

## **OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS** **Monday, 1 February 2016**

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at  
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 1 February  
2016 at 1.45 pm

### **Present**

#### **Members:**

Alderman Ian Luder (Chairman)  
Graeme Smith (Deputy Chairman)  
Alderman Gordon Haines  
Alderman Robert Howard  
Wendy Mead  
Barbara Newman  
Virginia Rounding  
Jeremy Simons  
Michael Welbank

#### **Officers:**

Natasha Dogra	Town Clerk's Department
Neil Davies	Town Clerk's Department
Sue Ireland	Director, Open Spaces
Martin Rodman	Superintendent, City Gardens and West Ham Park
Gerry Kiefer	Open Spaces Business Manager
Richard Gentry	Constabulary & Queens Park Manager
Louisa Allen	City Gardens Manager
Lucy Murphy	West Ham Park Manager
Patrick Hegarty	Technical Manager, Open Spaces
Mark Jarvis	Chamberlain's Department
Luke Joyce	Department of the Built Environment
Kristian Turner	Department of the Built Environment

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Deputy Alex Deane, Verderer Peter Adams, Catherine Bickmore and John Beyer.

### **2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no declarations made.

### **3. MINUTES**

Resolved – that the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record.

#### **Matters Arising:**

**2015/16 Business Plan Quarterly Performance Update**

The Committee were informed that the City had in fact retained 15 green flags and 12 heritage awards.

### **Open Spaces Bill**

Members noted that the House of Commons had received the first reading of the Open Spaces Bill on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2016. The second reading was due to commence today, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016.

#### **4. REVIEW OF THE FREQUENCY OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE.**

The Committee received the report of the Town Clerk and noted that at their meeting on 7th December 2015, the Open Spaces and City Gardens agreed to review the frequency of committee meetings for the 2017/18 municipal year, reducing the number from six to five evenly spaced meetings. The Town Clerk had investigated this possibility and proposed Committee meeting dates for the 2017/18 municipal year.

Members considered the committee meeting dates for 2017/18 and agreed the following:

22 February 2017  
12 May 2017  
17 July 2017  
9 October 2017  
4 December 2017  
20 February 2018.

Members agreed that the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee should meet at 11:30am, with West Ham Park Committee convening at 12:15pm. The timings of either meeting could be amended should the agenda necessitate this.

As part of the post-implementation review of the changes made to the governance arrangements in 2011 it was agreed that all Committees/Boards should review their terms of reference annually. This will enable any proposed changes to be considered in time for the reappointment of Committees by the Court of Common Council.

Members noted that part (c) of the terms of reference should read “to take joint responsibility for allocating grants in relation to Open Spaces, taking account of any views or recommendations expressed by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee, West Ham Park Committee or Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Committee as relevant.”

Resolved – that the Committee:

1. Approved the terms of reference; with the amendment to part (c) of the terms of reference to read “to take joint responsibility for allocating grants in relation to Open Spaces, taking account of any views or recommendations expressed by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee, West Ham Park Committee or Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Committee as relevant.”
2. Approved the frequency of their meetings effective from 2017/18.

5. **2015/16 BUSINESS PLAN QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE UPDATE - QUARTER 3 (APRIL TO DECEMBER 2015)**

The Committee received the Business Plan Quarterly Performance update which summarised the Open Spaces departmental performance against the 2015/16 – 17/18 business plan. Members noted that at the end of third quarter, one departmental programme was reporting as amber – the Lodges Review Programme. All other programmes were green.

The Committee were informed that the City had in fact retained 15 green flags and 12 heritage awards.

In regards to the development of staff indicators, Officers informed Members that a more effective and appropriate basket of performance indicators relating to staffing and personal development was being considered for inclusion in the 2016-19 business plan.

Resolved – that the item be received.

6. **CONSOLIDATED REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGETS - 2015/16 & 2016/17**

The Committee received the annual submission of the consolidated revenue and capital budgets overseen by the Committee. In particular, Members noted the latest approved revenue budget for 2015/16 and the proposed revenue budget for 2016/17, as approved by the relevant Open Spaces Committees. Members attention was drawn to the changes in the number of full time employees in the department and the Committee expressed their gratitude to Officers for their hard work.

Resolved – that the update be received.

7. **OPEN SPACES HEALTH & SAFETY AUDIT 2015**

The Committee received and update informing Members that the annual Open Spaces audit of Health and Safety (H&S) was carried out in the second half of 2015 and was validated by visits to three divisions. Hampstead Heath, City Gardens and Epping Forest in November 2015. These found improved consistency of good safety practice across the Department and action plans are in place to address any issues which arose.

Members noted that the only recommendation arising from the review regarding Open Spaces was in relation to the Annual Certificate of Assurance (ACA). The department had not produced ACA's in the past, as the annual audit system operated by Open Spaces pre-dates that which was established corporately and the Director has therefore continued with the practice of annual reporting to the committee. The director confirmed that this had now been completed.

Members noted that a permit to work system had been introduced at Epping Forest as a pilot scheme to assist with control of contractors on site. This had helped manage the risk of unsafe practices among contractors and was being considered for implementation by other divisions.

The Committee recognised that good induction of staff was noted across the department. Improvements in staff instruction and training were noted in City Gardens in particular, where a new safety manual had been developed. Members noted that the reporting and subsequent investigations of 'near misses' had increased and Officers encouraged this across all open spaces. The Committee agreed that this promoted a culture of transparency which in turn led to issues being addressed early on and before a major incident occurred.

Significant work had been done to reduce harmful exposure to vibration from the use of work equipment. This had been supported across the department by an officer from Epping Forest visiting other divisions to assist and share expertise in measuring vibration arising from equipment. This information was then used to determine safe time limits for the use of the equipment by staff. Members expressed concern that they were not provided with KPI data and the Director confirmed this would be reported using the Business Planing quarterly reports in future.

Resolved – that the report be received.

**8. OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT - PROGRESS ON SPORTS PROJECTS AND PROGRAMME BOARD AND PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH THE LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION**

Members noted the progress which had been made with the Sports Projects and Programme Board; specifically with regard to a review of the sports provision and the development of a strategic partnership approach with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), including the development of an online tennis booking application.

Members noted the benefits of entering a partnership with the LTA which included access to coaches and coaching models and tennis courses for all ages and abilities and sought Members support for this approach. The Committee noted that a consultant had provided analysis of the full cost of sports provision across the Open Spaces. The cost of provision of sporting activities across all Open Spaces Department was estimated at £2.4m per annum; with a corresponding income of £724,000 i.e. the net cost of service is £1.7m.

The Committee noted that the Sports Programme and Project Board was currently tendering for consultants to carry out a "user and non-user" consultation. This piece of work would provide a detailed understanding of the current profile of users and views (positive and negative) users had of the sports facilities within Open Spaces. Members noted that a key objective is for the Department to have information on the levels of current participation and thus, potentially how participation can be maintained and increased.

Members noted that in partnership with the LTA, there was an opportunity to access the LTA ClubSpark online tennis booking system. The ClubSpark system enabled users to book tennis courts using a PC, smartphone or tablet.

The system could be set up to take payments online and court bookings and membership can be managed by various modules in the application. ClubSpark was free software for all LTA registered venues. To register all four City of London Open Spaces with the LTA in year 1 would cost £200 per site. This information could be used to determine the profile of users of the tennis courts and identify trends of usage. Officers informed Members that all information received from online bookings would be collated and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

The Committee noted that £85,000 funding from the LTA had also been secured for the resurfacing works to be undertaken on 9 tennis courts located at West Ham Park.

**Resolved – that Members:**

- Noted the content of this report and the progress which has been made by the Sports Programme and Project Board.
- Support a partnership approach with the Lawn Tennis Association through a Memorandum of Understanding.
- Supported the implementation of the Strategic Impact Framework for the Sports Programme & Physical Activity.

**9. IMPLEMENTATION OF GRANTS REVIEW**

Members noted that as part of the Service Based Review, a review of the grant giving activities of the City of London Corporation under City Fund and City's Cash was commissioned.

The results of the review were reported to Members during 2015, and a new approach to grant giving was agreed, with a target implementation date of 1 April 2016. One of the key principles of this new approach was to consolidate the City Corporation's grants programmes under "a smaller number of distinct themes which reflect the City Corporation's priorities".

Members noted that proposals for four themes, including "Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment" were being presented to the Policy and Resources Committee in February for their approval. The Committee agreed that it would be beneficial to ask the Policy & Resources Committee to also determine the geographical area included under the grants programme and whether the green spaces referred to were the City's own open spaces or included those wider afield.

Members agreed that the draft sub-themes titled "connecting communities with their green spaces" must be widened to ensure the promotion of green areas in all vicinities in the city.

**Resolved – that Members** delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, to agree the sub themes and eligibility criteria for the proposed grant giving theme of "Enjoying Open Spaces and the Natural Environment", subject to that theme being agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee.

10. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE FEBRUARY 2016**

The Committee received an update from the City Gardens Manager on management and operational activities across the City Gardens section since December 2016.

Members noted that City Gardens would be representing London in the Royal Horticultural Society's Britain in Bloom campaign this year in the Town category. The Friends of City Gardens would take on a more prominent role in the planning of this along with London and City in Bloom campaigns. A launch event was planned at the end of February to generate interest and launch all three campaigns.

Members were informed that Parkguard Ltd, an independent community safety service, had recently been contracted to deliver patrols on the Golden Lane and Mansell Street Estates regarding similar issues as a pilot from February to August 2016. As part of this contract Parkguard Ltd would undertake patrols at key times in Bunhill Fields to evaluate if their presence improved these issues. Findings would be reported to Committee in the autumn.

Resolved – that the update be received.

11. **GATEWAY 4 DETAILED OPTIONS APPRAISAL: LONDON WALL PLACE SECTION S106/278 HIGHWAY AND PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of the Built Environment regarding the London Wall Place Section 106 and Section 278 Highway and Public Realm Improvements. Officers informed Members that the subject of maintenance fees would be considered under the design stage of the project.

Members were informed that Officers were working with Transport for London to introduce a number of new bus routes to avoid stopping at Liverpool Street Station.

The Committee agreed that it was important to remain flexible and to ensure that the outcome was one that was the more appropriate for all road users. Members noted that various options were being considered, however, no proposal would limit London Wall from operating as it does now. The Committee also noted that the use of variation of surfaces would be used to deter skate-boarding in the area.

**Resolved** – That the Committee approved the recommended option for St. Alphage Gardens to be progressed to detailed design

12. **CITY OF LONDON DRAFT BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN (2016-2020)**

Members noted the background and production of a Draft Biodiversity Action Plan (2016-2020). It sets out the vision, objectives and priorities for the management of biodiversity for the ensuing four years and has been prepared by the City Gardens team. Members were asked to agree to the draft plan being made available for public consultation. Following consultation, any

proposed changes to the draft plan would be brought back to Committee for approval and for formal adoption as a City-wide Biodiversity Action Plan.

**Resolved** – that Members approved the text of the Draft Biodiversity Action Plan for public consultation.

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

There were no questions.

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 be approved as an accurate record.

16. **APPENDIX 4 - CONSOLIDATED REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGETS - 2015/16 & 2016/17**

The non-public document was received.

17. **APPENDIX 1 - OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT - PROGRESS ON SPORTS PROJECTS AND PROGRAMME BOARD AND PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH THE LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION**

The non-public document was received.

18. **SERVICE BASED REVIEW: DEPARTMENTAL MONITORING - OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT**

The Committee noted that the Efficiency and Performance Sub (Finance) Committee had responsibility for overseeing and monitoring the agreed programme of work arising from the Service Based Review (SBR).

Resolved – that the update be received.

19. **THE WARREN HOUSE - DECLARATION OF PROPERTY AS SURPLUS TO OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

This report had been removed from the agenda as it was for the consideration of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee only.

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

There were no questions.

21. **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 2:45pm**

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Chairman

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