

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Open Spaces & City Gardens	27 April 2021
<b>Subject:</b> City Gardens Update	<b>Public</b>
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Open Spaces	<b>For Information</b>

### **Summary**

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 February 2021.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to:

- Note the report

### **Main Report**

#### **Current position**

##### **Finance**

1. The anticipated outturn for the 2020/21 financial year is a deficit of circa £80k. This is in part due to the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on filming and events income, as well as the reduction in public realm improvements during lockdown. However, this needs to be seen in the context of a likely overall underspend for the Open Spaces department.
2. City Gardens are commencing the 2021/22 financial year with £158k deficit of, as yet, unidentified savings, which equates to 9% of the total budget. The team will work to reduce this over the year through increasing income and identifying ways to minimise expenditure. However, considering that staff costs equate to 84% of the combined City Gardens and Bunhill Fields budgets, this will remain

a challenge until the implementation of any restructure to align with the Target Operating Model (TOM) and the merge into the new Environment Department. As this is not scheduled until Phase 5 of the TOM, any changes are unlikely to take effect until the end of the calendar year. Consequently, it is unlikely that the full 12% savings target will be achieved in year and in the short-term other areas of the Open Spaces department may accordingly need to make good the shortfall.

### **Personnel**

3. There have been no new staff or leavers since February. Two members of staff that have been shielding returned to work on April the 1st.

### **Procurement**

4. 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 procurement tender – will be let before the end of the financial year.

### **Operational Activities**

5. **Marketing:** Following a request from Members to review how we market the events in our gardens, we have started a review of our website and identified a number of improvements that will be implemented shortly. City Gardens will be presenting a report on benchmarking fees and charges as well as improving marketing in general.
6. **COVID-19:** City Gardeners have continued to work during the third lockdown. COVID guidance and protocols are regularly reviewed. All office-based staff continue to work from home and the Irish Chambers remain closed.
7. **Jubilee Gardens and Cleary Gardens:** There has been a significant increase in use of these sites in the evenings and particularly at weekends. Skateboarders are congregating at both sites and there has been a substantial increase in damage to plants and furniture.

### **Project Updates**

8. **Covid Streets Programme 19 planters:** Due to the success of this scheme, a second phase is now being planned and will be implemented later in the year.
9. **St Pauls Choir School:** The extension of the property is now complete, and City Gardens have completed the soft landscaping works to re-install the Holly hedge that was along the southern boundary and 4 replacement trees on Watling Street.

10. **St Bartholomew's Close:** The final street tree has been planted. There are issues with the drainage of one of the bronze planters which is affecting the health of the Camellia; this is being investigated and solutions identified.
11. **150 Bishopsgate (Heron Tower):** The line of seven London Plane trees on Houndsditch have now been replanted.
12. **Bank Junction:** The City Corporation have launched the consultation on a safer, greener Bank Junction. Details can be found at:  
<https://news.cityoflondon.gov.uk/city-corporation-launches-consultation-on-a-safer-greener-bank-junction/>
13. **Jubilee Gardens:** As part of the wider area development, this garden is to undergo a major redesign. Proposals include removal of the current wall facing on to the street and replacing this with railings to improve visibility and deter anti-social behaviour. The design team are also working with a scientist from the RHS to assess planting and monitor progress.
14. **St Bride Street – River Court HVM removal:** This project includes the removal of the slim planters along St Bride Street, the removal of the planters on Poppins Court, along with the bollards. River Court is due for demolition, delaying the proposal for street tree planting until the new development is complete.

### **Planning**

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

### **Community, Volunteering and Events**

16. City Gardens are working with the Friends of City Gardens, who have secured funding from British Land to create a wildflower meadow in Barbers Surgeons, along the western side of the wall.
17. Virgin Active are running fitness classes at Finsbury Circus until the middle of May.
18. City Gardens completed the installation of new log edging into the Barbican Wildlife Gardens.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – List of planning application Open Spaces consultations to March 2021

### **Jake Tibbetts**

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## APPENDIX 1 - Planning Application Open Spaces Consultations to March 2021

Application number	Location	Description
PT_KG/21/00187/FULL	Cheapside Traffic Island Cheapside London EC2V 6AA	Retention of the existing structure on the Cheapside traffic island for a further temporary period of 12 months to house a new art installation.
PT_AS/21/00152/MDC	155 Bishopsgate London EC2M 3TQ	Details of landscaping pursuant to condition 9 of planning permission ref 19/00837/FULL dated 3rd December 2019.
PT_CL/20/00997/FULEIA	Land Bounded By Fleet Street, Salisbury Court, Salisbury Square, Primrose Hill & Whitefriars Street, London, EC4Y	Demolition of existing and erection of three new buildings (combined court building, police headquarters building and a commercial building including offices) and public realm and highway works, including creating an enlarged Salisbury Square, including landscaping, new pedestrian routes and bicycle and vehicle parking; Dismantling, relocation and reconstruction of Grade II listed Waithman obelisk within Salisbury Square.
PT_AW/21/00122/FULL	5 Essex Court And 4 Brick Court Middle Temple London EC4Y 9AH	External works to provide a level access to 4 Brick Court and 5 Essex Court, and the installation of 10 No. Electric Vehicle Charging Points and associated works.
PT_PF/21/00110/MDC	St Paul's Cathedral St Paul's Churchyard London EC4M 8AD	Submission of details for the re-instatement of the 'People of London' Memorial pursuant to condition 2(c) of planning permission 17/00790/FULL dated 14.11.2017
PT_BXD/20/00848/FULEIA	Bury House 31 Bury Street London EC3A 5AR	Demolition of existing building and construction of a new building comprising 2 basement, ground floor plus 48 upper storeys for office use, retail/cafe use, publicly accessible internal amenity and community space, a new pedestrian route and new and improved Public Realm
PT_KG/21/00095/MDC	25 Cannon Street London EC4M 5TA	Submission of details pursuant to condition of planning permission 19/01150/FULL for re-landscaping of 25 Cannon Street Garden dated 16 April 2020