

OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS **Monday, 4 December 2017**

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 4 December 2017 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Graeme Smith (Chairman)
Alderman Ian Luder
Barbara Newman
Jeremy Simons
Michael Welbank

In attendance:

Caroline Haines (Observer)

Officers:

Martin Rodman	-	Superintendent, Parks & Gardens
Alison Elam	-	Chamberlain's Department
Natasha Dogra	-	Town Clerk's Department
Colin Buttery	-	Director of Open Spaces
Patrick Hegarty	-	Open Spaces Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Wendy Mead, Deputy Philip Woodhouse, Oliver Sells, Deputy John Tomlinson, John Beyer, Verderer Peter Adams and Karina Dostalova.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

Resolved – that the minutes be received as an accurate record.

4. HIGH LEVEL BUSINESS PLAN

The Committee noted that Open Spaces & Heritage business plan has strong alignment across the three themes of the corporate plan. The alignment between the departmental out comes and the corporate plan is included within the report. Member's attention is particularly drawn to the department's contribution with respect to:

- The City positively impacts people and the environment
- The Square Mile has outstanding public spaces, heritage, hospitality and retail
- People enjoy good health and wellbeing
- People have access to suitable accommodation in cohesive communities

- People lead enriched lives and can reach their full potential.

In response to a query regarding the correlation between open spaces and health benefits, Members were informed that the Deputy Mayor of London had recently published a report on the positive impacts of open spaces on health and wellbeing. Members agreed that whilst there was a positive impact it would be helpful to measure the impact. Officers informed Members that it was difficult to collect tangible information in this area but agreed to investigate the establishment of appropriate measures.

Resolved – that the report be noted.

5. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGETS - OPEN SPACES & CITY GARDENS 2017/18 & 2018/19

The Committee noted an update on the latest approved revenue budget for 2017/18 and seeks your approval for a provisional revenue budget for 2018/19, for subsequent submission to the Finance Committee. The budgets have been prepared within the resources allocated to the Director and overall the provisional Original budget for 2018/19 totals £2.044M, a decrease of £17,000 compared with the latest approved budget for 2017/18.

In response to a query Members were informed that the main reasons for this decrease are due to an increase of £91,000 in other grants, reimbursements and contributions, a decrease of £102,000 in supplies and services, off-set by an increase of £40,000 in the City Surveyor's Repairs & Maintenance costs, and a reduction of £145,000 in income from Learning Recharges (mainly due to the fall-out of the carry forward).

Resolved – that the update be received.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT

Members noted that there was an overall increase in the numbers of accidents and incidents reported in the Open Spaces Department in 2016. This was largely due to

better reporting of minor injuries and near misses. There was a decrease in accidents which were reportable to the Health & Safety Executive compared to the previous year.

Officers continue to seek to reduce accidents through a variety of measures including collaborative working and an annual H&S audit. Members were informed that the possibility of using more electric machinery was underway by the department.

Resolved – that the update be received.

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received an update from the Superintendent and noted that the budgets for both City Gardens and Bunhill Fields are in line with anticipated profile of expenditure for this time of year. The contract for summer bedding plants 2018 has been awarded to Amethyst Horticulture. The City Gardens

team are now working with colleagues in the Procurement section to create a framework contract for the supply of bedding that will last for a number of years, thereby reducing administration in the future.

In response to a query regarding St Peter Cheap, Officers agreed to provide Member with a detailed email response regarding the project.

Members were informed that the City's footprint within St Alphage church gardens had not increased. The churchyard remained the City's responsibility, whilst the remaining area was private space open to public use and was maintained by the developer. Members also noted that the gardens around the Bloomberg development included 3 trees which remained the City's responsibility. The other 2 sites within this garden were the developer's responsibility. Officers agreed that it would be beneficial for Members to receive detailed maps of these areas clearly highlighting which areas were to be maintained by this Committee.

Resolved – that the update be noted.

8. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

In response to a query regarding the Fann Street Wildlife Garden, Members were informed that Officers were currently investigating the possibility of categorising the garden as a level 1 SINC. Officers agreed to email Members a detailed response regarding Fann Street Garden and the consultation process.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

There was no urgent business.

10. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: 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.

11. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

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

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

There were no questions.

13. 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 12.15 pm

Chairman

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