



**Council**

29 April 2014

**Matter for Decision**

Title: **Greening of the Borough – Access to Funding Opportunities**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report has come out of the meeting of the Greening of the Borough Working Group that took place on 2 April 2014. It is being presented to this Council meeting due to its urgency.
- 1.2 The report seeks approval to establish a protocol that will enable external funding to be applied for as expediently as possible within set parameters.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 1.3 That the Brocks Hill Manager in consultation with the Chair of the Greening of the Borough Working Group, Director of Services and Chief Financial Officer is able to access a fund of up to £25,000 in order for the Council to take full expedient advantage of external match funding opportunities as they may arise.
- 1.4 That any delegated spend would then be the subject of a report to the next Service Delivery Committee
- 1.5 That the formal protocol which will enable the Greening of the Borough Working Group to access the Greening of the Borough Reserve is agreed
- 1.6 That the Council agrees a Brocks Hill “Brand and Vision Statement” that will assist the Council when applying for external match funding.

“Brocks Hill becomes recognised as Leicestershire’s premier country park and centre for natural history and the environment that the whole borough embraces and enjoys”

The centre would be known as simply “Brocks Hill” as a brand name from the public’s perspective.

## **3. Information**

- 3.1 At the meeting of the Greening of the Borough Working Group on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014 the Brocks Hill Manager reported that there were external funding opportunities available to the Council to assist in the development of Brocks

Hill. Increasingly, these opportunities have shorter lead in and application times.

3.2 There was a concern at the Working Group that the Council could therefore be missing out on external match funding opportunities at a time when its own finances are very restricted yet it has ambitious plans to develop Brocks Hill as part of Greening of the Borough.

3.3 It was agreed at that Working Group that as this full Council was the next decision making meeting to take place, a report should be presented that seeks approval for a protocol to be put in place that will enable match funding to be accessed more expediently.

3.4 Greening of the Borough is one of the Council's core priorities and consequently Council agreed to set up a funding reserve of £180,000 in order to implement its strategy.

3.5 In instances where an appropriate match funding opportunity presents itself then a quicker response time would be required in order to take full advantage this.

3.6 To cover these specific instances it is therefore recommended that £25,000 of the £180,000 Greening of the Borough Reserve is set aside for the Brocks Hill Manager to be able to access in order to take advantage of and draw down additional external funding. This would only be done in full consultation with the Chair of the Greening of the Borough Working Group and the Director of Services. Any spending would then subsequently be the subject of a full report to the next Service Delivery Committee.

3.7 In addition a formal protocol has never been agreed which sets out how the Working Group should access the remainder of the Greening of the Borough Reserve in order to fund larger scale initiatives.

3.8 Members are therefore also asked as part of this report to provide guidance on if this falls totally within the remit of the Service Delivery Committee or does that Committee in turn need to seek further approval from the Policy, Finance and Development Committee.

3.9 It has also recently become apparent that it would assist the Brocks Hill Manager and place the Council in the best possible position to take advantage of matched funding opportunities if the Council agrees and has a clear "Brand and Vision Statement" for Brocks Hill. The Greening of the Borough Working Group is seeking Council's approval for the following:

"Brocks Hill becomes recognised as Leicestershire's premier country park and centre for natural history and the environment that the whole borough embraces and enjoys"

The centre would therefore be known as simply "Brocks Hill" as a brand name from the publics' perspective.

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**Background Papers:-**

<b>Implications</b>	
Financial (JD)	The Council has established a specific Greening of the Borough Reserve which contains £180,000. This report does not recommend any specific spend from that reserve at this time other than to put in place a protocol to allocate up to £25,000 through a delegation scheme.
Risk (JD)	CR1; Decreasing Financial Resources
Equalities (KG)	No significant implications
Legal (KG)	The Council need to ensure compliance with any match funding criteria