

Briefing Note - Green Infrastructure & Recreational impact Avoidance & Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS)

Q “Funding principle agreed across the whole county, adopted last year. Is there any method by which we can get a statement on the current state of affairs and how this money was going to be spent”

GIRAMS is the Norfolk wide strategy to help off-set the impact of development (housing) upon sites of European Protected importance. Essentially it deals with visitor pressure put on these sensitive sites by extra people living in new housing. The protected sites are particularly vulnerable to dog walking. The Wash is covered, as are Dersingham Bog and Roydon Common, as Special Protected Area's (SPA's).

Previously we had our own group set up (chaired by Cllr Kunes) including NWT, RSPB, Natural England, and other interest groups, agreeing how to spend the monies we raised before the county wide Norfolk GIRAMS was set up. Cllr De Whalley is now chair, and we are currently assessing what, if any legacy funds we have left to spend. Essentially our fund was similar to GIRAMS, but only for our Borough. That was around £55 per dwelling. That group allocated funds for projects, including schemes at Roydon Common, the Plovers in Peril project at Holme etc.

The new county-wide GIRAMS is around £210 per dwelling, and that should apply across the county. We have been collecting this for some time, and have about £130,000 in the pot. Many of the other Norfolk authorities have collected very little at all, because they have been preoccupied dealing with Nutrient Neutrality, which is effectively a moratorium on new housing development. No new housing means no GIRAMS monies.

The question is correct that the principle of GIRAMS was agreed across the county at a previous Norfolk Strategic Planning Forum meeting. However, we are still trying to establish and agree the precise mechanism for spending the monies, and there is some disagreement between the county and districts who has the final say over that. That said, there has been a study (by Footprint ecology), including consultation with all the main players (NWT, RSPB etc), which is now concluding, which seeks to identify priority projects, which will inform future decisions made. So there is work being done on this issue.