

COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY PANEL

18 January 2021

Meeting commenced: 2.00 p.m.
“ ended: 3:45 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Burch - in the Chair

Councillors Barnes, Fletcher, Karen Garrido, Humphreys, Mullen, Ryan, Turner, Joan Walsh and Wheeler.

OFFICERS: David Seager - Assistant Director, Operational and Commercial Services
Annie Surtees - Principal Officer, Green Space.
Mike Relph - Senior Democratic Services Adviser

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Walker and Warner.

2. MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 16th November 2020, were approved as a correct record.

Reference was made to the recent HMICFRS (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services) review of Greater Manchester Police's service to victims and the identification of deficiencies in the recording of certain crimes.

RESOLVED: THAT this issue be incorporated into the Panel's work programme.

3. TREES - PRESERVATION AND REPLACEMENT POLICIES

The Strategic Director for Place gave a presentation which provided an overview of Salford City Council's tree planting, preservation and replacement policies and supporting activities, covering the following key areas/themes:

- Tree policies
 - Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Document
 - Policy EN13 Protected Trees
 - Highway trees
 - Tree Management and Maintenance Policy
- Tree Audits
- Ash Die back (ADB)
 - Salford's ash tree stock
 - Developing a delivery plan
 - Estimated cost implications of removal and replacement

- Next steps
- Tree planting programmes
- Trees for Climate - five year programme

Members raised issues, commented on, and noted them, as follows:

(a) Were the respective size of tree species and their rooting systems etc taken into account when selecting those to be planted on highways, including ones which did not cause damage to footpaths? This was one of many criteria considered when determining suitable trees for planting on highways and in turn sometimes prevented a like for like replacement. Where mature trees were causing trip hazards on footpaths the first recourse was always to mitigate these so they could be retained, but in some circumstances due to their unsuitability to a highway location and the extent of damage they were causing, the only option was to fell and replace them

(b) Were there any plans for tree planting along the route of the A57 Liverpool Road, through Barton, Eccles and Winton? Existing sub surface cabling and other utility services prevented an extensive tree planting programme on this particular highway.

(c) Were there any ADB resistant species of ash trees? The Department of Environment, Food and Rural affairs (DEFRA) were currently doing research into this.

(d) Reference was made to the long-term future of ash trees located in Prince's Park, Irlam because of ADB. Because of the spread and high mortality rate of trees with ADB, it was extremely likely that at least some would need to be felled in due course, but this would be subject to appropriate communication and engagement with the local community before such action.

(e) What was the policy with fallen, or felled trees in woodland areas? Wherever possible these were left on site and allowed to decay naturally.

(f) How was the 2 for 1 replacement policy managed, particularly where the development concerned prevented new planting being accommodated on the same site. This was often problematic, but the aim was generally to ensure replacement trees were planted in existing green space sites as close as possible to the development sites concerned.

(g) In reference to (f), was there a danger that those areas of Salford which were currently witnessing large scale redevelopment, would have limited public greenspace? There was a commitment to ensure all areas of the City had adequate, or increased greenspace and was a key element of planning strategies.

(h) Thanks were expressed to the recent arboricultural activities in Victoria Park, Swinton and had been well received by local residents.

(i) Were fruit trees ever considered as an option when looking to replace? If the location and other circumstances were suitable, then fruit trees had been planted as replacements.

RESOLVED: THAT the presentation be noted and thanks extended to all those involved in the successful implementation Salford City Council's tree preservation, replacement and management policies.

4. LETTING THE GRASS GROW - MEADOWS SCHEME

The Strategic Director for Place gave a presentation which provided an overview of Salford City Council's commitment to preserving and increasing wild grassland areas in the City, the reasoning for this and growing public acceptance of the importance of adopting alternative non-traditional approaches to green space management, covering the following key areas/themes:

- Creating nature recovery networks in Salford
- The value of grasslands
- Dominant habitat types in Salford
 - urban and suburban
 - open grassland, mossland and farmland
 - woodland
- The value of domestic gardens

Members raised issues, commented on, and noted them, as follows:

(a) Rivers, streams and canals all acted as natural corridors for wildlife and areas of vegetation, was there an opportunity in some areas of the City to link previously unconnected areas adjacent to water courses to create larger areas of grassland and woodland? Such opportunities were always being sought and realised if possible. It was suggested the value of such natural corridors needed to be recognised and their creation and retention be incorporated into existing planning policies.

(b) In reference to (a), was there any plans to expand the existing programme and significantly increase the "wild" green space in Salford? While this remained the ultimate aim, it was something which was limited by resources and as a result what was both feasible and affordable.

(c) Were schools in Salford involved with the scheme and creating "wild" meadow areas and habitats on their sites? Schools had individual responsibility for the management of their sites and grounds, though the appropriate "green space" officers of the Place Directorate were always willing to provide them with advice and support in the creation of such areas, which in many schools had been taken advantage of.

(d) Was this less traditional approach to the management of certain areas of green space in the City potentially lead them to being perceived as "overgrown" and therefore not valued by the local community. This was recognised as an issue and there was a need to manage and maintain sites so these negative perceptions were formed. Effective community engagement and involvement was also a key factor too.

(e) What was the extent of the litter problem in such "wild" meadow and green space areas in general, particularly the harm it caused to wildlife? This remained a significant problem, though actions to mitigate it were undertaken, including publicity campaigns as to its damaging impact, all of which was continually under review

RESOLVED: THAT the presentation be noted and thanks extended to all those involved in the continuing creation and management of wild grassland areas in Salford.

5. WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

Members considered the Panel's Work Programme for 2020/21.

RESOLVED: (1) THAT the Panel's Work Programme for 2020/21, be noted.

(2) THAT HMICFRS (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services) review of Greater Manchester Police (*see Minute 2*) be provisionally placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the Panel on 15th February 2021.

6. COUNCILLOR JOHN MULLEN

Councillor John Mullen reported this would be the last meeting of the panel he would be attending before taking up the post of the Ceremonial Mayor for the City of Salford. He extended thanks to both his fellow members of the panel and officers for their support during the time he had been a member of the Panel. Members responded by thanking him for his contribution to the panel's activities and expressing best wishes for the future during his term of office as Ceremonial Mayor.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Panel would be held on Monday, 15th February 2021, commencing at 2.00 pm.