

## 14. DESIGNATION OF LEEKFRITH NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA (AM)

### Purpose of the report

1. To designate that part of Leekfrith parish that is within the National Park as part of the Leekfrith Neighbourhood Area, under the Localism Act 2011 Schedule 9.

### Key issue

Under Schedule 9, section 61-I of the Localism Act, the power to designate an area as a neighbourhood area is exercisable by 2 or more local planning authorities if the area falls within the area of those authorities. Leekfrith parish council is a qualifying body for the purpose of designating a neighbourhood area, and has applied to the Authority and to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

2. **Recommendation:**

**That part of Leekfrith parish that is within the National Park is designated as part of the Leekfrith Neighbourhood Area (the shaded area within the parish boundary on the map in Appendix 1), under the Localism Act 2011 Schedule 9, section 61G.**

### How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3. This is a legal obligation under the Localism Act.

This proposal contributes to corporate objectives 3 and 5.

3: Provide a high quality planning service to the community of the National Park that achieves national park purposes and that is responsive to and contributes to the debate on planning reform nationally and locally.

5: Work with others in an integrated way to support local people to develop community facilities, local needs housing and services in ways that are sustainable and contribute to national park purposes.

A measure of success for this objective is working with communities/ parishes/villages to support their plans, including neighbourhood plans. If adopted, a neighbourhood plan forms part of the Local Development Plan for the National Park.

### Background

4. The Authority Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2012 approved procedures for processing notifications under the Localism Act 2011. For notifications to designate neighbourhood areas it was resolved that these be determined by Planning Committee (Minute 72/12).
5. On 21 October 2014, Leekfrith Parish Council applied to the Authority and to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to designate the whole of Leekfrith parish as a neighbourhood area. The letter of application (see Appendix 2) meets the statutory requirements that it must contain:
  - a map which identifies the area to which the area application relates;
  - a statement explaining why this area is considered appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area; and

- a statement that the organisation or body making the area application is a relevant body for the purposes of section 61G of the 1990 Act.

Designation of a neighbourhood area is necessary for parish councils wishing to undertake neighbourhood development plans or orders.

6. In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, the application was publicised for a period of 6 weeks from 12 January 2014 – 24 February 2015. The following publicity was undertaken:

- The letter of application and a map of the neighbourhood area was on the Authority's and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's websites
- Direct email (or letter where no email address available) to Staffordshire County Council and the following parishes: Horton, Leek, Tittesworth, Heathylee, Quarnford, Wincle, Macclesfield & Wildbourclough
- Posters on Meerbrook and Heathylee notice boards
- Direct mail and hand delivered notices to business at Upper Hulme industrial area
- Presentation to village hall committee
- Poster at Tittesworth visitor centre
- News release
- Article in Staffordshire Moorlands Parish newsletter

No representations have been received either by the Authority or by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

### **Proposal**

7. In determining the application the Authority must have regard to the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act 61G(4)(7) and H(1), and consider the following issues:

#### **(1) The desirability of designating the whole of the area of a parish council.**

*In the letter of application, the Parish Council states: "Leekfrith Parish Council would like to designate the whole of Leekfrith Parish as a Neighbourhood Area within which we will develop a Neighbourhood Development Plan for completion by approximately Sept 2016. We consider Leekfrith Parish to be suitable for a Plan because it is the area for which the Parish Council is responsible and therefore logical, recognisable and inclusive. We decided not to act in collaboration with other Parish Councils because of the unusual nature of the Parish being partly in the Peak District National Park and partly in the Staffordshire Moorlands District."*

There are no reasons why the whole of the parish should not be designated.

#### **(2) The desirability of maintaining the existing boundaries of areas already designated as neighbourhood areas, and ensuring areas do not overlap.**

There are no adjacent neighbourhood designations.

#### **(3) Consideration of whether the area should be designated as a business area.**

Designation of a business area would only apply if the area is wholly or predominantly business in nature. This is not the case.

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**Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?**

**Financial**

8. There have been costs incurred in undertaking the publicity. DCLG grant of £5k is available on designation of a neighbourhood area and this will be shared between the Authority and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

**Risk Management**

9. The steps that the Authority is taking, as described, to respond to the Localism Act, means that the risk around failing to meet government standards or legal obligations is low.

**Sustainability**

- 10.
- Environmental Management – there is no impact at this stage. These matters will be considered as part of the Authority's assessment of the plan itself.
  - Equalities – all work on community planning takes into account equalities issues.

**Background papers** (not previously published)

11. None.

**Appendices**

Appendix 1: Map of proposed Leekfrith Neighbourhood Area  
Appendix 2: Letter of application

**Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date**

Adele Metcalfe, Villages and Communities Officer, 5 March 2015