

Committee:	Date:
Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee	11 September 2017
Subject:	Public
City Gardens Management Plan 2017-22	
Report of:	For Decision
Director of Open Spaces	

Summary

This report sets out a summary of the comments received during the recent consultation process on the Management Plan (2017-22) for City Gardens. Consultation lasted from May to July and included a broad range of stakeholders. All comments received were supportive of the Draft Plan 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 (Appendix 2) as the City Gardens Management Plan for the next 5 years.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Adopt the attached draft Management Plan (2017-22) for City Gardens.

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 brings together the key actions from other strategic documents such as the Open Space Strategy, City Biodiversity Action Plan and the City of London 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 objectives proposed for the next five years. On the 12 May 2017, Members approved the draft City Gardens Management Plan and agreed it for public consultation.
3. Consultation began in May and was completed in July 2017. Links to the document were 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, City Gardens e-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 helpful. 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 location within the document.

Proposals

5. The vision for the management plan is: "The creation of a network of high quality and inspiring open spaces which helps 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, seven key service objectives have been identified for the City Gardens, grouped under three themed action plans:

Action Plan 1: Horticulture and open space management

Green Flag Award criteria:

- 1: A welcoming place
- 2: Healthy, safe and secure
- 3: Well maintained and clean

Action Plan 2: Environmental responsibility

Green Flag Award criteria:

- 4: Environmental management
- 5: Biodiversity, landscape and heritage

Action Plan 3: Community involvement and communication

Green Flag Award criteria:

- 6: Community Involvement
- 7: Marketing and communication

7. Action Plan 1 will ensure that high standards of grounds maintenance will be delivered in all of our green spaces, including those that we manage on behalf

of others through Service Level Agreements, and those new spaces that are yet to be created.

8. Action Plan 2 seeks to ensure that the team operates responsibly with regard to use of the earth's limited resources, in all of the work we undertake. This section therefore includes themes as diverse as using sustainable plant materials, how we manage our waste, and how the team can contribute to other City of London policy documents such as noise reduction and Low Emission Neighbourhoods.
9. Action Plan 3 sets out how the City Gardens team engage with our stakeholders, including working with our Friends group, welcoming volunteers, creating a healthy environment for all our users, and providing an interesting and engaging environment through events and activities.
10. The intended lifespan of the latest City Gardens Management Plan is 5 years, and the document will be reviewed throughout this period to ensure it remains fit for purpose and that progress is being made against the action plans.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

11. The City Gardens Management Plan supports the City of London Corporate Plan, specifically Key Policy Priority 5 (KPP5): Increasing the outreach and impact of the City's cultural, heritage and leisure contribution to the life of London and the Nation.
12. The creation of a Management Plan actively contributes to three of the five objectives in the Open Spaces Departmental Business Plan, specifically OSD1: Protect and conserve the ecology, biodiversity and heritage of our sites; OSD3: Enrich experiences by providing high quality and engaging, visitor, educational and volunteering opportunities; and OSD4: Improve the health and wellbeing of the community through access to green space and recreation. The Management Plan is also one of the key actions to achieve under objective OSD1.

Implications

13. **Financial implications** - 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 summer, 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 supporting the day to day operations of the team, as well as policy guidance in key areas, and a clear vision for the City Gardens for the next five years and beyond.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Consultation feedback
- Appendix 2 – City Gardens Management Plan 2017-22

Background Papers:

Committee Report – City Gardens Draft Management Plan 2017-22 (May 2017)

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