

OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS
Monday, 2 June 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 2 June 2014 at 2.30 pm

Present

Members:

Alderman Ian Luder (Chairman)
Deputy Alex Deane (Deputy Chairman)
Wendy Mead
Barbara Newman
Jeremy Simons
Graeme Smith
Deputy Michael Welbank
Alderman Gordon Haines (Ex-Officio Member)
Virginia Rounding (Ex-Officio Member)
George Abrahams (Ex-Officio Member)

Officers:

Natasha Dogra	Town Clerk's Department
Sue Ireland	Director, Open Spaces
Alison Elam	Chamberlain's Department
Martin Rodman	Superintendent, West Ham Park & City Gardens
Iain Simmons	Built Environment
Edward Wood	Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department
Sam Cook	Remembrancer's Department.
Lisa Russell	Built Environment
Roger Adams	City Surveyor's Department
Gillian Robinson	Public Health, City & Hackney

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Deputy Robert Howard.

2. **DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**

There were no declarations.

3. **COURT ORDER**

The Committee received the Order of the Court of Common Council.

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Chairman in accordance with Standing Order 29. The Town Clerk read out a list of Member's eligible to stand and Alderman Ian Luder, being the only Member to express his willingness to serve, was declared the duly elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

5. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Deputy Chairman in accordance with Standing Order 30. The Town Clerk read out a list of Member's eligible to stand and Deputy Alex Deane, being the only Member to express his willingness to serve, was declared the duly elected Deputy Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

Appointment of a Representative to the Streets and Walkways Sub Committee

Jeremy Simons being the only Member indicating his interest in standing for this position was appointed as the representative to the Streets and Walkways Sub Committee for the ensuing year.

6. **MINUTES**

Resolved: The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

Matters Arising:

St Olave's Churchyard, Hart Street, EC3

The Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee that the Chairman and Deputy Chairman had signed off delegated authority for the City Solicitor to enter into an agreement with the Church authorities in order to carry out the improvement works on Church land.

Senator House Garden, EC4

The Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee that the Chairman and Deputy Chairman had signed off delegated authority to approve the terms of a transaction and the detailed re-landscaping proposals to undertake renovations to Senator House Garden at no cost to the City. Officers informed Members that a report would be submitted to the July Committee meeting on the potential to use £24,000 goodwill payment as seed funding for a City Gardens maintenance endowment fund.

Members noted that the landscaping around Fenchurch Street Plaza was now complete.

7. **THE CITY OF LONDON OPEN SPACE STRATEGY-DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

The Committee received the report of the Director of the Built Environment and noted the background and production of a draft City of London Open Space Strategy. Members noted ten key strategic objectives that addressed current and future open space provision and the proposed process for public provision and the timetable therein.

It was proposed that consultation took place over the summer, from June to

September 2014, with the aim of collating and incorporating comments and reporting back to the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee and the Planning & Transportation Committee in October with a final draft for adoption.

Members discussed the possibility of better signage around the City pointing out green areas and roofs with public access. The Chairman of Planning and Transportation said this was an important part of the strategy and would be supported the suggestion.

Members noted that while some businesses were now able to provide green areas on top of their buildings this did not diminish the fact that there was still a large area of floor space being taken by the building. Therefore, being able to provide green roofs was not a substantial gain from a building, but simply a factor of the building. Members also noted that there was a difference between play areas and areas with the provision of soft equipment provided for children. Officers were asked to differentiate between the two in future reports.

RESOLVED: That Members approved the draft text of the City of London Open Space Strategy Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation.

8. **ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014**

The Committee received the report of the Remembrancer which informed the Committee of a legislative change which would allow the Common Council to exercise new powers to tackle anti-social behaviour (including powers relating to the control of dogs) in the City Corporation's open spaces.

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 created the Public Spaces Protection Order, which could be used by local authorities to curtail activities which have a detrimental effect on public spaces in their areas. As a result of discussions with the Government, provision was included in the Act to enable the Secretary of State to designate the Common Council and other custodians of open spaces as bodies additionally entitled to make these Orders.

Members noted that use of this provision would enable the Common Council to make Public Spaces Protection Orders in the open spaces outside the City. Infringements of the Orders will be criminal offences punishable by a fixed penalty notice of £100, or a fine of £1,000 on summary conviction. The Common Council's power to make Dog Control Orders would cease after the changes come into effect, although existing Dog Control Orders would continue in force for a period of three years.

9. **ALDGATE REPORT**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of the Built Environment. Members were informed that the aim of the project was to achieve complete transformational change in the Aldgate area through the removal of the existing gyratory system and the creation of new enlivened public spaces.

Members noted that CCTV equipment would be included in the design of the area and adequate coverage would be provided.

Members noted that the 'Middle Specification Option' would see the rill water channel and associated channel lighting removed from the water feature. Members noted that this option excluded some highly desirable features of the project. The Committee agreed that their preferred option of those proposed would be the 'Full Specification Option' which would deliver a total transformation of Aldgate and the creation of a new iconic public space.

RESOLVED: That the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee confirmed that it was only able to accept ongoing responsibility for this project subject to the following:

- That the revenue implications for the initial five years following construction be met through S106;
- That the future revenue budget increases for the following 15 years should be funded by draw down against future CIL; and
- That authority be given to the Director of the Department of the Built Environment to seek additional sources of funding for the project, including further Transport for London funding and utilise this funding provided this has no negative impact on the City Corporation resources.

10. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received the following update from the Superintendent:

Finance

The City Garden budget was in line with agreed budget profiles.

Awards

At the 2014 LEAF Tree and Woodland Awards hosted by the Mayor of London at City Hall, the City in partnership with Trees for Cities was awarded the Creative Award for 'Blue Trees' a temporary art project that took place in Festival Gardens last summer. 'The Creative Award recognises and celebrates the most innovative and creative piece of work that evokes the value and beauty of trees in London.' A short film, produced by the City's media department, explaining the project and promoting City Gardens was shown to the audience.

Gardens

The annual summer bedding was due to be planted over the coming weeks, nectar rich species have been selected where possible.

City, London and Britain in Bloom Campaign

The City's in Bloom campaign was underway. The Friends had recruited twelve volunteers to judge entries for the City wide campaign. Details of how to enter or nominate a garden, project, window box etc. could be found on the City Gardens pages on the website.

Volunteering

On the 22nd May, a group of ten volunteers from an international IT company based in the City paid for and planted 500 wildflower plugs and shrub plants at Bunhill Fields.

Roof Top Survey - 26 volunteers including three ecologists and the Director of the London Wildlife Trust took part in roof top bird surveys across seven buildings during April and May. 25 different species of birds were seen including breeding Black Redstarts and Peregrine Falcons. A report for publication was being prepared by the Friends to promote the value of green roofs for wildlife.

Open Squares Weekend 14/15 June – a plant stall, teas and coffees would be served by the Church and Friends in Postman’s Park. Volunteers would be conducting tours and a treasure hunt in Bunhill Fields.

Chelsea Flower Show

The City Corporation sponsored a garden at the Chelsea show for the first time. This was designed by Helen Elks-Smith and aimed to raise awareness of Oak Processionary Moth (OPM). The City’s horticultural apprentices assisted with the garden build, whilst Arboriculture apprentices interpreted the stand during the opening days of the show. Very good media coverage was received, including the Telegraph, Sunday Telegraph, The Mail, BBC and various radio interviews. The display received a Silver Award.

Committee Members congratulated the Officers on their achievements and thanked them for their hard work.

11. SMOKEFREE PLAYGROUNDS COMMITTEE

The Committee were informed of the proposal of implementing voluntary no smoking codes within children’s playgrounds, for a trial period of six months, in four identified areas in the City:

- Middlesex Street estate
- Tower Hill Gardens
- Portsoken Street
- West Smithfield Rotunda Garden

Officers informed Members that the key aim of smokefree children’s playgrounds was to deter children and young people from smoking. In response to a query, Members noted that the objectives included to:

- Reduce child exposure to smoking and help to decrease the number of young people starting to smoke.
- Decrease cigarette litter such as cigarette ends, empty packets and wrappers to playgrounds more pleasant and to protect wildlife.
- Reduce the risk of children putting toxic cigarette ends into their mouths
- A consultation exercise has been carried out with the public and Friends of City Gardens, which evidenced support for this initiative.

In response to a query regarding enforcement, Members were informed that this was a voluntary scheme, but the success would be measured through visits to the areas at the start, middle and end of the trial.

Members noted that the proposal was for a six month trial, after which the results would be reported back to the Committee. Members also noted that this was a voluntary scheme and the signs to be placed at playgrounds should not be misleading about the City's powers relating to this scheme. Members also noted that there were now a range of places where people were either not allowed to smoke or encouraged not to smoke; therefore the City Corporation should act responsibly sympathetic. It was also noted that there were now a number of smoking cessation groups available within the City.

A Member raised concerns regarding the six month trial. He noted that the displacement of smokers firstly out of indoor public spaces and now an outdoor space in rapid succession. He expressed concerns about those (business electors, residential electors and other users of City spaces) for whom smoking remained a cultural norm, whose interests he believed we should consider. For these reasons he said that we should monitor the results of the trial closely, with no presumption of it rolling out more widely before those results were analysed. The Member also stated that the City should not "overreach": he noted that the signage proposals currently indicated that the City Corporation had the powers to stop smoking in playgrounds, and as this is not the case the signage should clearly state that this was a voluntary scheme.

RESOLVED: That Members:

- Agreed the smokefree children's playgrounds' proposal in principle
- Agreed the three playgrounds under their remit where the proposal should be implemented for a trial period as below:
 - o Tower Hill Gardens
 - o Portsoken Street
 - o West Smithfield Rotunda Garden

12. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

A Members informed the Committee of the Grow London Event taking place in the East Heath Car Park on 19th to 22nd June. Members also noted that a visit to the City Gardens would take place on 21st July 2014 following the Committee meeting.

13. **URGENT ITEMS**

The Director of Open Spaces informed Members that a visit to the Olympic Park had been arranged for 3rd October 2014, with the coach departing Guildhall at 09:30, and then leaving the Olympic Park at midday to return to Guildhall. Members who wished to travel by coach were advised to inform the Town Clerk.

14. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

MOTION: 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.

15. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record.

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

There were no questions.

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.

The meeting ended at 3.50 pm

Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank