

## **Appendix 5 – Open Spaces Update**

### **Background**

1. 2 years ago, a proportion of the seasonal bedding for the podium highwalks was replaced with a combination of perennial shrubs and grass borders. With an initial outlay of £7880, this had produced annual savings of £15,300 for the Landlords budget for Garden Maintenance
2. No negative comments have been received by the Barbican Estate Office following this change.

### **Current Position**

3. The Beech Gardens project has seen a significant proportion of the gardens being removed from the gardens' maintenance schedule. This has produced an annual saving of £24,000 to the Landlords budget for Garden Maintenance.
4. New planting within Sculpture Court will now be maintained by Open Spaces on behalf of the Barbican Estate Office. This cost will be born through the Landlords budget for Garden Maintenance.
5. The Barbican Estate Office and Open Spaces have reviewed all bedding across the Barbican Estate and believe further reductions of seasonal bedding on the Podium are feasible. This has been presented to the Gardens Advisory Group who has concurred.
6. The replacement of seasonal bedding with perennial shrubs, herbaceous perennials and turf/mixed grass and meadow species does require an initial investment but does provide long term savings.
7. Perennial shrubs, herbaceous perennials and turf/mixed grass and meadow species are also considered to be much more sustainable as seasonal bedding is only left in for a short period and then composted. Depending on the plant types picked, they should also provide greater benefits for wildlife.
8. Generally, bedding requires greater levels of watering and maintenance.
9. The Barbican Estate Office, Open Spaces and the Gardens Advisory Group have also reviewed the condition of the planters across the estate. There are a number of planters reaching the end of their life and are in a state of disrepair, in particular the wooden tubs in front of both Cromwell and Lauderdale Tower.

## Proposals

10. The Barbican Estate Office will remove seasonal bedding from various areas across the podium and replace with various perennial shrubs herbaceous perennials and turf/mixed grass and meadow species.
11. These works are being done bearing in mind the requirements of the Beech Gardens replanting options ie. More sustainable, perennial planting that requires less watering.
12. The areas include, Speed Highwalk, Willoughby Highwalk and the north podium by Ben Jonson House.
13. Plants have been chosen to complement the existing planting, to provide seasonal interest and survive minimal watering.
14. The Barbican Estate Office and Open Spaces will further investigate the feasibility of introducing large concrete planters to the front of Cromwell and Lauderdale Tower. Options include purchasing new concrete planter rings (as was done for Shakespeare Tower approximately 4 years ago) or moving 4 of the large concrete planters behind Lauderdale Tower. It is anticipated that this would be done in 2013/14.
15. The concrete planters would replace the wooden planters outside both towers. These are reaching the end of their life. It has been suggested that 2 rings at either tower could work well.