

OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS
Monday, 8 April 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 8 April 2019 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Graeme Smith (Chairman)
Oliver Sells QC (Deputy Chairman)
Alderman Ian Luder
Wendy Mead
Barbara Newman
Deputy John Tomlinson
Caroline Haines

Officers:

Richard Holt	- Town Clerk's Department
Carl Locsin	- Town Clerk's Department
Philip Saunders	- Remembrancer's Department
Alison Elam	- Chamberlain's Department
Colin Buttery	- Director of Open Spaces
Martin Rodman	- Superintendent of Parks & Gardens
Andy Barnard	- Superintendent, The Commons
Gerry Kiefer	- Department of Open Spaces
Lucy Anne Murphy	- West Ham Park Manager
Martin Falder	- Department of Open Spaces
Vincent Dignam	- Department for Built Environment

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Jeremy Simons.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

The Committee considered the public minutes and non-public summary of their last meeting on 10th of December 2018.

The Director of Open Spaces informed Members that the Worshipful Company of Brewers had resubmitted an application for the development of Brewers Hall which included a redesigned second entrance on Aldermanbury Square.

RESOLVED- That the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 10th of December 2018 be agreed as an accurate record.

4. **NOTE OF THE INQUORATE MEETING**

Members received the public note of the inquorate meeting of the Committee held on the 4th of February 2019. Replying to a Members query the Town Clerk clarified that the update on the City's Visitor Destination Strategy had been provided to Members via email and confirmed that this would be resent for information.

RESOLVED- That the public note of the inquorate meeting of the Committee held on the 4th of February 2019 be noted.

5. **PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

Members received the response from the Planning and Transportation Committee to the resolution from the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee on the Finsbury Circus.

A Member highlighted the continued delay to the delivery of Crossrail and request further information on Finsbury Circus. Replying to this point the Deputy Chairman explained the matter had been deferred to the Streets and Walkways Sub-Committee where Members had the view that the closure of the highway represented good sense and would advance the issue. The Director of Open Spaces added that the City of London Corporation's highways team had investigated the issue further on an officer level. The Chairman commented that it would be helpful for progress on this project to be provided at future meetings.

RESOLVED- That the response from the Planning and Transportation Committee be noted.

6. **BREXIT UPDATE**

The Director of Open Spaces was heard in relation to an update on Brexit and the implications for the City of London Corporation's Open Spaces department. The Director explained that the given the lack of clarity on the process he was unable to provide a substantive update to Members on the future implications of Brexit but noted that the City was in discussion with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to mitigate issues which could be caused by lose of European Union funded grants. In addition, it was noted that the proposed Agriculture Bill would include funding details to cover the loss of income from the European Union grants.

RESOLVED- That the update be noted.

7. **FINAL DEPARTMENTAL HIGH-LEVEL BUSINESS PLANS 2019/20 - OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the department's final high-level business for 2019/20.

A Member commented that the departmental business plan did not have the required funding the for the projects which the department was required to

undertake specifically highlighting Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) and the *Branching Out* education scheme. Further to this the Member raised that the Pests and Diseases summary risk relating to the OPM be recategorised as red risks. Members discussed the potential reputational risk and the impact on the public using the City of London Corporation's Open Spaces that OPM could have. The Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee that funds had been agreed in the Open Spaces departmental budget for the education programme including the *Branching Out* scheme. In addition, the Director explained that strategies were in place for to limit the impact of OPM. The Chairman commented that despite the strategies the Open Spaces department had in place to mitigate the risks caused by OPM it was inevitable that it would present a substantial long-term risk for the department. Members agreed that the OSD 005 Pests and Diseases summary risk be recategorised as a red risk and the likelihood be increased to more accurately represent the actuality of the impact on the department.

RESOLVED- That the Open Spaces Department's high-level Business Plan 2019–20 be approved.

8. **ENJOYING OPEN SPACES AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT - AWARD OF GRANTS AND REVIEW OF GRANT AID CRITERIA**

The Committee considered a report of the Director Open Spaces on the Award of grants and review of grant aid criteria in the Central Grants Programme. The Director of Open Spaces introduced the report and highlighted to Members the proposed changes in paragraph 17 of the report including the lowering of the minimum grant value from £8,000 to £2,000.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The allocation of grant aid for 2018/19 approved under delegated authority to the Open Spaces and City Gardens Chairman and Deputy Chairman be agreed; and
- II. That the proposed amendments to the current Enjoying Green Spaces and the Natural Environment funding criteria as referenced in paragraph 17 be agreed.

9. **2019/20 EVENTS FEES AND CHARGES - CITY GARDENS**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the 2019/20 Events Fees and Charges in the City Gardens. The report proposed an increase of approximately 5% to the fees and charges for events that are held in City Gardens sites throughout the 2019/20 financial year.

A Member of the Committee asked for clarification on the Open Spaces department's policy regarding events held within the City of London's open spaces on whether the City of London Corporation aimed to maximise the number of events held or not. The Director of Open Spaces explained that the City of London Corporation policy was to agree the maximum number of events while considering a strict selection criteria.

RESOLVED- That the proposed 2019/20 fees and charges be approved.

10. **FINSBURY CIRCUS GARDEN REINSTATEMENT**

The Committee considered a report of the City Surveyor on the Finsbury Circus Garden Reinstatement project. The Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee that as a result of Corporate funding commitments, the Resource Allocation Sub-Committee had decided that many projects, including the Finsbury Circus Garden Reinstatement, would be deferred pending the fundamental review. Members expressed disappointment at this decision and agreed that the report would be agreed in principle subject to funding approval by the Resource Allocation Sub-Committee when appropriate.

Members discussed the importance of Finsbury Circus Garden as the largest open space within the City of London and noted the reputational impact of its closure for over 10 years. The Deputy Chairman noted the length of time that Finsbury Circus Garden had been closed and requested further details on the criteria used when deciding the allocation of funds. A Member replied that the criteria had been agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee and noted that reputational risk was listed as a component of these criteria. It was suggested by a Member that the Director of Open Spaces argue for funds on the basis of reputational impact to the City of London Corporation caused by the continued closure of Finsbury Circus. The Director of Open Spaces commented that while the funding was subject to a Fundamental Review the reputational risk and external funding sources would hopefully support the project progressing.

It was noted by a Member that the Gross cost on page 38 of the report was helpful but suggested that in future the Net cost be added in a non-public appendix.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The recommencement of work on the project and Fees for procuring a new consultant team in the total sum of £136,450 be approved; and
- II. That the changes below be noted;
 - The estimated increase in the project value from £5,274,800 at GW3 to £6,171,500 at this GW.
 - These increases are as a result of change requests included into the scope, totalling £728,800 as detailed in appendix 4.
 - Abortive fee costs incurred of £65,246.
 - The provision of a sum for paying the remainder of consultant Stage 3 fees (£35,137) for Stage 3 into the Risk Register to cover costs if consultants demonstrate they are entitled for further payment.
 - Uplift in fees in total project cost by £167,907.
 - Note change in project timeline key dates in Appendix 3.
 - Note that Crossrail are obliged to provide an interim landscape as part of their works to exit the site. Therefore, Finsbury Circus Gardens will be re-opened to the public as soon as possible, in accordance with the City of London (Various Powers) Act 1900 until a contractor is appointed to build the garden and pavilion.

11. **PROPOSED NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE STATUS FOR THE COULSDON COMMONS AND HAPPY VALLEY**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the proposed National Nature Reserve (covering the Coulsdon Commons and Happy Valley). The Director noted that the proposal to Natural England Board on the National Nature Reserve would be considered in June 2019 as detailed in appendix 3.

Members supported the proposed National Nature Reserve covering the Coulsdon Commons and Happy Valley commenting on the contribution the open space made to the quality of life of the people of Croydon.

A Member commented that the pictures and press related to the proposed South London Downs National Nature Reserve did not accurately represent the diversity of the local community and request that that diversity be considered in the production of future publications.

A Member questioned when invites to the July 2019 event to celebrate the National Nature Reserve would be received by Members. The Director of Open Spaces confirmed that it was their understanding that the 24th of July had been chosen as the provisional date of the event but, that as the London Brough of Croydon was leading on the event, the exact nature of Member involvement could not be confirmed.

RESOLVED- That Members approve the confirmation, by Natural England in summer 2019, of the 'South London Downs National Nature Reserve' with completion of their formal declaration process by November 2019.

12. **OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT, CITY GARDENS AND WEST HAM PARK RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the management of risks faced by the Open Spaces Department. The Director noted that each of the Superintendents of the City of London Corporation managed open spaces had been asked to look into efficiencies in their departments.

It was noted by a Member that non-impactful efficiencies were no longer possible and any future reductions would likely have an adverse effect on the services. The Chairman agreed with this point and asked Officers to properly inform Members of any future developments.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The overall risk summaries at Appendix 2 be noted; and
- II. That the Departmental risk register as outlined in this report and at Appendix 3 be approved; and
- III. That the City Gardens elements of the City Gardens and West Ham Park risk register at Appendix 4 be approved; and
- IV. That the removal of OSD 008 – IT System Failure from the Departmental risk register be approved; and

V. That the risk history report at Appendix 5 be noted.

13. **THE TRANSITION TOWARDS A ZERO-EMISSION FLEET**

The Committee received a joint report of the Department for Built Environment and Chamberlain on the Transition towards a Zero-Emission Fleet. The Director of the Department for Built environment introduced the report and informed Members that the Open Spaces vehicle fleet was now fully ULEZ compliant. The Chairman thanked Officers for their work on the Zero-Emission Fleet and for the coordination across the different open spaces' teams.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

14. **AGRICULTURE BILL AND FISHERIES BILL**

The Committee received a report of the Remembrancer on the Agriculture Bill and Fisheries Bill. The Remembrancer informed Members that the Agriculture Bill had been static since November and was a skeleton bill with more details to be added through regulations at a later stage.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

15. **CITY GARDENS UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces which provided an update on the City Gardens. The Director of Open Spaces informed Members that the City Gardens vehicle fleet was fully ULEZ compliant and that the Christmas tree lighting up ceremony had been confirmed for the 5th December 2019.

A Member requested further information on the situation at Senator House. The Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee that there were ongoing issues regarding drainage in the garden of Senator House and that the open spaces department was addressing these with the developer.

It was questioned by a Member how the City of London Corporation managed the relationship with the *Friends of City Gardens* volunteer group. The Director of Open Spaces explained that the City of London Corporation and the *Friends of City Gardens* volunteer group held regular meeting to discuss areas for cooperation and planned activities.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

16. **CHURCHYARDS ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Churchyard Enhancement Programme (CEP). The Director provided context on the project and explained the work which had been previously undertaken.

A Member raised that learning was not mentioned in the report and questioned whether this could be included in the CEP. The Director of Open Spaces explained that learning was one of the cross-cutting work streams within the CEP programme and opportunities such as oral history projects would be explored as project funding became available.

Replying to a Member's question on the Diocese of London involvement in the CEP the Director informed the Committee that the officer from the Diocese with whom the City of London Corporation had been liaising was about to leave that organisation. In addition, it was confirmed that the City of London Corporation would be in contact with the new officer and Members would be informed of any updates.

Clarification on the details present in Table D of the report was requested by a Member who suggested that the figures did not provide a complete reflection of the funding position. The Director of Open Spaces confirmed that Table D provided a list of the relevant Community Infrastructure Levy funds potentially available. The Member replied that it would be helpful for an extra column be added to Table D to make clear the extent of the CIL funding sources which was not yet allocated to a specific project.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The Churchyards Enhancement Programme noting progress to date be approved; and
- II. That the project briefs for the 9 priority churchyards (proposed aspirational projects) be approved; and
- III. That the status of the 2 existing churchyard improvement projects be noted; and
- IV. That the small- medium scale outline project ideas for 10 churchyard improvement projects and cross cutting work stream be approved; and
- V. That the Committee Approved, in principle, the delivery of the churchyard improvements on a project by project basis, subject to available funding, to be progressed through the City's Project Procedure as appropriate.

17. CITY ARTS INITIATIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CULTURE, HERITAGE & LIBRARIES COMMITTEE

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk on City Arts Initiative's recommendations to the Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee. The Director of Open Spaces highlighted the sections of the report and the recommendations which were pertinent to the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee. In addition, the Director noted that the Superintendent of Parks & Gardens was Member of the City Arts Initiative board.

Replying to a query from a Member of the Committee the Director of Open Spaces confirmed that the structural integrity of the trees which were planned to be used as part of City Arts Initiative projects would need to be confirmed by the artist before the Superintendent would permit any usage.

RESOLVED- That the proposals agreed in principle by the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee for Volo – dreams of flight, Sculpture in the City (at relevant sites) and London Festival of Architecture – Benches, delegating authority to the Director of Open Spaces to sign off installation subject to satisfactory details and plans being received be approved.

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

There were no questions considered.

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

The Chairman presented a proposed resolution regarding the City of London Corporation's new Sports Engagement Strategy and suggested that the resolution be sent to the Policy & Resources Committee. The Chairman explained that the resolution had been supported by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee on the 11th of March 2019 and the formally endorsed by the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee on the 13th of March. The Chairman proposed that the Committee send a resolution on this matter to Policy & Resources Committee which would be followed by resolutions of other relevant Committees. Members supported the proposed resolution to the Policy & Resources Committee noting the importance of open spaces to the Sports Strategy.

RESOLVED- That a resolution be made from the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee to the Policy & Resources Committee requesting involvement in the decision-making process regarding sports engagement in conjunction with other relevant Committees, as follows:

"Noting the creation of a new Sports Engagement Strategy, we are aware that the PRED sub-committee have resolved to recruit a full time Sports Engagement Officer. We, as the Chairmen of interested committees, would like to have a part in the decision-making process regarding the growth and implementation of the strategy, prioritisation of effort, and where funds are allocated. We feel that the committees that are responsible for sport (in its widest sense) should be involved in the overall process and have an involvement in the decision-making on the strategy.

We believe there are five pillars to the City's engagement with sport to be considered:

1. Open spaces, involving the community and local sports clubs
2. Education with the City of London Schools (independent schools and the academy chain), which often provide facilities for the local community
3. Promoting health and wellbeing across the boroughs and London-wide through facilities at our open spaces and through our Community & Children's services
4. National and regional sports events promotion
5. Soft benefits of Sports Business Networking where the business community are engaged (in particular sponsorships)

Our open spaces have worked extensively in sports partnerships with groups such as the Sports Lottery Fund, FA, The Football Foundation and the LTA, and would like to see the strategy encompass building on and strengthening these partnerships also."

20. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

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

21. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED- that the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2018 be approved as a correct record.

22. **NON-PUBLIC NOTE OF INQUORATE MEETING**

Members received the non-public note of the inquorate meeting of the Committee held on the 4th of February 2019.

RESOLVED- that the non-public note of the inquorate meeting of the Committee held on the 4th of February 2019 be noted.

23. **REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk on the action taken between meetings.

RESOLVED- that the report be noted.

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

There were no questions considered in the non-public session.

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

There were no items considered in non-public session.

The meeting ended at 12.42 pm

Chairman

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