

OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS
Tuesday, 7 December 2021

Public note of the inquorate meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens
Committee held on Tuesday, 7 December 2021 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Oliver Sells QC (Chairman)
Caroline Haines (Deputy Chairman)
Deputy Barbara Newman
Andrew McMurtrie

Observers:

Catherine Bickmore
Jeremy Simons

Officers:

Richard Holt	- Town Clerk's Department
Kristina Drake	- Town Clerk's Department
Mark Jarvis	- Head of Finance Citizen Services, Chamberlains
Martin Rodman	- Superintendent, West Ham Park and City Gardens, Environment Department
Gerry Kiefer	- Open Spaces Business Manager, Environment Department
Jake Tibbetts	- City Gardens Manager, Environment Department
Beth West	- Director of Open Spaces, Environment Department

The Town Clerk informed Members that a Quorum had not been established within five minutes of the scheduled start of the Committee and as result, in accordance with Standing Order 36 (2), the formal meeting was dissolved. Following this Members present agreed to informally consider the items on the agenda.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Wendy Mead, Benjamin Murphy, Anne Fairweather, Deputy John Tomlinson, Graeme Doshi-Smith and Alderman Luder.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

The Committee considered the public note of the inquorate meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee held on the 12th of October 2021.

RESOLVED- That the public note of the inquorate meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee held on the 12th of October 2021 be approved as an accurate record.

4. **DEPARTMENTAL AND SERVICE COMMITTEE BUDGET ESTIMATES 2022/23**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment on the Departmental and Service Committee Budget Estimates 2022/23.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The Directorate, Bunhill Fields and City Gardens proposed revenue budget for 2022/23 be approved for submission to the Finance Committee; and
- II. The City Gardens and Bunhill Fields capital and supplementary revenue budgets for 2022/23 be approved for submission to the Finance Committee; and
- III. The Chamberlain, in consultation with the Executive Director Environment, was authorised to revise these budgets to allow for any further implications arising from Corporate Projects, the Target Operating Model, and changes to the Cyclical Works Programme; and
- IV. Agreed that minor amendments for 2021/22 and 2022/23 from changes to recharges arising during budget setting to be delegated to the Chamberlain; and
- V. It was noted the provisional 2022/23 revenue budget for the services overseen by the other Open Space Service Committees.

5. **OPEN SPACES BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2022/23**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment on the Open Spaces Business Plan for 2022/23.

A local observer appointed to the Committee questioned if the formation of the new Environment would result in a reduced cost of administration to the individual sites. The Chamberlain responded that this a factor, however a full response to this would need to be provided after the meeting. The Deputy Chairman commented that there were a number of changes at the City of London Corporation which would impact the Department that would only be fully apparent going forward. Reacting to a further comment from a local observer the Deputy Chairman commented that these changes would not limit the voice of open spaces with the City of London Corporation. The Chairman added that he perceived a larger role for open spaces within the City of London Corporation, noting that their importance had been highlighted during the COVID19 pandemic.

The Deputy Chairman highlighted to the Committee the role of education within the Environment Department and explained that, as a component of this, the apprenticeship programme would be reassessed.

RESOLVED- That the high-level Business Plan for Open Spaces, Environment Department for 2022/23 be approved.

6. **OPEN SPACES BUSINESS PLAN 2021/22 - SIX MONTH PERFORMANCE UPDATE: APRIL TO SEPT 2021**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director Environment on the Open Spaces Business Plan 2021/22 Six-month performance update April to September 2021.

The Committee commended Officers for the awards, as specified in the report which the open spaces had received.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

7. **OPEN SPACES COVERAGE 2021**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk on the Open Spaces Media Coverage for 2021 September to November 2021.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

8. **2022/23 EVENTS FEES AND CHARGES - CITY GARDENS**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment on the 2022/23 Events Fees and Charges City Gardens. The Executive Director Environment explained that the comments received from the Committee previously had been incorporated appropriately and that the charges for charity and community events had been brought in line with benchmarking.

In reference to St Dunstan in the East the Committee discussed the need to tackle unlicensed commercial photographers using City Gardens sites which were harder to identify with those using social media for commercial purposes. In response to this the Executive Director Environment explained that this was an increasing challenge across all of the City of London Corporation managed open spaces and therefore the Department would be looking to find effective solutions to tackle this.

RESOLVED- The proposed 2022/23 fees and charges be approved.

9. **POSTMAN'S PARK MEMORIALS PROPOSAL**

The Committee considered of the Executive Director Environment on the Postman's Park Memorials Proposals.

The Committee commended a suggestion for adding memorials to Postman's Park noting the importance of high-quality carving for the memorial and a suitable selection criteria for choosing those names to be added. Members agreed that it was essential to have further clarity on the detail of the proposals before any public announcement was made.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The principle of adding memorials to Postman's Park, as outlined in the proposals, be approved; and
- II. It was agreed that officers liaise with relevant internal and external stakeholders to progress this proposal.

10. CITY GARDENS UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the on the City Gardens update. The Executive Director Environment highlighted the climate resilient planting scheme in beds along the river in front of the Boys' School and the significant increase in the visits to the City Gardens in the period specified. In addition, the Executive Director Environment noted the successful Christmas Tree lighting event which had been held on the 6th of December.

The Chairman commended Officers for their work in the City Gardens and highlighted to Members the Barbican Podium Phase Two project which was now entering an exciting position. A Member commented that the central issue for the Barbican Podium site was access and noted that the benches present offered an unwanted focus for antisocial behaviour.

A Member of the Committee asked Officers for an update on the Finsbury Circus Reinstatement Project planning permission. The Executive Director Environment informed the Committee that, so far, there had only been two formal planning objections and that officers were working closely with Historic England to overcome any concerns it may have with regard to the heritage landscape. It was anticipated that this application will not require the approval of the full Planning & Transportation Committee.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

11. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

Responding to a query from a Member the Executive Director Environment explained that responsibility for providing lights for the trees specified was held by the former Department for the Built Environment's lighting team and confirmed that the budget for festive lighting had been reduced. The Member responded that this was a pity as other local authorities seem able to fund the lighting of trees in their areas. Answering a Member's query the Executive Director Environment confirmed that the City Gardens Team used to maintain the planters at Mansion House, however these are no longer maintained due to budgetary reductions and a change in policy by the Mansion House Management Team.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

There were no urgent items considered in the public session.

13. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the

grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

14. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

The Committee considered the non-public note of the inquorate meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee held on the 12th of October 2021.

RESOVLED- That the non-public note of the inquorate meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee held on the 12th of October 2021 be approved as an accurate record.

15. DEBT ARREARS – INVOICED INCOME FOR PERIOD ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain and Executive Director Environment on the Debt Arrears for invoiced income for period ending 30th September 2021.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

16. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee received no questions in the non-public session.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

There was no urgent business considered in the non-public session.

The meeting ended at 12.20 pm

Chairman

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