

Committee: Natural Environment Board	Dated: 19 February 2024
Subject: 2024/25 Events Fees and Charges – City Gardens	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	4 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
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
Report of: Bob Roberts, Interim Executive Director Environment	For Decision
Report author: Jake Tibbetts – City Gardens Manager	

Summary

This report proposes that charges for corporate events that are held in City Gardens sites are increased by 4.1% for the start of the 2024/25 financial year. This is in line with the Retail Price index at the end of October 2023. The charge for non-profit and charity events is recommended to be frozen. The new fees and charges are to be implemented 1 April 2024.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

Approve the proposed 2024/25 fees and charges as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

Main Report

Background

1. The City Gardens Team processes requests from members of the public, charitable groups and corporate organisations to hold events within its gardens.
2. Members approved the updated City Gardens Events Policy in July 2018. The policy does not need reviewing, however the Fees and Charges that are laid out in appendix 1 of that report are intended to be reviewed on an annual basis.

Current Position

3. The hire of City Gardens sites generates income that is used to contribute towards the maintenance cost of our sites and staff resources. In 2022/2023 City Gardens generated £13012 from 34 events. At the time of writing £6880 has been generated by 26 events so far, this financial year 2023/2024.
4. In 2022/2023 the most popular type of event with 26 bookings continued to be photography; of which 21 were wedding shoots. These contributed £7510.
5. In 2022/2023 there was £2192 income from non-profit or charity events.
6. Facilitating events has an impact not only on the gardens but also staff resources within the City Gardens team. Whilst the total amount of income delivered is relatively low, this is a service that is important to our communities and needs to be financially sustainable and contribute towards the maintenance and upkeep of our gardens.
7. The City Gardens team carried out a benchmarking exercise in 2021 in preparation for; and detailed in the Fees and Charges report for 2022/23.

Options

- A. Apply no increase and retain current fees and charges. This option is not favoured as anything less than a rise in line with inflation would reduce our ability to cover costs and meet income targets.
- B. Increase all fees and charges in line with the Retail Price Index. Apart from non-profit and charity events which are frozen. Prices to be rounded up to the nearest £5. This option keeps fees and charges abreast of inflation whilst also considering the impact on charities. This is the favoured option.
- C. Increase fee and charges by a greater amount than the Retail Price Index to offset savings. This is not favoured as it is considered that a larger increase could result in a reduced number of sales. Considering the high price of inflation and the need for the generation of income from events this option is considered risky and may reduce event numbers and overall income.

Proposals

8. The proposed option is B. Increase fees and charges in line with the Retail Price Index apart from the fees for charity and non-profit events which are to be frozen.
9. **Strategic implications** – The provision of a well-designed events programme supports a number of key City of London Corporate Plan outcomes as follows:
 - 4. Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.
 - 12. Our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained.

10. Financial implications -The financial implications are contained within the body of the report

11. Resource implications – Resourcing the processing of event applications is covered by the income generated from events.

12. Legal implications - Section 7 of the City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018 authorises the City to impose charges for temporary use of part of an open space for an event or for admission to an open space area where access is restricted for an event, and requires that the power be exercised in accordance with the relevant policy. Paragraph 15.8 of the Open Spaces Event Policy 2018 makes provision for the charges and also provides that the schedule of charges will be reviewed annually. The exercise of the charging power and the review of charges is in accordance with the 2018 Act and the Policy.

13. Risk implications – None

14. Equalities implications – None

15. Climate implications - None

16. Security implications – Whilst there are some security implications of events being held, there are none when considering only the associated fees and charges.

Conclusion

17. Events held in City Gardens are important to our communities. The proposed increase in Fees and Charges reflects increased costs, enables us to continue to facilitate events in a sustainable manner and provides a small amount of income that contributes towards maintaining our gardens and our staff resources.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Proposed Fees and Charges for 2024/25

Background Papers

City Gardens Event Policy– Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee, 16 July 2018

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