



Open Spaces and City Gardens

Date: MONDAY, 10 JUNE 2013

Time: 11.30 am

Venue: COMMITTEE ROOM - 2ND FLOOR WEST WING, GUILDHALL

Members: Alderman Robert Hall
Alderman Ian Luder
Wendy Mead
Deputy Michael Welbank
Deputy Alex Deane
Deputy Robert Howard
Barbara Newman
Jeremy Simons
Alderman Gordon Haines (Ex-Officio Member)
Deputy Stanley Ginsburg (Ex-Officio Member)
Virginia Rounding (Ex-Officio Member)

Observers: Verderer Peter Adams - Observer Nominated by the Epping Forest & Commons Committee
Tony Ghilchik - Observer Nominated by the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Woods, and Queen's Park Committee
Vacancy - Observer Nominated by West Ham Park Committee

Enquiries: Alistair MacLellan
alistair.maclellan@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Lunch will be served in the Guildhall Club at 1pm

John Barradell
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

AGENDA

Part 1 - Public Agenda

1. APOLOGIES

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

3. ORDERS OF THE COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL 25 APRIL 2013

Orders of the Court of Common Council, 25 April 2013:

(i) Appointing the Committee

(ii) Approving the Committee's Terms of Reference (copy attached).

For Decision
(Pages 1 - 2)

4. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Election of Chairman for the ensuing year in accordance with Standing Order 29.

For Decision

5. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

Election of Deputy Chairman for the ensuing year in accordance with Standing Order 30.

For Decision

6. MINUTES

To agree the public minutes and summary of Open Spaces and City Gardens business at the meeting held on 15 April 2013 (copy attached).

For Decision
(Pages 3 - 10)

Open Spaces

7. CURRENT TOPICAL ISSUES IN OPEN SPACES - THE VALUE OF GREEN SPACES TO LONDON AND LONDONERS

The Director of Open Spaces to be heard.

For Information

8. OPEN SPACES ANNUAL REPORT

A report of the Director of Open Spaces (to be tabled at the meeting).

For Information

9. ANNUAL REVIEW OF VOLUNTEER WORKING IN THE OPEN SPACES 2012/13

A report of the Director of Open Spaces (copy attached).

For Information
(Pages 11 - 16)

10. TREE DISEASES IN LONDON: THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

A report of the Director of Open Spaces (copy attached).

For Information
(Pages 17 - 22)

City Gardens

11. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Superintendent of West Ham Park & City Gardens to be heard.

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

13. URGENT ITEMS

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Agenda Item 3

GIFFORD, Mayor	RESOLVED: That the Court of Common Council holden in the Guildhall of the City of London on Thursday 25th April 2013, doth hereby appoint the following Committee until the first meeting of the Court in April, 2014.
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OPEN SPACES & CITY GARDENS COMMITTEE

1. Constitution

A Non-Ward Committee consisting of,

- eight Members elected by the Court of Common Council, at least one of whom shall have fewer than five years' service on the Court at the time of their appointment
- the following ex-officio Members:-
 - the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee
 - the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee

2. Quorum

The quorum consists of any five Members.

3. Membership 2013/14

- 3 (3) Benjamin Robert Hadley Hall, Alderman, *for three years*
- 3 (3) Ian David Luder, B.Sc.(Econ.), Alderman, *for three years*
- 3 (3) Wendy Mead, Deputy
- 3 (3) Michael Welbank, Deputy
- 3 (2) Alexander John Cameron Deane
- 1 (1) Jeremy Lewis Simons M.Sc., *for three years*
- 1 (1) Robert Picton Seymour Howard, Deputy
- 1 (1) Barbara Patricia Newman, C.B.E.

Together with the ex-officio Members referred to in paragraph 1 above.

4. Terms of Reference

To be responsible for:-

Open Spaces

- (a) dealing with, or making recommendations to the Court of Common Council where appropriate, all matters relating to the strategic management (eg. policy, financial and staffing) of the City of London Corporation's open spaces where such matters are not specifically the responsibility of another Committee; and
- (b) the appointment of the Director of Open Spaces (in consultation with the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee);

City Open Spaces

- (c) the management and day-to-day administration of the gardens, churchyards and open spaces in the City under the control of the Common Council, together with Bunhill Fields Burial Ground;
- (d) arrangements for the planting and maintenance of trees and other plants and shrubs in open spaces and in footpaths adjacent to highways in the City;
- (e) advising on applications for planning permission relating in whole or in part to the gardens, churchyards or open spaces in the City under the control of the Common Council; and
- (f) the functions of the Common Council under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to make safe by felling, or otherwise, dangerous trees in the City generally on receipt of notices served on the City of London Corporation in the circumstances set out in Section 23 of the Act and where trees are in danger of damaging property.

Barradell

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Agenda Item 6

OPEN SPACES, CITY GARDENS & WEST HAM PARK COMMITTEE Monday, 15 April 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces, City Gardens & West Ham Park Committee held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 15 April 2013 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Alderman Robert Hall (Chairman)
Alex Deane
Alderman Ian Luder
Deputy Wendy Mead
Deputy Michael Welbank
Richard Gurney
Justin Meath-Baker
The Rev. Stennett Kirby
Councillor Joy Laguda
Cllr Bryan Collier
Alderman Gordon Haines (Ex-Officio Member)
Barbara Newman (Ex-Officio Member)
Jeremy Simons (Ex-Officio Member)

Officers:

Jacky Compton	- Committee & Member Services Officer
Esther Sumner	- Town Clerk's Department
Sue Ireland	- Director of Open Spaces
Martin Rodman	- Superintendent, West Ham Park and City Gardens
Louisa Allen	- City Gardens Manager
Alison Elam	- Chamberlain's Department
Edward Wood	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Bob Meldrum	- City Surveyor's Department
Peter Shadbolt	- Department of Built Environment

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Catherine Bickmore and Robert Cazenove.

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

Deputy Wendy Mead declared an interest as a Member of the City Bridge Trust Committee.

3. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

The Committee proceeded to elect a Deputy Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 30. The Town Clerk read a list of Members eligible to stand and Alderman Ian Luder, being the only Member expressing his willingness to serve, was declared to be duly elected Deputy Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

4. **MINUTES**

The public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 4 February 2013 were approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Members Declarations (page 2) – Jeremy Simons declaration to read "...a Trustee of 2 Charities based at St Andrew's Holborn" and Alex Deane's declaration to read "...a Trustee of St Andrew's Fundraising Board."

National Planning Policy Framework (page 2) – The Director of Open Spaces advised that with the support of Paul Becket from Dept of Built Environment, they had recently met with the Mayor of London's London Plan team on 14th March and had a very positive consideration of the need to protect areas and strategic spaces from un-appropriate development.

Schedule of Visits (page 2) – The Town Clerk advised that the July visit, in consultation with the Chairman, would now take place on 12 July.

LB of Newham Representative (page 2) – The new representative, Councillor Bryan Collier was in attendance.

West Ham Park

5. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Superintendent of West Ham Park. The following points were made –

Finance – in advance of the final out-turn, the end of the 2012/13 FY looks healthy - West Ham Park £11k planned underspend which we would seek to carry forward for planned projects in 2013/14, subject to the appropriate approvals. The Nursery shows an over-achievement of income in the sum of £13k.

Staff – at the end of last month we appointed a temporary nursery gardener post – fixed term to the end of November.

Works update – the team has replaced approx 1/3 of the hedge around the tennis courts with spp of *Pinus*. Refurbishment of three of the tennis courts has begun; this is funded by a grant from the London Marathon Trust secured by TSFA. In the Nursery we are all hands to the pump growing summer bedding for TRP. Including bedding for the City and other OS, we are growing over 350 species divided into many more varieties, totalling over 200,000 plants.

Visits - Committee lunch separated from visit this year. Lunch is scheduled on 17 May at Barber Surgeon's Hall – invitations have been sent. Visit will take place Thursday 5th September, Lady Mayoress will attend. Details to follow.

Events – Yesterday saw the Newham 10K run and half marathon start and finish in the park. Over 3000 runners took part in total. Number of well-known international runners took part as this is seen as a 'warm-up' and timing event for the full marathons coming up over the summer. Although those attending would not particularly have experienced any problems, there were a number of issues that occurred behind the scenes on the day that I was not happy with. Although our staff undertook their duties professionally and efficiently, this did not appear to be the case with the event organisers. I will be feeding this back to them at a wash-up meeting in the next few days and will seek to tighten arrangements next year through the granting of a formal event license.

-April 27th heroes and heroines day organised by the Friends of WHP. There will be a hired story teller for children and craft time (instrument making from recycled materials).

Tomorrow and Wednesday, 3 primary schools will be sowing wild flower meadows around park cottage and in the jubilee food garden as part of our CBT-funded improvements to biodiversity.

6. **WEST HAM PARK NURSERY BUSINESS PLAN PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces updating Members on the progress made over the past year in delivering projects set out in year 3 (2012-13) of the West Ham Park Nursery Business Plan.

RECEIVED.

7. **PROVISIONAL ADDITIONAL WORKS PROGRAMME 2014/15**

The Committee considered a report of the City Surveyor setting out a provisional list of cyclical projects being considered for properties under the management of Open Spaces, City Gardens and West Ham Park Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Committee's views be sought on the provisional list of works.

Open Spaces

8. **CURRENT TOPICAL ISSUES FOR OPEN SPACES**

The Director of Open Spaces advised that as this was the last meeting of the Committee in its current format, she stated that she thought it would be helpful to update Members on progress, following on from the various topical issues presented or mentioned to Members in the last year.

Planning – with the support of Paul Becket (Director of Policy and Performance in the Department of Built Environment) met with the Mayor of London's London Plan team on 14th March and had a very positive consideration of the need to protect areas and strategic spaces from inappropriate development.

Litter Management – The trial commenced earlier this year of installing recycling bins in the City Gardens Open Spaces. Each bin cost £800 and to date 15 have been installed and within the new financial year we hope to install a similar number. A report will be submitted on the outcome of the trial at the end of the year ie early 2014.

Dog Control Orders – The Superintendent of Burnham Beeches has been progressing this project, both in terms of identifying the means to administrative orders in a cool effective way and also, preparing for public consultation on the proposals.

Tree Disease – Following the tree conference just before Christmas with the Forestry Commission.

9. **OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT BUSINESS PLAN 2013/2016**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces outlining the overall departmental aims and objectives, the key projects for the next three years and the key indicators that have been set to measure performance.

Members are also asked to consider the key projects for the City Gardens and West Ham Park.

RESOLVED: That Members –

1. approve the Open Spaces Department Business Plan for 2013-2016, including the key projects for City Gardens and West Ham Park, and agree the targets for service delivery as quantified by the performance indicators; and
2. determine whether any projects and performance indicators represent high risk and priority sectors of service which you would expect to be featured in the quarterly progress reports which will be submitted to the Committee during 2013/14.

10. **OPEN SPACES AUDIT REPORT 2012**

The Committee received a report of the Director of the Built Environment summarising the key findings of the City of London Open Spaces Audit Report 2012.

RECEIVED.

City Gardens

11. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update from the City Gardens Manager. The following points were made –

Finance – City Garden's budget is in line with agreed budget profiles. The budget at year end is demonstrating a small underspend which subject to approvals to be spent on a repeat Massaria survey, associated tree works and the purchase of more recycling bins.

Staff – full complement of staff. A newly appointed Project Support Officer and a new Assistant Gardener have been recruited recently.

St Botolph Bishopsgate – Dashwood House S106 Improvements – Conservation and levelling issues in relation to the fountain have now been resolved enabling City Gardens and contractors to instigate drainage improvements during May. Other improvements to the garden have included: the installation of metal edging between the lawns and newly planted border, the planting of a replacement tree and the installation of three new watering points. One of the traditional bedding beds is to be converted temporarily into a decorative vegetable planting as part of the City's in Bloom campaign. In terms of designing out previous anti-social behaviour, the area behind the tennis/netball courts is now accessed via a locked gate. The installation of lamps and lighting bollards is complete. Remaining planting will be carried out in the autumn.

Green Corridors Update – A three year Transport for London funded project worth £415k in total. The City's Tree Strategy aims to increase the existing stock of trees, especially through the planting of large-canopied species, and to increase the number of City owned trees by 5% by 2019. The Green Corridors project significantly contributes to this target through the planting of around 50 street trees which will exceed this target.

Friends of City Gardens and volunteer activities

- 22 March – Friends of City Gardens and 10 volunteers from a regeneration charity based in Bromley by Bow have planted 450 native whips to create a native hedge in Bunhill Fields. This project supports the Town Clerk's and the Chairman of Policy's vision to work with and involve wider communities;
- 17 April – volunteers from Lloyds Bank are planting a woodland meadow, converting a patchy area of grass in Bunhill Fields in partnership with the Friends;
- 11 May – Barbican in Bloom event, organised by City Gardens in partnership with the Barbican Estate, the library and the Barbican Horticultural Society. The event will include: 'how to care for plants in container demonstrations and workshops, storytelling for children (gardening themed) and a treasure hunt;
- 8-9 June – Open Squares Weekend. A number of City gardens are promoted through this scheme. The Barbican Wildlife Group will be opening Fann Street garden to the general public. An edible walk has been organised by the City Gardens and a historical treasure hunt for families will be organised by the Friends of City Gardens and volunteers in Bunhill Fields.

12. RESULTS OF A FACE-TO-FACE SURVEY OF USERS AND NON-USERS OF THE CITY'S OPEN SPACE

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces relative to the results of a face-to-face survey of users and non-users of the City's Open Space.

The Director stated that the findings from the user survey were very positive, with 79.4% of users rating the City Gardens service as good or very good.

RECEIVED.

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

There were none.

14. URGENT ITEMS

There were none.

15. 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 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act as follows:

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Paragraphs in Schedule 12A</u>
16	3
17-18	-

SUMMARY OF MATTERS CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC WERE EXCLUDED

16. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2013 were approved.

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

There were none.

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

There were none.

The meeting ended at 1.15pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Jacky Compton
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Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee	10 June 2013	
Subject: Annual review of volunteering working in the Open Spaces 2012/13	Public	
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Information	
<u>Summary</u>		
<p>Volunteering continues to provide an excellent way to engage local communities with our Open Spaces. This year the Volunteer Improvement Group has focused on improving the quality of volunteers' experience through the development of local volunteer improvement plans. The year has seen the development of new volunteering opportunities, the creation of a more highly skilled volunteer workforce and a significant contribution made by volunteers in conservation, education and events work in our Open Spaces.</p>		
Recommendation		
<p>That this report is received and the work carried out by volunteers across all of the City's Open Spaces is commended.</p>		

Main Report

1. Background

1.1 Volunteers play an important role in many areas of work in City of London Open Spaces. The Volunteer Strategy is now thoroughly embedded and all sites, other than the Cemetery and Crematorium, have well-developed volunteering schemes and opportunities.

1.2 The Volunteering Improvement Group, which consists of representatives of all sites, works to improve the quality of volunteering opportunities and involve volunteers in all aspects of the management of the Open Space sites.

2. Current Position

2.1 In 2012/13 the Volunteering Improvement Group focused on ensuring delivery of the strategy through divisional ‘health checks’ against the strategy. Existing volunteers were surveyed for their views on progress being made on developing volunteering and, using the results, each division produced an improvement plan.

2.2 The department has continued to draw on sources of expertise in volunteering, for example subscribing to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, which provides a range of supporting resources.

2.3 Although the aggregate number of volunteer hours fell in 2012/13 compared to 2011/12 many new opportunities for volunteers were created and sites focused on improving the quality of volunteers’ experiences, through recognition of achievements, training opportunities and increased involvement in the management of sites.

2.4 Having regard to Members’ comments on last year’s report, this report describes volunteering work thematically, rather than detailing activities by site.

3. Measuring volunteering

3.1 Overall a 1% decrease in volunteer hours was reported. Decreases were recorded at all sites apart from Epping Forest, where hours contributed rose 8%.

3.2 Superintendents reported that some volunteers reduced their levels of engagements as they were LOCOG volunteers during the Olympics. It was also felt that recruitment was more difficult due to the proliferation of volunteering roles associated with the organisation of the Olympics.

Table One: Total hours volunteered at Open Spaces sites 2011/12 and 2012/13

Site	2011/12	2012/13
City Commons	11,240	10,770
City Gardens	1213	1127
West Ham Park	1574	1518
North London Open Spaces	6459	5182
Burnham Beeches	6200	5092
Epping Forest	19,536	21,730
Total	46,055	45,419 (-1%)

4. Volunteers' contribution to conservation work

4.1 Volunteers continued to provide a key role in carrying out fieldwork, particularly surveys. This work has been vital to conservation projects at all sites.

4.2 At City Commons a team of tree wardens were trained to carry out surveys for signs of ash dieback. Surveying and monitoring volunteers have also increased their work to cover butterflies, moths, reptiles, small mammals and birds.

4.3 Burnham Beeches have also increased conservation volunteering, with a regular Thursday volunteer group being supplemented by a Tuesday group which works specifically to support ecological monitoring and the work of the Conservation Officer. At Stoke Common three hectares of heathland were restored with help from young volunteers recruited from the local area. This reflects an increase in younger volunteers at Burnham Beeches.

4.4 At City Gardens corporate volunteers continued to play an important role, with members of staff from Lloyds and Goodman and Mason volunteering at Bunhill Fields doing wild flower and whip (small tree) planting, as well as creating a bug hotel and a willow fence. The Fann Street meadow was scythed by volunteers led by a tutor, and mini orchards were created at Fann Street, Golden Lane and on the Barbican Estate.

4.5 Once again volunteers completed the annual nest box check in the City Gardens. In total 48 bird boxes were checked with 29% of boxes having been nested in during the 2012 nesting season.

4.6 Significant conservation volunteering was carried out at Epping Forest as part of the Scout Project 2012. Scouts undertook a total of four projects including conservation work clearing silver birch, holly and gorse and clearing reeds from Bulrush Pond.

4.7 On-going conservation work at Epping Forest included work with the Forest Keepers in the south of the Forest to clear a public footpath at Bush work and remove scrub associated with anti-social behaviour at Jubilee Pond with the Lake house Lake Project. The Lakes and Ponds Task Force at Epping Forest focused their efforts on Connaught Water, completing the disabled angling swim platforms and planting margin and aquatic plants.

5 Volunteers' contribution to education and events

5.1 Volunteers have been involved in many activities which involve educating or explaining the Open Spaces.

5.2 City Commons participated in The Big Challenge, a project that brings young people from diverse backgrounds together to learn new skills, make new friends and volunteer to benefit their community. The Surrey group spent their final weekend this year helping remove silver birch to widen firebreaks on Ashted Common. Forty-three young people came with a team of mentors which provided an excellent set up for supervising the extensive amount of work achieved. City Commons plans to participant again this year.

5.3 At Hampstead Heath a three year project is underway called “Wild about Hampstead Heath” to support local people to explore Hampstead Heath and discover its wildlife. As part of this project fifty volunteers have been recruited and are being support to train and gain qualifications. Work is focusing on ensuring volunteers from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities are encouraged to join the scheme

5.4 At Burnham Beeches volunteers played a key role in a number of one off events such as the Jubilee celebrations and a visit by Skewbald Theatre.

5.5 The Friends of West Ham Park have also organised a number of events in West Ham Park through the year, including assisting in building and hosting “Newham’s Biggest Leaf Pile”, the ‘Park in the Dark’ event and a *Heroes and Heroines* event funded by a grant from the London Borough of Newham.

5.6 Educational activities in West Ham Park have continued, with the Food Growing project in its fifth year. Seven gardening club session were held in the new Jubilee Food Garden, providing an excellent way for local schools and young people to become involved in volunteering in the park. The Park and Nursery also hosted five work placement students from local schools and Capel Manor College.

6 Ensuring the quality of volunteers' experience

6.1 Work has focused, as a result of local improvement plans, on ensuring the highest possible quality of experience for volunteers. This is achieved through encouraging volunteers in management and improvement of the site, ensuring appropriate training is offers and recognising the achievement of volunteers.

6.2 Volunteers sit on consultative committees which allow for their input into the management of sites.

6.3 At City Commons work has been done to develop the team leader role. Team leaders are offered training, including first aid, and now regularly assist rangers in leading tasks. At Epping Forest and Burnham Beeches staff and volunteers attend joint training in areas such as chainsaw use, surveying visitors and leading health walks. Epping Forest has also developed a two monthly induction programme for volunteers.

6.4 Sites actively communicate with volunteers and run a range of events to celebrate the achievements of volunteers. At Burnham Beeches volunteers were invited to participate in the visit of the Lord Mayor and the Dorneywood event. At Epping Forest the Volunteer Awards Party has continued to provide an opportunity to recognise the work of exceptional volunteers.

6.5 At Hampstead Heath the development of a new base for volunteers at Parliament Hill Fields has provided a focal point for volunteers on the heath.

7 Corporate and strategic implications

7.1 Promoting and supporting volunteering fulfils the aim of the City Together Strategy to build a strong third sector to meet the needs of our communities.

7.2 Volunteering also supports the departmental Business Plan, with volunteers aiding in delivery of many aims and objectives, for example providing safe, secure and accessible Open Spaces and services for the benefit of London and the Nation.

7.3 More specifically the Business Plan includes a specific aim for the department of “[involving] communities and partners in developing a sense of place through the care and management of our sites.”

8 Conclusion

8.1 The introduction of a Volunteer Strategy and the oversight of the Volunteer Improvement Group have provided impetus to developing volunteer opportunities and fully engaging volunteers in the management of City of London Open Spaces.

8.2 The Open Space sites have benefited hugely from well-established volunteer groups and schemes and the development of new initiatives. Volunteers can bring a unique and valuable perspective to managing our Open Spaces and work

will continue to maximise the benefit the sites receive from volunteers and the benefit the experiences bring to volunteers.

Contact:

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Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee	10 June 2013	
Subject: Summary of a forthcoming research paper: Tree Diseases in London: The Economic, Social and Environmental Impact		Public
Report of: Director of Open Spaces		For Information
<p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>A forthcoming research report, commissioned as part of the City of London’s corporate research programme, highlights the threats posed by tree disease to London. The report identifies the homogeneity of tree species in London as causing vulnerability in terms of resisting pests and disease. The report makes the case for valuing trees as a part of the urban ‘green infrastructure’. The report will be used as part of a body of evidence to inform future management plans.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report and the forthcoming publication of the research paper.</p>		

Main Report

1. Background

1.1 The City of London plays a key role in promoting and sustaining London as a world-class city. In addition to a resilient physical infrastructure, a healthy green infrastructure is required to support the city. Recognising the vital role trees play in creating a healthy urban ecosystem, the City of London has commissioned a research paper to investigate the role of trees in urban centres and the benefits they provide, identify the threats to London’s tree stock, and suggest ways of managing these threats, and developing the tree population in the capital.

2. Current Position

2.1 Trees in London face a number of threats, which the City of London has sought to actively manage. In January 2013 the City of London Corporation hosted a Forestry Commission conference on tree disease and pests. This event brought together experts in tree disease with policy makers and land managers to discuss methods of countering threats. In May 2013 the London Oak Processionary Moth Advisory Group, of which the City of London is a member, was supported by the Forestry Commission in securing £2 million of government funding to help tackle this problem.

2.2 The City of London also undertakes regular inspections and activities to tackle tree diseases. For example branches of plane trees infected with the fungal disease massaria are regularly removed, where there is a risk of damage to property or people.

2.3 It is important to ensure that action is taken which promotes the resilience of trees in London to disease and ensures a strategic approach to tackling the spread of disease.

2.4 The report was commissioned as part of the City of London's research programme and prepared by Jago Keen for Ian Keen Ltd.

3. Research findings

3.1 The benefits provided by urban trees

3.1.1 The report adopts an ecosystem services approach to assessing the benefits provided by urban trees. The ecosystem services approach was developed as part of the UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, which examined the impact on human wellbeing of changes to ecosystems. Ecosystems provide a number of services to humans: supporting services which sustain life, regulating services such as climate, hydrological cycles and air quality, provisioning services such as food and materials and cultural services.

3.1.2 The report identifies three key services provided by urban trees. Firstly trees play an important role in micro-climate regulation. Due to the many buildings and hard surfaces in London acting as heat stores, temperatures in London tend to be higher than in surrounding areas. The presence of trees is demonstrated to mitigate this effect through shading and evapotranspiration, a process of water loss via the leaves which cools the air.

3.1.3 Secondly trees improve air quality through oxygen generation and the capture of health-damaging airborne particulates, such as sulphur dioxide and

nitrogen oxide. This is of particular importance in London where the UK regularly breaches the levels of pollutants specified by the EU Air Quality Directive, leaving the UK government liable to fines. Trees provide a cost-effective means for public authorities to reduce air pollution.

3.1.4 Finally the report seeks to delineate the role urban trees play in wellbeing and creating a sense of place.

3.2 The threats to London's trees

3.2.1 The report identifies the homogeneity of the tree population in London as a key risk to the long term health of London's trees. The dominance of a few species renders the tree population vulnerable to pests or diseases which attack one of the dominant species.

Table One: Most abundant genera within the City of London

Rank	Genera	Common name	% of the tree cover in the City
1	Platanus	Plane	14
2	Tilia	Lime	9
3	Acer	Maple	8
4	Prunus	Cherry	8
5	Carpinus	Hornbeam	6
6	Betula	Birch	5
7	Sorbus	Rowan/whitebeam	4
8	Quercus	Oak	3
9	Broadleaf		3
10	Magnolia	Magnolia	3
11	Robinia	Locust Tree	3
12	Fraxinus	Ash	3

3.2.2 The report considers the numerous tree diseases present in the UK and their threat to trees in London. The report focuses on novel pests and disease, which originate from overseas and pose a significant threat to native United Kingdom trees, which have no natural resistance to them.

3.2.3 The key threats to trees in London from novel pests and disease are identified as Oak Processionary Moth, Ash Dieback and Massaria. Massaria is judged the most significant to London as its host is the London Plane tree. The report considers that an urban environment may act as a limitation on the spread of Oak Processionary Moth and Ash Dieback, though both continue to pose a serious threat and need to be addressed.

3.3 Sustaining trees in London

3.3.1 The report's author considers approaches to sustaining trees in London. The report suggests that resilience can be built through early identification and preventative action, with eradication of disease where practicable.

3.3.2 The report also discusses how London's tree stock should be developed to promote resilience. It is suggested that diversity of tree species is important. However, the report warns that the function of tree species should also be considered carefully as a factor in diversity. There is a danger that a diversity of species could be planted, but all the chosen species would provide a similar function. Consideration therefore needs to be given to the function of possible species in terms of contribution to air quality, carbon sequestration, supporting biodiversity, noise attenuation and aesthetics, among other functions.

3.3.3 The report emphasises the importance of coordinated large-scale effort in tackling tree disease. London boroughs are urged to share information and data and pool resources to combat threats.

4. Corporate and strategic implications

4.1 The research links to the City Together Strategy. The report makes a case for viewing trees as part of the green infrastructure of the city, which supports the theme in the strategy of "developing and improving the physical environment around our key cultural attractions; and providing safe, secure and accessible Open Spaces.

4.2 The research provides an evidence base for future management plans for all Open Spaces sites.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The report makes a case for viewing trees as essential to the 'green infrastructure' of London. It suggests an approach for sustaining trees in London through effective prevention and eradication of pests and disease, diversity of species and tree function among London's tree stock.

5.2 The report suggests using an ecosystem services approach to properly appreciate the role of trees providing benefits such as air quality improvement, climate regulation and promoting biodiversity. The report emphasises the importance of public authorities working cooperatively to sustain trees in London.

5.3 The full report is due for publication on Wednesday 5th June and will be circulated to Members of this Committee.

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