

Committee:	Date:
Open Spaces & City Gardens	13 Oct 2020
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 July 2020.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the report 	

Main Report

Finance

1. Overall expenditure for City Gardens is projected to be £90k overspent this financial year due to a reduction in income generated from events and project delivery, as well as personal protective equipment and other items that have been required due to the coronavirus pandemic. Small on-site garden improvements and other non essential purchases have all been stopped to reduce pressure on the budget.

Personnel

2. City Gardens will be taking on two additional apprentices from January 2021. The first cohort of apprentices have now all successfully completed their courses. Two of the three have secured new fixed term contracts with City Gardens. The third apprentice's contract expires at the end of this year.
3. City Gardens currently have two vacancies for assistant gardeners, one which permission is being sought to fill, the other is being kept vacant.
4. The additional Gardener post for the Barbican which is being funded by the residents will be in post within the next couple of weeks.
5. Sickness levels have increased, this is largely due to staff self-isolating due to them or members of their household developing COVID-19 symptoms.

Procurement

6. City Gardens are currently carrying out a number of procurement exercises this financial year, these will help ensure that City Gardens continue to provide a value for money service:
 - Tree purchase tender – This tender is due to go out in next two weeks.
 - Tree Inspection tender – This is currently out to tender.
 - Christmas Tree tender – this contract has been awarded to Christmas Tree World for the supply of an artificial tree.

Operational Activities

7. **COVID-19:** All City Gardens Depots have been assessed as COVID safe. All gardening front line staff have been individually risk assessed and are all back at work full time. Some adjustments to start and end times have been made to allow staff commuting via public transport to avoid busy times. All office based staff have been working from home and the Irish Chambers remain closed.
8. **Bunhill Conservation Management Plan** – The City Gardens team have been working with City Surveyors to deliver a new Conservation Management Plan for Bunhill Fields. This document outlines opportunities and defines the management approach for this site for the next ten years, ensuring that the historical monuments are conserved, biodiversity and ecology is enhanced and that the visitor experience is improved.
9. **Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) 2020:** City gardens are using the baseline survey on biodiversity that was commissioned to define the focus species and assist in setting targets and objectives for the new BAP. Work is also under way on strengthening the BAPs focus on pollinators and insects and the team are working with a number of external organisations on this. The aim is for the new BAP to be adopted in April 2021.

Project Updates

10. **Covid Streets Programme 19 planters:** City Gardens are working to support the Department of the Built Environment with the temporary greening measures. Phase one includes the installation of 30 trees in planters by the end of October. Six parklets are to be introduced at a later stage. Locations for the planters in phase one are at Cheapside, West Smithfield, Chancery Lane, Cursitor Street, Ludgate Broadway and Carter Lane junction, Creechurch Lane, Middlesex Street.
11. **St Mary Aldermary:** The civil works are now complete, and the following has been achieved:
 - The paving has been re-laid and extended.

- The perimeter wall, which is a Surveyors asset, has now been rebuilt and is complete and stable
 - The planted areas around the garden, have been prepared and will be planted by City Gardens.
 - Benches are to be returned and installed shortly.
12. **Tower Hill Gardens – play area:** A New type of play safety surfacing is being trialled on an area at the base of the slide that has become heavily compacted and difficult to maintain.
 13. **St Bartholomew the Great:** This project is now complete apart from the installation of a bird bath. The following has been achieved; paving renewed and extended, new benches installed, a new Taxus hedge planted along the top of the retaining wall, new handrails installed to both sides of the steps leading to Little Britain. The central area under the two large Plane trees has been improved with manure and dug over and replanted. The long border facing Cloth Fair has been replanted by the Friends of City Gardens. The Worshipful Company of Gardeners have agreed to pay for new replacement plaques in the garden
 14. **Moor Lane planters:** This is a temporary installation of several planters on the pavement area near the junction of Silk Street along the side of the Barbican. It is due to be installed in the next month. City Gardens will maintain these planters for approximately two years.
 15. **Cursitor Street:** City Gardens have been working with the Department of the Built Environment on designing three raised planters within this street. The planters will be constructed in Corten steel and include seating. City Gardens aims to trial establishing lawn areas in shady sites, a crushed brick growing medium which is free draining will be used and it is hoped will increase the chance of establishment. It has been agreed that if the turf fails long term, the turf will be removed and replaced with a mixture of low growing plants and shrubs.
 16. **2-6 Cannon 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. This project has been delayed due to issues with underground structures; planting is now not anticipated until early 2021.
 17. **St Bartholomew's Close:** The relocation of two of the planters from outside Butchers Hall to the corner of Little Britain and King Edward Street is being carried out by the Department for the Built Environment and will have automatic irrigation.
 18. **St Pancras Gardens –** A redesign and refurbishment of this garden that is to be funded by the owners of the garden is currently being considered. The

proposal is to reuse the existing paving, add new and additional planting, replace the seating and most notably to fence and gate this garden.

Planning

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

Community, Volunteering and Events

20. The Friends of City Gardens have been instrumental in helping with the delivery of St Bartholomew the Great.
21. The City of London achieved Gold overall winner in the Town category in this year's London in Bloom competition. The City Corporation was commended by judges for keeping its open spaces running efficiently to high standards during the COVID-19 lockdown and applauded the Square Mile 'rainbow' flower bed grown to honour key-workers fighting COVID-19.
22. The Barbican Wildlife Garden attained "Outstanding" in the Community Gardening Award. As did the City of London Gardener Nic Guerra, for his Rescue Nursery at All Hallows by the Tower, which City Gardens supports.
23. Plans for the Lord Mayor's Christmas tree lighting event are being discussed with Mansion House, in light of the COVID-19 restrictions. A decision on how to it will proceed will be made shortly and committee members will be advised.

Appendix 1 -Planning Application Open Spaces Consultations to 28th September.

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Planning Application Open Spaces Consultations to 28th September 2020

Application number	Location	Description
PT_SJW/20/00671/FULEIA	55 Gracechurch Street London EC3V 0EE	Demolition of all existing buildings and the erection of a new building comprising basement levels and ground floor plus 29 upper storeys (146mAOD) including office use (Class E), flexible retail use (Class E, drinking establishment (sui generis), hot food takeaway (sui generis)) a public viewing gallery and garden terrace (sui generis), new pedestrian routes, cycle parking, servicing, refuse and plant areas, public realm improvements, and other works associated with the development.
PT_CL/20/00647/FULL	Barber-Surgeons' Hall Monkswell Square London EC2Y 5BL	i) Alteration to the side entrance door, glazed screen and the side ramped access into the building; ii) Replacement of the low level ventilation louvres and; iii) the reinstatement of windows.
PT_SJW/20/00631/FULMAJ	Custom House 20 Lower Thames Street & River Wall, Stairs And Crane, Custom House Quay London EC3R 6EE	Change of use from office (Use Class E) to hotel (Use Class C1) with flexible ground floor and roof level retail floorspace (Use Classes E & Sui Generis (Drinking Establishment)), leisure facilities (Use Class E) and ancillary riverfront public realm;..... new river terraces, stairs and step free ramped access across Centre, and parts of West and East Block; (south elevation) ; iv) alterations to and raising of the flood defence wall;..... vii.) associated works to the river wall viii)

		and other external alterations including elevational alterations; hard and soft landscaping;.....
PT_LH/18/01020/FULMAJ	1 - 12 Long Lane London EC1A 9HF	Demolition of existing buildings and structures to basement level and construction of a eight storey office (Class E) building with basement and lower basement with retail (Class E) at part ground and basement levels together with ancillary cycle parking, associated servicing, plant, amenity terraces, landscaping and other associated works. (RE-CONSULTATION DUE TO AMENDED PLANS RECEIVED).
PT_LH/20/00560/FULL	New Bridge Street House 30 - 34 New Bridge Street London EC4V 6BJ	Alteration and extension, including: (i) new and replacement windows to the east, south and west elevations at first to sixth floor levels; (ii) removal of existing rooftop plant enclosure and erection of a single storey roof extension at seventh floor level to provide office accommodation and plant room (Class B1) with private terraces at seventh floor and roof level; (iii) Installation of a green wall to the south elevation.
PT_CL/20/00402/FULL	Barber-Surgeons' Hall Monkswell Square London EC2Y 5BL	Installation of painted metal railing and access gate to the southern side of the Barbers' Company Physic Garden to match existing adjacent terrace railings.