



## Natural Environment Board

**Date:** THURSDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2025

**Time:** 11.00 am – or at the rising of the West Ham Park Committee, whichever is later.

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

**Members:**

James St John Davis (Chair)	William Upton KC
Charles Edward Lord, OBE JP (Deputy Chair)	Heather Barrett-Mold
Deputy Anne Corbett	Vladislav Dobrokhoto
Deputy Caroline Haines	Tony Leach
Alderman Gregory Jones KC (Ex- Officio Member)	Dani Stephenson
Wendy Mead OBE	John Beyer (Observer)
Deputy Benjamin Murphy	Catherine Bickmore (Observer)
	Verderer Paul Morris (Observer)

**Enquiries:** Zoe Williams  
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**Ian Thomas CBE**  
Town Clerk and Chief Executive



## **AGENDA**

NB: Certain matters for information have been marked \* and will be taken without discussion, unless the Committee Clerk has been informed that a Member has questions or comments prior to the start of the meeting. These information items have been collated in a supplementary agenda pack and circulated separately.

### **Part 1 - Public Agenda**

1. **APOLOGIES**

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

3. **MINUTES**

To agree the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 October 2025.

**For Decision**  
(Pages 7 - 16)

4. **REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2026/27**

Report of Chamberlain and Executive Director, Environment.

**For Decision**  
(Pages 17 - 32)

5. **\*HIGH-LEVEL BUSINESS PLAN 2025-30 MID-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT**

Report of Executive Director, Environment.

**For Information**

6. **CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY UPDATE**

Officers of the Environment Department to present a verbal update.

**For Information**  
(Verbal Report)

### **Open Spaces**

7. **\*NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OPERATIONAL FINANCE PROGRESS REPORT Q2 2025/26**

Report of the Chamberlain.

**For Information**

8. **\*SENIOR OFFICER RECRUITMENT**

Report of Executive Director, Environment.

**For Information**

9. **\*PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE BILL**

Report of the City Remembrancer and Executive Director, Environment.

**For Information**

**City Gardens**

10. **CITY GARDENS UPDATE**

Officers of the Environment Department to provide a verbal update.

**For Information**  
(Verbal Report)

11. **FEES AND CHARGES**

Report of Executive Director, Environment.

**For Decision**  
(Pages 33 - 40)

12. **RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP**

Report of the Executive Director, Environment.

**For Decision**  
(Pages 41 - 48)

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

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

**Part 2 - Non-Public Agenda**

15. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

MOTION: 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.

**For Decision**

16. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

To agree the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 October 2025.

**For Decision**  
(Pages 49 - 50)

17. **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT CHARITIES REVIEW – GRANT FUNDING MODEL PRINCIPLES PROPOSAL**

Report of Chamberlain and Executive Director, Environment.

**For Decision**  
(Pages 51 - 72)

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

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

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## **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BOARD** **Thursday, 23 October 2025**

Minutes of the meeting of the Natural Environment Board held at Committee Rooms  
- 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Thursday, 23 October 2025 at 11.00 am

### **Present**

#### **Members:**

James St John Davis (Chair)  
Charles Edward Lord, OBE JP (Deputy Chair)  
Deputy Caroline Haines  
Wendy Mead OBE  
Heather Barrett-Mold  
John Beyer (observer)  
Catherine Bickmore (observer)  
Tony Leach  
Dani Stephenson

#### **In attendance:**

Alderman Gregory Jones KC (ex-officio) – attended online  
Verderer Paul Morris (observer)  
Deputy Benjamin Murphy – attended online

#### **Officers:**

Clem Harcourt	- Chamberlain's Department
Marguerite Jenkin	- Chamberlain's Department
Jack Joslin	- City Bridge Foundation
Anna Cowperthwaite	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Joseph Smith	- Corporate Strategy & Performance
Katie Stewart	- Executive Director, Environment
Ben Bishop	- Environment Department
Emily Brennan	- Environment Department
Melanie Charalambous	- Environment Department
Ian Hughes	- Environment Department
Jo Hurst	- Environment Department
Andrew Impey	- Environment Department
Jake Tibbets	- Environment Department
Heinz Traut	- Environment Department
Zoe Williams	- Town Clerk's Department

The Chair welcomed the Committee and noted their thanks for the support of Officers and their work across the City Corporation's Open Spaces during the summer.

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Deputy Anne Corbett, Vladislav Dobrokhoto, Karina Dostalova and William Upton KC.

The Chair noted that Karina Dostalova would be stepping down from the Natural Environment Board. The Committee noted their thanks and best wishes to the Member.

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 public minutes and non-public summary of the previous meeting held on Thursday 3 July 2025 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

4. **RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Environment which sought to assure Members that the procedures in place within the Environment Department were satisfactory and that they met the requirements of the Corporate Risk Management Framework and, where applicable, the Charities Act 2011.

Regarding the risk about budget pressures and uncertainty over the future funding model, a Member noted that the effects of this risk should include reputational risk to the City Corporation if the transition was not handled well.

Another Member requested that Officers identify any tensions around the public and anti-social behaviour when the update on the Ponds was provided during item 11.

The Chair noted that it would be important to see an increased level of detail regarding risks such as work-related stress, impacts of anti-social behaviour and budgetary pressure, and a broader conversation would be started about how these risks should be mitigated.

**RESOLVED** – That, Members:

- a. considered and noted the content of the report, the Natural Environment Cross Divisional Risk Register, and the action being taken to effectively manage those risks
- b. considered and noted the content of the report, the City Gardens Risk Register and the action being taken to effectively manage those risks.

5. **CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update and presentation from Officers of the Environment Department about the leaky dam project at Epping Forest and the day held at Copped Hall.

The Chair asked about the total number of leaky dams to be installed and the timeline for the project. Officers responded that 374 leaky dams were to be



installed and for the more complex leaky dams, contractors would have until March 2027 to complete these. They explained that half of the project had been funded by the Climate Action Strategy, and it had also received a £200,000 grant from the Environment Agency, through the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. In response to a further query, Officers confirmed that construction of the various leaky dams would occur concurrently

Another Member noted that water resilience needed to be picked up as a cross-cutting theme on the Natural Environment Board as it would impact all of the City Corporation's open spaces.

With regards to outcomes of the leaky dam project, the Chair asked whether the 374 planned leaky dams would prepare the environment for the level of water resilience that would be required by the end of the project. Officers responded that leaky dams were the first step in improving the open spaces' water resilience and there was more that could be done in the future to hold more water back, such as overland flow interceptors and techniques. Officers estimated that the leaky dams would hold back approximately 10,000 cubic metres of water.

A Member queried how the presence of the leaky dams would be advertised to the public. Officers responded that they were working with the Communications Officers to finalise this. They noted that once the outline of the business case had been agreed with the Essex County Council, more publicity could be issued about the project.

## **Open Spaces**

### **6. REVENUE OUTTURN REPORT - 2024/25**

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain and Executive Director, Environment which compared the revenue outturn for services overseen by the Natural Environment Board in 2024/25 with the final budget for the year.

**RESOLVED** – That, Members received the report and noted its contents.

### **7. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OPERATIONAL FINANCE PROGRESS REPORT Q1 2025/26**

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain and Executive Director, Environment which provided an update on the operational finance position for Quarter 1 for 2025/26 for the Natural Environment Division's (including City Gardens) revenue budget to date to the end of June 2025 and projected year-end outturn position, current live capital projects and outstanding debt position.

A Member requested further clarity about how the Grant Funding Model would operate with regards to the grant allocated for operational activity. Officers explained that the Grant Funding Model would be implemented in a phased approach, and the first phase was to transition the local risk budgets to the Grant Funding Model. Other areas of the budget would be moving to the Grant Funding Model in subsequent phases. The Member queried whether information could be

publicised about this. Officers confirmed they would update the public information document accordingly.

Another Member requested an update about the Monument. Officers responded that there had been ongoing conversations about how to achieve the transfer of responsibility within the City Corporation, and the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee had supported this transition. They explained that they would be meeting with Chamberlains to address the outstanding matter of the income generation. The Executive Director, Environment confirmed they would also be engaging with the Culture staff to ensure they have the appropriate resources to address this. The Chair noted that they would reinvigorate these discussions with the Chairman of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee.

In response to a query from the Chair, Officers confirmed that a lot of the debts identified in the report were in relation to historic wayleave debts, some of which were more than 10 years old.

**RESOLVED** – That, Members received the report and noted its contents.

**8. ENJOYING GREEN SPACES AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT – ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Managing Director of City Bridge Foundation which provided an overview of projects funded through the EGS in the 2024/25 financial year and an analysis of the grants awarded by the EGS over the last five years.

Regarding the rejected EGS grant applications identified in the report, a Member asked about the reasoning for the rejection of the Good Gym's application. Officers responded that while it was a good application, the Good Gym had not made connections with staff about the feasibility of the work. They assured the Member that Officers provided comprehensive feedback with the rejection which the applicant could take on board if they were to reapply. In response to a further question about the application process, Officers responded that they ensured staff had pre-application calls with applicants, so they knew what was required during the process. They also directed them to relevant Officers managing the various Open Spaces so they could ensure the activity was possible in the area.

The Member also expressed concern that there were not any awards to activities in City Gardens and asked for the reasoning of this. Officers responded that the Natural Environment Board had previously decided not to fund City Garden related projects through this fund as this already had CIL funding.

A Member asked whether applicants were required to report the outcomes of the grant after it had been awarded. Officers confirmed the full grant management was included in the conditions of the grant, and at the end of each year they receive an impact report about the grant. They confirmed they would have a discussion with the organisation if it had not achieved what was intended.

The Chair asked whether the maximum impact in the short-term was the main outcome considered with ESG grants. Officers responded that they were constricted by the budget as they did not have the funding available to support long term impact projects. They further noted that they encouraged organisations to seek additional funding through other grant opportunities and with the outcomes of the Natural Environment Charity Review there may be opportunities in the future to support these groups with their long-term endeavours.

**RESOLVED – That, Members:**

- a. Noted the allocation of grants for 2024-25 approved under delegated authority, as shown in appendix 2 of the report.
- b. Noted the key findings of the analysis of EGS funding programme over the last five years 2020/21 to 2024/25, as shown in appendix 3 of the report.

**9. COOL STREETS AND GREENING – PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Environment which provided an update on the delivery of the Cool Streets and Greening programme.

Members noted the positive feedback they had received about the transformation of the small spaces in the city.

**RESOLVED – That, Members:**

- a. Noted the content of the programme update.
- b. Noted the extension of the Cool Streets and Greening programme timeframes by 12 months to March 2027, as agreed by the CAS Square Mile Programme Board.
- c. Noted the additional projects being proposed to be delivered in Phase Five through the relevant gateway approval processes, detailed in Appendix 3 of the report.

**10. MOORGATE CROSSRAIL STATION LINKS: FINSBURY CIRCUS WESTERN ARM**

The Committee received a Gateway 6: Outcome report of the Director of the Built Environment about the Finsbury Circus Western Arm relandscaping scheme.

**RESOLVED – That, Members received the report and noted its contents.**

**11. PONDS - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update from Officers of the Environment Department about the Hampstead Heath Ponds.

Officers noted that they had been receiving a strong response to the consultation on the Hampstead Heath Ponds, and that negative commentary about the City Corporation had declined. They also explained that focus groups would be conducted as part of the consultation to collect qualitative information. Officers further noted that given the strong response rates, it was unlikely that a final report would be delivered before the end of the year.

The Chair noted that setting realistic expectations for the timeline would be essential and establishing the decision-making framework would be equally important. A Member, also the Chairman of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee, emphasised that while the consultation was about the Hampstead Heath Ponds, it concerned broader issues likely to be of relevance to City Corporation policy.

## **12. CITY GARDENS TREE ANNUAL UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Environment which provided an update on the state of the City's Urban Forest, to give Members a clear understanding of the health, condition and management of the trees by the City of London Corporation within the square mile and the aims and objectives for the next year.

The Chair requested that the Committee receive a breakdown of all the trees that were not in good health and a realistic outline of what could be done.

In response to a query, Officers confirmed that while the report only outlined those trees owned and managed by the City Corporation, they had an influence on how private trees were looked after and they had the opportunity to comment on all planning applications that involved trees.

The Chair noted that comments had been raised about the protection of the City Corporation's ancient and heritage trees, as the sponsorship of these trees could be a beneficial way to contribute to an Urban Tree Fund. Officers responded that they were in the early stages of considering options for the Urban Tree Fund and agreed that the fund should consider the protection and development of the urban forest. In response to a question about how the Urban Tree Fund would be set up, Officers responded that such matters were still to be considered and would be addressed in a report that was expected to come to the Board in the following year.

A Member asked whether the information about City Corporation's ancient trees could be further publicised. Another Member, also the Chair of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee, responded that a large amount of publicity had been produced from the International Conference on the Biodiversity of Veteran Trees recently held at Burnham Beeches. They explained that this was because Epping Forest had the greatest concentration of ancient trees.

A Member queried whether the City Corporation had any control over the biosecurity of privately owned trees. Officers responded that national biosecurity controlled any plant imports brought into the United Kingdom. They noted that they were reviewing standard planning conditions as part of the Service Level Agreement with the planning department and they would consider biosecurity as part of this.

A Member asked whether, given the limited space within the City of London for tree planting, alternative approaches to introducing greenery in urban areas had been considered. Officers confirmed that such options were being explored,

including alternative planting methods on Leadenhall Street. They also noted that vertical planting at St Dunstan in the East would be renewed this year.

A Member asked whether Officers were satisfied with the current system for monitoring compliance with planning conditions, particularly requiring private companies to replant trees that had failed. Officers explained that the Service Level Agreement with the Planning and Development Department addressed the monitoring of all trees planted within the City of London. They confirmed that this monitoring was carried out by their team, with findings reported back to Planning and Development.

Officers assured the Member that any trees known to have failed during planning permission periods had been replanted. In response to a further query, Officers noted that Planning and Development had not previously employed an arboriculture specialist and had relied on tree failures being reported to Planning Officers. The Member requested that a formal mechanism be established to inform the Committee when a tree failure occurred and remedial action had been taken.

**RESOLVED –** That, Members received the report and noted its contents.

**13. CITY GARDENS UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update from Officers of the Environment Department on the City Gardens.

Officers announced that at the London in Bloom awards, City Gardens received gold and won best in category for Town of the Year, West Ham Park and Golders Hill Park received gold for Large Park of the Year over 25 acres, Hill Garden received gold for Small Park of the Year up to 5 acres, the Hill Garden Pergola received gold and won best in category for Walled Garden of the Year, and Queen's Park received gold and won best in category for Large Park of the Year over 25 acres.

The Chair noted these achievements and congratulated Officers on the awards and positive feedback they had received about the City Gardens.

A Member asked whether there was any data available on the increased use of the new green spaces within the City of London. The Chair commented that they had found the presence of the spaces on social media a useful indication of their use. Officers responded that they had considered gathering usage statistics and confirmed mobile tracking would be a useful way of collecting this data. They noted that would speak to Planning and Development to further consider this.

Regarding the opening of Jubilee Gardens, the Member also asked Officers whether further consideration had been given as to how to story of Houndsditch could be better reflected. Officers responded that they would speak to the Policy and Projects Department to consider what could be done to retell this story.

The Member also raised the matter of homelessness in the gardens at St Botolph-without-Bishopsgate. The noted the complexity between the roles and responsibilities between City Gardens, City of London Police, and the Community Action team when responding to this, and explained that it had taken several months to get to stage where they could address it. The Chair noted they had discussed with Officers how the response to these matters worked in practice compared to formal processes. Officers confirmed that the tents in the garden had since been removed. They assured Members that they were collaborating with the relevant departments on this issue and were working on developing a framework to establish the responsibilities of each team for such matters.

14. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**  
There were no questions on matters relating to the work of the Committee.

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

Sport activities at the City Corporation's Open Spaces

As the City Corporation's lead Member for sport, the Deputy Chair noted that the sporting activity taking place on various City Corporation open spaces was only reported to the committees responsible for the space and there was no central repository for this work.

The Deputy Chair requested that a report be presented to the Natural Environment Board, and sent to the Sports Sounding Board, detailing the sporting activity being conducted in and around the open spaces. Officers confirmed that a report would be presented on this matter.

Walk in the Park

A Member explained that they had been speaking with the Royal Voluntary Service about a concept called 'Walk in the Park' which aimed to create both virtual and in-person walks for local communities. They suggested that this could be a good initiative to roll out in the City Corporation's open spaces. Officers confirmed that the superintendents would discuss this in an upcoming meeting and respond to the Member in due course.

16. **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.
17. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**  
**RESOLVED** – That, the non-public minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 3 July 2025 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting.
18. **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OUTSTANDING DEBT ARREARS - 30 JUNE 2025**  
The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Environment.
19. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**  
One question on matters relating to the work of the Committee was raised.

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

There was no other urgent business to be raised in non-public.

**The meeting ended at 12.33pm.**

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Chairman

**Contact Officer: Zoe Williams**  
**Zoe.Williams@cityoflondon.gov.uk**

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## City of London Corporation Committee Report

<b>Committee(s):</b> Natural Environment Board	<b>Dated:</b> 11/12/2025
<b>Subject:</b> Revenue and Capital Budgets – 2026/27	<b>Public report:</b> For Decision
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</b></li> <li>• <b>provides statutory duties</b></li> </ul>	Providing Excellent Services Flourishing Public Spaces
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	£0
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	N/A
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b>	Executive Director Environment Chamberlain
<b>Report author:</b>	Clem Harcourt, Chamberlain's Department

### Summary

This report presents for approval the revenue and capital budgets for the Natural Environment Board for 2026/27, for subsequent submission to Finance Committee. The Natural Environment Board is the strategic overarching committee for all of the Open Spaces with direct responsibility for the 2026/27 budgets for the Natural Environment Directorate, Learning Team, City Gardens and Bunhill Fields detailed in this report. In addition, the total proposed budget for the Natural Environment Charities is provided at Appendix 3 for information. Further details on proposed Grant Funding Model principles and arrangements are also presented to Members for discussion and endorsement in the Natural Environment Charities Review – Grant Funding Model Principles paper.

Overall, the proposed revenue budget for 2026/27 for Natural Environment Board totals £3.221m net expenditure, an increase in net expenditure of £745k compared to the 2025/26 original budget of £2.476m net expenditure.

The proposed budget for 2026/27 has been prepared within the resource envelope allocated to each Director by Resource Allocation Sub-Committee, including an inflationary increase of 3% and contingency funding to cover additional costs from the July 2024 pay award and increases in employer's national insurance.

The resource envelope must be adhered to, as failure to do so will impact Finance Committee's ability to set Council Tax rates for the year ahead and the requirement in law for the City to set a balanced budget.

## Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- i) note the latest revenue budget for your Board for 2025/26;
- ii) review and approve the proposed revenue budget for 2026/27 for your Board for submission for approval by the Finance Committee;
- iii) review and approve the City Gardens capital and supplementary revenue budgets for 2026/27 for submission for approval by the Finance Committee;
- iv) authorise the Chamberlain, in consultation with the Executive Director, Environment to approve amendments for 2025/26 and 2026/27 budgets arising from changes to recharges & support services or for any further implications arising from corporate contracts, energy price increases, changes to the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) and depreciation during budget setting; and
- v) note the proposed draft 2026/27 summarised revenue budget estimates for the Natural Environment charities in Tables 5 and 6 and Appendix 3.

## Main Report

### Introduction

1. The City of London Corporation owns and manages almost 11,000 acres of historic and natural Open Spaces for public recreation and enjoyment. This includes City Gardens which is funded from City Fund as part of the City's local authority functions. Bunhill Fields, the Learning Team and the Natural Environment Directorate, which co-ordinates the management of the Natural Environment Division and works in co-operation with other departments on cross service projects and corporate initiatives are funded through City's Estate.
2. This report sets out the latest budget for 2025/26 and the proposed draft revenue and capital budgets for 2026/27 for these areas and under the control of the Executive Director Environment, analysed between:
  - **Local Risk Budgets** - these are budgets deemed to be largely within the Chief Officer's control;
  - **Central Risk Budgets** – these are budgets comprising specific items where a Chief Officer manages the underlying service, but where the eventual financial outturn can be strongly influenced by external factors outside of his/her control or are budgets of a corporate nature; and
  - **Recharges & Support Services and Capital Charges** - these cover budgets for services provided by one activity to another. The control of these costs is exercised at the point where the expenditure or income first arises as local or central risk.
3. As the strategic lead board for Natural Environment, an overview version of the total proposed budget for the Natural Environment Charities is provided at Appendix 3 for information. Members should note that for 2026/27, the format of

the budgets for the charities has been reviewed, reframing the proposed budget to show net expenditure as grant funding (subject to formal approval of the grant funding principles and arrangements) from City's Estate for 2026/27 which is broken down according to the individual elements of the grant (Core Grant, City Surveyor Works, Corporate Recharges and Support Services and Central Risk Expenditure). The proposed draft budgets for 2026/27 are set out in the format of a Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) to enable the charities to comply with the best practice for the financial reporting of charities. Tables 5 and 6 present a high-level summary of the proposed draft budget for 2026/27 in the City's standard format and the new charity style respectively.

4. In the various tables, income, increases in income, and reductions in expenditure are shown in brackets, whereas positive figures will be used to denote expenditure, increases in expenditure, or shortfalls in income in line with the City's standard financial reporting convention which is used across the Financial Services Division. Only significant variances (generally those greater than £30k) have been commented on and are referenced in the relevant table in Appendix 1. However, where charity style reporting has been introduced in this paper (Table 6 and Appendix 3), the convention is to show both income and expenditure without brackets, which are instead used to denote deficits or adverse variances.
5. The latest budget for 2025/26 and proposed draft budget for 2026/27 for your Board, is summarised in Table 1 below and further analysed by risk and Chief Officer in Appendix 1.
6. The overall 2026/27 proposed draft budget for your Board which includes the Executive Director Environment's relevant operating budgets (local risk and central risk) and recharges & support services budgets, plus the City Surveyor's CWP and building repairs & maintenance budget is £3.221m net expenditure, this is a net increase of £745k when compared with the 2025/26 original budget of £2.476m net expenditure agreed previously by your Board.

<b>Table 1 - Natural Environment Board</b>	<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Latest Budget</b>	<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Movement 2025/26 OR to 2026/27 OR</b>
	<b>2025/26 £000</b>	<b>2025/26 £000</b>	<b>2026/27 £000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Local Risk	3,476	2,981	3,087	(389)
City Surveyor Repairs & Mte	45	45	46	1
Cyclical Works Programme (CWP)	122	20	115	(7)
Central Risk	20	20	20	0
Recharges & Support Services	(1,187)	(304)	(47)	1,140
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>	<b>2,476</b>	<b>2,762</b>	<b>3,221</b>	<b>745</b>

### **Latest Revenue Budget for 2025/26**

7. Overall, the 2025/26 latest budget for your Board is net expenditure of £2.762m, an increase of £286k compared to the 2025/26 original budget of £2.476m net expenditure agreed previously by your Board. The reasons for this net expenditure budget increase are:

- £519k decreased income from recharges for the Learning Team which are now no longer being recharged to the Natural Environment charities;
- £364k reduced income from recharges from the Natural Environment Directorate to other sections of the division following a reduction in the budgeted net cost of the Directorate for 2025/26 largely arising from the transfer of support staffing budgets to other sections of the division;
- £76k contingency funding provided to cover increased costs from the July 2024 pay award and increases in employers national insurance;
- £64k Transformation Funding to cover the cost of a Project Support Officer to support the delivery of the Environment Department Asset Plan;
- (£452k) transfer of support services staffing budgets to Epping Forest and North London Open Spaces (NLOS) charities with these posts no longer funded from the Directorate effective from July 2025;
- (£183k) adjustments relating to previous years funding for centrally funded apprentices and savings from the corporate mobile phone contract; and
- (£102k) changes to the newly agreed CWP managed by the City Surveyor comprising (£87k) at City Gardens and (£15k) at Bunhill Fields.

## **Proposed Revenue Budget for 2026/27**

8. The proposed draft 2026/27 budget is net expenditure of £3.221m, an increase of £745k compared to the 2025/26 original budget. Detail of the movement between the 2025/26 original budget and the 2026/27 original budget is set out in Appendix 2.
9. For 2026/27, budgets include:
  - a 3% uplift for inflation as a cash limit to Chief Officers' budgets;
  - a clear distinction between local risk, central risk, and recharge budgets; and
  - responsibility for budgetary control placed on departmental Chief Officers.
10. The resulting resource envelope must be adhered to, as failure to do so will impact Finance Committee's ability to set Council Tax rates for the year ahead and the requirement in law for the City to set a balanced budget.
11. The budget has been prepared within the resource envelope allocated to the Executive Director Environment with the following assumptions. Further details are also set out in Appendix 2:
  - Support Services budgets reflect the attribution and cost of central departments. All support services are based on time spent or use of services and were reviewed during 2024/25 with the method of apportionment updated to reflect the latest up to date corporate information. However, the full budgets for these departments have not yet been finalised, so further changes may be required. Members are asked to agree that the decision as to the changes required to these budgets are delegated to the Chamberlain in consultation with the Executive Director Environment;
  - The transfer of support services staffing budgets to Epping Forest and NLOS with such posts previously budgeted for within the Natural Environment Directorate;
  - Contingency funding provided to cover additional costs associated with the July 2024 pay award and increases in employers national insurance;
  - Adjustments to your Board's budget envelope for 2026/27 in relation to funding from centrally funded apprentices from previous years and savings from the corporate contract for mobile phones;
  - The transfer of budgets from other service committees falling under City Fund within the control of the Executive Director Environment to enable your Board to remain within its allocated proposed budget envelope for 2026/27; and

- The reversal of one-off funding provided in 2025/26 to West Wickham & Coulsdon Commons from the Natural Environment Directorate to fund additional grounds maintenance costs.

12. Appendix 1 provides details on budget movements between the 2025/26 original budget and the proposed draft budget for 2026/27. Overall, there is a net increase in net expenditure of £745k. The main reasons for this net increase are:

**Budget Increases:**

- £519k reduced income from recharges due to the cost of the Learning Team no longer being recharged to the individual Natural Environment charities that it supports;
- £462k decreased income from recharges from the Natural Environment Directorate to other sections of the division as a result of the reduced net cost of the Directorate for 2026/27. This is largely explained by support services posts no longer being budgeted for in the Directorate as set out above;
- £113k additional recharges and support services including an increase in recharges from corporate departments following a review of central recharges during 2024/25 as well as additional depreciation projected to be incurred at City Gardens;
- £64k extra premises related costs to fund additional repair and maintenance costs at the City's Open Spaces managed by the Highways Division for cyclical cleaning, safety checks and maintenance of irrigation sites and ornamental fountains. This is in addition to an increase in water costs budgeted for at City Gardens;
- £30k additional supplies and services, primarily explained by an increase in internal legal fees and licenses for the Natural Environment Division.

**Budget Decreases:**

- (£308k) net reduction in staffing costs compared with 2025/26 largely explained by the transfer of budgets for support service staff from the Natural Environment Directorate to Epping Forest and NLOS. The net decrease is partly offset by an increase in employment expenditure in other sections following cost of living pay rises to staff and increases in employer's national insurance;
- (£99k) additional income from customer and client receipts relating to extra income forecast from projects at City Gardens in 2026/27 as well as income expected to be delivered from a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between City Gardens and the Planning section;
- (£54k) extra income from grants and contributions largely relating to an increase in income forecast from Section 106 contributions at City Gardens; and
- (£31k) reduced contingency budget held by the Natural Environment Directorate as a result of increased costs such as supplies and services expenditure.

## Staffing Statement

13. Analysis of the movement in staff related costs are shown in Table 2 below:

<b>Table 2 Staffing Statement</b>	<b>Original Budget 2025/26</b>		<b>Latest Budget 2025/26</b>		<b>Original Budget 2026/27</b>	
	<b>Staffing Full-time equivalent</b>	<b>Estimated cost £000</b>	<b>Staffing Full-time equivalent</b>	<b>Estimated cost £000</b>	<b>Staffing Full-time equivalent</b>	<b>Estimated cost £000</b>
Directorate/ Learning	28.80	1,654	16.55	1,301	16.93	1,185
City Gardens/ Bunhill Fields	43.00	1,972	43.00	1,834	43.00	2,103
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>71.80</b>	<b>3,626</b>	<b>59.55</b>	<b>3,135</b>	<b>59.93</b>	<b>3,288</b>

## Cyclical Works Programme

14. Table 3 below details the budgets held and proposed for the City Surveyor's CWP and building repairs & maintenance:

<b>Table 3 - CWP &amp; City Surveyor Local Risk</b>		<b>Original Budget 2025/26 £'000</b>	<b>Latest Budget 2025/26 £'000</b>	<b>Original Budget 2026/27 £'000</b>
<b>Repairs and Maintenance</b>				
<b>Cyclical Works Programme</b>				
Bunhill Fields		15	0	12
City Gardens		107	20	103
		<b>122</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>Planned &amp; Reactive Works (Breakdown &amp; Servicing)</b>				
City Gardens		45	45	46
		<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Total CWP &amp; City Surveyor</b>		<b>167</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>161</b>

## Draft Capital and Supplementary Revenue Budgets

15. The latest estimated costs for your Board's current approved capital and supplementary revenue projects are summarised in Table 4 below:

Table 4							
Service	Project	Exp. Pre 01/04/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Later Years	Total
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
City Gardens	Finsbury Circus Reinstatement	4,415	1,013				5,428
City Gardens	Tower Hill Play Area Replacement Project	26	10		-		36
<b>TOTAL City Gardens</b>		<b>4,441</b>	<b>1,023</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,464</b>

16. The latest Capital and Supplementary Revenue Project expenditure on approved schemes will be presented to the Court of Common Council for formal approval in March 2026.

### **Total Estimates Summary for Natural Environment Charities**

17. Appendix 3 provides a summary overview of the total proposed budget for the Natural Environment Charities. For Unrestricted revenue grant funding from City's Estate to the Natural Environment Charities amounts to £24.868m for 2026/27, a decrease of £39k (0.16%) compared with the grant from City's Estate for 2025/26. This includes core grant funding for the charities of £10.067m plus £14.801m in additional grant income.

18. Each of the Natural Environment Charities has been targeted to achieve unrestricted operational breakeven within the budget envelope. However, an operational deficit of £162k is budgeted to be met from Epping Forest Charity reserves, though officers continue to review how this shortfall might be met in year. In addition, an update will be provided to your Board's January 2026 meeting on officers' review of the baseline budgets for each of the Natural Environment Charities to support a request to Finance Committee to increase the budget envelope for local risk elements (i.e. the core unrestricted revenue grant), to address concerns regarding historic underfunding of core operations. As part of the Natural Environment Charities Review, work will continue to be undertaken to identify opportunities for income generation and cost savings.

19. A summary of the proposed draft budgets for 2026/27 for the charities can also be found below in Table 5 and Table 6. Please note that Table 5 presents the budgetary information for the charities in the format of the City's standard financial reporting conventions. Table 6 meanwhile sets out a summarised version of the proposed draft budgets for 2026/27 in a charity financial reporting style.



<b>Table 5 - NE Charity Total (City / deficit funding report style)</b>	Original (OR) Total Budget 2025/26 £000	Latest Total Budget 2025/26 £000	Original (OR) Total Budget 2026/27 £000	Movement 2025/26 OR to 2026/27 OR £000
Local Risk	9,035	9,617	10,067	1,032
City Surveyors - Repairs & Maintenance	1,281	1,281	1,333	52
Cyclical Works Programme (CWP)	6,159	6,770	7,974	1,815
Central Risk (inc. Depreciation / Investment income)	(292)	(292)	(374)	(82)
Recharges & Support Services	6,114	6,112	5,432	(682)
Capital and Projects	2,318	0	125	(2,193)
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>	<b>24,615</b>	<b>23,488</b>	<b>24,557</b>	<b>(57)</b>
Depreciation (shown as Funds movement)	(1,191)	(1,171)	(1,098)	93
Investment income (shown as Self-Generated Income)	1,483	1,483	1,534	51
<b>Total Grant Funding</b>	<b>24,907</b>	<b>23,800</b>	<b>24,993</b>	<b>86</b>

<b>Table 6 - NE Charity Total (Charity / grant funding report style)</b>	Original (OR) Total Budget 2025/26 £000	Original (OR) Total Budget 2026/27 £000	Original (OR) Unrestricted Budget 2026/27 £000	Restricted Budget 2026/27 £000	Variance F/(A) 2025/26 OR to 2026/27 £000
Core Grant (Local Risk)	9,035	10,067	10,067	0	1,032
Additional Grant	13,554	14,801	14,801	0	1,247
Capital / Projects	2,318	125	0	125	(2,193)
<b>Total Grant Funding</b>	<b>24,907</b>	<b>24,993</b>	<b>24,868</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>86</b>
Self-Generated Income	9,130	9,310	8,578	733	180
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>34,037</b>	<b>34,304</b>	<b>33,446</b>	<b>858</b>	<b>267</b>
Local Risk Expenditure	18,675	20,024	18,806	1,218	(1,349)
Central Risk Expenditure (excl. Depreciation)	0	62	62	0	(62)
City Surveyors - Repairs & Maintenance	1,281	1,333	1,333	0	(52)
Cyclical Works Programme (CWP)	6,159	7,974	7,974	0	(1,815)
Recharges & Support Services	6,114	5,432	5,432	0	682
<b>Total Revenue Expenditure</b>	<b>32,229</b>	<b>34,825</b>	<b>33,607</b>	<b>1,218</b>	<b>2,596</b>
Capital Expenditure	2,318	115	0	115	2,203
<b>Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>(510)</b>	<b>(636)</b>	<b>(161)</b>	<b>(475)</b>	<b>(4,532)</b>

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

Strategic implications – none

Financial implications – none

Resource implications – none

Legal implications – none

Risk implications – none

Equalities implications – none

Climate implications – none

Security implications – none

## **Conclusion**

20. This report presents the proposed draft revenue and capital budgets for 2026/27 for your Board for Members to consider and approve.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Board Summary Budget – by Risk and Chief Officer
- Appendix 2 – Movement Between 2025/26 Original Budget to 2026/27 Original Budget
- Appendix 3 – Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) – Natural Environment Charities

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## Appendix 1

### Board Summary Budget – by Risk and Chief Officer

Analysis of Service Expenditure	Local or Central Risk	Actual  2024/25 £'000	Original Budget (OR) 2025/26 £'000	Latest Budget  2025/26 £'000	Original Budget (OR) 2026/27 £'000	Movement 25/26 OR to 26/27 OR £'000	Notes
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>							
Employees	L	3,596	3,596	3,105	3,288	(308)	1
Employees	C	50	30	30	0	(30)	2
Premises Related Expenses	L	418	268	268	332	64	3
City Surveyor - All Services	L	576	167	65	161	(6)	
Transport Related Expenses	L	64	54	54	63	9	
Supplies & Services	L	600	353	349	383	30	4
Supplies & Services	C	5	20	20	20	0	
Third Party Payments	L	55	43	43	43	0	
Contingencies	L	0	133	133	102	(31)	5
Transfers to Reserves (Grant Income)	C	8	0	0	0	0	
Capital Charges	C	(1)	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>5,371</b>	<b>4,664</b>	<b>4,067</b>	<b>4,392</b>	<b>(272)</b>	
<b>INCOME</b>							
Government Grants	C	0	(30)	(30)	0	30	2
Other Grants, Reimbursements & Cont.	L	(243)	(224)	(224)	(278)	(54)	6
Customer, Client Receipts	L	(610)	(507)	(507)	(606)	(99)	7
Transfer from Reserves (OSPR and Aldgate)	L	(232)	(240)	(240)	(240)	0	
Transfer from Reserves (Grant Income)	C	(50)	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>(1,135)</b>	<b>(1,001)</b>	<b>(1,001)</b>	<b>(1,124)</b>	<b>(123)</b>	
<b>TOTAL NET EXP/(INC) BEFORE SUPPORT SERVICES &amp; RECHARGES</b>		<b>4,236</b>	<b>3,663</b>	<b>3,066</b>	<b>3,268</b>	<b>(395)</b>	
<b>SUPPORT SERVICES &amp; RECHARGES</b>							
Central Support and Capital Charges		668	702	702	815	113	8
Recharges Within Fund		(2,418)	(2,855)	(1,972)	(1,846)	1,009	9
Recharges Across Funds		957	966	966	984	18	
<b>Total Support Services</b>		<b>(793)</b>	<b>(1,187)</b>	<b>(304)</b>	<b>(47)</b>	<b>1,140</b>	
<b>TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE/(INCOME)</b>		<b>3,443</b>	<b>2,476</b>	<b>2,762</b>	<b>3,221</b>	<b>745</b>	

#### Notes:

1. (£308k) reduction in employment costs budgeted for 2026/27 as a result of the transfer of support services staffing budgets to Epping Forest and North London Open Spaces (NLOS) from the Natural Environment Directorate following an internal staffing restructure.
2. (£30k) budget not required on central risk for 2026/27 as a result of grant monies used to fund a fixed term contract post at City Gardens coming to an end.
3. £64k increased premises related costs largely explained by additional repairs and maintenance expenditure budgeted for the Highways Division at the City's Open Spaces as a result of cyclical cleaning, safety checks and maintenance of irrigation sites and ornamental fountains. This is in addition to extra water costs expected to be incurred at City Gardens.
4. £30k additional supplies and services expenditure largely due to increased internal legal fees to support the Natural Environment Division as a whole. This is on top of an increase in the budget for IT licenses for the Natural Environment Directorate.
5. (£31k) reduction in the contingency budget held by the Natural Environment Directorate to support initiatives across the division in order to cover increased costs in other areas of the Directorate's budget.
6. (£54k) additional income largely attributable to extra Section 106 contributions projected to be received at City Gardens in 2026/27 based on current forecasts.
7. (£99k) increase in income from customer and client receipts at City Gardens for 2026/27. This is due to extra income projected to be received from specific projects being delivered in the next financial year as well as income from a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Planning section.

8. £113k additional expenditure is comprised of an increase of £73k in recharges from corporate departments compared with 2025/26 as well as £40k extra depreciation for vehicles and plant held at City Gardens.
9. £1.009m net change in Recharges Within Fund compared with 2025/26. This is primarily explained by £519k in recharges from the Learning Team no longer being recharged to the Natural Environment charities as well as £462k reduced recharges from the Natural Environment Directorate to other sections of the division following the cost of support services staff now directly being charged to the individual Natural Environment charities. In addition, there are increased recharges of £28k for 2026/27 at City Gardens from the Environment Directorate and Cleansing section.

## Appendix 2

### Movement between 2025/26 Original Budget and 2026/27 Original Budget

<b>Natural Environment Board</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Original Budget 2025/26</b>	<b>2,476</b>
<b>Original Net Local Risk Budget (Executive Director Environment &amp; City Surveyor) 2025/26</b>	<b>3,643</b>
<b>Executive Director Environment</b>	
Transfer from other service committees in City Fund falling within the control of Executive Director Environment	172
3% uplift for inflation	107
Contingency funding from July 2024 pay award and increases in employer's National Insurance	77
Reversal of one-off funding from Natural Environment Directorate in 2025/26 for grounds maintenance costs at West Wickham & Coulsdon Commons	40
Transfer of budgets for support services staff to Epping Forest and North London Open Spaces (NLOS)	(602)
Prior year adjustments for centrally funded apprenticeships and savings from corporate mobile phone contract	(183)
<b>City Surveyor</b>	
Corporate Integrated Facilities Management contract – City Gardens	1
Re-phasing of projects under Cyclical Works Programme – City Gardens	(4)
Re-phasing of projects under Cyclical Works Programme – Bunhill Fields	(3)
<b>Original Net Local Risk Budget (Executive Director Environment &amp; City Surveyor) 2026/27</b>	<b>3,248</b>
<b>Central Risk (Executive Director Environment)</b>	
<b>Original Net Central Risk Budget 2025/26</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Original Net Central Risk Budget 2026/27</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Recharges</b>	
<b>Original Recharges Budget 2025/26</b>	<b>(1,187)</b>
Removal of recharges for Learning Team to Natural Environment charities	519

Decreased Directorate recharges to other sections of Natural Environment Division	462
Recharges from corporate departments	73
Depreciation at City Gardens	40
Recharges from Environment Department Directorate	25
Recharges from Cleansing section to City Gardens	21
<b>Original Recharges Budget 2026/27</b>	<b>(47)</b>
<b>Original Budget 2026/27</b>	<b>3,221</b>

Statement of Financial Activities	NE Charity Total						
	Total	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Unrestricted	Restricted	Unrestricted
	2025-26	2025-26	2025/26	2026-27	2026-27	2026-27	2026-27
	FY Original Budget	FY Original Budget	FY Original Budget	FY Budget	FY Budget	FY Budget	Budget Variance F / (A)
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Income</b>							
<b>City's Estate Grant Funding</b>							
<b>Core Grant (Local Risk)</b>							
Core Grant	9,035	9,035	0	10,067	10,067	0	1,032
Pay Settlement Adjustment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Core Grant</b>	<b>9,035</b>	<b>9,035</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10,067</b>	<b>10,067</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,032</b>
<b>Additional Grant</b>							
Operational - Surveyors Works	7,440	7,440	0	9,307	9,307	0	1,867
Operational - Corporate Recharges & Support Services	6,114	6,114	0	5,432	5,432	0	(682)
Operational - Central Risk - Expenditure	0	0	0	62	62	0	62
<b>Total Additional Grant</b>	<b>13,554</b>	<b>13,554</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14,801</b>	<b>14,801</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,247</b>
<b>Capital and Projects</b>							
Capital (Restricted)	2,318	0	2,318	115	0	115	0
Other Projects (Restricted)	0	0	0	10	0	10	0
<b>Total Capital and Projects</b>	<b>2,318</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,318</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total City's Estate Grant Funding</b>	<b>24,907</b>	<b>22,589</b>	<b>2,318</b>	<b>24,993</b>	<b>24,868</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>2,279</b>
<b>Self-Generated Income</b>							
Fundraising	1,231	501	730	1,054	324	730	(177)
Trading	6,416	6,416	0	6,723	6,723	0	307
Learning Income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Income	1,483	1,483	0	1,534	1,531	3	48
<b>Total Self-Generated Income</b>	<b>9,130</b>	<b>8,400</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>9,310</b>	<b>8,578</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>34,037</b>	<b>30,989</b>	<b>3,048</b>	<b>34,304</b>	<b>33,446</b>	<b>858</b>	<b>2,457</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>							
<b>Local Risk Expenditure</b>							
Direct Employees	13,880	13,880	0	14,715	14,553	162	673
Indirect Employee Costs	151	151	0	165	157	8	6
Fundraising	8	8	0	35	35	0	27
Direct Trading	9	9	0	187	187	0	178
Learning Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Premises	1,568	1,568	0	1,543	1,538	5	(30)
Conservation and Ecology	1,450	720	730	1,523	541	982	(179)
Access, Safety & Visitor Management	18	18	0	178	175	3	157
Transport	330	330	0	442	439	3	109
Equipment, Furniture and Materials	905	905	0	964	931	33	26
Supplies and Services	356	356	0	272	250	22	(106)
<b>Total Local Risk Expenditure</b>	<b>18,675</b>	<b>17,945</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>20,024</b>	<b>18,806</b>	<b>1,218</b>	<b>861</b>
<b>Central Risk Expenditure</b>							
External Audit / Accreditation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Insurance	0	0	0	62	62	0	62
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Central Risk Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>City Surveyors Works - Repairs and Maintenance</b>							
Cyclical Works Programme (planned / backlog)	6,159	6,159	0	7,974	7,974	0	1,815
Repairs and Maintenance (reactive)	1,281	1,281	0	1,333	1,333	0	52
<b>Total City Surveyors Works</b>	<b>7,440</b>	<b>7,440</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9,307</b>	<b>9,307</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,867</b>
<b>Total Operational Expenditure (Before Recharges)</b>	<b>26,115</b>	<b>25,385</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>29,393</b>	<b>28,175</b>	<b>1,218</b>	<b>2,790</b>
<b>Surplus / (Deficit) (Before Recharges)</b>	<b>7,922</b>	<b>5,604</b>	<b>2,318</b>	<b>4,911</b>	<b>5,271</b>	<b>(360)</b>	<b>(333)</b>
<b>Total Corporate Recharges &amp; Support Services</b>	<b>6,114</b>	<b>6,114</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,432</b>	<b>5,432</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(682)</b>
<b>Total Operational Expenditure (After Recharges)</b>	<b>32,229</b>	<b>31,499</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>34,825</b>	<b>33,607</b>	<b>1,218</b>	<b>2,108</b>
<b>Surplus / (Deficit) (After Recharges)</b>	<b>1,808</b>	<b>(510)</b>	<b>2,318</b>	<b>(521)</b>	<b>(161)</b>	<b>(360)</b>	<b>349</b>
Central Risk - Depreciation	1,191	1,191	0	1,098	1,098	0	(93)
<b>Surplus / (Deficit) After Depreciation</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>(1,701)</b>	<b>2,318</b>	<b>(1,619)</b>	<b>(1,259)</b>	<b>(360)</b>	<b>442</b>
Restricted Capital Expenditure	(2,318)	0	(2,318)	(115)	0	(115)	0
Restricted Expenditure from Reserves (not analysed above)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer (to) / from Fixed Asset fund	1,191	1,191	0	1,098	1,098	0	(93)
Transfer (to) / from Unrestricted Reserves	106	106	0	162	162	0	56
Transfer (to) / from Restricted Reserves	0	0	0	475	0	475	0
<b>Surplus / (Deficit) After Transfer to / (from) Reserves</b>	<b>(404)</b>	<b>(404)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>405</b>
Total Revenue Expenditure	32,229	31,499	730	34,825	33,607	1,218	2,108
Total Capital Expenditure	2,018	0	2,018	115	0	115	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>34,247</b>	<b>31,499</b>	<b>2,748</b>	<b>34,940</b>	<b>33,607</b>	<b>1,333</b>	<b>2,108</b>

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## City of London Corporation Committee Report

<b>Committee(s):</b> Natural Environment Board	<b>Dated:</b> 11 Dec 2025
<b>Subject:</b> City Gardens Fees and Charges 2026/27	<b>Public report:</b> For Decision
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</li> </ul>	Flourishing Public Spaces Providing Excellent Services Vibrant Thriving Destination
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	£
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	N/A
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b>	Katie Stewart Executive Director Environment
<b>Report author:</b>	Jake Tibbetts

### Summary

This report recommends that charges for corporate events that are held in City Gardens sites are increased by 4.3% for the start of the 2026/27 financial year. This is in line with the Retail Price index (RPI) for October 2025. The charge for non-profit and charity events is recommended to be frozen. The new fees and charges are to be implemented from 1 April 2026. The fees also cover the cost of bench sponsorship,

### Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve the proposed 2026/27 fees and charges as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

## Main Report

### Background

1. The City Gardens Team processes requests from members of the public, charitable groups and corporate organisations who wish to hold events within its gardens.
2. Members of this Board approved the updated City Gardens Events Policy in December 2024. The policy does not need reviewing, however the Fees and Charges that are laid out in appendix 1 of that report are intended to be reviewed on an annual basis.
3. Members of this Board approved the Commemorative Benches and Trees Policy in September 2023. The fees for commemorative bench are now included in this annual review.

### Current Position

4. The hire of City Gardens sites generates income that is used to contribute towards the maintenance cost of our sites and staff resources. During the 2024/25 financial year City Gardens generated £11,151 from 31 events. At the time of writing £6,776 has been generated by 22 events so far, during the current financial year.
5. In 2024/25 the most popular type of event continued to be photography with 19 bookings.
6. Table 1 below shows the number of events and photography applications for the last three full financial years.

	2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
	Number	Income	Number	Income	Number	Income
Events	12	£ 8,382.00	7	£ 2,305.00	12	£ 6,876.00
Photo	22	£ 4,630.00	23	£ 4,945.00	19	£ 4,275.00
Total	34	£ 13,012.00	30	£ 7,250.00	31	£ 11,151.00

Table 1

7. The number of photographic events have remained largely static ranging between 19 and 23 annually since 2022/23.

8. Event numbers in 2024/25 were the same as 2022/23, but the income total has dropped. This is due to events being shorter in length and therefore generating less income.
9. There will be a focus over the next year to review and improve the marketing of our sites for events. This will now include a renewed Finsbury Circus Gardens, which was not completed early enough in the Calendar year to allow events to be booked in it this summer.
10. In 2024/25 two benches were purchased under the commemorative benches scheme and so far this financial year four have been purchased.
11. Since 2017 we have based the annual increase for events on the RPI index for October of each year. The RPI index for October 2025 is 4.3%. We set the Fees and Charges increase at this time so that fees are in place for those wanting to book events early in the year.

## Options

- A. Apply no increase and retain current fees and charges. This option is not favoured as anything less than a rise in line with inflation would reduce our ability to cover costs and meet income targets. **This option is not recommended.**
- B. Increase all fees and charges in line with the Retail Price Index, apart from non-profit and charity events which are to remain at current levels. Prices to be rounded up to the nearest £5. This option keeps fees and charges abreast of inflation whilst also considering the impact on charities. **This option is recommended.**
- C. Increase fee and charges by a greater amount than the Retail Price Index to offset savings. This is not favoured as it is considered that a larger increase could result in a reduced number of sales. Considering the high price of inflation and the need for the generation of income from events this option is considered risky and may reduce event numbers and overall income. **This option is not recommended.**

## Proposals

12. The proposed option is B. Increase fees and charges in line with the Retail Price Index apart from the fees for charity and non-profit events which are to remain at current levels. City Gardens will focus on reviewing and improving marketing and promoting the gardens for events to drive up numbers whilst maintaining the balance of keeping our spaces open and enjoyable for as many people as possible.

## Corporate & Strategic Implications

### Strategic implications

Facilitating and generating income from events helps us meet the following corporate objectives:

- Flourishing Public Spaces
- Providing Excellent Services
- Vibrant Thriving Destination

**Financial implications** - The financial implications are contained within the body of the report

**Resource implications** - Resourcing the processing of event applications is covered by the income generated from events.

**Legal implications** - Section 7 of the City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018 authorises the City to impose charges for temporary use of part of an open space for an event or for admission to an open space area where access is restricted for an event, and requires that the power be exercised in accordance with the relevant policy. Paragraph 15.8 of the Open Spaces Event Policy 2018 makes provision for the charges and also provides that the schedule of charges will be reviewed annually. The exercise of the charging power and the review of charges is in accordance with the 2018 Act and the Policy.

**Risk implications** – None

**Equalities implications** – Whilst equality implications should be considered when event applications are made, there are none when considering only the associated fees and charges.

**Climate implications** – None

**Security implications** - Whilst there are some security implications of events being held, there are none when considering only the associated fees and charges.

## **Conclusion**

13. Events held in City Gardens are important to our communities. The proposed increase in Fees and Charges reflects increased costs, enables us to continue to facilitate events in a sustainable manner and provides a small amount of income that contributes towards maintaining our gardens and our staff resources.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Fees and Charges increase for City Gardens for 2026/27

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# Appendix One - Proposed Fees and Charges for 2026/27

Wedding/Other photography	City Gardens 2025/2026 fees	Finsbury Circus 2025/2026 fees	City Gardens 2026/2027 proposed fees (4.3% increase)	Finsbury Circus 2026/2027 proposed fees (4.3% increase)
Wedding/Other photography for 2 hours	£235	£235	£245	£245
<b>Private Hire, Weddings &amp; Civil Partnerships</b>				
Application Fee	£0	£0	£0	£0
Basic Hire Fee (1st hour)	£425	£2000	£445	£2085
Subsequent hours (Up to 4 Hours)	£205	£1000	£215	£1045
Full day	£2105	£7500	£2195	£7820
Required set up / de-rig time outside of the event hire time – per hour.	£205	£500	£215	£520
Damage deposit (£500 or 25% hire fee whichever is the greater)				
<b>Commercial/corporate events</b>				
Application Fee	£235	£235	£245	£245
Basic Hire Fee per hour (Up to 4 Hours)	£205	£2000	£215	£2085
Full day	£1905	£7500	£1985	£7820
% of on anticipated ticket sales - additional to basic hire fee	15%	15%	15%	15%
Additional event day	£1060	£7500	£1105	£7820
Required set up / de-rig time outside of the event hire time – per hour.	£205	£2000	£215	£2085
Booking Deposit (£500 or 25% hire fee whichever is the greater)	£500 or 25%	25%	£500 or 25%	25%
Damage deposit (£500 or 25% hire fee whichever is the greater)	£500 or 25%	25%	£500 or 25%	25%
<b>Non-profit/charity events</b>				
Application Fee	£0	£0	£0	£0
Basic Hire Fee (1st hour)	£200	£1000	£200	£1000
Subsequent hours (Up to 4 hours)	£135	£500	£135	£500
Full Day	£1315	£3750	£1315	£3750
Required set up / de-rig time outside of the event hire time – per hour.	£135	£250	£135	£250
Damage deposit (£500 or 25% hire fee whichever is the greater)	£500 or 25%	£500 or 25%	£500 or 25%	£500 or 25%
<b>Commemorative Bench &amp; Plaque</b>				
Sponsorship fee covers the placing of a bench with inscribed plaque, plus administration and maintenance costs for a period of ten years beginning from the installation of the bench	£1980	n/a	£2065	n/a

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## City of London Corporation Committee Report

<b>Committee:</b> Natural Environment Board	<b>Dated:</b> 11 Dec 2025
<b>Subject:</b> Responsible Dog Ownership – City Gardens	<b>Public report:</b> For Decision
<b>This proposal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</b></li> <li>• <b>provides statutory duties</b></li> <li>• <b>provides business enabling functions</b></li> </ul>	Dynamic Economic Growth Leading Sustainable Environment Providing Excellent Services Flourishing Public Spaces
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	N/A
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	N/A
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b>	Katie Stewart
<b>Report author:</b>	Jake Tibbetts

### Summary

Following the February 2024 report to Committee concerning dog-related issues at Bunhill Fields, a new City Gardens Keeper role was created to enhance byelaw enforcement and promote responsible dog ownership. Since the appointment of the Keeper in October 2024, there has been a significant and sustained improvement in compliance and behaviour among dog owners.

Data collected over the first year demonstrates a sharp decline in issue-based interventions and aggressive incidents, with no further issues recorded after June 2025. Dog fouling incidents remain at a low level and are primarily observed during periods when the Keeper is not on site. Feedback from stakeholders, including the Friends of City Gardens, indicates that the presence of the Keeper has greatly improved the overall atmosphere and safety of Bunhill Fields.

Data from other City Gardens sites highlights that while most sites experience low levels of irresponsible dog ownership there are two sites (West Smithfield Rotunda and St Barts the Great) which would benefit from the same approach employed at Bunhill.

Given these improvements and the current low level of incidents, it is not considered necessary or proportionate to pursue a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) at this stage.

## **Recommendation(s)**

Members are asked to:

**Endorse** the continuation of the current proactive and relationship-based approach to promoting responsible dog ownership at Bunhill Fields and across City Gardens sites.

**Agree** that the introduction of PSPOs should not be pursued at this time, but the situation should be kept under review, with a further report brought to Committee should issues re-emerge.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. During the pandemic there was a significant rise in dog ownership across London including the City of London. In 2022 and 2023 we received an increase in dog related issues being reported to us as well as concerns raised by staff and volunteers. In particular there was a concentration of issues located in Bunhill Fields.
2. In February 2024, a report was presented to this committee in which Members were asked to:
  - Endorse the creation of a **City Gardens Keeper** role to enforce byelaws and legislation across City Gardens sites, initially focused on Bunhill Fields.
  - Support the **exploration of PSPOs** and other enforcement powers to improve user experience.
3. Members agreed to the above proposals and asked that a report to update on the effectiveness of the approach be brought back to committee after one year so that approaches could be adapted as required.

### **Current Position**

4. Following committee approval, a Keeper was recruited and commenced duties in October 2024. The post holder adopted a proactive, educational approach, focused on promoting responsible dog ownership through:
- Face-to-face engagement with dog owners.
  - Distribution of leaflets explaining expected behaviour.
  - Improved and updated signage.
  - Use of chalkboards for informal messaging (example in Figure 1)
  - Relationship-building with regular dog owners and early intervention where needed.



Figure 1: Example of Chalk Board

### Recorded Data (Jan–Oct 2025):

5. As part of the role, the Keeper recorded actions and interventions made under the following headings:

- Intervention – No Issue; Speaking to dog owners where no issue has arisen.
- Intervention - Issue; Dog issues where intervention was required, these are where dogs have been off the lead in beds or shown aggression to other dogs.
- Dog mess – Where dog faeces have been found

	Intervention - no issue	Intervention – Issue	Dog Mess
Jan	6	13	4
Feb	10	10	5
Mar	30	7	14
Apr	3	1	5
May	2	2	15
Jun	0	0	15
Jul	0	0	11
Aug	0	0	3
Sep	1	0	3
Oct	1	0	0
Grand Total	53	33	76

Table 1

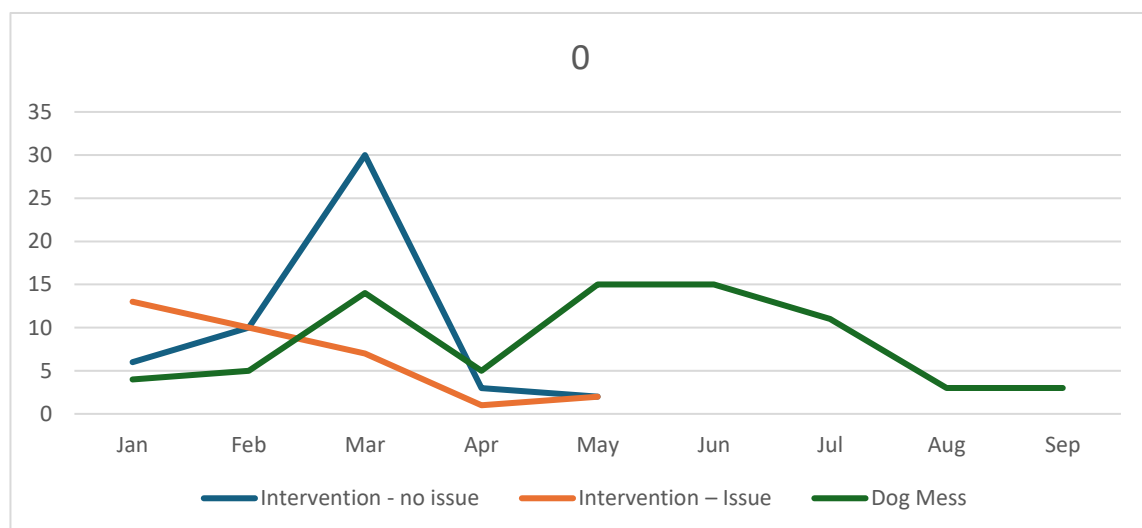


Chart 1

## Key findings:

6. Issue-based interventions steadily decreased month-on-month until June, after which no further issues were reported. There were two incidents of dog aggression which were recorded early in the year; and there have been none recorded since then. Dog mess incidents occur mainly during weekends when the Keeper is not on site and are now considered low level.

## 2.4 Stakeholder feedback:

7. The introduction of a keeper at Bunhill Fields has been widely welcomed from various stakeholders. This includes both dog owners and the wider community. The Chair of the Friends of City Gardens, who undertake a significant amount of work in Bunhill Fields provided the following statement.

*“Since the new Keeper at Bunhill has been in post there has been a significant improvement in the behaviour of dog owners and other members of the public in Bunhill Fields. The Keeper is very much more visible on site because his shifts include late afternoons and some weekends. He has used leaflets, and hand drawn notice boards to explain what responsible behaviour means in practice and has engaged directly with many of the regular dog owners to build a relationship. I have noticed that the garden is much calmer and feels safer. Dog owners no longer throw balls into flower beds and keep their dogs under control and away from volunteers working in the public area or children playing.*

*– Chair, Friends of City Gardens*

## Data from Other City Gardens Sites

8. Data, gathered by the City Gardens team from other sites across the City, provides a valuable wider context. While most sites report minimal issues, Smithfield Rotunda Garden accounts for almost 80% of all recorded incidents of irresponsible ownership. St Bartholomew the Great also shows elevated levels of dog fouling. Both sites would benefit from targeted engagement or short-term deployment of the Keeper resource to replicate the success achieved at Bunhill Fields.

Row Labels	Irresponsible Ownership	Dog Mess
Barbican Estate	1	8
Beech Gardens	0	0

Finsbury Circus Gardens	2	0
Postman's Park	2	0
Smithfield Rotunda Garden	59	2
St. Bartholomew the Great	10	16
Thomas More Garden	1	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>25</b>

**Table 2**

### **Consideration of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)**

9. PSPOs, introduced under the *Anti-social Behaviour, Crime, and Policing Act 2014*, can be used to regulate behaviour related to irresponsible dog ownership in public spaces. However, PSPOs require:
  - Evidence of persistent, detrimental behaviour affecting public safety or well-being.
  - A formal consultation process and justification of necessity.
10. Given the marked improvement in compliance and the absence of a demonstrable problem across the majority of sites, pursuing a PSPO would not currently be justified or proportionate.
11. Notably, only 25 dog mess incidents were recorded across all other City Gardens sites over the past year, half of which were concentrated in a single location.
12. A review of the existing byelaws is recommended to ensure they remain relevant and enforceable in relation to dog ownership within City Gardens.

### **Options**

#### **1. Option 1 - Continue with the current approach – Recommended**

To maintain the educational and engagement-based strategy that has proven successful at Bunhill Fields. In addition to this, replicate the approach across other City Gardens sites.

#### **2. Option 2 - Introduce PSPOs across City Gardens sites – Not Recommended**

This would enable stronger enforcement powers but given the current low level of incidents and the positive results already achieved, this approach could be considered disproportionate and it is also unlikely, given the evidence that the threshold for obtaining a PSPO would be reached.

## Proposals

13. Option 1 is the recommended approach as it has already demonstrated its effectiveness with a sharp decline in issue-based interventions, showing a clear behavioural shift among dog owners. The number of dog fouling incidents has also stabilised. Though still present, they are low-level and primarily occur when the Keeper is off-site, indicating the Keeper's presence is a strong deterrent.
14. Pursuing a PSPO would require formal consultation, legal justification, and enforcement infrastructure, which is disproportionate given the current low level of incidents.
15. The current approach is cost-effective, community-oriented, and adaptable without the requirement for legal enforcement.
16. It is proposed that the team continue to record and monitor the situation both at Bunhill Fields and other City Gardens sites. This will allow for responsive adjustments if issues re-emerge, without prematurely resorting to punitive measures.

## Corporate & Strategic Implications

17. **Financial implications** – Minimal, as the current approach makes efficient use of existing resources.
18. **Resource implications** – Potential for flexible redeployment of Keeper resource to identified hotspots.
19. **Legal implications** – contained within the body of the report.
20. **Risk implications** – Low, with monitoring in place to detect any emerging trends.
21. **Equalities implications** – Positive; promotes equitable use of public space.
22. **Climate implications** – Neutral.
23. **Security implications** – N/A.

## Conclusion

24. The appointment of the City Gardens Keeper in October 2024 has led to sustained improvement in dog owner behaviour at Bunhill Fields.

Responsible ownership has increased markedly, and aggressive incidents have been eliminated since June 2025.

25. Data from other City Gardens sites shows that, while most areas remain low risk, a small number would benefit from targeted attention. Expanding the principles of the Bunhill Fields model to these sites represents a proportionate and effective next step.
26. The current proactive, educational, and relationship-based approach has proven highly successful and should continue to form the cornerstone of the City's approach to responsible dog ownership across City Gardens.

## **Appendices**

None

## **Background Papers**

Dog Control Within City Gardens

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