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| <b>Committee:</b>  | <b>Date:</b>              |
| Open Spaces & City Gardens   | 12 October 2012           |
| <b>Subject:</b><br>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> Juliemma McLoughlin  | <b>For Information</b>    |
| <b>Report author:</b> Jake Tibbetts  |                           |

### **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 July 2021.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to:

- Note the report

### **Main Report**

#### **Current position**

##### **Finance**

1. As detailed in the previous City Gardens update, the service commenced the 2021/22 financial year with £158k deficit of, as yet; unidentified savings, which equates to 9% of the total budget. The team is on target to reduce this figure by approximately £50k through generating income, minimising expenditure and temporary vacant posts. The team continue to explore other options in order to fully balance the bottom line.

## Personnel

2. All fixed term contracted staffs' contracts have been extended to the 31 March 2022. There are currently two fixed term contract assistant gardener vacancies, one of which will be filled by a current apprentice. The other will be kept vacant and agency staff used when required. Unfortunately, the City Gardens Project Officer left in September, having been head-hunted and offered a position in a private organisation. This vital post is being kept vacant until the outcome of the TOM and clarity on the new structure is realised. The majority of this workload is being absorbed by other staff in the City Gardens Team, notably the Project Manager (Public Realm) and the Technical Manager
3. City Gardens office staff have now returned to the Irish Chambers with all staff attending the workplace at least twice a week.
4. The Barbican Residential Committee agreed in September that the temporary funding for the additional gardener for private gardens that was agreed in 2019 will now be made permanent. This is as a result of the hard work of all of the gardeners in the Barbican team. City Gardens will be requesting that this permanent funding is replicated with the recruitment a permanent member of staff.

## Procurement

5. City Gardens are currently carrying out a procurement exercise to source new lease agreements for its fleet. The new fleet will consist of two electric vehicles and three Euro 6 diesel tippers. This will balance the drive to move to a completely electric fleet, with affordability and practicality.
6. In addition to this City Gardens have secured funding to purchase a small electric maintenance vehicle that can drive on pavements. This will be used primarily to water and maintain the increased number of street planters and parklets.
7. Tree procurement tender – a report is being presented to procurement board to agree the commencement of this tender process.

## Operational Activities

8. **Climate Action Strategy:** City Gardens have secured funding from the Climate Action Group to deliver a climate resilient planting scheme in beds along the river in front of the Boys' School, with an aim to trial new species and to reduce both maintenance and the amount of water used.
9. In addition the team are leading on a project to produce a catalogue of climate resilient plants to help deliver sustainable projects in the future. The first stage of this project, an audit of planting schemes delivered in the city over the last ten years will be completed by March. The second stage of the project is to research and identify plants that can cope with climate prediction models. This

catalogue will be a live document that will continue to be developed beyond the end of the project through a continuous process of review and assessment.

10. City Gardens are working with the Climate Action Group to assess utilising the network that monitors and controls street lighting within the City to carry out various monitoring functions. City Gardens are looking at introducing soil moisture monitors that will relay in real time data via the streetlighting network to be able to remotely monitor and control irrigation systems. The aim is to enable more efficient use of water, by only watering when required and not on a timed programme as they are currently.
11. **Biodiversity Action Plan:** The final design of this document is being worked on by a designer and aims to be ready by the end of October. Funding has also been secured to deliver two Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) management plans by the end of the financial year in line with the action plan as set in the BAP.

### **Project Updates**

12. **Bank Junction:** The final scheme is currently being developed, City Gardens are working with the design team to ensure that maintenance of this scheme delivers value for money and covers a twenty-year period.
13. **Barbican Podium Phase Two:** City Gardens are part of the design team that for this project that will significantly increase the amount of green infrastructure with this area, working closely with the appointed designer to ensure that the scheme delivered is sustainable and presents value for money.
14. **Covid Streets Programme 19 planters:** Additional planters and a parklet are being added at the junction of Golden Lane and Fann Street.
15. **2-6 Canon Street (phase 2) Old Change Court/St Nicholas Cole Abbey:** Work is progressing on site; drainage is an issue that is presenting challenges that we are working to overcome with colleagues within the Environment Department.
16. **Greening Cheapside Phase 1B (Sunken Garden)** This project that looks to redesign this area and to introduce a sustainable urban drainage scheme is anticipated to start in the spring of 2022.
17. **Moor Lane:** Design discussions are under way to finalise the permanent scheme replacing the two temporary schemes currently on site. This will include a sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS) and the widening of the eastern pavement.
18. **Finsbury Circus Reinstatement Project:** This project is on schedule and the planning application was submitted at the beginning of September.

## **Planning**

19. A list of planning applications that have been received since the last Committee meeting can be found in Appendix 1.
20. **81 Newgate Street:** The planning application for this site will result in the loss of the three planes on private pavement on the west of the site, opposite Christ Greyfriars and the four public street trees in Angel Street. When completed 26 new trees are proposed to be planted around the site.

## **Community, Volunteering and Events**

21. The City Christmas Tree Lighting Event will take place on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December. Details of the event will be confirmed and circulated soon.
22. The City Gardens Manager attend the Launch of Pollinating London Together in September. This is a collaboration of some of the City of London's Livery Companies, initiated by the Wax Chandlers. Its aims include raising awareness of pollinators, specifically bees, the challenges facing them and educate and inspire society to take positive action for them within London. City Gardens will actively support this project.

## **Appendices**

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

### **Jake Tibbetts**

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**APPENDIX 1 - Planning Application Open Spaces Consultations to September 2021**

| <b>Application number</b> | <b>Location</b>  | <b>Description</b>  |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| PT_LH/21/00781/FULMAJ     | 61 - 65 Holborn Viaduct<br>London EC1A 2FD                                     | Redevelopment of the site for a new building (12 upper floors) including a publicly accessible roof terrace, a pedestrian route through the site and hard and soft landscaping.   |
| PT_AW/21/00755/FULMAJ     | 14-21 Holborn Viaduct<br>32-33 & 34-35<br>Farringdon Street<br>London EC1A 2AT | Demolition of existing buildings and construction of a new building (10 upper floors to Holborn Viaduct and 12 upper floors to Farringdon Street). Includes new publicly accessible lift to provide step-free access between Holborn Viaduct and Farringdon Street; hard and soft landscaping works.  |
| PT_HG/21/00684/LBC        | Finsbury Circus<br>Gardens Finsbury<br>Circus London                           | Reinstatement and relocation of the Listed Drinking Fountain and Shelter as part of a new landscape scheme.   |
| PT_HG/21/00683/FULL       | Finsbury Circus<br>Gardens Finsbury<br>Circus London                           | Alterations to Finsbury Circus Gardens including the construction of a new park office building and pavilion cafe (Use Class E), removal of 12 trees, 4 trees to be crown lifted to 7m, the re-instatement and re-location of the Listed Fountain, relocation of an unlisted fountain, demolition of the band stand, including hard and soft landscape works. |
| PT_BXD/20/00848/FULEIA    | Bury House 31 Bury<br>Street London EC3A<br>5AR                                | Demolition of existing building and construction of a new (48 upper storeys) including a new pedestrian route and new and improved Public Realm.  |
| PT_LH/21/00622/FULEIA     | 115 - 123 Houndsditch<br>London EC3A 7BU                                       | Demolition of existing buildings and construction of a new building (23 upper storeys), including new public realm and highway works;   |
| PT_BAB/21/00601/MDC       | 81 Newgate Street<br>London EC1A 7AJ   | Feasibility study and details of the survey of the ground works and the locations for seven replacement trees to ensure that the new trees are deliverable pursuant to condition 52 of planning permission dated 11 September 2020.   |
| PT_KG/21/00538/FULEIA     | 120 Fleet Street<br>London EC4A 2BE  | Demolition of the existing River Court building at 120 Fleet Street and the erection of a new building (20 upper storeys) and creation of new pedestrian routes. Includes office roof garden.   |

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|------------------------|--|--|
| PT_SJW/20/00631/FULMAJ | Custom House 20<br>Lower Thames Street &<br>River Wall, Stairs and<br>Crane,<br>Custom House Quay<br>London EC3R 6EE | Redevelopment of Customs House as a hotel and other uses. Includes new riverfront public realm including Water Lane, Old Billingsgate Walk and Lower Thames Street. Retention of existing riverside trees. |
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