

OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS **Wednesday, 11 October 2017**

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Wednesday, 11 October 2017 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Graeme Smith (Chairman)
Oliver Sells QC (Deputy Chairman)
Alderman Ian Luder
Wendy Mead (Chief Commoner)
Deputy Philip Woodhouse (Ex-Officio Member)
Caroline Haines

Officers:

Martin Rodman	- Superintendent, West Ham Park and City Gardens
Alison Elam	- Group Accountant, Chamberlain's Department
Natasha Dogra	- Town Clerk's Department
Colin Buttery	- Director of Open Spaces & Heritage

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Jeremy Simons, Karina Dostalova and Michael Welbank.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

Resolved – that the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record.

4. OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENTAL RISK REGISTER

Members had previously expressed dissatisfaction with the way that risks are presented using the departmental summary risk register alongside the divisional risk registers. Officers believe this is because the current departmental summary risk register does not provide sufficient detail. The report outlines alternative options for the presentation of departmental risks. Members were asked to consider the options, and select one which can then be trialled.

The Open Spaces Department currently reports on risk using a summary departmental risk register and divisional risk registers for each division. The summary risk register represents the top 5 or 6 cross cutting or most serious issues facing the department. These summary entries point to the detail contained within the divisional risk registers. This approach has not been popular with Members and so alternative presentations of risk are now presented for Members to consider.

Recent discussions have identified two further risks which should be included on our risk registers: historic landscapes and safeguarding. It has been identified that a number of our historic landscapes and features could be at a risk of decline or of further decline in their condition. Members noted that capital projects are being considered to mitigate this risk. Safeguarding was not previously included on the departmental risk register as it is reflected on the corporate register. This is not felt to be a sufficient so it will be now added to the departmental risk register. The Director is confident that the department is managing this risk well having undertaken “train the trainer” session to prepare staff in the Learning Team to deliver safeguarding training across the department. This is in addition the online training available corporately. These risks will be added to the revised risk register once the new format has been agreed by Members. Members may also like to note that the impact of terrorism at Tower Bridge has now been incorporated into the departmental risk register.

Resolved – that Members approved to trial **Option 2:** Detailed divisional risk registers only. This option would do away with the summary departmental risk register and just present the divisional risk registers. This could increase Committee focus on the risks as impacting on the individual divisions. The Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee would only receive the Parks & Gardens risk register, which it is jointly responsible for with the West Ham Park Committee. The Committee could, if it wished, receive copies of all divisional risk registers annually to satisfy itself it the Committee” strategic role, that risk is well managed across the department.

Option 3: Departmental risk register which reflects actions from divisional risk registers and divisional risk registers. This option retains a summary risk register reflecting the top 5 or 6 key departmental issues, but populates the actions with the actions from each of the relevant divisional risks entries. This option has been trailed and is presented at Appendix 2. This approach has the advantage of drawing Members of this Committee’s attention to the key strategic issues, whilst allowing Members to “drill down” and see what actions are being taken at each division

5. **YEAR 1 REVIEW OF LEARNING IN OPEN SPACES**

Members noted that Green Spaces, Learning Places, the Open Spaces Department’s new innovative learning programme, was launched in April 2016 and has reached over 45,000 children, young people and adults in the first year

of delivery. This programme represents a key method for the City of London to contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents of some of London's most deprived communities through connecting them more powerfully to their local green spaces.

The programme has achieved overwhelming success as highlighted in the first year

evaluation report. However, the future of the project remains at risk due to uncertainty over the long term funding arrangements for the core areas of the work.

Resolved – that Member received the report.

6. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE REPORT

Members noted an update from the Superintendent of City Gardens in relation to activities taking place across various green spaces. The Committee noted that the budgets for both City Gardens and Bunhill Fields are in line with anticipated profile of expenditure for this time of year. Of the four Carry Forwards requested from the departmental City Fund underspend 2016/17, three were approved. Consequently improvement projects will take place this coming winter/spring at West Smithfield, Cleary and Tower Hill Gardens. The request for funding to undertake planting improvements at St. Dunstan's in the West was rejected.

City Gardens enjoyed a success in this year's London in Bloom awards:

- City of London – Overall winner in the Town category (based on population size)
- St Olave's Churchyard, Hart Street – Gold and overall winner of Churchyard of the year award.
- Beech Gardens, the Barbican Estate – won Gold in the Small Park/Garden category
- St Dunstan in the East – also won Gold in the Small Park/Garden category.

Resolved – that the update be received.

7. CITY GARDENS MANAGEMENT PLAN 2017-22

Members noted 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 listing the responses and explaining where these comments have been included, if appropriate, in the revised

draft. Members approval was sought to adopt the attached final draft document as the City Gardens Management Plan for the next 5 years.

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.” 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.

It was drawn to Members’ attention that related documents and strategies were listed within the management plan.

Resolved – that Members adopt the attached draft Management Plan (2017-22) for City Gardens.

8. GREENING CHEAPSIDE: ST. PAUL'S TUBE STATION AREA AND ST. PETER WESTCHEAP CHURCHYARD IMPROVEMENTS

Members noted that Greening Cheapside project was identified as a high priority in the Cheapside and Guildhall Area Enhancement Strategy (adopted by the City in 2015) with the objective of enhancing greening and re-landscaping in the area. This project was developed with the active support of the Cheapside Business Alliance (CBA) and the Diocese of London. They have been consulted on its development and are in support of the proposals outlined in this report. The CBA has also contributed financially to the project at Gateway 1 and 2 stage, and a further £100,000 contribution to deliver detailed designs for this next stage has been secured.

There are a number of current corporate priorities in the area which the project would contribute to including improving connections into the emerging Culture Mile and security of the City. Completed enhancements in the area include improvements to the former St. Paul’s Churchyard coach park, Festival Gardens

and Carter Lane into accessible gardens, as well as the One New Change shopping centre and 150 Cheapside developments.

A Gateway 1 and 2 report was approved by Committees in April 2016, and the project proposes public realm enhancements to two sites: the area around St. Paul’s tube station and the churchyard of St. Peter Westcheap (Wood Street) as

shown in the location plan in Appendix 1. The environs of St. Paul’s Tube station

is currently congested with poor wayfinding and movement throughout the site, as

well as a lack of seating within close vicinity of St. Paul’s conservation area. St. Peter Westcheap is located on Wood Street and is populated primarily by smokers and the associated detritus and smell of cigarette butts. It also contains

limited signage, planting and railings that are in need of restoration. In response to a query it was noted that the railings must be retained due to their historical significance.

The churchyard is a former burial ground containing a number of historic structures

and a historic plane tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order. Both locations could benefit from enhanced / additional planting to improve the local air quality

and appearance.

Resolved – **that Members approve:**

(i) Progression of option 2 and 3 for St. Paul's tube station area to Gateway 4 and

5 (detailed design and implementation) under the 'regular' Gateway process.

(ii) Progression of option 1 for St. Peter's Westcheap churchyard to Gateway 4 and 5 (detailed design and implementation) under the 'regular' Gateway process

9. **SENATOR HOUSE GARDEN IMPROVEMENTS**

Members noted that the City has entered into a licence agreement for the use of its Senator House Garden as access for a major refurbishment of Senator House. The agreement includes the closure of the garden for the works period, waterproofing of the City's slab over the London Underground Ltd tunnel which runs under the

garden and the refurbishment of Senator House Garden following the construction work. All the works are to be carried out at the expense of the Senator House tenant, Legal & General.

The proposed works to Senator House Garden represent an improvement on the previous garden and provide a high quality, accessible and welcoming garden which is clearly identifiable as a public space provided by the City.

Resolved – that Members approve the detailed design of the proposals to improve Senator House Garden at no cost to the City of London Corporation.

Members were also invited to receive a presentation regarding the Churchyards Enhancement Programme, which was noted by the Committee.

10. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

A Member raised a query stating that when trees were planted in the pavements in Queenhithe Ward it was not possible to plant as many as was hoped because of the utilities beneath the pavements and walkways. Since then the cycle way has reduced Upper and Lower Thames Street to one lane in most places through the Ward and this, added to the reduction of traffic speed to 20 mph, has seriously affected air quality (and noise pollution) in access points to residential flats and at various points along the walkways. Residents were now getting restless at what appears to be a lack of real intention to 'green' the environment and it was a major issue at the recent Wardmote.

The Member felt it could harness the phrase in the City Together Strategy that the City was "contributing to a world class City that promotes and enhances our environment".

Officers did not have a detailed response to hand but agreed to provide the Member with a detailed answer via email.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

The Committee were invited to consider the City of London Culture Strategy and submit any comments to the Town Clerk after the meeting,

12. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

13. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

Resolved – that the minutes be agreed as an accurate record.

14. BUNHILL FIELDS HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND PROJECT

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces

15. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There was one question.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

There was no urgent business.

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

Chairman

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