

## Decision under Delegated Powers

### Officer Requesting Decision

Senior Ecological Officer

### Officer Making the Decision

Head of Planning and Regeneration

### Recommendation

1. To enter into a collaborative agreement with Natural England in order to receive seedcorn funding from Natural England to undertake work for the project "Charnwood Nature POSitive" .

### Reason

1. The purpose of the collaborative agreement is to facilitate investigative work into the potential for changes in open space and roadside verge management practice to deliver both cost savings and biodiversity net gain in the Borough of Charnwood. It is anticipated that the project findings will help to inform future decision making about open space management in the Borough.

### Authority for Decision

Delegation is afforded to heads of service to submit bids for and enter agreements for grants and offer funding sources up to a value of £200k per annum under the constitution

### Decision and Date



3 December 2020

### Background

Natural England have made funding available to organisations in the East Midlands to support improvements for nature conservation outside protected sites.

Following internal discussions about the potential for changes in open space and roadside verge management to deliver both cost savings and biodiversity enhancements, a project proposal to quantify the benefits of such changes was presented to Natural England. Undertaking such an investigation will enable the council to understand whether such initiatives should be given strategic priority and, for example, whether it could be appropriate to use biodiversity offsetting contributions to facilitate changes to open space

management. Natural England have agreed to fund an element of the project by providing a financial contribution of £7,300 provided the Council match funds this grant.

The deadline for delivery 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2021 at which point the funding from Natural England will be released following the provision by the council of a project report.

It is proposed that the funding be used to employ a project officer to conduct the bulk of the project research under the supervision and direction of the Senior Ecological Officer. It is proposed to recruit a project officer via a tendering process

### **Comments from HR**

N/A

### **Reason for Urgency**

Natural England have indicated that the funding must be allocated before the end of November 2020 after which time it may no longer be available.

### **Financial Implications**

The project will be delivered through a combination of funding from Natural England and existing council resources. The initial cost of funding the project officer post will be borne by the council and reimbursed by Natural England following submission of the project report. The total project cost is £13,300 comprised of £7,300 grant from NE to cover external staff costs and projected internal staff time, projected to be equivalent to £6,000. The contributions to the project by CBC staff can be accommodated within their normal roles and so there is no financial implication associated with this element of the project.

### **Risk Management**

The risks associated with the delivery of the Action Plan and proposed actions to mitigate those risks are set out in the table below.

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions Planned
It is not possible to identify a suitable project officer with all the specialist skills required to perform the role	Remote	Minor	The work is assigned to more than one project officer according to their specialism
The final report is not delivered and consequently the grant funding is lost	Remote	Minor	Ongoing project management and review ensure that work needed to complete the report is spread throughout

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions Planned
			the duration of the project

Key Decision:

No

Background Papers:

Collaborative agreement