

Committee:	Date:
Open Spaces & City Gardens	9 Dec 2019
Subject: City Gardens Update	Public
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Information
<p>Summary</p> <p>This report provides an update to Members of the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee on management and operational activities across the City Gardens section since October 2019.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the report 	

Main Report

Finance

1. At this stage of the financial year City Gardens are predicting a balanced budget at the end of this financial year. Members will be aware of the increasing pressure on budgets, including an anticipated reduction in the availability of Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy, against the background of a significant rise in the number of people using our gardens.

Personnel

2. The three City Gardens horticulture apprentices are currently undertaking their finals exams and assessments. Interviews have been held for two new apprentices who will start in January. The successful candidates will be supervised by one of our current apprentices who is progressing to a level three apprenticeship. The City Gardens project management apprentice successfully completed her course in October.

Procurement

3. City Gardens are due to carrying out a number of procurement exercises this financial year, these will help ensure that we continue to provide a value for money service:

- **Supply of Herbaceous plants:** this contract has been awarded to our incumbent supplier; Palmstead nurseries.
- **Soils and substrates:** tender returns for this contract will be evaluated in December.
- **Tree purchase tender:** anticipated start date is April/May 2020
- **Tree Management Database:** tenders have been assessed and a preferred supplier identified. The new system will be operational by March 2020.

Operational Activities

4. **IT Transformations Project:** City Gardens have been working with a software developer to deliver a mobile application that will improve the service we provide. This app has been trialled by the Aldgate team and final improvements are being made. This will be rolling this out to all City Gardens staff in the next two months.
5. **Christmas Trees:** City Gardens are exploring options for festive trees for 2020 onwards. Options include planting and growing trees on our land, laser/holographic trees as well as purchasing smaller real trees. Examples of artificial trees are being installed at Camden market, Kings Cross station and Paddington station. City gardens will be visiting to assess the suitability of these trees in December.
6. **Tree Strategy:** The City of London's Tree Strategy is currently being updated by Planning and City Gardens.
7. **Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) 2020:** City Gardens have started the process of reviewing and updating the existing corporate BAP.

Pests and Diseases

8. **Box Disease/ Caterpillar:** City Gardens will be continuing the box hedge replacement that was initiated last year, trialing out alternative species. The low hedge at Fen Court will be replanted with Euonymus Jean Hughes.

Project Updates

9. **Guildhall Piazza:** City gardens are working with DBE to remove the defunct 'bog-garden' and to replace it with substrate/ soil and low maintenance, high impact planting.
10. **St Dunstan's in the West:** This is a City Gardens project that is funded by a grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The grant will be used to will enhance the garden with repairs to the paths, removal of defunct electrical uprighters and cabling, removal of 80-90% of the planting and replacement, new signage and turf replacement. This is due for completion by March.

11. **St Mary Aldermary:** This Churchyard paving requires extensive repairs. The boundary wall has failed due to poor design. The Historic Building Surveyor is currently considering options for the replacement of the wall. City Gardens have met with the Church and agreed to sharing the cost for repairing the paving. These works are being programmed in and will commence once faculty consent has been given.
12. **2-6 Canon Street (phase 2) Old Change Court/St Nicholas Cole Abbey:** This project is a redesign of the current area incorporating new beds and trees. It is also proposed that the area to the front of the Church (St Nicolas Cole Abbey) on Queen Victoria Street will also be planted. Completion is anticipated over early in 2020.
13. **Stonecutter Street – Goldman Sachs development:** This project is now complete except for the replacement of one tree that was removed at Goldman Sachs request. Due to post development conflict between the building and the proposed tree, it has now been agreed that this tree will be replaced by a number of new trees in nearby locations, funded by Goldman Sachs.
14. **Greening Cheapside:** Highway improvements around St Paul's tube station have commenced. The improvements remove the existing low-level beds and replace these with a new design to a raised level of 450mm to allow for additional seating. There will be two street trees included and the planting will change to herbaceous and shrub planting.
15. **Vine Street:** Highways and City Gardens are working with the developer to re-design a road scheme that will incorporate eight street trees. The design is still being developed.
16. **Puddledock Highway works:** Due to commence in Jan 2020, this will include the planting of up to four new street trees.
17. **Dukes Place:** City Gardens together with DBE are designing two planters at Dukes Place. The innovative design will act as a sustainable urban drainage scheme (SUDS), water run-off will be directed into these planters instead of straight into the sewer system.
18. **St Bartholomew's Close:** Six street trees have been planted with more to follow in 2020. Raised bronze planters are due for installation in early summer 2020 and will be planted with large multi stemmed trees and shrubs.
19. **St Bartholomew the Great:** City Gardens are working with Planning, the Church, the Diocese and, friends of City Gardens to deliver an improvement project within this Churchyard. The intended works will include the installation of a hand rail to steps, paving improvements, a new evergreen hedge and planting improvements throughout the garden. Friends of City gardens who have secured some match funding through British Land.

Planning

20. A list of planning applications that have been received since the last Committee meeting can be found in Appendix 1.

Community, Volunteering and Events

21. Friends of City Gardens, supported by City Gardens successfully held two corporate volunteering days. The first at Bunhill Fields with Moore Kingston Smith where gravel paths were topped up, leaves collected and mulch laid. The second at Whittington Gardens with Sanlam UK where mulch was laid and bulbs planted.

Appendices

Appendix 1 -Planning Application Open Spaces Consultations to 30 September 2019

Jake Tibbetts

City Gardens Manager

T: 020 7374 4127

E: jake.tibbetts@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Planning Application Open Spaces Consultations to 25 November 2019

Application number	Location	Description
PT_LH/19/01038/FULMAJ	61-65 Holborn Viaduct London EC1A 2FD	Demolition of existing building structure and erection of a 55m high mixed-use building for hotel, restaurant / bar use and office workspace use, including a publicly accessible terrace at roof level (540sq.m) with hard and soft landscaping.
PT_SJW/19/00856/MDC	22 Bishopsgate London EC2N	Details of a landscaping scheme pursuant to Condition 17 of planning permission 16/00849/FULEIA dated 11.09.2017