



through confirmed contributions and through monies carried forward from the Biodiversity Partnership.

- 4.5 It was agreed that the appointment of the Manager be progressed. The closing date for applications is 31<sup>st</sup> May, with interviews held on 10<sup>th</sup> June. A verbal update will be given at the meeting about this process.

The NEP Manager's key responsibilities are shown below:

- To work with the NEP Board to facilitate the preparation and delivery of the NEP Strategic Action Plan
- To support the NEP Board by convening, and facilitating Board meetings.
- To secure external funding to deliver the NEP Strategic Action Plan
- To co-ordinate the NEP Task Groups and other groups as necessary so as to ensure the delivery of the NEP strategic objectives
- To establish and maintain relationships with the wider NEP Forum so as to assist in the co-ordination of their efforts to achieve the overall strategic aims of the NEP.
- To inspire a range of stakeholders to invest in the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, at a landscape scale;
- To identify best practice from within the national Local Nature Partnership Network, and other relevant groups;
- To build a compelling evidence base on the value of the natural environment to a range of other stakeholders - particularly the economic and health sectors;
- To ensure close liaison with the Buckinghamshire Local Economic Partnership (LEP) and the Health and Well-Being Board, seeking opportunities for alignment of priorities.
- To ensure activities of the NEP are compatible with local and national policy.
- To provide regular reports, both internally and externally, as required.
- To undertake any other duties commensurate with the post.

Further details about the long term funding, operations and working details of the NEP will be provided to Members as the partnership progresses.

- 4.6 The Shadow Board discussed the development of the draft NEP Strategic Plan. This will be reviewed by the Delivery Group and presented to the next Board meeting.
- 4.7 Task groups will be set up to progress projects of particular importance. These may relate to certain government or otherwise initiatives or strategies, or to the existing Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs), which identify areas of opportunity for biodiversity improvements and enhancements. The South Bucks area has several BOAs, in particular the South Bucks Heaths and Parklands and the Colne Valley.
- 4.8 A Memorandum of Agreement has been prepared. This is shown in Appendix 3.
- 4.9 Funding had previously been agreed for the support of the Partnership for 2012 - 2015. However there was concern that some District Councils were not contributing as much as others so the funding structure has now been amended so that each District Council will contribute an equal amount of £4,000 per annum (to be reviewed after the initial year. Chiltern DC has yet to confirm this amount.)

The Council's contribution to the partnership has therefore been reduced by £1,700 per annum and it is requested that this amount be saved annually to be accumulated into the existing budget that can be used for funding potential future projects within the South Bucks area.

This project fund would ensure that South Bucks would be in a stronger position to attract partnership support and external funding for potential projects in the future.

- 4.10 Finally, the Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy (Appendix 4) has previously been reported to Members. The NEP will be key in progressing this work and intends to review the Delivery Plan.

The delivery plan is intended to be used as evidence to support infrastructure requirements in Buckinghamshire. It will feed into the county infrastructure assessments, and inform development plan/site allocations/CIL work at district level. It will be strategic, but will also add value to and be consistent with existing district GI plans where in place.

The plan will include a new section which will contain all strategic schemes for Buckinghamshire - on a 'long-list' and listed in a summary table. All schemes on the long-list will be mapped at county level.

The plan will then incorporate more detailed GI Opportunity Plans for the following areas. These are prioritised on the basis on proximity to major settlement in the county.

- Wycombe
- Burnham (Slough)
- Chalfont/Gerrards Cross/Denham
- Amersham/Chesham
- Aylesbury - Grand Union Triangle (incorporating Linear Park East, Wendover Woods & Regional Wetlands Park) TBC
- Aylesbury - Linear Park north, south & west (incorporating Hartwell & Quarrendon) TBC
- Whaddon (Milton Keynes)

Members are asked to note and endorse the continuing work on the Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Plan.

## 5. Resources, Risks and Wider Policy Implications

- 5.1 Funding for the LNP has previously been agreed for 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15.
- 5.2 The revised amounts requested for the Partnership over the next three years are set out below. These increase slightly due to inflation.

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Partnership Contributions	£4,000	£4,080	£4,160
Project Funding	£1,700	£1,730	£1,760

- 5.3 Continuing to fund the Natural Environmental Partnership will enable to Council to 'have a seat at the table' and benefit from key discussions and opportunities within the Green Infrastructure network. The Council would benefit from a wide

shared knowledge about issues such as Community Infrastructure Levy, the Localism Act etc.

- 5.4 Should the Council cease to be a Member of this partnership, it would have to make an alternative provision, for example to employ a biodiversity officer, to meet its statutory duties. This would be likely to cost much more than the amount requested for the partnership costs so membership of the partnership gives value for money to SBDC.
- 5.5 There is a risk that, if the Council does not agree to continued support and membership of this NEP, the Council will fail in its legal duty to take reasonable steps to conserve and enhance the SSSIs and other notable sites of biodiversity value in its district.
- 5.6 There is also a risk that, if the Council does not agree to support and be a member of this Partnership, the Biodiversity services throughout the County will be jeopardised as the Partnership relies on the continued funding and support of all District Councils and partners.

## 6. Recommendation

The PAG is asked to note the report and to advise on whether the amount of £1,700 saved per annum be accumulated for funding potential future projects within the South Bucks area.

Officer Contact:	Simon Gray 01895 837321 <a href="mailto:simon.gray@southbucks.gov.uk">simon.gray@southbucks.gov.uk</a>
Background Papers:	