

Committee(s)	Dated:
Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee	02/02/2015
Subject: Bunhill Fields Burial Ground Draft Management Plan (2015 - 2020)	Public
Report of: The Director of Open Spaces	For Decision

Summary

This report sets out the background and production of a Bunhill Fields Burial Ground Draft Management Plan (2015 – 2020), attached at Appendix 1. It sets out the vision, objectives and priorities for the management of Bunhill Fields for the ensuing five years and has been prepared by the City Gardens team.

Members are asked to agree to the draft plan being made available for public consultation.

Following consultation, any proposed changes to the draft plan will be brought back to Committee for approval and for formal adoption as a management plan.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Approve the draft text of the Bunhill Fields Burial Ground Draft Management Plan 2015 - 2020, attached at Appendix 1, for public consultation.

Main Report

Background

1. Bunhill Fields Burial Ground, a 3.5 acre (1.4 hectare) site just north of the City boundary, is considered a significant burial ground, as indicated by its designation as a Grade I listed Historic site.
2. It contains over 2,300 monuments of which 76 are separately listed as Grade II* and Grade II listed structures. The site has a sensitively designed public garden by one of the foremost landscape architects of the 1960s, Peter Shepheard. As a valuable oasis of greenery in a highly urban area it is a popular destination for local workers and residents along with a significant number of people coming to visit individual memorials.
3. In 2006 a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the burial ground was commissioned and produced by Land Use Consultants. The purpose of the CMP

is to address specific problems and protection of Bunhill Fields Burial Ground and provide a valuable conservation management tool for the long term improvement and best value investment.

4. As a response to the CMP and to benchmark the national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales, a Bunhill Fields Burial Ground Management Plan (2009 – 2014) was first produced in 2008 by the City Gardens team.
5. The production of the plan used guidance provided by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) who at the time had responsibility for managing the national scheme since its inception in 1996.
6. Since 2009, the Green Flag award has been managed by the Green Flag Plus Partnership made up of partners from a consortium comprising Keep Britain Tidy, the Trust for Conservation Volunteers (TCV) and Green Space who now manage the scheme on behalf of Communities and Local Government (CLG).
7. Since 2008, Bunhill Fields Burial Ground has successfully been awarded Green Flag status every year. External judges recruited nationally visit the site each year assessing the site using the Green Flag criteria and verifying the management plan. The judges' feedback is incorporated into the action plan for the following year subject to funding constraints.
8. Over the last five years, the City Surveyor via the centrally funded Additional Works Programme, have spent £265,000 repairing and restoring memorials, railings and paving contained within the Burial Ground. The City Gardens team have also delivered a range of volunteer opportunities. These have included planting wildflowers, annual bulb and hedging planting, repainting the inner railings and conducting habitat surveys.
9. A diverse programme of activities and events has also taken place attracting workers, residents, families and school children. Events have included: annual Green Garden lunchtime taster sessions; family Victorian games; Open Squares weekends and the Big Read. All have been well attended by local people and workers with positive feedback.

Current Position

10. The preparation of the current draft plan has provided an opportunity to review and build on the previous 2008 plan, setting out how the Burial Ground will be managed and the projects that are proposed for the next five year period.
11. The draft management plan incorporates Green Flag Plus Partnership guidance which suggests the following criteria and information is included:
 - How to create a sense that people are positively welcomed into a green space;
 - How best to ensure that the site is a safe and a healthy environment;
 - What people can expect to find in the way of standards of cleanliness, facilities and maintenance;

- How a green space can be managed in environmentally sensitive ways;
 - The value of conservation and care of historical heritage;
 - Ways of encouraging community involvement;
 - Methods of promoting or marketing a site; and
 - How to reflect all the above in a coherent and accessible management plan, statement or strategy.
12. The draft plan provides information on progress made as a result of the current 2008 management plan. It also provides information on the burial ground is and will be managed.
13. Using the criteria, outlined in point 11 as headings, an action plan has been produced to provide a summary of objectives and activities with expected timescales and indicative cost for each headline topic. Actions have been given a broad indication of costs from Low (less than £500), to high (greater than £5,000).
14. Throughout the preparation of the draft plan, key internal stakeholders have been consulted through meetings, emails and phone conversations. The next step is to take the draft plan out to a wider audience, thus fulfilling the formal consultation stage of its production.

Proposals

15. It is proposed that stakeholder consultation takes place during the months of February and March 2015, with the aim of collating and incorporating comments and reporting back to your committee in April 2015 and proposing a final draft for adoption.
16. Consultation will be undertaken to ensure stakeholder involvement and will include:
- City of London Members;
 - Other City of London key stakeholder departments;
 - Garden users, through an 'advertising campaign' on noticeboards, e newsletters and through the extensive database of contacts that have expressed interest in the City Gardens over many years (held by the City Gardens section)
 - Hard copies of the draft plan deposited at the City libraries;
 - Contacts within neighbouring boroughs

Corporate & Strategic Implications

17. The production of a draft plan fulfils key requirements highlighted within the City's Local Plan, notably Core Strategy Policy CS19: Open Spaces and Recreation. Good quality open spaces improve the health of the City's communities and create a pleasant environment which encourages businesses to locate in the City.

18. The provision of high quality open space in the City supports a wide number of key City of London policies and objectives contained within the core objectives of the City of London Community Strategy:

...is competitive and promotes opportunity

To facilitate the opportunity for exemplary, innovative inclusive and sustainable design which respects and enhances the distinctive character of the City.

...protects, promotes and enhances our environment

To reduce our impact on climate change and how to improve the way we adapt to it.

To continue to minimise noise, land and water pollution and improve air quality where this is possible.

To conserve and enhance biodiversity.

...is safer and stronger

To strengthen the City's third sector to further meet the needs of our communities and promote volunteering

Implications

19. Many associated actions will be funded by Bunhill Fields Burial Ground's annual local risk budget, currently £108K annum. The City Surveyors Department will continue to restore and repair railings, pathways and memorials from the centrally funded Additional Works Programme.
20. A number of activities and actions will be supported and delivered in partnership with the Friends of City Gardens and other stakeholders at no cost.
21. The draft plan recognises the challenges faced by the City in the current fluctuating financial climate and seeks to address these in a realistic way. It recognises that Open Spaces revenue budgets are fully committed and consequently improvements can only occur if new and innovative ways of securing finance are explored, including through S106 planning obligations, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) other funding streams.

Conclusion

22. The completion and adoption of a comprehensive revised Bunhill Fields Burial Ground Management Plan will ensure that the City is strategically managing its open space portfolio in accordance with regional and national good practice.
23. The production of a revised Bunhill Fields Burial Ground Management Plan has helped identify those significant components of the green space enabling long term maintenance and a management strategy for the site to be developed.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 –Bunhill Fields Burial Ground Draft Management Plan (2015 - 2020)

Louisa Allen

City Gardens Manager, Open Spaces Department

T: 020 7374 4140

E: louisa.allen@cityoflondon.gov.uk