



Report to the Partnership for South Hampshire Joint Committee

Date: 26 September 2023
Report of: Paddy May, Bird Aware Board Chair
Anna Parry, Partnership Manager
Subject: BIRD AWARE SOLENT SITE SPECIFIC FUNDING

SUMMARY

This paper seeks endorsement from the Joint Committee for the Bird Aware Partnership's recommendations for how site-specific funding should be allocated for the years 2024/5 and 2025/6.

RECOMMENDATION

It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Joint Committee NOTE and ENDORSE the Bird Aware Partnership's proposed allocation of funding for site specific projects.

Background

1. The Bird Aware Strategy includes support for site-specific projects to deliver mitigation measures. There is an annual allocation of £400k for this work and monitoring the effectiveness of it.
2. Earlier this year, all partners were invited to prepare and submit project proposals for this funding and a 'site-specific projects' sub-group has scored the proposals that came forward.
3. This project group comprises the Partnership Manager together with a senior ranger, the Monitoring Officer, representatives from Natural England, the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, the RSPB and a local planning authority. Projects are scored under the following criteria:
 - Scale
 - Effectiveness
 - Value
 - Deliverability
 - Monitoring
4. The scores were presented to the Project Board which considered them in detail. The information in Table 1 represents what the Project Board were prepared to offer support for.

Projects received

5. The Partnership received bids for fourteen proposed projects, in total requesting £751,834 of funding. These bids contained a good spread of project type and size as well as representing a good geographical spread.
6. As agreed previously, the Site-specific Project Team were seeking to allocate £720,000 over a two-year period (the remainder of the £80k used to fund the Monitoring Officer who evaluates the delivery and impact of the projects). Members of the Project Team individually reviewed and scored the projects against the agreed categories (see paragraph 3), then met to compare results and seek a consensus for a final score for each project.
7. During the screening and scoring process, three bids were considered to fall outside the remit of Bird Aware and therefore cannot be supported by this funding stream and have not been scored. This is not intended as a reflection on the worthiness of these proposals, but does reflect the focus of our work.
8. The scores given have then been used to prioritise the funding recommendations which are outlined below in **Table 1** and presented in full in the agreed scoring sheet circulated with this report.

Bird Aware Site-specific projects scoring July 2023

Table 1: Projects

Site Location and proposer	Summary	Total score	Project cost £s	Scoring Notes
CHTI - Pilsey Island - RSPB	Fencing and signage	21	13,000	Straightforward Project, offering tried and tested approach. Potential is quite far reaching due to location. Potential match funding could enhance scheme further.
SWWS - Western Shore - HCC	Improvements to 4 routes, 1 of which will incorporate dog activities, Replacement of 2 map boards	19	190,830	This project is located very close to the coast and effectively creates a SANG type area with added features for dogs, without deterring non-dog walkers. This is adjacent to what is currently one of our busiest sites.
LHOB - Oyster Beds - RSPB	Fencing	18	10,500	Within this area, some fencing is proposed under ECP works, these will be complimentary to these proposals.
PHPO - Pewit Island - HIWWT	6 Buoys and signage	18	15,000	Birds known to travel between high tide roosts, this has the potential to attract birds from a wide area. Possible use for this as a test project for others that might follow too.
NFLK - Lymington Heyhaven - HCC	Screening 2 lagoons from dogs, providing signage and creating a 'mound' to act as a viewpoint and attract people away from more sensitive areas.	18	43,524	Fencing element of this application is a strong form of mitigation, the interpretation is too. The group still support the mound element, but recognise it to be slightly weaker/ unproven at this point.

LHML - Milton Locks - PCC	A1 sized interpretation panel	17	1500	Future possibility of another application for 2nd board at Southern side of site. Good staff presence on site so monitoring should be straightforward.
NFPD/NFLK - Lymington - NFNPA, NFDC, HIWWT	Footpath improvement and interpretation	17	Up to 70,600	Newly promoted route will not link to the coast, panel assessors are confident this will not attract new visitors to the coast. High visitor pressure already in this area, this keeps them away from the coast. Expect main users will be local residents and visitors arriving by rail who might otherwise have visited the coast. Largely on existing rights or way, now to be upgraded and promoted as a circular walk. Support offered for the 5 year maintenance plan too due to specific circumstances/context on site.
SWHC - Hamble Common - EBC	New Fence and Signage at Hamble Common Beach	15	21,714 including vat	This project seeks to funnel visitors past a sign before they can enter the beach. This is a key site for birds and popular with dog walkers. This may make Bird Aware Rangering duties at this site more straightforward.
SWRV - Royal Victoria - HCC	Enhancement of boardwalks (2 walkways)	14	268,145	Potential to channel site users away from coast if quality of finished route is high enough. Project could be broken into 2 separate elements and funding just given to 1 if there are budgetary concerns overall for this year's projects. If this is the case, Horse Pond Wood should be the priority.

Chichester Harbour Area 2 - CHC	Schools outreach programme and targeted social media promotions	13	18,000 requested, 9,000 supported	This application is very 'lite' on detail, more detail would have likely improved the score. Expectation that teaching resources will be developed with Bird Aware staff and shared with them too. The educational resources and teaching element seems far stronger than the social media element of this bid. The scoring panel are not able to support the social media element and after speaking with CHC have reflected this within the scoring column.
CHFI - Fishbourne Meadows - CHC	Installation of 100m non continuous boardwalk south of the kissing gate, with signage to reinforce staying on the paths	11	42,000	Application was extremely brief, map to be requested from applicant. The scoring group could see a mitigation benefit for this to be delivered.
CHTI - Thorney Island, Great Deeps 1 - CHC	Tern Raft	Not scored, see notes	32,371 plus VAT	This relates to summer birds which fall outside the remit of Bird Aware, it also falls under habitat creation so won't satisfy the habitat regulations.
CHTI - Thorney Island, Great Deeps 2 - CHC	Live Streaming of Tern Raft	Not scored, see notes	4,650 plus VAT	This application only relates to summer birds and therefore falls outside of the remit of Bird Aware.
Chichester Harbour Area 1 - CHC	Scoping Exercise - looking for SANGs that offer alternatives for dog walkers	Not scored, see notes	20,000	This application relates to a scoping report. Projects of this nature need to be rejected from this process as they do not provide direct mitigation. This decision has been endorsed by the Project Board previously.

Key

Year 1 Projects (2024/25)
Year 2 Projects (2025/26)
Unscored and unsupported projects

9. As outlined in table 1, the recommendation is to fund £366,668 of projects in year 1, and £319,145 of projects in year 2. There is not a reserves list this time round.

RECOMMENDATION

It is RECOMMENDED that the Joint Committee NOTE and ENDORSE the Bird Aware Partnership's proposed allocation of funding for site specific projects.

ENQUIRIES:

For further information on this report please contact:-

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