

Subject: Royal Pavilion Garden Strategy
Date of Meeting: 4 February 2010
Report of: Director of Culture & Enterprise
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Key Decision: No
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1 SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 This purpose of this report is to present to Culture, Recreation & Tourism Overview & Scrutiny Committee an updated draft of the Royal Pavilion Garden Management & Maintenance Plan and set out the next steps in the process of finalising the overall Royal Pavilion Garden Strategy. It should be noted, that the Plan has been developed to also assist in the achievement of a Green Flag award in the future.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 For Members to note the draft Garden Management & Maintenance Plan for this significant historic Garden, as detailed in (Appendix A) including its key purposes.
- 2.2 To note the vision and aims for the management of the Garden.
- 2.3 To note the events policy recommendations for the Garden.
- 2.4 To note the next steps in the process of finalising the Strategy.
- 2.5 To ask that the Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation & Tourism considers comments and recommendations made by this Committee for the Garden Strategy.

3 RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 Work has been underway since the summer of 2009 to prepare an updated Management & Maintenance Plan for the Royal Pavilion Garden.

3.2 As the Culture, Tourism & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee will recall, a workshop was held in September 2009 to inform and involve Members in the development of the Management & Maintenance Plan. The main issues covered were: the volunteers, horticultural and arboriculture management, anti-social behaviour; Garden interpretation; events and funding.

3.3 Vision and Management Aims

The vision and aims for the management of the Garden are:

'to achieve a balance between conserving its high heritage significance as the foremost, fully restored Regency Garden in England, while enhancing its value, as the most popular Garden in the heart of the City, for public understanding of the Pavilion Estate as a whole and for the enjoyment and involvement in its care through programmes of promotion, community engagement, education and events'.

- Positively welcome people into the Garden in terms of physical, social and intellectual access.
- Ensure a healthy, safe and secure experience for all Garden users.
- Provide a well-maintained and clean Garden by maintaining its plantings, buildings and infrastructure to a consistently high standard.
- Improve the environmental and ecological quality of the Garden and the sustainability of practices carried out in the course of its maintenance.
- Maintain and conserve the restored historic character of the Garden and increase awareness and understanding of its heritage significance.
- Provide opportunities to increase community involvement, particularly through education, interpretation and activity/events and volunteer programmes.
- Develop an events and marketing strategy appropriate to the Garden's historic character, capacity and role as a public space but which will enable a robust, stable generation of income, enhance the Royal Pavilion Estate experience as a whole and promote it effectively as a community resource.
- Establish an effective, co-ordinated partnership approach to the Garden's management and funding; ensure all those involved including the community representatives in the management and maintenance of the Garden use the Management plan effectively as a working document.

3.4 Events Policy in the Royal Pavilion Garden

3.4.1 A key area that the Royal Pavilion Garden Management & Maintenance Plan addresses is that of the staging of events. To date, there have been no clear agreed criteria or guidelines for the type of event deemed appropriate for the Royal Pavilion Garden. Decisions are taken at the discretion of officers. Historically, due to lack of city centre open space, there can be demand to use the Garden for events that are not appropriate to its historic nature. (A Grade II on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in

England). In planning events, the issues of the historic nature of the Garden, the recovery periods from structures that are placed on the lawns, additional noise and crowding in the Garden are currently not clearly taken into consideration. Commercial events are charged for and other events are allowed free.

3.4.2 A vital aspect of a sustainable and successful events strategy is understanding the Garden and its historical development significance, as well as its current character and use, will help to underpin policies on aspects such as zoning for different levels, types and frequencies of events and, therefore, the standard of repair and maintenance different areas will need (and therefore necessary fee/charging scale) as well as their capacity. As an internationally-iconic site in the city, an event in the 'Royal' Garden should be capable of attracting, and charging proportionately, top-end and exclusive cultural events.

3.4.3 The draft Royal Pavilion Garden Management & Maintenance Plan makes a series of recommendations for the policy, which are included below for Members' consideration.

- The need to identify locations for income-generating events of various types, levels and frequencies within the Pavilion Garden, partly for combined visitor 'offers' (of 'historic house and garden') and partly to increase the understanding and enjoyment of the Garden, through interpretation and educational activities/events (free and paid), for both visitors and local community.
- The need to use the tool of character area analysis (as set out in section 3.2 of the draft Plan - see Appendix A) as the basis for guiding capacity for events. So that the strategy ensures that events are selected and managed to sustain and enhance the fabric and significance and values of the 'heritage asset' ie it should build upon the asset rather than risk damaging it.
- The need to conserve and reveal the historic designed character and role of the East and North-East lawns as demonstrating the picturesque principles Nash and George IV chose for the Pavilion's setting.
- Recognition that the different historic character and current public informal use of the North-East lawn limits its capacity for temporary closure, structures and large crowds.
- Recognition that any event agreed for the King's Apartment lawn must enhance its closed and exclusive character to allow visitors to experience something of the Garden's original purpose.
- The opportunity for achieving some significant income-generating events that re-establish the tradition of cultural entertainments on the main East lawn while, with careful siting and control, retaining much of the open façade as the principal vista for city visitors arriving along the A23.
- The opportunities for developing small-scale events on the West lawns which recognise their present, intensive level of informal use and their value for such by the majority of visitors.
- Consideration of whether the height of the railings should be increased to indicate a clear perimeter for the Pavilion and to allow the area to be secured on

occasions when there is an event taking place on the East lawn. (Consultation and appropriate advice would be needed to resolve this point).

3.4.4 The events agreed for taking place in the Royal Pavilion Garden should take into account the following criteria:

- Acknowledge the historic tradition, established with public ownership in 1850 and continued into the early-mid C20, cultural events on the lawns by developing an events strategy which responds to the points identified above and which is integrated into the overall management strategy for the Garden.
- Define the criteria for the type, level and frequency of events based on those of the C19 and early-mid C20 which appear to have been less intensive and to have complemented the historic character of the Garden as defined in the 'Site Significances' and the above-described historic characters.
- Re-establish the Eastern lawn, as the largest open space and least used by the public, as the preferred location for the more extensive events as C19 and early C20 tradition. The strategy will include the Royal Pavilion & Museums specifying criteria defining the nature, size and frequency of the events, preferred locations for all structures and servicing facilities and the management of event visitors, preferably retaining a significant length of East façade open to view from the Steine and avoiding impact on the remaining areas of the Garden. All events on the East lawns would be agreed on a commercial hire basis – no free events would take place there.
- Publication of events strategy, once it has been agreed, including the reasons for vigorous control of its implementation; advance notice event programme.
- Restrict events on the west lawns to those which are more appropriate to community preferences (as per survey findings) and which are inclusive and do not require areas to be closed off. Avoid large, intrusive and heavy structures and any installations which might cause damage to lawns and blight their everyday use.
- Undertake appropriate/additional public/stakeholder consultation specifically as part of developing the events strategy, building on past recent user survey and Pilot Garden's Events Programmes, with particular exploration of views on the acceptable nature and frequency of events and attitudes to lawn closure.
- Apply capacity analysis to lawns to guide frequency and intensity of events and allow lawns to recover. Build in budget (and/or by charging deposit/upfront payments to event sponsor) to pay for lawns to be maintained to a higher quality and density of sward throughout the year than is presently the case.
- Acknowledge that more frequent use and heavier structures and footfall will require more intensive and more expensive maintenance and, in the case of the East lawn, renovation to counter previous years' neglect and compaction from building repair activity.
- Explore and evaluate the capacity of the Garden as a whole to manage access for major events on East lawn; measure acceptability of event against outcomes from this.

4 **CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 The Plan has benefitted from the active involvement of members of the Culture, Tourism & Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee, through a workshop held in September 2009 to look at the main areas of the Management & Maintenance Plan.
- 4.2 Royal Pavilion Garden Volunteers.
- 4.3 Users of the Royal Pavilion Garden and other stakeholders through surveys.
- 4.4 Further consultation to be carried out with other key stakeholders before the Plan, including the Events Strategy is finalised.

5 **FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The first phase costs for the preparation of the revised management and maintenance plan are expected to be approximately £2k. Currently the Royal Pavilion Garden is maintained by one gardener (funded by CityParks) supported by a team of volunteers. During the summer months the RP&M funds two security staff to patrol the area. In recent years, monies received from events which have taken place in the Royal Pavilion Garden has averaged approximately £2kpa. The development of a programme of appropriate commercial events alongside charitable and community events, could help generate a stable income stream for the service, to assist with future achievement of income targets.

Finance Officer consulted: Peter Francis, Accountant – 26/01/10

5.2 **Legal Implications**

- 5.2.1 Apart from the suggestion that a revision take place to the current Dog Control Order to include the Royal Pavilion Garden within its powers, there are no legal implications arising from this report.

Lawyer Consulted: Bob Bruce Principal Solicitor 25.01.10

5.3 **Equalities Implications**

With proper of the kind of events which should take place in the Royal Pavilion Garden there is an there is an opportunity to broaden the age range of the volunteers by developing new partnerships.

Equalities Officer Consulted: Maureen Pasmore – 26/01/10

5.4 **Sustainability Implications**

The Garden is managed on organic principles. The sustainability and conservation of these historically significant Gardens is dependent on the implementation of a proper management plan.

5.5 **Crime & Disorder Implications**

In carefully considering the kinds of events which take place in the Garden there may be opportunities to reduce the current levels of anti-social behaviour within it.

5.6 **Risk and Opportunity Management Implications**

None

5.7 **Corporate / Citywide Implications**

The actions from the report are necessary in order to ensure the ongoing maintenance of the Royal Pavilion Garden.

6 **EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S)**

None were considered.

7 **REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS:**

7.1 To enable the Division to progress with the work, complete the report and to produce both a budget strategy and an events strategy.

8 **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

8.1 Appendices: The Royal Pavilion Garden Management & Maintenance Plan.

8.2 Documents in Members' Rooms: None

8.3 Background Documents: None