Bird Aware Solent

Revised Strategy

September 2024

www.birdaware/solent

Bird Aware Solent

The Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership

Foreword by Councillor Keith House
Chair, Partnership for South Hampshire

With a rising demand for new housing supply, and the natural world under increasing pressures, the need for robust mitigation has never been more important. Effective and adaptive mitigation allows our communities to benefit from considered and relevant development while also ensuring the coastline's unique ecological needs are met.

It's vital that new homes can be built in our area to meet the needs of local people, but they must be built without adversely affecting the internationally important Special Protection Areas (SPAs) along the Solent coast. The mitigation provided by Bird Aware Solent has enabled us to address the impact of additional residents making recreational visits to the coast and has allowed us to manage the coast for the benefit of both people and wildlife.

The Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) has been proud to be involved with Bird Aware Solent from its inception. It was gratifying to see its mitigation rated as impressive by independent environmental experts in a recent report. We were delighted but not surprised the report also called the project ground-breaking and a model for other mitigation strategies to follow.

This updated Strategy builds on Bird Aware Solent's success to date and benefits from the insight gained from its practical experience and expertise in delivering mitigation over the last seven years. For the first time it also incorporates support for breeding birds that feature within the Solent's SPAs.

Long-term, we need a solution for funding mitigation that does not discourage new housing and growth, but I am confident the revised Strategy's delivery plan for the next five years will ensure funding is used in the most effective way, maximising the positive changes to people's behaviour as they enjoy our beautiful coastline, and ensuring our wealth of wildlife thrives for generations to come.

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The Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership

Summary

The Solent coastline provides a haven for thousands of protected birds, making the area of worldwide importance to wildlife. They need to be able to feed and rest undisturbed if they are to survive the winter and complete long migrations twice yearly. In summer, coastal birds need to be left undisturbed so they can successfully breed and raise their young.

Around 147,500 new homes are anticipated around the Solent up to 2050. This is likely to lead to more people visiting the coast for recreation and this has the potential to cause more bird disturbance. This strategy aims to mitigate likely impact of bird disturbance as a result of these additional homes and the resulting increase in recreational visits. It focuses on educating people about the birds and encouraging positive behaviour change.

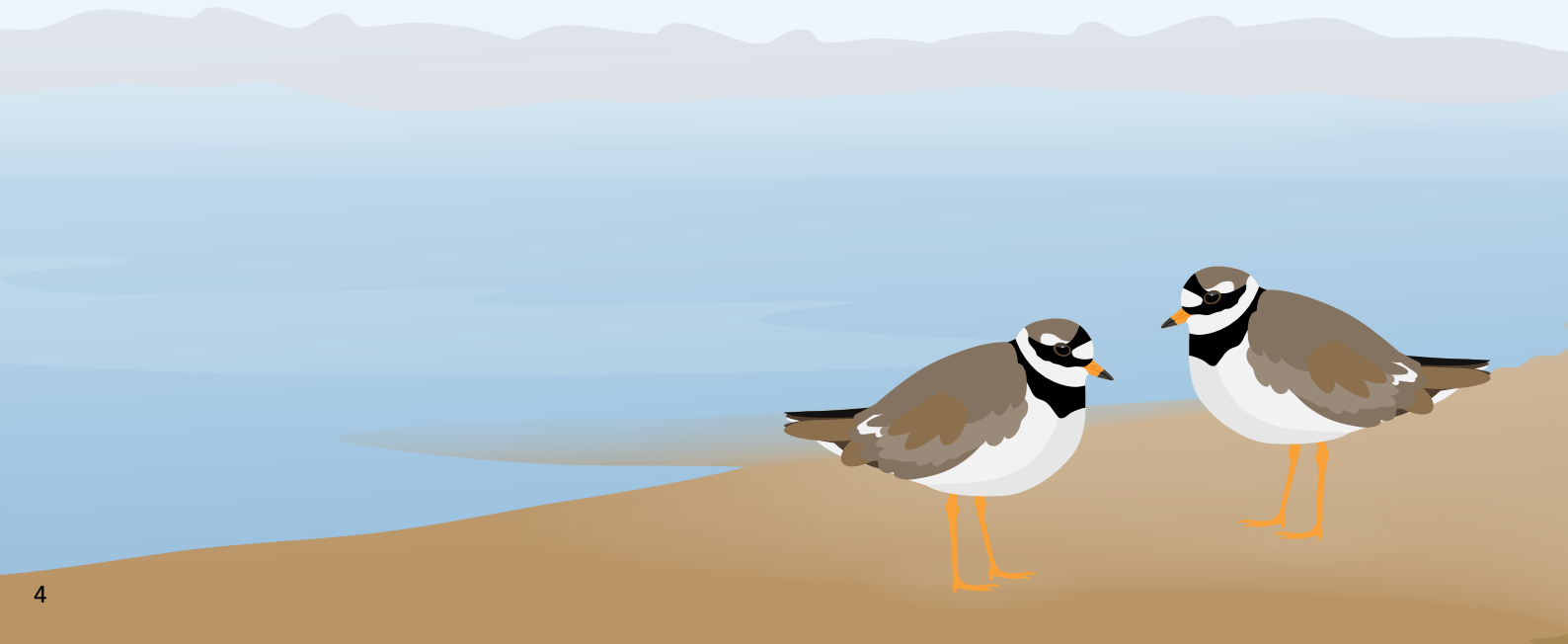
The strategy builds on the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy published in 2017 and has been put together by Bird Aware Solent, a partnership made of Natural England, wildlife conservation bodies and local authorities. This updated Strategy benefits from the practical experience gained so far in delivering mitigation and builds on the success and learning of the Partnership to date. Some of the partnership's work to date is showcased on the Bird Aware Solent website.

The Partnership focuses on:

- Strong governance, by knowledgeable decision makers
- Monitoring and evaluating the work undertaken, to ensure it remains efficient
- Close collaboration with Partners and local stakeholders
- A wide variety of engagement activities, targeting key user groups such as dog walkers
- Site-based investment

The work of the Partnership is funded by developer contributions calculated according to the bedroom numbers of the property. It applies to homes built within 5.6 kilometres of the Solent's Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Some developments may require additional mitigation due to their size or proximity to an SPA. Some of the money received will be set aside to fund the measures 'in-perpetuity' (calculated on an 80 year basis) after 2050.

Council leaders will steer and oversee the Partnership's activities and expenditure. Progress on implementation and financial accounts will be published in an annual report. Further information about the Partnership is at: www.birdaware.org/Solent.



1. Strategy Remit and Duration

Rationale

1.1 The Solent coastline provides a haven for thousands of protected birds every winter, making the area of worldwide importance to wildlife. Each winter, more than 125,000 waders and wildfowl travel thousands of miles here from their summer breeding grounds, including 10 percent of the global population of dark-bellied brent geese. During the summer, several protected species choose to breed and raise their chicks on our shores.

1.2 Over winter they need to be able to feed and rest undisturbed if they are to survive and fly back to their summer breeding grounds. In the summer, species such as terns and gulls need to be left undisturbed so they can successfully breed and raise their young.

1.3 3 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds along the Solent coastline have been established and are recognised under UK law.

1.4 These protected areas are safeguarded by legislation, namely, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitats Regulations) as amended. This means that mitigation must be provided for any proposed development that is likely to have any significant effects on an SPA. Local Planning Authorities must ensure necessary mitigation will be provided before planning permission is granted[1].

1.5 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 consolidate all the various amendments made to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 in respect of England and Wales. The 1994 Regulations transposed Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive) into national law.

[1] The Habitats Regulations allow for compensatory measures to be provided in exceptional circumstances, however this lies outside the scope of Bird Aware Solent's work.

The Partnership

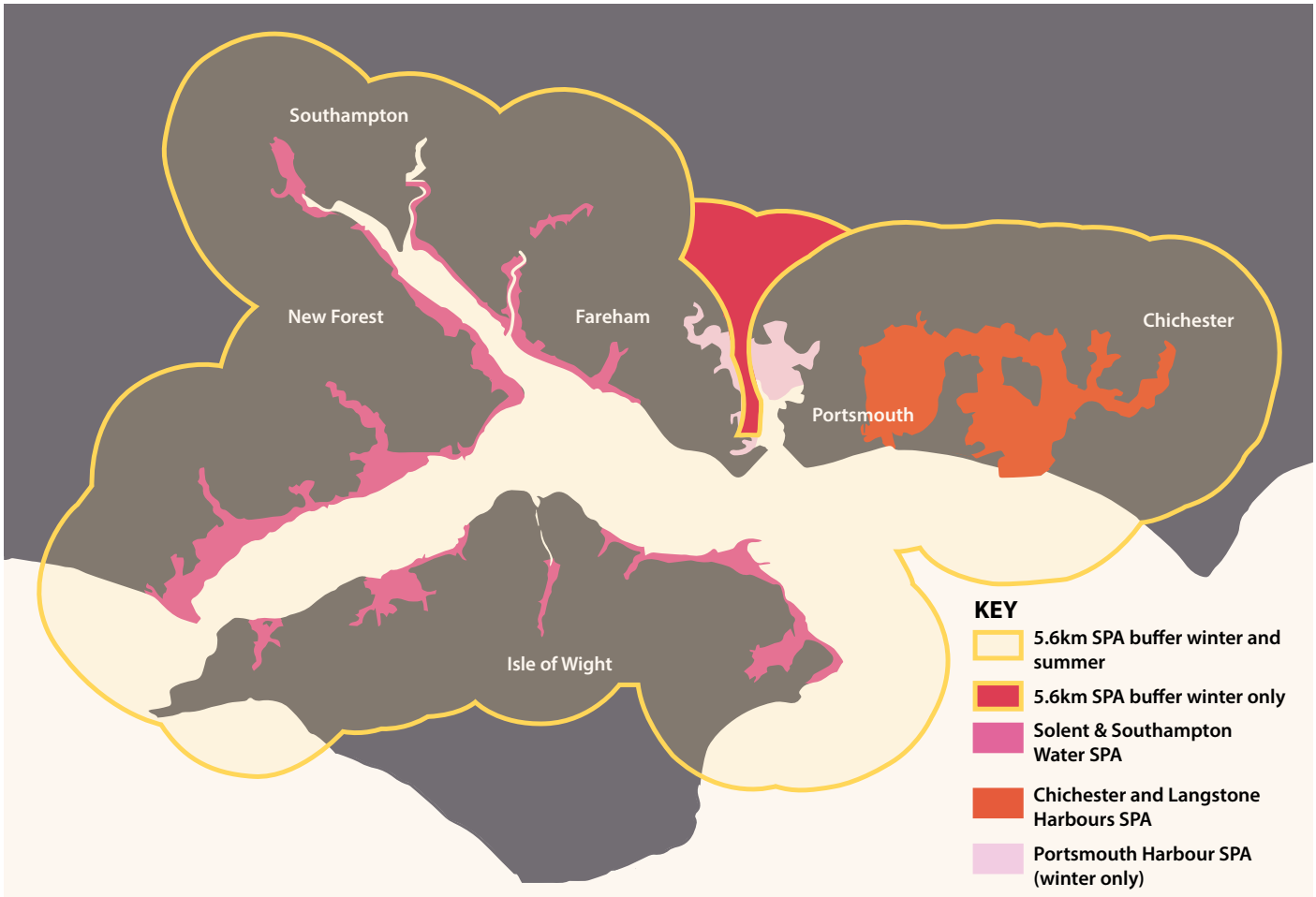
1.6 Bird Aware Solent (previously known as the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership) is delivering a strategy which aims to ensure the requirements of the Habitats Regulations are met in terms of the impact of increased recreational pressure on the Solent SPAs as a result of new residential development. Some of the partnership's work to date is showcased on the website.

1.7 Bird Aware Solent's strategy aims to provide mitigation for the duration of the impact, that is, for the lifetime of the additional dwellings in the Solent ('in perpetuity'), in line with the Habitats Regulations. Throughout this period, regular strategic reviews will take place every 5 years; or more frequently if changes in the legislation or local evidence indicate this is needed.

1.8 Research[2] indicates that mitigation should be required from all dwellings built within 5.6 kilometres of the boundaries of the SPAs. This is the zone from which 75% of coastal visits originate. The zone boundary is defined by using straight line distances from the inland SPA boundary and is shown in map 1. The area within this is referred to as the zone of influence.

1.9 The areas within which protected winter and breeding birds occur differ, with breeding birds cited at 2 of the 3 SPAs. This, and the resulting zones of influence as depicted in the map below.

Map: Developer contribution winter and summer zones.



[2] Liley, D. & Tyldesley, D. (2013). Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project: Phase III. Towards an Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy.

1.10 New housing developments require mitigation to address the 'in combination' effects that increased numbers of residents in the region, and therefore increased numbers of visits to the coastal SPAs, will have on the protected bird species. This mitigation is required to comply with the Habitats Regulations.

1.11 Bird Aware Solent's Partners, made up of Natural England, 3 wildlife conservation groups and 15 local authorities, have devised a strategic approach to the provision of the mitigation of additional recreational impacts. This is to ensure an impactful, cost-effective approach and to make the delivery of mitigation measures more straightforward to process and oversee. Developers can opt into this scheme in order to meet the mitigation requirements related to their proposed developments.

1.12 Governance is provided by the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH). Bird Aware Solent regularly reports to PfSH, as well as having its own Project Board and Steering Group to oversee the strategic direction and day-to-day delivery of the project.

1.13 Extensive research was undertaken during 2009-2013 to assess the impact of recreational activity on wintering birds on the Solent coast. This work was known as the Solent Disturbance Mitigation Project and formed part of the Solent European Marine Sites (SEMS) Scheme of Management. This work included recording the response of birds to disturbance, face-to-face surveys of visitors at the coast, and a postal survey of households living around the Solent. Computer modelling using that information predicted the number of additional recreational visits which would be generated by planned housebuilding. The results of this modeling predicted that additional recreational disturbance would lead to increased bird mortality at the SPAs.

1.14 The original strategy drew heavily on the recommendations of this research and was later updated in 2020 with a Strategy Review which was able to incorporate practical experience and lessons learnt from delivering the first few years of the project.

1.15 This updated and revised strategy further enhances the original approach by drawing on the recommendations of the independent 5 Year Review undertaken in 2023 and incorporating further insights and experience gained from the delivery of the strategy. Furthermore, it takes into consideration the findings of a report commissioned by PfSH in 2023 which considered the likelihood of impacts on breeding birds around the Solent from increasing recreational disturbance from new housing.

1.16 It is envisaged that this Strategy will be further reviewed and revised in later years, to keep it as effective as possible throughout the lifetime of the Partnership.

1.17 The strategic approach allows a housebuilder to pay a developer contribution to cover the costs of providing mitigation over a wider area instead of needing to provide bespoke mitigation themselves. A developer can still choose to provide their own mitigation, if they have the ability to do so, but the vast majority are likely to opt to pay towards the Strategy instead. This is an approach which is used across the country and provides clarity and certainty for both developers and local authorities as it has been proven to be robust through the planning process.

1.18 Subsequent to the 5 year review, which identified increased levels of anticipated housebuilding in the region, the Strategy has been extended to take into account the approximately 147,500 planned houses in the Solent between now and 2050. It has also been extended to provide mitigation to breeding birds around the Solent. As before, the Strategy includes the provision of in-perpetuity mitigation, this will now be delivered until 2130. This in-perpetuity element deals with the duration of the impact, which has been calculated as 80 years and accepted by Natural England as such.

1.19 Summary of changes from original to revised strategy:

The duration of the Strategy has been extended to provide mitigation for proposed housing developments until 2050 (was previously 2034), with the in-perpetuity element provided until 2130 (was previously 2114).

The proposals are structured to provide mitigation for around 147,500 dwellings predicted to come forward during the period. It remains an opt-in Strategy and developers are still able to provide their mitigation requirements through a bespoke scheme if they choose.

In response to new evidence that came forward during the initial Strategy period, these proposals have, for the first time, taken on board the needs of the breeding SPA birds and now provide mitigation for the entire year (was previously 6 months).

The Team has been expanded from 10 staff to 19 to address the additional workload associated with providing mitigation for more planned housing and for breeding birds. This includes a Team Manager to oversee the delivery of the expanded strategy, a Volunteer Coordinator to trial the use of volunteers, Rangers for the expansion to summer breeding, as well as additional staff for dog initiatives, communications and monitoring as outlined below.

The resources focused on dog initiatives have been greatly increased, both in terms of staff allocated to this work, and budget available to them (£10k increases to £30k per annum), to allow Coast and Country Canines to fully reach its potential and become a valuable resource for the dog walking community.

In recognition of the key role of communications to support all areas of mitigation work, resources to this area of work have also been increased. These resources consist of additional staff and budget available for this area of work (£10k increases to £30k per annum). This work will remain central to all Bird Aware Solent's mitigation efforts and will now be better resourced to facilitate this.

Effective monitoring allows the Team to use resources in the most efficient way: it allows for baseline data to be created and comparisons to be made before and after mitigation interventions. This information is then fed back into future resource planning and allows for the most efficient use of resources. It also allows the Team to quickly identify changes in coastal use patterns and reallocate resources in a timely and cost-effective way to meet these. Staff resources for this vital part of the Strategy will increase.

1.20 Alongside these changes, the Partnership will continue to promote:

- Wildlife Aware guides (previously called Codes of Conduct)
- Site-specific visitor management measures
- Suitable alternative natural greenspaces (SANGs) where people can enjoy recreation away from the coast.

2. Outside of Strategy Remit

2.1 This Strategy does not aim to address the impact of existing recreational activities, which is the role of the separate Solent European Marine Sites (SEMS) initiative. It should also be noted that the Strategy does not deal with any other impacts on SPAs such as loss of habitat, increased noise, effect on water quality, nutrient neutrality or construction impacts, which may arise from new housing, or the potential impact of other types of development such as new employment sites. Separate mitigation may be required to address these or other additional impacts on the SPAs that arise from new development. It also does not count towards Biodiversity Net Gain, which is a separate, nationwide initiative launched in 2024. Biodiversity Net Gain will be assessed by the Local Planning Authorities at the planning application stage.

3. The Impact of Recreational Disturbance

3.1 When birds are disturbed, they stop feeding, resting and may even fly away. If the birds cannot feed and rest undisturbed, they will not have enough energy to reproduce or they may suffer increased mortality. This can in turn lead to population declines of protected species. If the disturbance is substantial, then food-rich areas may be little used by the birds or avoided altogether, leading to other areas hosting a higher density of birds and intensifying the competition for the available food. If the birds are unable to consume enough calories ahead of their planned migration, they may not be fit enough to complete this journey, or have a successful breeding season if they do reach their summer homes.

3.2 Disturbance to breeding birds, their nests or chicks can result in a severe decline in their breeding success, with possible nest abandonment and increased predation both becoming likely. Again, this can in turn lead to population declines in protected species.

4. Causes of Recreational Disturbance

4.1 Human activities can disturb birds from behaving naturally. Any alteration to a bird's natural behaviour is considered disturbance, ranging from stopping feeding to observe a perceived threat, taking a major flight to actively avoid the threat of disturbance or nest abandonment. Often people cause bird disturbance unintentionally or remain unaware it has occurred.

4.2 Any activity at the coast has the potential to cause bird disturbance. The Partnership aims to focus efforts on those activities that are causing the most disturbance in the Solent region. See Section 5 - Five Year Plan Delivery Strands - for more details on how this will continue to be done.

5. Five Year Plan Delivery Strands

5.1 The partnership has enhanced and refocused its priority work areas as a result of past experience, new evidence, the 5 Year Review and the revised anticipated housing figures for the extended period of the strategy delivery. This enables wider engagement beyond Rangers on site and places greater emphasis upon working with the dog walking community. The reprioritisation includes bolstering communication capacity to reach a greater audience through a range of measures.

5.2 The revised strategy also retains these functions throughout the in-perpetuity period, once payments to the scheme have ceased.

5.3 All of this is underpinned by additional monitoring support to ensure that the Partnership is able to deploy resources in the most effective way possible and adapt to changes in an agile way. Information from this additional monitoring will be regularly reported to the Project Board, allowing changes to be implemented and for best practice to be maintained, and will feed into the scheduled 5 year reviews.

Delivery Strand: Governance

5.4 The Bird Aware Partnership benefits from strong Governance arrangements being in place, with decision makers knowledgeable about the purpose and aims of the Partnership and intent on enabling its ongoing success. Scrutiny provided by the Partnership for South Hampshire further ensures robust processes are upheld and integral to the work of the Partnership. In Footprint Ecology's review of the Partnership's first 5 years, it found that Bird Aware Solent was identified as 'well run, organised and professional' and that there was a 'smooth process for mitigation delivery'.

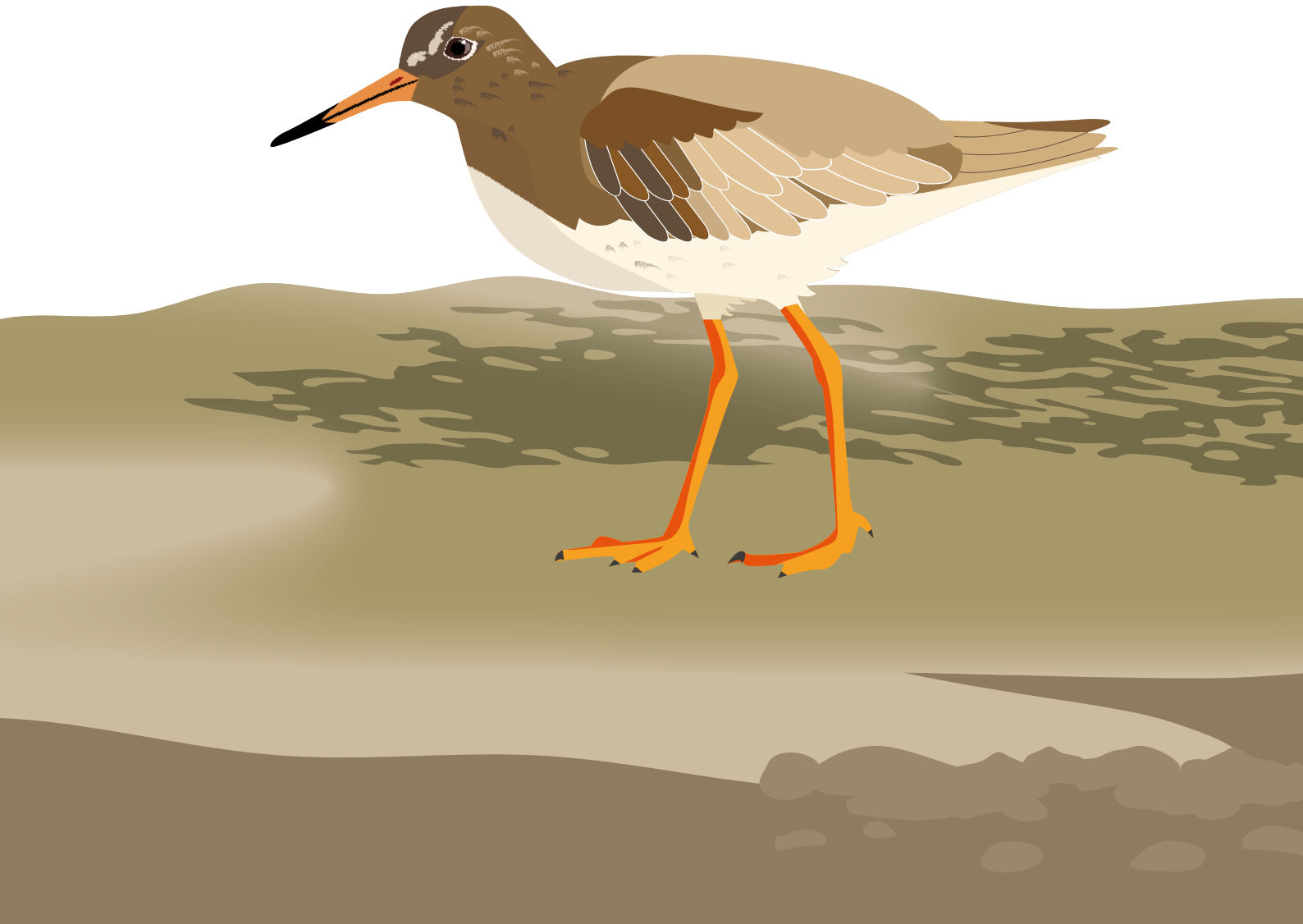
5.5 The Partnership will continue under the existing governance structure for decision making, whilst continuing to make use of a series of specialist knowledge skill sets within the wider Partnership to inform reporting procedures, recommendations and outcomes.

5.6 The Project Board is committed to regular reviews and ongoing evaluation of the Partnership, its workstreams, Team and outputs. The Project Board also takes time to reflect on its leadership and contribution to the work of Bird Aware, in a way that enables the Project Board to remain agile and capable of adapting to changing circumstances.

5.7 **In the coming period, the Partnership will also expand its activities and priorities to cover the following**:

	What	Why
G1 Team Manager	1 x FTE Team Manager required	As the Bird Aware Team has grown and the scope of its work has developed, a Team Manager position is now required. This is to manage and oversee work packages and ensure the effective and efficient delivery of the strategy.
G2 Review lifespan	Periodically review the strategy period with the expectation of extending the length of the strategy beyond 2050.	To support emerging local plans with dates beyond 2050 and to continue meeting the mitigation needs of coastal birds.
G3 In-perpetuity funding	Periodically review in-perpetuity period, both operationally and financially.	To ensure the level of mitigation delivered is fit for purpose during this period.
G4 Annual away day	Hold an annual away day of Board members and other key personnel as appropriate (operational staff and Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH)).	Regular internal review of progress and knowledge sharing to ensure strategic aims continue to be met efficiently.

	What	Why
G5 Ranger Shadowing	Expectation that key personnel as appropriate (Board members and Steering Group members and PfSH) accompany a Ranger on an operational site patrol, with an expected frequency of annually.	This lifts the project from abstract paper reports and brings a sense of its practical delivery: it will demonstrate the reality of the delivery and scope of the project to the governance team.
G6 Endorsement of in-kind contributions	Request ratification by PfSH of continuation of in-kind contribution from partners.	Some of the key services (procurement, legal, financial and so on) are provided by partners in-kind. A formal commitment of these contributions will ensure the successful continuation of the Partnership and the ongoing smooth delivery of these services.
G7 External Awards	Continue to seek opportunities to submit into local and national industry awards.	Maintain and boost profile through peer recognition.



Delivery Strand: Monitoring

5.8 Understanding the impact of work undertaken by the Partnership is key to ensuring resources continue to be delivered and utilised in the most efficient way. Comprehensive baseline information was gathered prior to the Partnership being established and this remains crucial in allowing us to evidence trends and changes since coming into operation. Integrating a Monitoring Officer within the Team has empowered this work through the creation and tracking of an evidence base which is regularly utilised to understand where priorities lie and how best to allocate resources to address them.

5.9 Since first operating, the Partnership has continued to refine the data collected to inform how well the Partnership is performing, alongside allowing for changes in coastal use patterns to be spotted and rapidly responded to. This is reviewed regularly and forms a critical part of the annual season planning work, additionally it is used to satisfy regular reporting requirements.

5.10 Footprint Ecology's review found that project monitoring was 'well organised' with, for example 'any relevant information being provided to both the PfSH Joint Committee and Monitoring Group well in advance of meetings.'

5.11 The findings of scheduled third-party monitoring work and data shared by Partners further informs the operational practices, as does the results of the 5 Year Review which confirmed the progress of the Partnership.

5.12 In the coming period, the Partnership will also expand its activities and priorities to cover the following:

	What	Why
M1 Setting of 5 Year Monitoring	Setting of strategic direction for the next 5 years. The next wholescale review is scheduled for April 2027. This will be a 10-year review period, with commentary on the two 5-year periods.	To ensure that data to monitor these delivery strands is appropriately collected in a timely way. Additionally, to ensure resources continue to be used efficiently and effectively.
M2 Delivery of 5 Year Monitoring	Timely collection of relevant data.	To provide evidence for the next 5 Year Review, and to shape the strategic direction of the project.
M3 Scale up current monitoring provision	Scale up in-house monitoring.	To further understand the impact of behaviour change measures, allowing most beneficial use of future resources, particularly regarding efficient use of Ranger time, for example blitzing sites and re-prioritisation or alternative engagement strategies. Concepts could be trialled around how these would be utilised.

Delivery Strand: Collaboration

5.13 Meaningful collaboration with Partners and local stakeholders is vital to the success of the Partnership; it ensures that trusting relationships are built, opportunities are utilised and efficiencies/economies of scale are capitalised upon where possible. Bird Aware Solent is made up of 19 Partners and needs them to remain committed to information sharing with project staff to make sure that they remain knowledgeable of pertinent local issues across the entire operational area and be involved in a timely manner with issues such as Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) and parking reviews which, if well orchestrated, may also contribute the Partnership's mitigation aims.

5.14 The Partnership has also been instrumental in establishing a national network of professionals working within the sector and seeks appropriate knowledge sharing and joint working opportunities within this network. This includes working with other partnerships to share messaging, branding and initiatives that further the work it does.

5.15 In the coming period, the Partnership will also expand its activities and priorities to cover the following:

	What	Why
C1 Sharing resources	Expand resources available, in terms of behavioural change messaging and signage, to organisations wishing to share Bird Aware and Coast & Country Canines messaging.	Extends Bird Aware and Coast & Country Canines messages beyond existing audiences. Behaviour change science supports the idea of messaging being more credible if it comes from more than 1 valued source (see reference below). NECR239 edition 1 Behavioural Insights Quick Guide.pdf
C2 Knowledge exchange	Continue close working relationship within other mitigation partnerships, national partners and local stakeholders.	Sharing best practice with other key organisations to maintain efficient work practices and avoid silo working.
C3 Collaborations with businesses	Continue to build effective collaboration with local businesses relevant to users.	To amplify Bird Aware Solent's messaging through other influencers.
C4 Stakeholder relationship continuity	Removing seasonal Ranger posts, to reduce disruption to long term stakeholder relationships.	Meaningful stakeholder relationships take time to establish. Having all staff on permanent contracts better facilitates this approach. This minimises knowledge loss through reduction of staff turnover and ensures a more efficient use of Team resourcing.

	What	Why
C5 Grow research collaboration	Tentative links have been established with universities in the Bird Aware region. These will be built upon and utilised for mutual benefit.	It is recognised that these could be a valuable resource to further understand the sector and Bird Aware's impact within it.
C6 Brand extension	Continue to bring more mitigation organisations within the Bird Aware brand family. Further extend the Great Coastal Birdwatch to even more relevant organisations.	By extending its branding, messaging and engagement projects, Bird Aware will have a greater profile and wider positive impact on behavioural change.
C7 Spread the Coast & Country Canines brand	Scope out option and potential impact of expanding the Coast & Country Canines brand.	By extending its branding, messaging and engagement projects, the brand will have a wider positive impact on behavioural change. Full consideration given to potential impacts of sharing the brand.
C8 Local Nature Recovery Strategy	Ensure Bird Aware expertise is considered by Hampshire County Council in formation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).	Bird Aware Solent have specialist expertise that would contribute to a strong collaborative LNRS.
C9 Partner support	Ensure support from Partners receives appropriate recognition.	There are some Partners who are able to offer additional support to the Partnership in the form of free parking within their car parks and similar. Noting such endeavours within the Annual Report will go some way to recognising the value of their support.

Delivery Strand: Engagement

5.16 As a behaviour change project, it is vital for the Partnership to engage with coastal users to encourage 'bird aware' practices when visiting the coast. Engagement takes many forms including: face-to-face contact with Rangers; signage; digital, broadcast and print media; presentations; and leaflets. The Footprint Ecology review found that Rangers were seen as 'passionate, approachable, observant, knowledgeable, and friendly'. It also commented that the installation of signage targeted at water sports enthusiasts was a 'good example of the Partnership engaging with hard-to-reach groups.'

5.17 Threaded throughout all communications and interactions are positive messages, formatted and presented in ways supported by behaviour change science as effective for creating lasting impressions and meaningful change. The Partnership remains committed to keeping abreast of emerging behaviour change science and using it within its working practices.

5.18 Partnership staff continually seek out new engagement opportunities, be they new audiences, techniques, events, venues, resources or activities. This will continue to be a priority and will be supported by increased communications resources to further develop this key workstream and amplify its messaging.

5.19 In the coming period, the Partnership will also base priorities around the following:

	What	Why
E1 Wildlife aware guides	Focus 'code of conduct' / wildlife aware guide work on truly embedding and expanding existing initiatives for main leisure groups rather than widen to a larger number of less impactful leisure activities.	The greatest mitigation impact will be seen from changing behaviour of the main user groups – land based, watersports and dog walkers - honing in on just these key groups enables us to embed positive behaviour and keep guides updated and relevant which will require ongoing support.
E2 Audience workshops	Expand use of audience workshops.	Increased knowledge sharing to better inform its work practices and knowledge sharing.
E3 Increase communication resources	Communications requires additional staff resource and budget.	As a behaviour change programme, communication is vital for Bird Aware Solent. Communication content has the highest reach of all Bird Aware Solent's mitigation tools.
E4 Volunteers	A 2-year trial period to explore if the use of volunteers, champions, interns, work experience placements and ambassadors is feasible and to trial if considered so.	This is potentially an untapped resource that needs further exploration, both in terms of delivery and any potential associated risks.

	What	Why
E5 Education programme	Expand resources to support various forms of learning: formal or otherwise.	Delivering core messaging through a wider audience base.
E6 Supporting dog walkers	More targeted communications to the dog walking community, and incentives for them to become involved in Coast & Country Canines.	Adequately supporting this user group to make wildlife aware choices has the potential to achieve large mitigation gains. More resources will be dedicated to supporting this work.

Delivery Strand: Site-based Investment

5.20 The Partnership has developed a robust system for assessing applications for site specific project funding. This process is continually refined, not just by streamlining the application/assessment process, but also by utilising monitoring evidence from delivered projects to inform the scoring process for further rounds of funding. Officer time is provided to applicants in the pre-application stage to help shape and refine project proposals. In this way, the Partnership is able to use local experience and evidence to have more certainty on which physical measures deliver strong mitigation gains.

5.21 There is an ongoing commitment to continue refining this process, with aims to make it more agile, particularly for lower value proposals. The Partnership is also committed to working with appropriate organisations to further this work and maximise on the outcomes it is able to deliver.

5.22 In the coming period, the Partnership will also expand its activities and priorities to cover the following:

	What	Why
S1 Agile small scale project fund	10% of site-specific funds to be ring-fenced for small scale projects (£5k and under) on an agile, as-needed basis.	Allows the process to consider small scale projects outside of the application window. This will remove previous barriers to smaller meaningful mitigation measures coming forward. Robust approval processes and monitoring schedules will still apply to these projects.
S2 Additional staff resource	The site-based investment delivery strand requires additional expert staff resource.	This will ensure site-based projects are well-planned and executed. Further staff resources will enable the time-consuming creation of potential project ideas and the liaison with project partners to take them forward.

6. Project Costs and Funding

6.1 Projected costs to undertake the activities are outlined in Section 5, Five Year Plan Delivery Strands above, as per the baseline year of 2024/25 indicated in Table 1.

Item	000s
Staff provided under Service Level Agreement	869
Campaigns and Engagement Officer	64
Partnership Manager	54
Campaigns operational budget	30
Dog initiatives operational budget	30
Monitoring (including consultancy support):	37
Materials (signage)	15
Collaboration	15
Operating budget	10
Stakeholder workshops	5
Operating expenditure	**1,128**
Site Specific Project Monitoring Officer	40
Site specific projects	400
Capital commitment	**440**
Sub-total	**1,568**
Contribution to in-perpetuity fund	2,130
Total budget	**3,698**

Table 1: Projected costs for 2024/25

6.2 These activities are funded from developer contributions. The level of these has been derived by dividing the total annual project costs between the expected annual housing levels. These have been weighted to take into account bedroom numbers for planned housing and are summarised for the baseline year (2024/25) in Table 2 below. Developer contributions are revised annually in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI) and rounded upwards to the nearest pound.

6.3 From 2025/26, there will be 2 charging schedules, reflecting the different costs for those developments needing to mitigate for overwintering and breeding birds, and those only needing to mitigate for overwintering birds (this latter category make up around 1% of all expected developments during the Strategy period). These 2 schedules are depicted in Table 2, against a baseline of 2024/25.

Bedroom size	Current: 2024/25	Moves to: All year	Homes within the zone of SPA with winter birds only (less than 1% of total)
1	£465	£465*	£419*
2	£671	£671*	£604*
3	£875	£875*	£788*
4	£1,029	£1,029*	£927*
5+	£1,207	£1,207*	£1,087*
flat fee	£777	£777*	£700*

* Annual inflationary increases will continue as usual

Table 2: Developer contributions baseline year (2024/25)

6.4 Whilst this formula is appropriate for most dwellings, the option remains for Local Planning Authorities, in consultation with Natural England, to assess each application on a case-by-case basis.

6.5 These figures are recognised as an informed calculation for planned housing, and the actual number of dwellings coming forward could vary, both annually and throughout the lifetime of the Partnership. However, the package of mitigation measures in this strategy are scalable, which means that the amount of mitigation can be increased or decreased in line with actual housebuilding, and is a matter that is regularly reviewed.

6.6 There will be regular financial reviews throughout the lifetime of the Partnership to ensure that it remains on track to deliver sufficient mitigation through to the end of the in-perpetuity period.

6.7 The developer contributions are paid to Local Planning Authorities. Each Authority decides which legal mechanisms to use to secure the developer contributions from development proposals in its area and the potential for phased / staged payments in relation to specific proposals.

6.8 Planning applications should be assessed on a case-by-case basis to take into account scale, proximity to sensitive areas, locality and any other substantive factors. Some proposals will require additional mitigation to that outlined above for example if the nature of the development could lead to 'alone' impacts on designated sites in addition to 'in-combination' impacts. Developers are encouraged to hold early discussions with Natural England and the Local Planning Authority on the mitigation that will be required for their proposals.

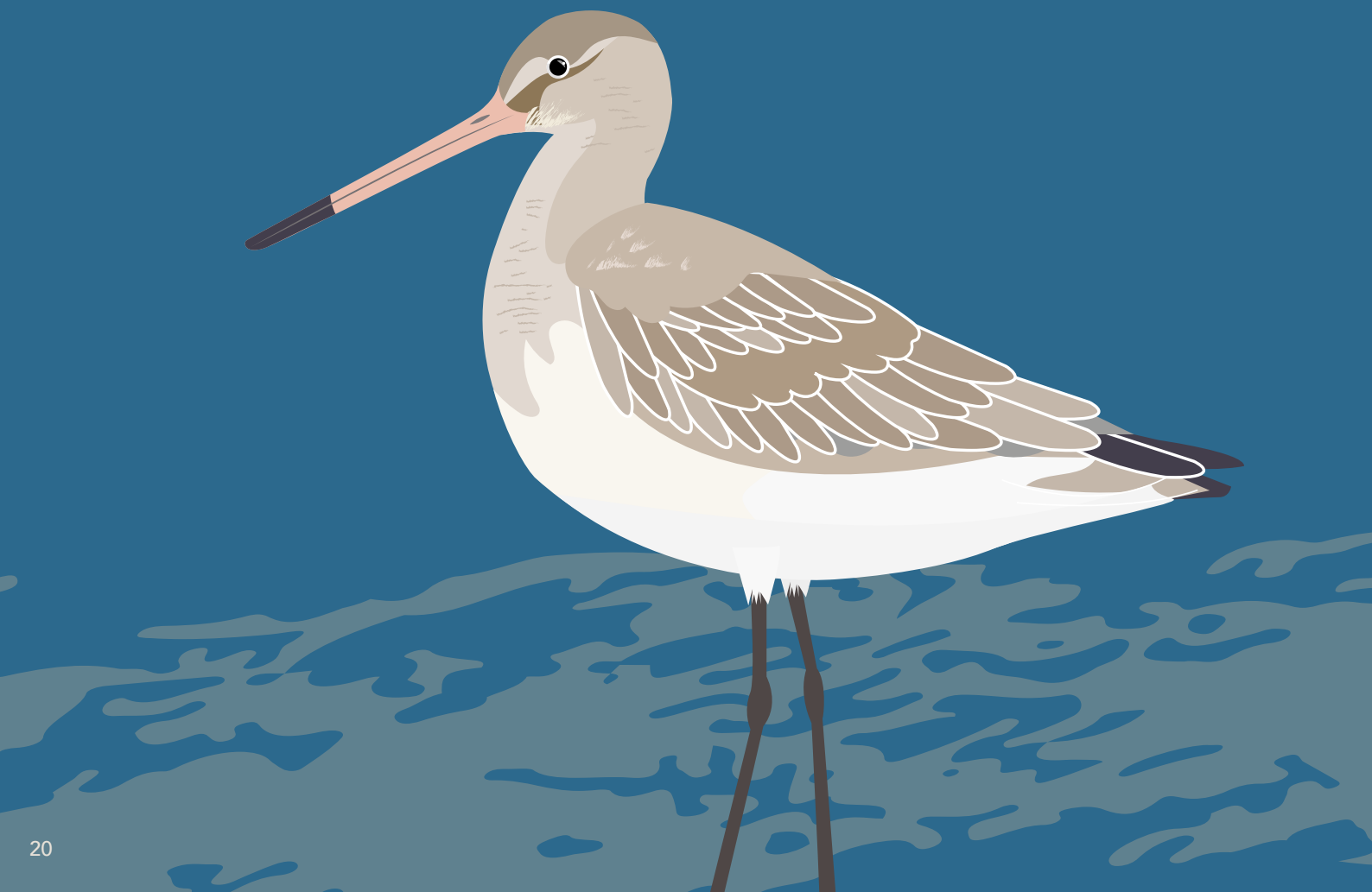
6.9 Further information related to this can be found in Appendix B.

7. Reporting and Review

7.1 This strategy, and a range of other documents and information can be seen on the Partnership's website: www.birdaware.org/Solent.

7.2 Reports submitted to the PfSH Joint Committee can be accessed on the PfSH website: www.push.gov.uk.

7.3 The Strategy seeks to provide mitigation for development planned until 2050. Therefore, in order to ensure it remains relevant, regular strategic and financial reviews will take place. These will enable lessons learnt, new best practices and variations over time to be incorporated into the Strategy, ensuring it remains relevant and impactful. Following each review, an update report will be made available on the website.



APPENDIX A

Information related to predicted housing numbers.

This Strategy has been prepared to mitigate approximately 147,500 new dwellings estimated to be planned between 2024 and 2050 within the 5.6km zone of influence. This equates to 5,674 new dwellings per annum. This estimate is derived from work undertaken with each of the Local Planning Authorities within the Bird Aware Solent zone of influence.

Each area analysed projections within their adopted and emerging Local Plans and made an assessment of the average number per annum over the planned period. This figure was then multiplied by 26 to cover the period until 2050. The resulting figure was then critically assessed by each Local Planning Authority, using local knowledge of planned development sites and land availability within their boundaries. From this work, a refined figure was presented to the Partnership for each area.

This resulted in the overall figure across the Strategy area of 147,500 new dwellings. A further technical 'sense check' was undertaken of this total figure, by comparing it to an estimated overall housing need figure for the same area. (This is based on the Government's standard method figure, and the likely split of this figure where a district is partially within the Bird Aware Solent zone of influence[3]). This comparison between the estimated planned figure and the estimated need figure over the overall Bird Aware Solent zone of influence indicates that the 147,500 figure and subsequent calculation of mitigation costs per dwelling provides a robust basis for the Strategy.

[3]Informed by the need split in the PfSH Spatial Position Statement (which covers a similar area) and further consideration of the figures for the non – PfSH areas.

APPENDIX B

Further information relating to developer contribution levels.

Application Type	
Residential annexes	These should be treated like an extension to an existing dwelling therefore mitigation is not required.
Gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople sites	Applications of this nature are treated as increases in residential development therefore are required to provide the full mitigation consistent with a dwelling.
Alteration in both bedrooms and dwelling from original permission	The number of bedrooms is only relevant once net increase in number of dwellings has been determined. Therefore, the developer will need to pay an additional contribution for the net increase in the number of dwellings.
House in multiple occupancy (HMO)	Mitigation would need to be provided for permissions for new HMOs, change of use from a C3 (dwelling house) and C4 (small HMO) to sui generis (large HMO) and increased occupancy of an existing HMO. If the HMO is sui generis (of its own kind) then the number of bedrooms for that property is used to calculate contribution. The whole property is treated as one dwelling. If the HMO is classed as C4 then each bedroom is treated as a dwelling therefore the charge will be the number of bedrooms x the 1-bedroom rate.
Holiday accommodation - caravans	Mitigation is required and the flat rate should be used, based on the nature of this kind of development. For holiday sites there should be a pro-rata reduction for conditioned closed periods if this is relevant. In the event that details related to bedroom numbers are provided, these would be charged against the sliding scale (and again made pro-rata if appropriate).
Holiday accommodation - tents	Mitigation is required and the flat rate should be used, based on the nature of this kind of development. For holiday sites there should be a pro-rata reduction for conditioned closed periods if this is relevant. In the event that details related to bedroom numbers are provided, these would be charged against the sliding scale (and again made pro-rata if appropriate).

[4]https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/9/change_of_use

Application Type	
Holiday accommodation – summertime only	Mitigation would be required for holiday accommodation which is only used during the summer breeding months. The summer fee rate should be used and with a pro-rata reduction for conditioned closed periods. Only in this instance, the summer scale of 40% would apply.
Studies	Studies on a bedroom floor are treated as bedrooms. Any room on a ground floor with an en-suite bath/shower room is considered a bedroom.
Outline planning application – number of bedrooms unknown	A formula will be added to the S106 agreement so that collection of developer contribution will be taken once the mix of bedroom numbers is known. Furthermore, for the certainty required for the Habitats Regulations the number of beds within the mix will need to be specified.
Temporary permissions	It is considered reasonable that the applicant should only be required to pay mitigation for the period that their permission lasts. As the Strategy is based around an understanding of in-perpetuity being 80 years, it is therefore logical that the applicant should pay one 80th of the fee for each year the permission is requested for. In these cases, if the bedroom number is known, then use the sliding scale, if not, then the flat rate should apply. The calculation if it is only for a proportion of the year can also be calculated on a pro-rata basis.
Temporary accommodation	Mitigation is required for this kind of development as the use is residential. The scale should be determined in the same way as residential development, with the 1-bedroom rate used for single bed units, the 2-bedroom rate used for 2 bed units and so on.
Hotels	It is likely that mitigation is required from all hotels as the type of user cannot be determined through the planning process. Any proposed bespoke approach should be discussed with the relevant planning authority and Natural England at the pre-application stage.
Older person housing – assisted living/retirement housing/ sheltered housing/extra care/ close care (C3)	Mitigation is required for this kind of development as the use is residential. The scale should be determined in the same way as residential development, with the 1-bedroom rate used for single bed units, the 2-bedroom rate used for 2 bed units and so on.

Application Type	
Care homes, Care homes which include nursing provision and Nursing Homes (C2)	Care facilities classed as C2 will need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis with the determining planning authority and Natural England as to whether contributions are required and what the scale of mitigation should be.
Self-contained student accommodation	These will need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis with the determining planning authority and Natural England. In recognition of the general absence of car parking and the inability of occupants to have pets, there are times when a reduced rate is applicable. If a reduced rate is used, the general model is that every 5 study bedrooms will be considered a unit of residential accommodation and charged accordingly (that is, 50% of the rate of the 5-bedroom property charge).