

Committee:	Date:
Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee	20th April 2015
Subject:	Public
City Gardens Draft Events Policy	
Report of:	For Decision
Director of Open Spaces	
<p style="text-align: center;">Summary</p> <p>This report sets out the background and production of a draft City Gardens Events Policy at Appendix 1. It sets out the vision, aims and objectives for the management of small events to be trialled in selected City Gardens.</p> <p>Members are asked to review the document and its associated appendices including a proposed fees and charges structure and to agree to its use as a draft policy as a pilot for one year.</p> <p>Following the pilot, a further report will be brought back to Committee to report on any findings and suggested amendments to the draft policy in order to formally adopt the policy as the City Gardens Events Policy.</p> <p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the City Gardens Draft Events Policy, attached at Appendix 1 • Agree to the use of the City Gardens Draft Events Policy to manage events as a pilot for one year from May 2015 to June 2016 • Agree to the proposed fees and charging structure • Delegate authority to the Superintendent of Parks and Gardens to decide whether to approve or refuse applications for events in City Gardens for the pilot period 	

Main Report

Background

1. City Gardens regularly organises and facilitates small scale events and activities, the majority of these have been walks and talks, seasonal lunchtime well-being activities and volunteering environmental activities. These events have been either funded through external grants or arranged by the City Gardens team in partnership with community groups such as the Friends of City Gardens and the City of London Guides at minimal cost to the City.
2. In addition, the gardens attract regular filming and photography requests; these are managed by the film liaison team and facilitated by the City Gardens team, accruing modest annual amounts of income. In recent years the City Gardens team has experienced an increasing number of requests

from members of the public to use the gardens to hold special events such as wedding proposals and wedding celebrations.

3. The City's gardens are protected by various legislation and regulations which helps protect and govern the use of these gardens including restricting certain activities.

Current Position

4. All of the City of London's open spaces are less than two hectares in size and fall within the definition of the London Plan's (2011) hierarchy of open spaces as *Small Open Spaces* and *Pocket Parks*. Their size is therefore considered only suitable for small scale events. According to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) a small event is classified as 'the attendance of 500 people or less'.
5. Until now the City Gardens section has not actively publicised the gardens to be used for event purposes. Any fees that have been charged have been minimal and have been used to cover costs incurred by the gardening team for facilitating the event. However, officer time responding to and assessing requests has taken time and is currently not covered by a charge.
6. The current Service Base Review is tasked with finding ways to identify savings as well as increasing income to support revenue budgets. The introduction of this draft policy and pilot period could be an opportunity to increase income for the City Gardens revenue budget.

Proposal

7. The City Gardens Draft Events Policy acknowledges the value and benefit of outdoor events, contributing to the City of London's cultural offer. The draft policy provides guidance with the decision-making while protecting residents, visitors and the green space infrastructure from any negative impacts which an event may cause.
8. The draft policy aims to offer guidance in relation to the number, size and nature of events that can be held in each green space

Fees and Charges

9. The structure for fees and charges is outlined in Appendix 3 of the draft policy and has taken into account a differing levy to reflect commercial, corporate and charitable events respectively. In addition, it is proposed that fees are charged for commercial exercise classes, wedding photography and corporate volunteer days. The introduction of an application fee will assist with filtering out speculative events, manage demand and contribute to covering administration costs.
10. The City has a number of different garden user groups who support the maintenance, development and enjoyment of our gardens. These volunteer groups hold a number of 'free of charge' community events throughout the year. The City Gardens team will continue to host and support these events

acknowledging the significant community benefit that these events bring to the gardens.

11. The City Gardens team has benchmarked the recommended fees and charges against other London local authority parks departments to ensure the charges are reasonable, competitive and viable.
12. It is proposed that the fees and charges are reviewed each year and any increase will reflect the Retail Prices Index (RPI).

Management

13. The approval process and management of events is described in detail in the draft policy found in Appendix 1.
14. To ensure information is shared and to reduce any conflict that a City Gardens event may have with other events taking place in the City, event requests will first be assessed by the City Gardens Events Group (CGEG). The group will be made up of members of the City Gardens team. The group will assess the event applications to ensure a proposed event meets the requirements laid out in the draft policy. The Parks and Gardens Superintendent will have the final say in approving or rejecting an event. Where an event requires further scrutiny, using the criteria outlined in the draft policy, it will be presented for decision to the City of London Safety and Advisory Group (SAG) which meets quarterly. This group is made up of representatives from Highways, Pollution Control, Health and Safety and the City of London Police.
15. The draft event policy will be promoted and publicised on the City Gardens website page and e-newsletters.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

16. The provision of a well-designed events programme supports a number of key City of London policies and objectives as follows:
 - **The Corporate Plan 2013-17-** through a key policy priority of maximising the opportunities and benefits afforded by our role in supporting London's communities
 - **The Open Spaces Business Plan 2014-2017-** through the strategic objective of improving our use of resources through increased income generation and improved procurement
 - **Visit the City-**a visitor destination strategy for the City of London 2013/17 which seeks to provide a framework for the delivery of the City of London Corporation's visitor services, providing a clear statement of our vision for the assets we control and the areas over which we may have influence within the City area.

Implications

17. **Legal Implications** - The approval of an event does not remove the need for the event organiser to secure all other necessary consents such as advertising, licensing and complying with both Byelaws and statutory legislation. This is explained in the draft policy and guidance notes. Once the

event has been agreed a City Gardens Events Licence will be issued to the applicant, see Appendix 4 of the draft policy.

18. A number of the gardens identified for this pilot are governed by their own individual Byelaws as well as statutory legislation such as the Open Spaces Act. The City Gardens Event Group will ensure during the assessment stage that an event will be compliant and advise applicants accordingly.
19. Delegated decisions to grant applicants permissions or licences that may affect an individual will need to be recorded and published pursuant to the Openness of Local Governance Bodies Regulations 2014. Applicants will be advised how any personal data will be processed by an appropriate Fair Processing Notice.
20. **Human Resources** - during the pilot period, the City Gardens Manager and Support Officer will manage the day to day event arrangements, undertaking this work within existing resources.
21. **Equalities** - an Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out in relation to the design and implementation of this draft policy and was found to have a relatively low positive impact overall.
22. **Financial** - the structure for fees and charges is outlined in Appendix 3 of the policy. Both a booking and damage deposit required as part of the event management procedure will be collected by the City Gardens team.
23. **Consultation** - throughout the preparation of this draft policy, key internal stakeholders have been consulted through meetings, emails and phone conversations. Their comments and advice has been incorporated into the document.
24. The next step is to pilot the policy for a year reporting back to committee in May 2016 on the level of interest, management issues, resourcing and income generation. Amendments to the draft policy will be made to reflect any changes as a result of the pilot.

Conclusion

25. The City seeks to ensure best use of City Gardens for open space purposes, subject to public enjoyment being safeguarded. The City also wishes to ensure that requests to hold events are treated in a fair, consistent and appropriate manner. This report summarises the key points associated with the management of a City Gardens Draft Events Policy and the City Gardens team's intention to trial its use for a pilot period between June 2015 and May 2016
26. Officers will report back to Committee in June 2016 updating Members on the success and/or issues raised as a result of the pilot. Revisions to the draft policy will be made to reflect these findings and a final draft will be presented to members for approval before adopting it as the City Gardens Event Policy.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - City Gardens Event Policy

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