

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Open Spaces, City Gardens & West Ham Park	15 Apr 2013
Subject: West Ham Park Nursery Business Plan Progress Report 2012/13	Public
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Information
<p>Summary</p> <p>This report is to update Members on the progress made over the past year in delivering projects set out in year three (2012–13) of the Nursery Business Plan.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the Report 	

Main Report

Background

1. As part of the annual review process for the Nursery Business Plan, it was agreed at your Committee on 5 February 2010 that a report is prepared each year setting out the progress made against objectives and related improvement plan actions. This is the third such report which, in accordance with the Plan, forms the basis of a short progress summary to this Committee each April.
2. Members will recall that, whilst acknowledging past achievements, the Nursery Business Plan primarily sets out a clear vision and aims, and includes the following five key objectives:
 - **Quality** – Establish SMART processes to measure and ensure that customers receive, and the Park users benefit from, value for money services and effective use of land and infrastructure.
 - **Trading** – Review and adjust trading terms and apply an innovative approach that maximises returns and opportunities from our Nursery capital assets and contributes to the objectives of the Park.
 - **Environment** – Ensure that processes and measures to reduce our impact on the environment are embedded in the Nursery's work.

- **Promotion** – Develop initiatives that maximise opportunities for community use and expand our client base to achieve sustained sources of income.
- **People** – Involve Members, staff, clients and the community in achieving the outcomes and requirements set out in the business plan.

Current Position

3. The Nursery supplies over 200,000 annual bedding plants per annum to City of London Open Spaces and other clients. It also supplies floral decorations for City of London formal dinners and events (average 50 per annum). These core activities are delivered through a team of 4.8 full time equivalent employees.
4. In addition to the core work carried out by the Nursery team and office staff in delivering the Nursery service, the plan sets out a wide range of projects to be delivered within the third year. To date, 88% of these projects have been completed, with acceptable reasons for non-completion of the remainder. Incomplete projects will either be deferred to the 2013/14 financial year, or will be revised to take account of business changes.
5. All the remaining projects planned for years 1-3 of the Business Plan have been adopted and remain in progress. In recognition of the cyclical nature of nursery work and to avoid a repeat of many of the actions listed in the reports from the last two years, comments on the improvement plan this year are by exception, that is only any additional actions for 2012/13 or those that have been deferred/not completed have been picked up in Appendix 1 to this report.

General Progress

6. Performance surveys - Customer satisfaction surveys completed by our clients rated the product quality and service provided by the Nursery as 90% very good and 10% good. In addition to the surveys, a number of favourable letters of appreciation and thanks were received by the nursery in recognition of the quality of displays and material provided.
7. Floral decorations - The nursery team provided floral decorations for a number of high profile City events, which provides income for the Nursery. These included the state visits of the Presidents of Kuwait and of the Republic of Indonesia, Her Majesty The Queen's visit to the Barbican and decorations for The Lord Mayor's Banquet. The team also dressed Mansion House and Guildhall for the Diamond Jubilee Reception and provided flowers for the Establishment Committee Dinner.
8. Supply of bedding plants - Throughout the year, the Nursery has produced nearly 230,000 peat free bedding plants. In addition to the supply of plants to the Park, City Gardens and North London Open Spaces, we also completed the first season of growing for three of The Royal Parks: Greenwich, Bushy and Richmond.

9. Environment and sustainability - May this year will see the second anniversary of the installation of our borehole, which enables us to extract water from an underground layer of water-bearing rock. A long vertical pipe placed inside maintains stability and prevents contamination entering the borehole. Water is pumped back to the surface and stored in a 50,000 gallon header tank. We are able to draw up to 4400 gallons of water daily without the need to use mains water supplies thereby substantially reducing our costs.
10. Education and apprenticeships - A number of school placements, including students with special needs, have assisted in the Nursery over the last year. In addition, the Nursery grows the fruits and vegetables that are planted out in the park's Jubilee Food Garden, where local schools and residents come to learn about food growing through educational talks and workshops.

Proposals for the Year Ahead

11. Following the completion of the 2012/13 Nursery Business Plan projects, work will commence on delivering the 2013/14 projects. These include:
 - Continued provision of bedding for Bushy, Richmond and Greenwich Parks;
 - Investigating the feasibility of running a florist outlet from the converted potting shed;
 - Six monthly 'What's New' newsletter to send to clients and community contacts;
 - Investigating the feasibility of an alternative fuel 7.5 tonne lorry for operational purposes;
 - Providing horticultural training to a group of young people (aged 17-18) through the City Bridge Trust's Growing Localities programme.
12. There is little doubt that the year ahead will continue to be challenging. The Nursery is not only directly affected by its own budget reductions, but also indirectly through cuts to client budgets, meaning that they have less to spend with us. Staff are working hard to identify further efficiencies and to maximise income, thereby ensuring a sustainable future for this valuable resource.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

13. The Nursery Business Plan 2010-15 supports the following themes of The City Together Strategy, The Heart of a World Class City:
 - Competitive and promotes opportunity;
 - Supports our communities;
 - Protects, promotes and enhances our environment;
 - Is vibrant and culturally rich;

14. The business plan also supports all five strategic aims within the Open Spaces Department Business Plan 2013-16:
- Quality
 - Environment
 - Promotion
 - People
 - Inclusion

Implications

15. The Nursery Reserves fund was established to offset the financing of improvements, equipment and machinery, and to balance any reported under achievement in forecasted income targets. The outturn for the previous financial year is reported to your Committee at its July meeting each year.
16. The actions under the improvement plan objectives provide a cautious and controlled approach which is supported by the Chamberlain.

Conclusion

17. Throughout the year, the plan has provided clear direction taking into account charity and business objectives and trading challenges. It provides a clear set of aims, objectives and improvement plan actions to enable the monitoring of performance that supports and contributes towards the objectives of West Ham Park.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - The Nursery Business Plan Improvement and Project Plan 2012-2013

Background Papers:

The West Ham Park Nursery Business Plan 2010 – 2015

West Ham Park Nursery Business Plan: Progress Report 2011-12

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