

<b>Decision Makers:</b>	Councillor Tim Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Environment and City Management
<b>Date:</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2018
<b>Classification:</b>	For general release
<b>Title:</b>	Christchurch Gardens Landscape Enhancement Scheme
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	St. James's Ward
<b>Reason for the Report</b>	<p>This report provides an overview of the Victoria Business Improvement District (BID) lead proposals for landscape improvements in Christchurch Gardens, Victoria. It seeks Member approval of the use of Section 106 (S106) contributions to help fund detailed design development and delivery and provides a summary of informal consultation responses to-date.</p>
<b>City for All Summary</b>	<p>The scheme responds to the City Council's new City for All objective to ensure that our neighbourhoods have access to open spaces.</p>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	<p>The total cost to complete the detailed design and implement this scheme is currently estimated at £2.5m (two million, five hundred thousand pounds).</p> <p>The Victoria BID have funded development of the concept design for Christchurch Gardens. They have been funding more detailed design development and funded the initial external consultation.</p> <p>S106 Agreement funds already collected locally from development schemes within Victoria are proposed to be used to help deliver the scheme, subject to planning permission</p>

being secured for the gardens works. A decision on the submitted Council's own planning application is pending.

**Report of:**

Interim Executive Director of City Management and Communities

**Report Authors:**

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# **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 Christchurch Gardens is a small public open space set back from Victoria Street at its junction with Broadway. It is owned by the Diocese of London and managed by Westminster City Council (WCC) Parks.
- 1.2 Despite regular and ongoing maintenance, Christchurch Gardens suffers from a poor quality physical environment, is underused, and currently attracts anti-social behaviour. The grass in the main lawn area is patchy and receives little natural light.
- 1.3 The gardens generally are in need of capital investment to deliver physical improvements to create an attractive and usable space for a range of visitors.
- 1.4 The aspiration of WCC officers, the Victoria Business Improvement District (BID) and others is to transform the site through a hard and soft landscaping scheme from one that currently feels unwelcoming, into an award-winning public space with increased opportunities for seating and positive social interaction.
- 1.5 Specialist consultants, appointed externally by the BID, have developed a landscaping enhancement scheme to deliver a new central lawn area, increased seating and better lighting. A considerable amount of internal WCC officer support and advice from a range of specialist teams at the council has helped develop the proposals. The relevant ward councillors and Cabinet Members were briefed during the design development process, and initial public consultation was carried out through a 3-day public exhibition in early June 2018.
- 1.6 Following a largely positive response to the above, the detailed design is proposed to be completed this autumn/winter.
- 1.7 On the advice of the City Council's South Area Planning team, a parallel Council's own planning application has been submitted seeking permission to carry out the works.
- 1.8 Subject to the scheme and its proposed funding package obtaining Cabinet Member support through this report, alongside the separately sought planning approval, works are planned to start on-site early next year, with an intended opening date to be agreed in early summer 2019.
- 1.9 Initial project costs indicate full scheme delivery, including completion of the detailed engineering design, on-site surveys and trial holes, and an initially high level of funding allocated towards risk and contingency, at £2.5m. This includes circa £700k to cover risk and contingency. The total figure includes a full cost review and any necessary value engineering to help reduce costs prior to scheme implementation.
- 1.10 The Victoria BID have funded the initial design development stages and the costs of initial external consultation. Section 106 Agreement (S106) funds, already collected locally from development schemes within Victoria are proposed to be used to help deliver the scheme.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Environment and City Management approves the concept design for Christchurch Gardens as attached as Appendix C and explained in Section 6 of this report;
- 2.2 That the Cabinet Member for Environment and City Management approves the use of S106 funds, secured in respect of developments within the vicinity of the gardens, to fund completion of the detailed design and delivery of the proposed gardens scheme as set out in Section 9 of this report.
- 2.3 That delegated authority be given to the Interim Executive Director City Management and Communities, and Director of City Highways in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member for minor modifications to the approved scheme.

## **3. Reasons for Decisions**

- 3.1 There is a future need for high quality green spaces in Victoria as the local population continues to grow, with developments in the area bringing forward additional homes. This presents increasing pressures on green spaces such as Christchurch Gardens to provide leisure and play space for children and families.
- 3.2 Approval is hereby being sought for the concept design for Christchurch Gardens set out in Appendix C of this report. The proposed scheme is supported by officers as it offers potential to:
  - Protect and significantly improve the quality of the green space in Christchurch Gardens and encourage greater biodiversity;
  - Foster a sense of place, providing a tranquil open space in a busy office district;
  - Create a more attractive community space – optimising opportunities for positive activity within the gardens and therefore discouraging anti-social behaviour.
- 3.3 The proposed widening and opening of new Garden entrances will help to enhance pedestrian routes and movement within and around the Gardens as well as establish a better connection between the Gardens and nearby Strutton Ground Market – itself the subject of planned public realm improvement works.
- 3.4 The establishment of additional signage and improved walkways in the gardens will enable better wayfinding in the area and the potential to link the gardens to nearby walking routes away from the main road and traffic.
- 3.5 The scheme and its proposed delivery programme have been designed to enable delivery during the winter when the gardens would likely be least used. An opening date in early summer 2019 will be sought to give time for new plants to establish ahead of the gardens opening at a time when the gardens would likely be used more. It is critical that Cabinet

Member approval is gained at this stage to enable the detailed design work to be completed and materials ordered in-line with these proposed dates.

- 3.6 S106 funds have already been collected from development schemes within the vicinity of Christchurch Gardens. Four, totalling £2.5m have already been allocated internally for spend on this project. All 4 are detailed in Table 2, in Section 9 below.
- 3.7 Cabinet Member support for the spend of these contributions is hereby sought to enable delivery of the gardens scheme, in line with the intentions of the original S106 agreements.

## **4. Background**

- 4.1 Christchurch Gardens is a green open space located at the mid-point along Victoria Street, on its north side. The gardens are owned by the Diocese of London, leased to WCC (on a long lease), and managed by the WCC Parks team.
- 4.2 Whilst 'Christ Church' was destroyed by bombing in WWII, its churchyard, a former burial ground, was landscaped and opened to the public in the 1950s. The gardens have remained open to the public since then and are the main subject of this report.
- 4.3 The gardens are open to the public at all times of the day and year, and whilst they provide a valuable amenity space, their attractiveness and amenity value has been in decline.
- 4.4 The site has known anti-social behaviour issues with incidents of drug use. Westminster's Rough Sleeping Strategy (2017-2022) lists Victoria as a notable hotspot for rough sleepers. The gardens site often attracts rough sleepers and the design team have been working closely with the City Council's Homelessness Prevention Team to support the rough sleepers that do come to the gardens, into accommodation.
- 4.5 The new landscaping scheme, subject of this report, has been designed to improve the environment within the gardens and increase the feeling of safety there. Details of the proposed scheme are set out in Section 6 below.
- 4.6 The Diocese of London have indicated support for the concept design through the BID's dedicated Project Board.

## **5. Policy Background**

- 5.1 The proposals respond to the City Council's latest 'City for All' objective to ensure that all of our neighbourhoods have access to open spaces. In addition, the plans will help the City Council to meet a number of strategic objectives.

### **Westminster City Plan**

- 5.2 The 2016 Westminster City Plan's Spatial Strategy (strategic objective 7) states the need to maximise the use of Westminster's existing parks and open spaces in light of growing

pressures on them as visitor numbers increase. These pressures show that it is necessary that spaces such as Christchurch Gardens remain of high quality and continue to provide social value to a growing City.

- 5.3 Policy S4 “Victoria Opportunity Area” supports this and calls for the enhancement of the Victoria Opportunity Area’s public realm and open spaces, so that Victoria is seen as more of a destination as opposed to just a travelling gateway. Christchurch Gardens fall within this Opportunity Area and the proposed landscaping scheme supports this aspiration.
- 5.4 Policy S35 further highlights the need to upgrade public spaces to create play space for children as well as enhance the ecological benefits of open spaces. Having well-designed open spaces can encourage increased levels of physical activity, such as walking and cycling, in-turn leading to healthier lifestyle choices. The proposed improvements to the Gardens will provide an attractive open space for individuals to engage in such physical activity.
- 5.5 Policy S25 seeks to protect Westminster’s heritage, including conservations areas. The Gardens lie within the Broadway and Christchurch Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Audit for this area (2007) highlights the ecological importance of Gardens in a heavily developed environment.
- 5.6 The Landscape Institute also acknowledges the need to create “healthy places” in order to improve the mental wellbeing of individuals. Having such places can help reduce stress and isolation as well as encourage positive social interaction. The designs for the Gardens would provide a place that individuals can use to relax and de-stress.

### **Greener City Action Plan**

- 5.7 The Council’s Greener City action plan (2015-2025) promotes interventions such as the installation of green infrastructure in areas with poor air quality. Christchurch Gardens is located on busy Victoria Street, and the designs for the Gardens include the installation of additional green infrastructure, which could support the council’s air quality agenda.
- 5.8 The Action Plan highlights Victoria as an area of environmental concern as large amounts of hard infrastructure in the area has led to a heat island effect, where temperatures in the summer time are significantly higher as harder surfaces absorb the heat. This further illustrates the ecological importance of ensuring good quality greenery in the area.
- 5.9 The plan *further* discusses the value that Westminster’s open and green spaces have in attracting visitors to the city. The designs for the Gardens include plans to highlight the site’s history and create a small plaza for site appropriate events and community programmes.

These features of the design would optimise the use of a valuable open space and could encourage visitors.

### **Other policies and priorities**

- 5.10 Improvement to Christchurch Gardens was identified as a priority project within the Victoria Business Improvement District (BID)'s Public Realm Vision in January 2015 and was most recently identified by the City Council's Growth Planning and Housing management team as a priority place for investment and change, further supported by the Victoria BID's Public Realm Steering Group Board in June this year.
- 5.11 The underuse and misuse of the Gardens was documented in the Victoria BID's Green Infrastructure Audit carried out in 2010. The audit identified that the site was being used for rough sleeping and that there was limited public use of the space, demonstrating that the full potential of the site was not currently being met.
- 5.12 Westminster's Open Space Strategy (2007) calls for more attractive and safe open spaces as the population in Westminster continues to grow; this is an increasingly prominent issue for the surrounding area of Christchurch Gardens as the new Ten Broadway development, adjacent to Christchurch Gardens (amongst others) is set to deliver a significant number of new homes. The need for local publically accessible open green space will heighten and the plans for the Gardens will help mitigate some of these pressures.

## **6. Proposed Landscape Improvement Scheme**

- 6.1 In 2017 the Victoria BID appointed Reardon Smith landscape architects to develop a landscaping scheme for the gardens up to RIBA design stage 2. They have since undertaken a considerable amount of background research and the resulting concept design is attached in Appendix C of this report. Further details are set out in the associated Council's own planning application relating to this scheme (Application Reference: 18/07319/COFUL).
- 6.2 In summary, the scheme proposes the enhancement of the Gardens' central lawn and biodiversity, development of a small informal plaza, improved public facilities - benches, lighting, and the enhancement of the Gardens' entrances and wayfinding to improve access into the space. These proposals will help transform a currently underused and ecologically

poor quality open space into one that is attractive, easier to access and provides opportunities for multiple communal activities.

- 6.3 Increased opportunities for seating and positive social interaction will be provided through the proposed hard and soft landscaping improvements, provision of new and realigned paths, enhanced signage, a range of additional seating, improved lighting and planting.
- 6.4 Opportunities for sustainable urban drainage are being considered and are proposed to be integrated into the overall design to help mitigate any potential drainage issues.
- 6.5 The design team have been working closely with the council's arboriculture specialists on the potential removal of trees in order to deliver significant improvements to the lawn. Trees currently occupying the central lawn are not of good quality and the lawn itself is currently in poor condition due to a lack of sunlight that is currently able to reach the grass. The potential removal of certain trees from this central area could enhance the condition of the lawn by improving the level of sunlight into the space, allowing the lawn to survive in a better condition for public use. This potential removal will be subject to further investigation as part of the overall scheme development process, and forms part of the associated planning application.
- 6.6 A treatment of the rear boundary of the gardens has been proposed as the current line of lime trees does not provide sufficient screening of the building to the rear (the "BT building"). A green climber wall is proposed to be installed here to create the effect of a living green wall, whilst being more cost-effective than a green wall as it will require less water to maintain.
- 6.7 A decorative wall is also proposed as an interactive feature of the Gardens. This would provide the potential to consult the local community on the art that is displayed, which would in turn encourage community engagement in the design process. Both proposed boundary treatments are included in the associated planning application.
- 6.8 Reconfigured seating arrangements are included in the design with the proposed installation of additional seating, including new bespoke benches reflecting the ecclesiastical history of the gardens (reflecting the shape of church windows) and informal seating on walls built from a mixture of stone and timber materials. The open lawn area will provide space to place deck chairs and other moveable seating (similar to those already deployed by the BID in nearby Cathedral Piazza and Grosvenor Gardens) with a management plan in place to put these out and away at set times, helping to create a more flexible open space.
- 6.9 Whilst no changes of use are proposed within the gardens, any future changes, or any activities which may be restricted by the terms of the lease between WCC and the Diocese of London will need to be approved by the Diocese as freehold owners of the land before they can be considered for implementation. The Diocese have been fully engaged in the design development process, and supported submission of the planning application.
- 6.10 The need to improve lighting in the Gardens in order to improve wayfinding has been highlighted, with the proposed designs providing improved navigation lighting and illumination of the main walking routes and key features, whilst keeping the central lawn area relatively



dark at night to help enhance opportunities for wildlife and biodiversity to thrive there. Lighting is proposed to the rear of the Gardens through to Caxton Street to illuminate areas currently being used for anti-social behaviour. Additional lighting on the Henry Purcell statue and Suffragette Memorial statue is proposed to illuminate their features.

- 6.11 On-site litter and recycling bins are proposed to help keep the Gardens clean and attractive as well as encourage on-site recycling.
- 6.12 The designs incorporate an enhanced planting schedule, including a variety of plants, to improve biodiversity within the Gardens and help develop a more visually attractive space. Specialist advice will be sought on the final plant choices.
- 6.13 The final scheme will further look to highlight the local history of the site using information boards and design interventions, such as the use of stained glass windows at the entrance of the Gardens to pay tribute to the church that once existed on the site. Graphics illustrating these are included in the appendices and associated planning application.
- 6.14 Provision for improved signage in and around the Gardens has been included in the scheme to again support better wayfinding and help direct pedestrian flow into, through and around the space.
- 6.15 The small paved plaza area within the Gardens has been designed to provide space for seasonal and site appropriate events that again respect the site's history, such as a Christmas tree or one-off choir performances, cultural or arts events. The plaza could also provide space for a mobile coffee stall, encouraging a small level of commercial activity ancillary to the use of the gardens and providing an additional facility for the public to enjoy. There may be potential for the site to host a temporary coffee cart that could potentially be run by a charitable organisation, which would not only help provide an additional facility for Garden users to enjoy but could also help to give back to the community.
- 6.16 Again, any such use of the gardens will need to be approved by the Diocese as freehold owners of the land before they can be considered in line with the planning application. These discussions are underway and initial feedback on this has so far been positive.

### **Ground Conditions**

- 6.17 Given the history of this site as a post-medieval burial ground, there was a high chance for post-medieval burials to have survived within the gardens. A Museum of London Archaeology (MoLA) survey was commissioned by the BID and undertaken on-site from 12<sup>th</sup> February 2018 to determine the depths of these burials.
- 6.18 Investigations by MoLA uncovered human bone fragments at a depth of 380mm, and fully articulated human remains at a depth of 1.5m, these burials are consistent with Westminster Archive records that recorded burials having taken place in the gardens up to 1853. MoLA have recommended avoiding works to a depth lower than 1.5m and that any works deeper than 230mm may require an archaeology watching brief. Whilst the gardens' proposals are

being developed to sensitively reflect the history of this site, no deep excavation works are currently proposed, and no human remains are intended to be removed as part of this project. Further site surveys are proposed to be undertaken as part of the detailed design work and MoLA will be invited on site during any such activity and scheme implementation works.

## **Benefits**

- 6.19 The proposed landscaping scheme offers real benefits to the quality of the environment in Christchurch Gardens. The layout has been designed to open up new routes through the gardens, to create a usable and attractive green space, and enliven the parts of this site which are currently attracting anti-social behaviour. Rough sleeping is particularly concentrated to the north of the gardens, in the planted area on the west side of the path linking the gardens to Caxton Street. The design proposals seek to open up this space, with enhanced lighting and landscaping to encourage positive activity and deter anti-social behaviour. This is seen as one of the key benefits of the proposed scheme.
- 6.20 The scheme will also look to develop better connections to Strutton Ground market to encourage interaction between the markets' commercial activity and the Gardens' open space. The current intention is for improvement works to the market to begin this autumn/winter, subject to a temporary relocation strategy being confirmed for the market traders to enable paving works to be completed there. Both schemes have the potential to complement one another.

## **7. Consultation**

- 7.1 WCC officers have worked closely with the BID to develop the proposals for the gardens and are supportive of the concept design, which has been designed to protect and enhance the gardens in line with Westminster's adopted planning policies.
- 7.2 WCC officers carried out internal consultation on the concept design in February 2018, with approximately fifteen teams/ areas in WCC. This indicated a high level of support for the scheme and provided useful technical input into the design development process, which enabled the project to develop to the stage shown in Appendix C. Comments received at that time included that improving lighting and pedestrian access as well as encouraging positive use of the Gardens would be welcomed changes. These matters are reflected in the proposed scheme. Further subject specific meetings have been held and the design modified and improved accordingly.
- 7.3 Relevant Cabinet Members and local ward members have been briefed on the proposed scheme in person, including by the BID on-site and at the summer public exhibition and in writing by WCC officers at the end of May.
- 7.4 WCC Parks officers are supportive of the concept subject to detailed design considerations. Initial meetings have been held with the Parks contract team with the intention of having them deliver the soft-landscaping scheme as they currently manage and will be managing the site

going forward. The hard-landscaping elements are proposed to be delivered through the council's highways contract team.

- 7.5 In addition, the Victoria BID have held initial conversations with local stakeholders and gained considerable local support for these proposals including through their Public Realm Steering Group and new Christchurch Gardens Project Board (WCC is represented by officers in both). The concept to improve the Gardens was endorsed by the Victoria BID's Christchurch Gardens Board in December 2017 and again in June 2018. The Board includes senior representatives from local businesses and the resident community.

## **Public Exhibitions**

- 7.6 In early June 2018 the Victoria BID hosted a series of public exhibitions to present the proposals to the local community. The design team were available to answer questions about the proposals and the designs were presented on display boards, accompanied by questionnaires to records responses. A link to the Christchurch Gardens webpage and exhibition boards is included in the Background Documents section below.
- 7.7 In summary, the plans received a positive public reaction. Over 100 people attended the public exhibitions. The vast majority responded that they really liked the proposed scheme. There were no dislikes responded. The green space and seating were considered particularly important. Individuals commented that the proposals were "excellent", "imaginative" and would create "a welcoming space" with "a good mix of seating, walkways and information". A comment was recorded about the future upkeep of the scheme and one that it was a shame about the loss of trees. The proposed loss of trees is subject to live review as set out in paragraph 6.5 above. Maintenance discussions are underway with the relevant service providers. Working with the BID, WCC officers have also developed site-surveys to help monitor the success of the scheme going forward.
- 7.8 Further comments received related to: the width of the paths, which have since been narrowed to provide an extended lawn area; and the extent of the coffin-design in the paving (reflecting the historical use of the gardens as a burial ground), which if reduced could offer a potential cost-saving for this scheme. This is subject to live review through the detailed design process.
- 7.9 Officers are keen to engage local school/church and other community groups in the detailed design process where feasible, including for any proposed art panels within the scheme.

## **8. Programme**

- 8.1 Design stages are proposed to be completed this autumn/winter.
- 8.2 Subject to the scheme obtaining Member support and planning approval, works are planned to start on-site early next year, with a planned opening date of the new garden layout to be agreed for early summer 2019.
- 8.3 A more detailed delivery programme is being developed between the council's contract teams

to ensure that works can be delivered in a rational order, for example with hard-landscaping works, and works requiring vehicular access to the gardens completed before any decorative planting is undertaken.

## 9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 The total cost of delivering the Christchurch Gardens scheme is currently estimated to be circa £2.5m, as set out in Table 1 below. This includes design and professional fees, split between hard and soft-landscaping works (broadly covering infrastructure: paths, lighting and seating as hard landscaping; and planting as soft). The below costs are subject to live review following a decision on the below listed funding strategy (Table 2).

Table 1: Indicative Hard-Landscaping Cost Summary

Hard-landscaping Works:	Cost
Design and Works Costs:	£1.290m
Third Party Costs (Thames Water, surveys etc):	£0.040m
Professional Fees:	£0.09m
<b>Project Total including fees:</b>	<b>£1.420m</b>
Contingency:	£0.568m
Total hard-landscaping works estimate:	*£1.988m
Total soft-landscaping works estimate:	£0.512m
Total project cost estimate:	£2.5m

\*The costs above are based on cost estimates provided by FMConway July 2018.

- 9.2 The Victoria BID have funded all of the initial design work for this project. Earlier this year their Board agreed to ring-fence a further £0.250m of BID funds towards completion of the design work, bringing their current financial contribution to this project to £0.330m - despite the fact that the gardens technically fall outside the current BID area<sup>1</sup>, such is their collective desire for improvement here. They have spent over 40% of this total allocation on the project to date.
- 9.3 This Cabinet Member Report seeks formal approval to allocate already collected s106 public realm funds for spend on delivery of this scheme.
- 9.4 Four S106 contributions have been allocated for spend on this project. These have all been collected from development within the immediate area, and are all for public realm, open and play spaces and social and community projects within the ward. It is considered entirely appropriate that these funds be put towards the delivery of the proposed gardens scheme. These are set out in the delivery section of Table 2 below.

<sup>1</sup> The First term of the new 'Victoria Westminster' BID commences in October 2018 and covers Christchurch Gardens

9.5 Table 2: Identified Funding Sources September 2018

Funding Source:	Amount	Purpose
Design, consultation and specialist survey funds		
Victoria BID	£0.330m	Towards concept design work, appointment of specialist consultants and initial public exhibition.
Design checks, detailed design, third party surveys, implementation		
S106 Contribution 1 08/05789/FULL	£0.115m	Towards the provision or improvement of open space/play space facilities within the vicinity of a development in nearby Howick Place
S106 Contribution 2 11/07939/FULL	£0.076m	From a site in Victoria Street, for the provision maintenance and/or improvement of public realm for the benefit of the public
S106 Contribution 3 11/03854/FULL	£1.016m	For public realm enhancements in the vicinity of Victoria Street
S106 Contribution 4 17/07672/FULL	£1.293	To be used for social and community projects in the St James's Ward

- 9.6 The future maintenance costs for the completed scheme are anticipated to be broadly in-line with existing and will be agreed prior to delivery of this scheme. The ambition is that all future maintenance costs will be contained within existing maintenance budgets.

## 10. Legal Implications

- 10.1 Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables a Local Planning Authority to enter into an agreement with a person with an interest in land which is the subject of a planning application to regulate the use of the land, including amelioration or development impacts.
- 10.2 Planning benefits, including financial contributions, can be secured under the provisions of a section 106 agreement.
- 10.3 The Council is seeking to use section 106 contributions – already collected and secured for public realm / open space and community facilities in the vicinity of Christchurch Gardens - to be used for the Christchurch Gardens Landscape Enhancement Scheme - the subject of this report.

- 10.4 The Director of Law has reviewed the purposes for which s106 funds were secured, as detailed in paragraph 9 above, and is satisfied that they can be legally utilised for the scheme which is the subject of this report.

## **11. Business Plan Implications**

Not applicable.

## **12. Risk Management Implications**

A risk register is being created and will be regularly updated for this project. Key risks include a shortfall of funding (which is low risk subject to Cabinet Member approval being gained for the use of s106 funds through this report), unexpected archaeological findings which could delay the project and/or increase costs (MOLA will be kept involved in the build process to check for any such findings), and limits to access to the site as a result of adverse weather conditions or other unforeseen events. Some allowance will be made for the latter in the scheme delivery programme.

## **13. Health and Wellbeing Impact Assessment including Health and Safety Implications**

The proposed scheme should have beneficial impacts on health and well-being in comparison to the existing site arrangements. The proposals seek to encourage positive activity within the gardens, walking and play, and to deter anti-social behaviour such as drug-taking which currently occurs in this site. The site works will be carefully managed during the construction process to help minimise their negative impacts. The gardens are currently proposed to be closed for the duration of the major works over the winter to reduce risk of accident by the general public.

## **14. Crime and Disorder Implications**

The measures in this report are not expected to have any negative implications under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The proposals seek to create a safe and accessible public space, which is well-lit and accessible.

## **15. Impact on the Environment**

The scheme seeks to deliver an overall improved quality environment. Succession planting is proposed to enhance biodiversity to help mitigate any proposed loss of trees. The layout of the gardens and enhanced lighting is proposed to encourage positive social interaction. The lighting strategy has again taken biodiversity into account and lighting is only being used to aid wayfinding and safety whilst having minimal impact on the natural environment. Opportunities for sustainable urban drainage are also being considered and will be implemented wherever appropriate and feasible.

## **16. Equalities Implications**

The scheme has been designed to be fully accessible, with lighting to aid way-finding, new level paths following pedestrian desire lines. New/additional benches will have arm-rests to aid accessibility.

## **17. Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications arising from this scheme at present. Detailed scheme development is being managed through the Highways/Public Realm teams within the Council. Future maintenance of the scheme will likely be managed by the Parks Contract Team who currently maintain the site, tend to the gardens etc.. The terms and requirement of their existing maintenance agreement, and future requirements arising from this scheme are currently under review.

## **18. Human Rights Implications**

There are no specific human-rights implications arising from the proposals. Whilst the gardens' proposals are being developed to sensitively reflect the history of this site, no deep excavation works are currently proposed, and no human remains are intended to be removed as part of this project.

## **19. Energy Measure Implications**

A new power supply is proposed to be laid under the gardens to provide a future source of energy for planned events, such as the placement of a seasonal Christmas tree or lighting for special events. This would make the site accessible for any future planned events and will save additional works being required/ generators being brought in at these times in the future.

## **20. Conclusion**

- 20.1 Cabinet Member support is hereby being sought to enable delivery of a successful enhancement scheme within Christchurch Gardens, to facilitate positive social interaction, and maintain an oasis space within this busy part of Victoria.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact: Hilary Skinner, S106 and CIL Programme Manager, City Management and Communities [hskinner@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:hskinner@westminster.gov.uk) 020 7641 2531 or Toby Bowden, Programme and Contract Manager, City Management and Communities [tbowden@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:tbowden@westminster.gov.uk)**

## **APPENDICES:**

**Appendix A: Christchurch Gardens Location Map**

**Appendix B: Broadway and Christchurch Gardens Conservation Area Map**

**Appendix C: Concept Design for Christchurch Gardens**



## **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

### **Policy Framework / Site Details:**

- Westminster City Plan: Strategic Policies November 2016:  
<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/westminsters-city-plan-strategic-policies>
- Westminster City Council, City for All, (2018-19); <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/city-for-all>
- Westminster City Council Open Spaces Strategy, (February 2007):  
[http://www3.westminster.gov.uk/docstores/publications\\_store/Open\\_Space\\_Strategy\\_March\\_2007.pdf](http://www3.westminster.gov.uk/docstores/publications_store/Open_Space_Strategy_March_2007.pdf)
- Westminster City Council Parks Overview Christchurch Gardens:  
<http://myparks.westminster.gov.uk/parks/christchurch-gardens/> (includes location plan)
- Westminster City Council Rough Sleeping Strategy, (2017-2022):  
[https://www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/www.westminster.gov.uk/files/rough\\_sleeping\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/www.westminster.gov.uk/files/rough_sleeping_strategy.pdf)
- Westminster City Council Broadway and Christchurch Gardens Conservation Area Audit (2008);  
[http://transact.westminster.gov.uk/docstores/publications\\_store/Broadway%20and%20Christchurch%20Gardens%20CAA%20SPD.pdf](http://transact.westminster.gov.uk/docstores/publications_store/Broadway%20and%20Christchurch%20Gardens%20CAA%20SPD.pdf)
- Westminster City Council, Greener City Action Plan, (2015-2025);  
<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/greener-city-action-plan>

### **Victoria BID Studies:**

- Victoria Business Improvement District Public Realm Vision for Victoria, (2015):  
[https://issuu.com/victoriabid/docs/public\\_realm\\_vision\\_for\\_victoria\\_lr](https://issuu.com/victoriabid/docs/public_realm_vision_for_victoria_lr)
- A Green Infrastructure Audit of the Victoria Business Improvement District, (October 2010):  
[http://www.victoriabid.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Victoria-GI-Tech-Report\\_digital\\_Oct-2010.pdf](http://www.victoriabid.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Victoria-GI-Tech-Report_digital_Oct-2010.pdf)

### **Other / External Studies:**

- The Landscape Institute;  
[https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/PDF/Contribute/PublicHealthandLandscape\\_CreatingHealthyPlaces\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/PDF/Contribute/PublicHealthandLandscape_CreatingHealthyPlaces_FINAL.pdf)

### **Scheme Details:**

- Link to Christchurch Gardens webpage and exhibition boards, (June 2018):  
[www.christchurchgardens.london](http://www.christchurchgardens.london)
- Related Planning application for the proposed Christchurch Gardens works: 18/07319/COFUL  
(<http://idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk/online-applications/>)

### **Adjacent development schemes;**

- Ten Broadway: <http://www.tenbroadway.com/vision/>
- Buckingham Green: <http://buckinghamgreen.co.uk/#/development>
- Strutton Ground Street Market Improvements-  
<http://committees.westminster.gov.uk/documents/s26190/70035159-02-GA-01.pdf>

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Environment and City Management**

**Declaration of Interest**

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: **Councillor Tim Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Environment and City Management**

State nature of interest if any .....  
.....

*(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)*

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled  
Christchurch Gardens Landscape Enhancement Scheme and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed .....  
**Councillor Tim Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Environment and City Management**  
Date .....

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:  
.....  
.....

If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Director of Law, Chief Operating Officer and, if there are resources implications, the Director of Human Resources (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.