

Committee	Dated:
Streets and Walkways	10 April 2018
Subject: Low Emission Neighbourhood – Air Quality Greening Proposals	Public
Report of: Director of Markets and Consumer Protection	
Report author: Ben Kennedy – Low Emission Neighbourhood Project Manager	For Decision

Summary

In July 2016 the Mayor of London awarded the City of London Corporation £990,000 over three years to implement a Low Emission Neighbourhood (LEN) in the Square Mile. The project formally commenced in September 2016. The work forms part of a package of measures that the City Corporation delivers to improve air quality and support the Mayor of London with his Air Quality Strategy.

In the 2017/18 financial year the LEN team worked with the Friends of City Gardens (FCOG) community group to deliver a number of ‘Clean Air Gardens’ off highway in the LEN area. As part of the LEN proposals for 2018/19 we are seeking permission to deliver, in partnership with FCOG and the City Gardens team, two air quality greening projects on City streets or walkways.

Recommendation

Members are asked to approve the proposals for the delivery and installation of green infrastructure at locations that are either on or adjacent to the Public Highway or City Walkway in the LEN area. The two locations are:

- i. The columns supporting Barbican High Walk Platform outside 45 Beech Street, also known as Central Point (on or adjacent to the public highway);
- ii. The footbridge above Aldersgate that connect Barbican station with the Barbican Estate (City Walkway);

Main Report

Background

1. The Mayor of London awarded the City of London Corporation £990,000 over three years to implement a Low Emission Neighbourhood (LEN). This followed a successful application for funding submitted in April 2016. The funding covers the period September 2016 to March 2019.
2. The aim of the LEN is to pilot initiatives that will lead to a measurable improvement in local air quality. This includes raising awareness about air quality, introducing measures to reduce emissions, reduce exposure to, and mitigate

against air pollution. It is intended that the most successful, cost beneficial measures would be rolled out across the City.

3. Particulate pollution in the form of airborne dust particles can be trapped by plants and vegetation thereby stopping resuspension and removing it from the air. This happens when the particulates get caught on the surface of leaves and stems of plants. Some plants remove particulates better than others, for example dense perennials with rough, hairy or waxy leaves are especially good at trapping particulates.
4. In 2017 the LEN project supported the Friends of City Gardens (FCOG) in their *City in Bloom, Clean and Green for Seventeen* challenge which is part of the Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) City in Bloom and Greening Grey Britain campaign. Entrants were asked to take on the air quality challenge and create 'Clean Air Gardens'. Over a dozen gardens were created by residents, businesses and community organisations across the City with particular focus on the LEN area. The Clean Air Gardens included plants that trap particulate air pollution whilst also attracting pollinators, increasing biodiversity and raising awareness around air quality. Details of the Clean Air Pop Up Gardens created in 2017 as part of the LEN project can be found in Appendices A1 and A2.
5. For 2018/19 the LEN team wish to deliver new green infrastructure in two different locations in the LEN area in time for National Clean Air Day on the 21st June 2018 but this time all three sites are on City Streets and Walkways.

i) Greening of columns outside 45 Beech Street

6. The LEN team have been working with the City Gardens team to develop proposals for the installation of planters and green climbing plants on four columns in Beech Street, outside 45 Beech Street also known as the Central Point building.
7. This building is owned and managed by the Business Environment Company who are supporting the proposal and have been involved in the design. Last year they participated in the City in Bloom event and created their own 'Clean Air Garden' outside their office. They are particularly keen to see greening at this location as their entrance opens directly onto the covered section of Beech Street where air pollution levels are currently known to be more than twice the legal limit values.
8. The planter proposals have been designed by the City Gardens team following liaison with officers working on the Cultural Mile Look and Feel Strategy and Conservation and Design in Planning.
9. Trachelospermum (Jasmine) climbing plants were chosen for their evergreen leaves and ability to survive the environmental conditions in this location.
10. The planters will be placed on the existing buttress of the columns and fixed together around the column. A stainless steel mesh frame will be built around the column to allow the climbing Jasmine to grow up it. The planters will be aluminium with a black powder coated surface.
11. There will be no highway visibility issues resulting from the proposals as there is at least 2 metres footway width from the kerb edge to the front of the planters.

12. The Conservation and Design officer has confirmed that the planter design and colour is in keeping with the Barbican Estate Design Guidelines and does not require Listed Building Consent approval.
13. The City Gardens team will procure and project manage the installation of the planters and will undertake ongoing maintenance.
14. Business Environment have committed to undertake the necessary watering of the planters and are willing to sign a formal agreement committing them to undertaking the watering at a regular frequency throughout the year according to climatic conditions.
15. The Highways Team, City Surveyors and Barbican Estate office have all reviewed the proposals and given their consent to the plans.
16. No footway or pavement space will be occupied by the planters meaning there is no loss of pedestrian space.
17. The project is being fully funded by the LEN Mayors Air Quality Grant including the project management and ongoing maintenance costs for up to five years.
18. The total cost including ongoing maintenance and project management costs is currently estimated at £21,500.
19. Visualisation and drawings of the planter can be found in Appendix A3.
20. The intention that the installation would commence in late April/early May.

Greening of Aldersgate footbridge connecting the Barbican Estate to the Underground station

21. The footbridge that connects the Barbican Estate to Barbican Underground Station is situated above queuing traffic on Aldersgate resulting in poor air quality.
22. The proposal is for the installation 12 planters distributed evenly on both sides of the footbridge (6 each side) to green it and improve air quality. A visualisation of the planters on the footbridge can be found in Appendix A4.
23. The planters will be square in shape, approximately 40x40 centimetres in width and diameter. The proposed plants will be Griselinia shrubs that are evergreen and have a waxy leaf surface.
24. The designs and plans have been developed by Friends of City Gardens and they have committed to undertake watering and maintenance of the planters for the period they are in situ. It is intended that the planters will be in place for the next 12 months, the remaining period of the LEN project. After this time a decision will be made as to whether they can be retained on a permanent basis or removed.
25. To address concerns relating to security, the planter and plants would be secured to the railings to prevent them being moved or tipped over or the plants removed.
26. Pedestrian width - The width of the bridge is 3.56m allowing for 2 planters of 0.4m wide this still leaves an unrestricted pathway of 2.76m wide across the

- bridge. This still greater than the 2.5m minimum width recommended for City Walkways.
27. An assessment of the weight loading and wind bearing on the bridge structure has been undertaken for a previous design planter design and revealed that there is no risk to the structure of the bridge. The City Surveyors team has given their consent for the proposal on the condition that a neoprene sheet membrane is placed underneath the planters to prevent any damage to the footbridge surface.
 28. The Friends of City Gardens have a team of corporate volunteers standing by for installation of the planters and plants on 20th April 2018. The FCOG has comprehensive public liability insurance and will produce a method statement and risk assessment that will be signed off by the City Gardens team prior to commencement.
 29. The total cost of the installation is expected to cost approximately £5,000 with all costs funded by the LEN Mayor's Air Quality Grant.

Financial Implications

30. The City Corporation has been awarded £900,000 over three years to for the Low Emission Neighbourhood programme. This is an external funding grant from the Greater London Authority and is considered a capital cost. All ongoing maintenance, management and removal costs over the lifetime of the different projects has been considered and covered by this capital grant and there are no ongoing financial implications.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

31. The LEN project supports the aims and objectives of the City of London Air Quality Strategy 2015–2020, in addition to a number of other corporate policies and strategies. It also goes towards addressing air quality, which has been identified as a corporate risk.

Conclusion

32. Two locations have been identified for new permanent or temporary green infrastructure in the Low Emission Neighbourhood area to help mitigate against the impacts of air pollution and improve the public realm. The LEN project is fully funding both projects and all ongoing maintenance, management and removal costs have been factored in.
33. Both of these projects have been developed in partnership with local stakeholders including community groups, residents and businesses. They also have the approval and support of the relevant internal City Corporation departments.

Appendices:

Appendix A: LEN Greening Proposals Images and Plans

Further information

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