



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Belfast Zoological Gardens – fund raising activities and donations to support external conservation programmes
Date:	15 January 2015
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Mark Challis, Zoo Manager

1.	Relevant Background Information
1.1	A significant proportion of Belfast Zoo's animal collection represents species that are endangered in the wild and managed as part of international inter-zoo collaborative breeding programmes. Such programmes are managed under the auspices of the European (EAZA) and World (WAZA) zoo associations, of which we are members. One of the roles of these programmes is to create conservation links between captive populations of endangered species being managed <i>ex situ</i> (ie the process of protection an endangered species outside of its natural habitat), and captive and wild populations being managed <i>in situ</i> (ie in the species natural habitat). Such links provide educational/awareness, scientific and financial support to those working in species' range states.
1.2	Under the terms of our zoo licence issued by NIEA, we are required to demonstrate that we undertake conservation activities. Such activities are epitomised by the endangered species we manage in the zoo, but we are also required to evidence support for <i>in situ</i> endangered species conservation.
1.3	The zoo receives significant requests for <i>in situ</i> funding annually, and it is prudent that we develop an agreed process and identify approved projects for support, which will also enable us to provide justification for refusal of funding for projects that are not included in an annual plan.
1.4	Fundraising for such projects is achieved by a variety of methods. Since Easter 2014, we have been receiving donations via a voluntary donation as part of entry price as per the agreed scale of charges. Additional fund

	<p>raising activities, such as collection boxes, animal birthday parties, sponsored activities and animal themed weekends with a fundraising element have proved very popular with visitors and staff, and inadvertently provides for significant and positive joined work across the various zoo departments (ie business support and marketing, front of house and zoo keeper teams). Further, via the estimates process, a small annual budget is established for donations.</p>
1.5	<p>We have recently completed a rigorous review, which involved assessing every species, mostly those currently held in the zoo, for which there are current <i>in situ</i> conservation activities for which we receive funding requests. A range of personnel from across the zoo have been part of the review process.</p>
1.6	<p>We critically challenged each species against a set of criteria, including:</p> <p><u>IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) wild status</u>, ie vulnerable, rare, endangered etc. We reasoned that our assistance should be driven towards those species most endangered in the wild;</p> <p><u>Were they held in the zoo?</u>: we reasoned that fund raising activities would be somewhat easier if the species was part of the animal collection;</p> <p><u>Was the species part of a EAZA or WAZA breeding programme?</u>: we considered that species that were managed at European or Global level represented those with the best long term options for zoo lead <i>in situ</i> conservation activities;</p> <p><u>Project endorsement</u>: we chose those projects that had endorsement from a recognised conservation body (ie UWT, NIEA, BIAZA, EAZA, WAZA, IUCN);</p> <p><u>Time project established</u>: we preferred conservation projects that had been extant for a significant period;</p> <p><u>Endowment to hold in zoo</u>: some of the (rarest) species we look after can only be held in the zoo via payment of a one off or annual management fee to the conservation programme;</p> <p><u>Clear evidence of where funds would be spent</u>: we reviewed each conservation project, its aims and objectives, and looked for clear evidence of how and where money would be spent, and ideally for regular feedback from the project on such conservation activities, which we could use for signage and use on social media for information purposes;</p> <p><u>Had we already made donations to the project?</u>: we reasoned that for some projects we had already built a relationship, and had already considered that the project was strong and worthy of funding support;</p> <p><u>Number of other supporters</u>: we considered that to maximise Belfast</p>

	<p>Zoo's impacts as potential funders, for those projects that were already heavily supported Belfast's impacts would be reduced, while for projects where there were limited numbers of participants, the impact of our support could be considerable.</p> <p><u>Cost of support:</u> we have identified a number of projects where larger donations (of ideally greater than £2000 per annum) would be appropriate, and projects where donations per annum of between £1000 and £2000 are appropriate. However, we remain mindful that, particularly currently, donations are difficult to acquire and in some years it may not be possible to both support all our chosen conservation projects, and, the value of support we provide might also be reduced.</p> <p><u>Regional mix:</u> given the comprehensive animal collection in the Zoo, of predominantly mammals and birds, with species represented from around the world and all 7 continents, we felt that it would be prudent to select 4 geographical regions where we would focus our efforts of <i>ex situ</i> support activities, and which would further bring clarity for visitors and other donators.</p>
1.7	<p>We have thus selected the following 12 projects:</p> <p>Northern Ireland (barn owls and white-tailed sea eagles); South East Asia (Asian elephants, Visayan warty pigs, Francois' langurs, Moloch gibbons, tree kangaroos); Madagascan and African primates (sifaka, lemurs and mountain gorillas); South American primates (in Brazil and Colombia).</p>
1.8	<p>Additionally, we receive a number of funding requests on an irregular basis, to support projects via small amounts of money (less than £500), for specific pieces of research or conservation projects. In the last years, such requests have included titi monkeys in Colombia, Malayan tapirs, and red pandas. Such projects fit the criteria we used as part of the review, and we considered that it might be sensible to reserve a small portion of our annual budget, outside of that detailed above, so that small scale support can be given to such projects where they fit.</p>
1.9	<p>A zoo representative has been appointed as a project owner of each project. This person, usually at curator level, has been responsible for identifying the project, and will brief relevant staff (ie front of house staff, keepers), will provide information to zoo marketing for posters, signage, web site and social media use, will collate and disseminate feedback from the projects, and will liaise with commercial teams to ensure auditable processes are in place, ie for income collection, reconciliation and distribution, should specific fundraising activities over and above the donations at entrance and budgeted money be undertaken.</p>
1.10	<p>We intend to make one annual payment per project each year.</p>
1.11	<p>We intend to review the programme annually to ensure the continued</p>

	<p>support for appropriate programmes is regularly checked, and to ensure that any new projects for relevant species are identified and compared against those we currently work with. An idea for 2015/16 is that, via signage at the entrance, we inform visitors of the projects we have selected and ask them, via a disk system, to select the project they would prefer that their donated money is given to. Such a scheme works in supermarkets, and might encourage additional 'buy in' from visitors. It is unlikely that such signage will be in place until the start of the next financial year.</p>
--	---

2.	Key Issues
2.1	Under the terms of our zoo licence issued by NIEA, and via our memberships of EAZA and WAZA, we are required to demonstrate that we undertake or support <i>in situ</i> conservation activities.
2.2	A detailed and rigorous process has recently been completed in which we analysed the most relevant projects that we might be support.
2.3	In order to provide focus for our fundraising activities, we have selected 4 regions from around the world, and identified 12 projects where funding would be appropriate.
2.4	We have further identified that a small reserve budget for project requests for funding of less than £500 would be valuable, and would allow some flexibility for requests of an urgent nature that fit our established criteria.
2.5	Arrangements are in place for zoo representatives to act as project owners, and for an annual review of our funding commitments.

3.	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>A total of approximately £20,000 will be available at the end of this financial year from which we will be able to make grants available to the selected projects. This represents income from donations as part of visitors' entrance fees, funds in the 2014/15 budget, and some deferred donations from the 2013/14 budget.</p> <p>It is proposed that, for the end of this financial year (ie 2014/15) small grants (£1000) are made to the white-tailed sea eagle, tree kangaroo, lemurs and mountain gorilla projects. It is proposed that grants of £1500 are made to barn owl, Asian elephant, Visayan warty pig and Moloch gibbon projects. It is also proposed that grants of £2500 are made to Brazilian primates, François' langurs, sifaka and Colombian primate conservation projects.</p> <p>All grants are of an appropriate size to assist each project and their aims.</p>

	<p>An annual review of conservation projects will take place on this basis.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>There are no immediate resource HR implications, zoo staff remain committed to this vital component of the zoo's work and willing to undertake additional duties to support these functions.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u></p> <p>There are no other implications identified at this time.</p>
--	--

4.	Equality Implications
4.1	It is considered that there are no equality or good relations implications.

5.	Recommendations
5.1	Committee is asked to approve the approach taken to support conservation activities in Belfast Zoo.
5.2	The Committee is asked to approve the programme of donations in 2015/16 as outlined in 1.6 and agree that an annual review process will be put in place to support future donations.

6.	Decision Tracking
6.1	None required.

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	<p>EAZA: European Association of Zoos and Aquaria</p> <p>WAZA: World Association of Zoos and Aquaria</p> <p>NIEA: Northern Ireland Environment Agency</p> <p>IUCN: international Union for the Conservation of Nature</p> <p>UWT: Ulster Wildlife Trust</p> <p>BIAZA: British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquaria</p>

8.	Documents Attached
	None