

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date</b>
Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee	20.04.2015
<b>Subject:</b> Bunhill Fields Burial Ground Draft Management Plan (2015 - 2020)	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Open Spaces	<b>For Decision</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Summary</b></p> <p>This report is a follow-up report to that dated 2<sup>nd</sup> February, and explains the consultation process regarding the production of the draft Bunhill Fields Burial Ground Management Plan.</p> <p>Following a period of public consultation, proposed changes have been added where appropriate. Comments from the consultation have been summarised and collated and responses to these are illustrated at Appendix 1.</p> <p>Members are asked to agree the final draft Bunhill Fields Ground Management Plan and allow its adoption and publication.</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <p>Approve the final draft of the Bunhill Fields Burial Ground Management Plan, appended at Appendix 2, for adoption and publication.</p>	

## **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 Shephard. 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 Green Flag 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.
10. On the 2nd February 2015 the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee approved the Bunhill Fields Burial Ground Draft Management Plan and agreed its content for public consultation. This took place in March this year.

## **Current Position**

### **11. Consultation**

To achieve a worthwhile process, the following stakeholder groups were consulted

- City of London Members;
- Other City of London key stakeholder departments; Garden users, through an 'advertising campaign' on noticeboards, e newsletter and through the extensive database of contacts that have expressed

interest in the City Gardens over many years (held by the City Gardens section)

- Posters have been displayed in the City libraries;
  - Contacts within neighbouring boroughs
12. The consultation period triggered four constructive comments, some of which have been addressed and added to the draft plan. Comments received and the City Corporation's responses are included in Appendix 1. The City Gardens team has made contact with all four individuals to thank them for their contributions and to provide them, where appropriate, further information regarding their comments.
13. The draft management plan can be seen in Appendix 2. The published document will include photographs and will be in an accessible format.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

14. The production of the draft management plan supports 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.
15. The provision of high quality open space in the City supports 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**

16. 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.
17. 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.
18. 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**

19. 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) and other funding streams.
20. 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 - Comments and responses from the consultation period - March 2015.
- Appendix 2 - Bunhill Fields Burial Ground Draft Management Plan (2015 - 2020)

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