Report to the Partnership for South Hampshire Joint Committee

Date: **14 March 2024**

Report of: **Paddy May, SRMP Board Chair**
Anna Parry, Partnership Manager

Subject: **BIRD AWARE SOLENT BUDGET REQUEST -** Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership Strategy

SUMMARY

This paper seeks approval from the Joint Committee for the Bird Aware 2024/25 budget request, a matter that is considered annually by the PfSH Joint Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

It is RECOMMENDED that the Joint Committee NOTES and ENDORSES the Bird Aware Partnership's proposed budget for 2024/25.

Background

1. The Bird Aware Partnership's work is wholly funded by developer contributions.
2. The amount which will be received in the future cannot be accurately predicted, so a judgement needs to be made annually on an appropriate budget for the coming year. Information collected quarterly related to developer contributions received, and annual planning permission data, helps inform the budget for each coming year.
3. Additionally, the board maintains a financial reserve to cushion the peaks and troughs in development activity and thus money received by the Partnership. This means that if income is lower than outgoings in 2024/25, in the first instance money from the reserves would be used to meet any shortfall.
4. The proposed budget for 2024/25 is £2,236k, which includes a £1,289.5k contribution to the in-perpetuity fund, leaving £946.5k for the implementation of mitigation measures. These measures include a team of six Rangers, a communications lead officer, a Dog Initiatives Lead, a monitoring officer and the Partnership Manager. For the fifth time, they also include £400k to support site specific projects. The in-perpetuity fund is part of the agreed strategy and vital to allow for the work of the Partnership to continue until 2114, whilst payments into the scheme are due to halt in 2034.
5. The budget will also fund the vital monitoring surveys and data collection activities which will be taking place during winter 2024/25. Furthermore, it provides for the development of targeted engagement activities with dog owners and walkers, as research shows that around 47% of all major disturbance incidences involve a dog off the lead.
6. The proposed budget for 2024/25 is therefore:

Table 1: Proposed 2024/25 budget

Item	**000s**	**Comment**
Rangers	322.5	As per the SLA
Dog Initiatives Officer (FT role)	48	Includes element for travel costs
Dog initiatives	10	Promotion, website, resources
Campaigns and Engagement Officer (FT role)	58	Includes element for travel costs
Campaigns operational budget	10	Printing / Design / Freebies
Partnership Manager (0.6 F.T.E.)	48	Includes element for travel costs
Operating budget	10	Same as last year
Monitoring (consultancy support)	30	See note

Contribution to Monitoring Officer role	10	This is in addition to 10% of the site specific funding money
Site Specific Projects	400[1]	Same as last year
Sub-total	**946.5**	
Contribution to in-perpetuity fund	1289.5	As taken from the In-perpetuity tables
Total budget	**2236**	

Differences from 2023/24 Budget

7. The proposed budget for 2024/25 sees a broadly similar request to that of 2023/24. This is because the Strategy is already in full delivery mode and therefore the main activities of the Partnership remain unchanged. There is however an uplift in the payment for the SLA to reflect the fact that the fixed fee for the initial five years of operation expires at the end of July. We are in the process of activating the extension clause of this SLA and HCC have provided a revised price for continuing operations within this extended period. The revised price was expected and reflects the reality that inflation has been high throughout part of the fixed price period. Procurement is in the process of confirming that it still represents value for money.

8. The monitoring budget is a little smaller this year than last (£30k as opposed to £50k) and is in place as a contingency, which reflects the fact that more and more of this work is being undertaken in-house, and that currently there are no plans to use external support in this financial year.

9. For clarity, the Monitoring Support Officer role (0.7 f.t.e - hosted by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust) and the additional work undertaken related to 'quality control' of the delivery of the site-specific projects - is paid for through the 10% from site specific projects and the £10k budget previously allocated to the now discontinued access management plans.

10. Members should be made aware that the current Bird Aware strategy is also under review, as is the issue of whether Bird Aware should begin focusing on summer breeding birds too. If approved, these may result in a change in the Bird Aware budget and so a further budget request, associated with the new strategy and scope, may need to come back to Joint Committee during the financial year.

[1] This is in addition to money committed in previous years but not yet drawn down (circa £1100k)

For Information

Balances at 31/03/2023

Reserves brought forward @ 31/03/22	1,131,579
Contribution to reserves 22/23	971,561
Transfer from reserves to LT perpetuity	(1,211,602)
Reserves carried forward @ 31/03/23	891,538

In-perpetuity fund @ 31/03/22	2,886,532
Transfer in 22/23	1,211,602
Interest received	111,114
In-perpetuity fund @ 31/03/23	4,209,248

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It is RECOMMENDED that the Joint Committee NOTES and ENDORSES the Bird Aware Partnership's proposed budget for 2024/25.

ENQUIRIES:

For further information on this report please contact:-
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