealing with the great crested newt matter affecting our residential development site and planning application."*

**Rob O'Carroll, Planning Manager, Bellway Homes**

*"The NatureSpace scheme is an excellent additional tool for councils to assist the development process - the integrated planning and licencing process allows councils to issue planning decisions more quickly, while ensuring the statutory obligations regarding protected species are met."*

**Adrian Duffield, Head of Planning, South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of the White Horse District Council.**

## Allocation of developer contributions

- 20% Habitat creation
- 20% Long-term management fund
- 20% Newt Conservation Partnership - operational costs
- 40% NatureSpace & LPA operational costs, landscape monitoring & re-modelling costs

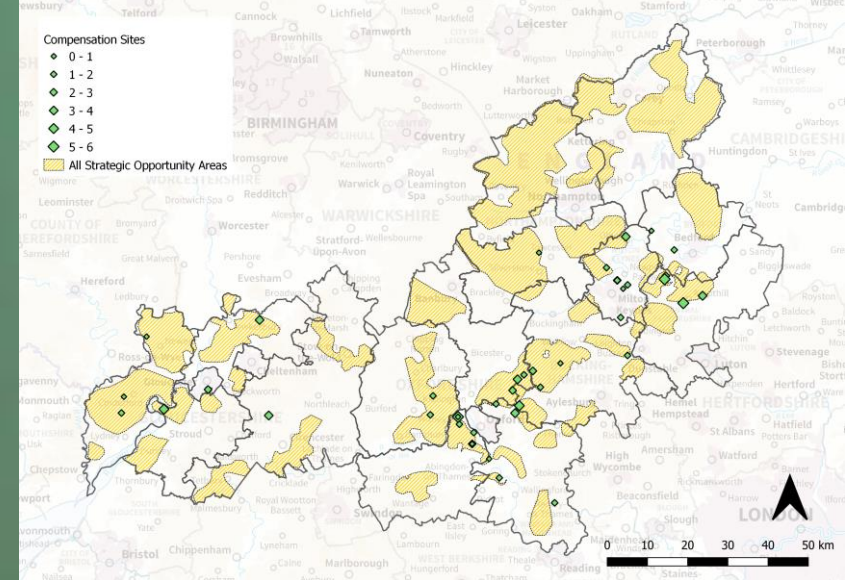
The Newt Conservation Partnership is an asset-locked, not for profit, community benefit society



# Scheme conservation outcomes

The DL scheme delivers, for the first time ever in the UK:

- A landscape-scale conservation strategy
- High-quality habitat created where it most benefits newts
- Expert design, delivery & long-term management
- *At least* four high-quality ponds are created for every GCN pond lost
- Endowment fund already sufficient to manage created ponds for 25 years
- Funds are asset-locked to be used only for newt conservation
- “The best single conservation action anyone can do is to create a pond”
- FCS & BNG delivered, managed and monitored for each LPA



Habitats	Created/ restored	Damaged/ destroyed
GCN Ponds	147	19
Terrestrial habitats	>560ha	194ha



## Wider benefits of the scheme

Ponds and terrestrial habitats delivered under this scheme are also providing biodiversity gains for other species and habitats:

- Creation of high-quality Priority Ponds
- 10% of all Priority species live in or are associated with ponds
- Stepping-stone habitats for many species
- New evidence that new clean water ponds increase landscape-scale biodiversity and resilience (Williams et al., Water Friendly Farming)



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# Integration

## Planning Policy

- IRZ mapping - a tool in spatial development planning

## Biodiversity Net Gain

- GCN DL is delivering net gain for GCN
- Species compensation measures (under DL) can contribute to a project's BNG calculations – up to no net loss (NNL)

## Species Conservation Strategies

- GCN DL is an example of a SCS
- Opportunities for integration with other species strategies

## Local Nature Recovery Strategies

- GCN DL is a spatial mapping and planning tool – lots of opportunities for integration – IRZs and SOAs





## Newt Officer Role

- Works alongside LPAs to provide advice to planners & help with authorisations
- Ensure developments are properly addressing their ecological impacts
- Monitor developer compliance
- Provide a point of contact between the LPA and NatureSpace, the Newt Conservation Partnership and Natural England.
- Raise awareness of the scheme, local habitat delivery & conservation outcomes



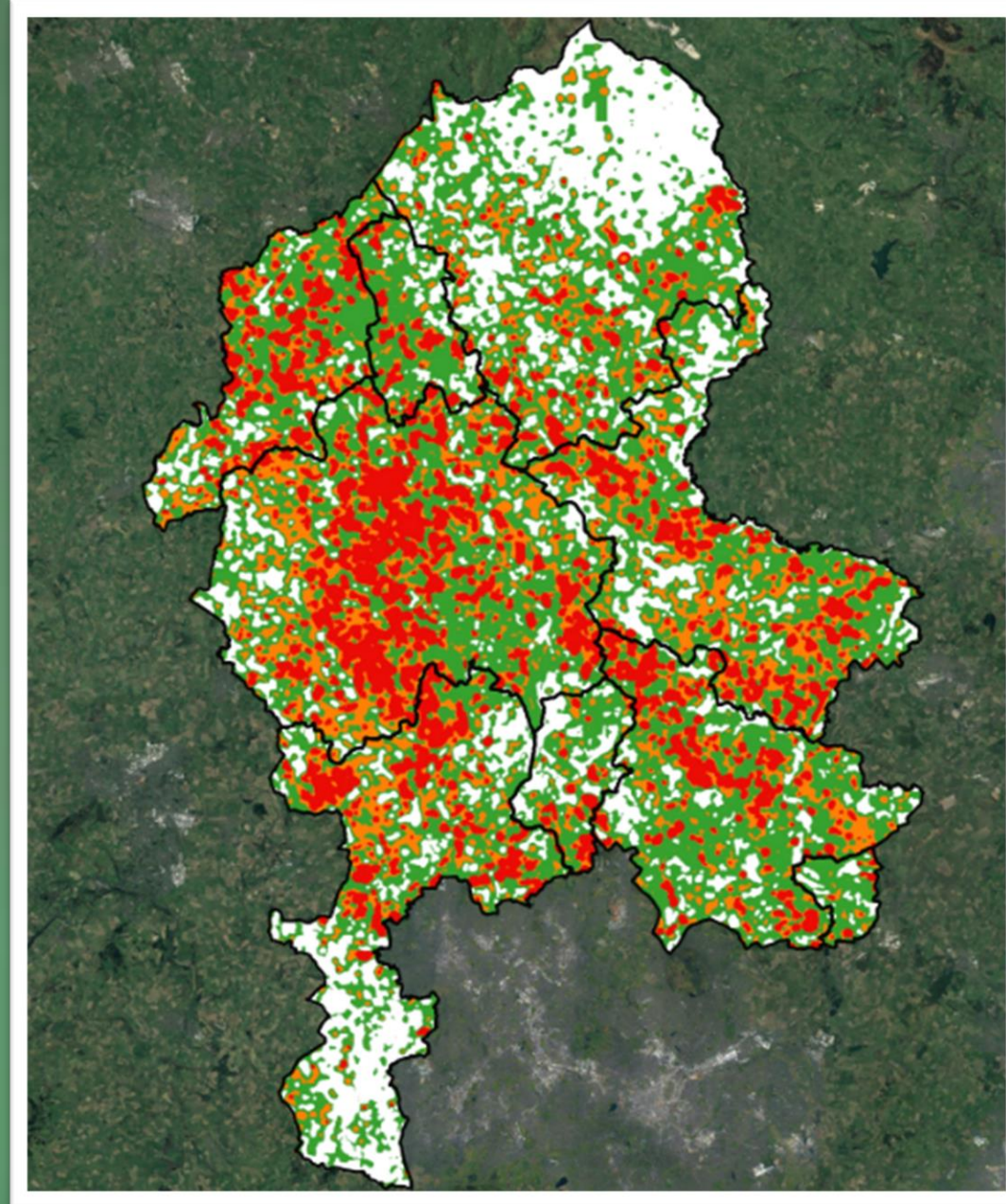
# Staffordshire Statistics – The importance of Staffordshire

High Pond Occupancy - 33%

Area (ha)	271891.9
% suitable habitat	42%
% within 500m of pond	68%



# Staffordshire's Impact Risk Zones (IRZs)



# Staffordshire's Strategic Opportunity Areas (SOAs)

