

Committee(s)	Dated:
Health and Wellbeing Board-For decision Open Spaces City Gardens Committee-For decision	21.09.18 02.10.18
Subject: Voluntary smoke-free space in Finsbury Circus	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Children and Community Services	For Decision
Report author: Tizzy Keller, Strategy Officer- Health and Children	

Summary

Finsbury Circus has been closed due to Crossrail works and is due to be returned to the City in October 2018. The City Gardens team are currently planning the use and design of the reopened space and considering how it can better cater to the needs of children and families to increase use by this group.

This report seeks to gain Member support for the implementation of a voluntary smoke free space in Finsbury Circus when the full space is reopened to the public. It outlines the benefits of implementing a voluntary smoke-free ban in this area including denormalising smoking, reducing smoking related litter and increasing potential for use of the space for leisure and recreational activity.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Endorse the implementation of another voluntary smoke free green spaces in the City in Finsbury Circus when it reopens.

Main Report

Background

1. In May 2014, the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) agreed to trial voluntary smoke free spaces in four children's playgrounds in the City. Following the successful implementation of these spaces, the Health and Wellbeing Board agreed to include the aim to explore options for extending this scheme and implementing more voluntary smoke free spaces in the City in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-20.
2. In September 2015 the HWBB rejected the recommendation from the 2014 'Better Health for London report' to ban smoking in the City's green spaces.

However, it was agreed that the board would seek to expand smoke free children's spaces as new play areas are developed in the City.

3. Finsbury Circus is the biggest green space in the Square Mile. It is currently closed for Crossrail construction. The City Corporation are due to get this space back in October 2018 and hope to reopen the full space in early 2020.

Current Position

4. The Public Health team have been in conversation with the City Gardens team to discuss the feasibility of expanding the voluntary smoke free scheme in the City's green spaces. Finsbury Circus was chosen as the best trial area as it is currently partially closed to the public and will be closed in its entirety for a period during the development of the new garden. During this time it will not be used by smokers and will not require them to change their behaviour when it reopens as a smoke free space. Additionally, it is the biggest green space in the Square Mile and so provides the best opportunity for leisure and physical activity.
5. While evidence is mixed regarding whether second hand smoke in open spaces poses a direct risk to health, there are a number of other benefits of implementing a voluntary smoking ban in Finsbury Circus. These include:
 - To support the denormalisation of smoking. When smoking is made less visible it is made less normal and less convenient and contributes to fewer people starting smoking, and more stopping. The City Garden's team plan to incorporate children's play equipment into Finsbury Circus when it re-opens and a lack of adults smoking will set a good example.
 - To reduce smoking-related litter and the threat of cigarette ends, which are non-biodegradable and toxic to children, wildlife and the environment. Currently the City gardeners spend a significant proportion of their time and resources clearing up cigarette butts. An initiative like this would save both time and resource.
 - To offer the potential for increased use of parks and recreation areas. When it reopens, Finsbury Circus will be the biggest green space in the Square Mile. This is a space provides residents and workers for physical and leisure activities. Cigarette litter will make this space less appealing for this use.
 - To reduce fire risk
6. In Bristol, voluntary smoke free spaces have been implemented in two of their biggest public squares - Millennium and Anchor Square. These spaces have largely been positively received. The team who implemented the initiative in Bristol noted that a beneficial outcome was that they raised awareness of the impacts of smoking in public and started a conversation about how this impacts the way the spaces are used and who uses them.
7. The City Gardens team are exploring options for how Finsbury Circus can best be utilised for all groups, including children and young people, to increase use by

this group. It is important that this space is children friendly and that smoking is denormalised.

Proposals

8. This report seeks to gain support from the Health and Wellbeing Board to make Finsbury Circus a voluntary smoke free space.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

9. This proposal supports the following aims of the aims of the Corporate plan:
 - Contribute to a flourishing society
 - People enjoy good health and wellbeing
 - Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need
 - Shape outstanding environments
 - We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment
 - Our spaces are secure resilient and well-maintained.

Cost Implications

As there will be no enforcement involved in these smoke free spaces, the costs associated with it will be minimal. The only expenses are expected to be the cost of the signs and potentially some marketing activity.

A lack of cigarette litter in Finsbury Circus would save resources for the City Gardens team as currently a significant part of the gardeners' time is spent cleaning up cigarette litter.

Health Implications

This initiative would support the priorities of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy of a health urban environment, promoting healthy behaviours and giving every child the best start in life.

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