

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Open Spaces, City Gardens and West Ham Park	25th April 2012	
Subject: City Gardens Management Plan 2011-16	Public	
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Decision	
<p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>This report sets out a summary of the comments received during the recent consultation process on the Management Plan (2011-2016) for City Gardens. Consultation lasted from December to March and included a broad range of stakeholders. All comments received were supportive of the Draft Pan and some respondents provided very specific feedback on certain issues, for example biodiversity or sustainability. A table was produced (Appendix 1) listing the responses and explaining where these comments have been included, if appropriate, in the revised draft. Finally, this report seeks your approval to adopt the attached final draft document as the City Gardens Management Plan for the next 5 years.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>It is recommended that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The attached draft Management Plan (2011-2016) for City Gardens is adopted (subject to the substitution of up to date financial information when available). 		

Main Report

Background

1. The draft City Gardens Management Plan set out the vision, objectives and priorities for the management of the City's Open Spaces. It brought together the key actions from other strategic documents such as the Open Spaces strategy, City Biodiversity Action Plan and draft Tree Strategy, outlining how they will be delivered.
2. Officers prepared an accessible and easy to read document describing how the gardens, churchyards and open spaces in the Square Mile are managed and outlined the key objective proposals for the next five years. On the 5th December 2011 Members approved the draft City Gardens Management plan and agreed it for public consultation.
3. Consultation began in December 2011 and was completed in March 2012. A four page summary document was circulated to residents, local schools, libraries and businesses so that a broad range of views and comments were

obtained. The plan was also publicised through the garden noticeboards, 'What's New' newsletter and website. A full copy of the Management Plan was also made available in the Members reading room, housing estate offices and libraries. A consultation exercise was carried out with the members of the City Gardens Team to gather their views and expertise.

Current Position

4. Given the breadth of consultation and the timescale, the number of respondents was relatively few. Comments received ranged from broadly supportive to very specific, the latter proving especially useful. The full range of comments can be viewed at Appendix 1, along with a brief explanation as to whether the comment was included in the revised draft strategy, the reason why and whereabouts within the document. Appendix 2 provides details of the staff consultation.

Proposals

5. The vision for the management plan is: "The creation of a network of high quality and inspiring open spaces which help ensure an attractive, healthy, sustainable and socially cohesive place for the City's communities and visitors."
6. To achieve this vision, the importance of working towards an agreed national standard for good practice in the management of parks and green spaces has been recognised. By adapting the Green Flag Award recommendations for a successful park, eight key service objectives have been identified for the City Gardens:
 - i. Well managed spaces
 - ii. A welcoming City
 - iii. Healthy, safe and secure environment
 - iv. Well maintained and clean City Gardens
 - v. Sustainable City Gardens
 - vi. Spaces that address conservation and heritage
 - vii. A City where community involvement is encouraged
 - viii. Well marketed and promoted City Open Spaces
7. Through working to these objectives, we aim to achieve Green Flag status for a number of our eligible City Gardens and churchyards. These service objectives will be upheld in all of our City spaces and high standards maintained for the life of this Management Plan.
8. The draft management plan is divided in to three parts.

- i. The first details how the City delivers the eight key service objectives mentioned above.
 - ii. The second part provides an introduction to the different categories of Open Space that are owned or maintained by the City Gardens Section and lists the objectives for these gardens, churchyards and open spaces.
 - iii. Part three contains site specific action plans for those sites which are designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC's) and those sites being proposed for SINC designation. It details the unique attributes of each site, along with specific action plans describing ways in which these will be positively managed to improve and enhance their condition.
9. The intended life expectancy of the City Gardens Management Plan is 5 years, and the document will be reviewed throughout this period.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. The City Gardens Management Plan will help to deliver the Community Strategy goal of supporting its communities, with Objective 7: a City where community involvement is encouraged as this will result in an increasing number of volunteer and educational activities for the City's community.
11. The plan will also protect, promote and enhance our environment through Objective 6, where conservation and heritage is addressed. Wildlife will be monitored and habitats enhanced to encourage biodiversity in the Square Mile.
12. The creation of the Management Plan will enable priorities and policies to be drawn together from both the Open Spaces Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan. This is a key project in the Open Spaces Business Plan for 2011-14.

Financial Implications

13. No additional financial resources are required, based on current budgets. In the event of further budget reductions, the ability of the City Gardens team to deliver all of the aspirations within the plan may be compromised and will be dependent on the resources available. The Management Plan prioritises actions ensuring the most efficient use of those resources. The plan will also be a useful tool in securing external funding to help support the work that is carried out in the gardens and open spaces of the Square Mile.

Conclusion

14. The completion and adoption of a comprehensive Management Plan for the City Gardens is an important milestone in the ongoing development and improvement of the City's green spaces. Through the consultation process undertaken over the past three months, we are now confident that the Plan is as representative as possible of the views of staff and users.
15. The Plan now provides a clear document setting out a wide range of information on day to day operations, as well as policy guidance in key areas, and a clear vision for the City Gardens for the next five years and beyond.

Background Papers:

- City Gardens Management Plan 2011-16 – Draft (5/12/11)

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Consultation Comments Matrix
- Appendix 2: City Gardens Team – Consultation Exercise
- Appendix 3: City Gardens Management Plan 2011-16 – final draft

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