

# Green Places Fund Briefing for Parks Core Cities Group

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## 1 Introduction

This paper has been produced after a meeting of the Parks Core Cities Group and GreenSpace on 9<sup>th</sup> December to give more detail on the proposed structure and implementation of the Green Places Fund.

It was agreed Core City colleagues would review the paper and return comments and queries to GreenSpace to allow a revised paper to be produced.

The city wide Green Places Fund fits into a Green Places Fund 'suite' of income and support generating initiatives that GreenSpace is developing to benefit the green space sector and help sustain quality parks and green spaces. We aim to ensure this suite of initiatives have synergy and mutual benefit but are also capable of functioning as 'stand-alone' options and viable in their own right to mitigate overall risk.

## 2 Where do we want to be? What does success look like?

The Green Places Fund has a national profile and is recognised by the sector and key influencers as contributing to significant improvements to parks and green spaces and the expansion of the grass roots network of community groups and forums that support the sector.

The Green Places Fund is seen as a partnership between land managers, private sector, public sector and community and in each area is backed by a cohort of 21<sup>st</sup> century parks philanthropists who are acting as advocates for green space.

A network of local Green Places Funds exist across the UK that are managed centrally by GreenSpace that support quality green space with substantial improvements to urban areas of deprivation/disadvantage (urban being the initial main focus).

Private sector leaders/benefactors are recognised as the 21<sup>st</sup> century parks/green space philanthropists supporting the work started by their Victorian predecessors.

## 3 How would the City-wide Green Places Fund work in practice?

### 3.1 Framework

It is recognised that for the fund to be successful in each core city a degree of flexibility in fund delivery will be required to respond to local context, circumstance and priorities. Individual funds must be capable of moving at different speeds and be able to adapt to changing operating environments.

The framework below therefore does not set out to be prescriptive but proposes a shape and direction of travel for the fund. Ideally there would need to be a number of prerequisites in place to make the fund viable in each city/borough:

- A city wide friends forum committed to participating or the commitment to develop a friends forum
- Local authority senior officer and political endorsement
- Business sector support and ideally a business sector champion for the fund
- The development of a fund board to oversee the fund and approve projects
- A staff resource to recruit business sponsors and manage/co-ordinate the fund in partnership with GreenSpace

A flow chart is shown at Appendix 2 that shows key precursor processes to set up the fund.

### 3.2 Governance

Each individual City wide fund would be overseen by fund board, responsible for the governance of the fund within their locale.

Whilst not being prescriptive on the make-up of individual boards and recognising their need to reflect local circumstances, the following structure is suggested:

- The board is chaired by a representative from the local business sector (a business sector champion) Ideally someone with the relevant local gravitas to promote the fund.
- Chair of city-wide friends forum and other forum representatives
- Other business representatives including Chamber of Commerce
- Senior officer of local authority parks department
- Representatives of local green space NGO's
- Project co-ordinator- acting as secretary to board
- Local media/newspaper editor

It is suggested that to develop and sustain the confidence of the business community and other sponsors that the board is chaired by a representative of the business sector. The relevant council should be represented as the major land manager of public space and to ensure there is effective synergy between funded projects and the strategic management of parks and green spaces. There will also be a need to ensure that projects, where they have a maintenance implication, can be sustained by either the council or other mechanisms

The constituency of the board will need careful consideration in each city. It may at this stage be counter-productive for the relevant council to have a high profile on the board as this may risk a perception from potential funders that the Green Places Fund is an alternative tax raising mechanism.

Councillor representation on the board will also need further exploration as this may be seen externally as politicising the fund.

### 3.3 Stakeholder Mapping and Management

All of the board are critical stakeholders. The wider business community will also be key to the success of the fund and will need to be effectively nurtured to give sustainability to the fund. It is suggested a stakeholder mapping and communications plan is undertaken in each city.

### 3.4 Project application process

Viable costed parks and green space projects or programmes that need support would be identified by NGOs, Council, businesses, friends groups within the city. It is suggested that these initially vary in cost from £500-£50,000 to give a range of fundable projects. To ensure the project has a community focus, ownership and support, each project should be endorsed by the relevant 'friends of/community group on the project form. Projects would be initially screened by the project coordinator to ensure they fit the fund criteria and have financial rigour/viability.

### 3.5 Project Selection, Approval Tracking and Evaluation

The fund board would be responsible for approving proposals We are currently developing a process based on previous successful grant giving mechanisms in the sector.

#### **Broad Outline- What will it fund?**

1. Park and open space improvements
2. Community activities
3. Climate change adaptation/resilience
4. Health and wellbeing initiatives
5. Sustainability initiatives
6. Bio-diversity
7. Play and access to green environments
8. Knowledge and skills

### 3.6 Donation of Funds and Specificity

Ideally we would hope that businesses would donate predominantly into the city-wide fund as opposed to donating to a specific site to give the board more freedom in fund allocation. This would also avoid too many small amounts of funding being 'trapped' in a range of sites and not resulting in fruition of viable projects.

It is proposed that a fund allocation hierarchy is developed;

1. City-wide Fund
2. Specific Parks
3. Specific Projects

It will also be important to ensure that funding is new funding and not diverted from current initiatives eg 'City In-bloom' activity.

### 3.7 Support from National Green Places Fund and Other Funding Streams

If significant corporate and/or legacy funding is secured at a national level, a mechanism to ensure equitable distribution between city-wide funds will be developed to ensure more advanced funds do not gain disproportionate funding advantage.

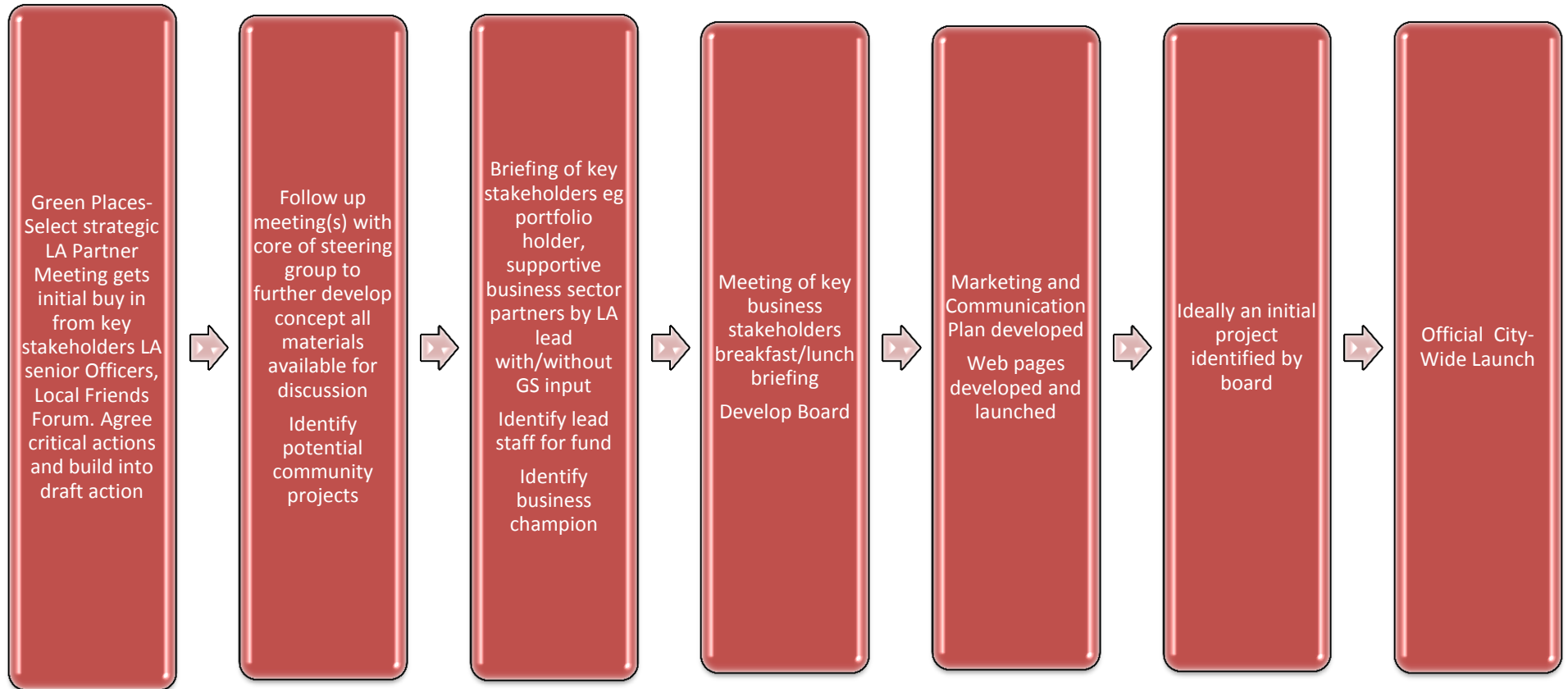
The City-wide Fund may also be an effective vehicle to leverage other funding streams including CIL and public health funding.

## 4 Appendix 1 Core Cities Action Plan

There are a number of key actions required if the fund is to be launched in May 2012 which was the ambition of the Core Cities Group in December. This will need more detailed development based on returns from this briefing paper

Action	Lead	Timeframe
Draft 'Core Cities Briefing' paper written and circulated	GreenSpace	23 <sup>rd</sup> Dec
Contact core cities unable to attend December meeting to discuss briefing background?	Paul	Dec/Early Jan
Track-change responses from all core cities to GreenSpace	Core Cities	Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> January
Revised Paper produced and circulated	GreenSpace	Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> Feb
Meeting GreenSpace/Core Cities to agree action plan, including communication plan and political buy in	Core Cities/ GreenSpace	w/c 13th Feb
Develop detailed action plan with key milestones for each participating city	Individual City /GreenSpace	20 <sup>th</sup> Feb-23 <sup>rd</sup> Mar
Confirm political commitment	Core Cities	By early Mar
Official Launch	Core Cities/GreenSpace	20 <sup>th</sup> May

## 5 Appendix 2 City Wide Fund Topline Process Map



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