

## COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY PANEL

15 February 2021

Meeting commenced: 2.00 p.m.  
“ ended: 3:50 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Burch - in the Chair

Councillors Fletcher, Karen Garrido, Humphreys, McIntyre, Ryan, Turner, Walker and Joan Walsh.

Councillor Lancaster - Environment and Community Safety Lead  
Member

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 Karen Garrido and Warner.

### 2. MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021, were approved as a correct record.

### 3. ALLOTMENTS

The Strategic Director for Place gave a presentation entitled “Lockdown and Leeks” which provided an overview of Salford City Council’s provision and management of allotment space in the City, particularly during the lockdowns arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and an unassociated general increase in demand, which covered the following key areas/themes:

- Developing an allotment strategy
- Meeting growing demand
- Promoting self-management
- Salford Allotment Federation
- Creating new sites - Tatton Street, Ordsall
- Rediscovering and restoring derelict plots/redesigning and optimising existing sites:
  - Addison Road
  - Mossfield
  - Beechfield
  - Poorlots

- Community growing schemes
- Greenspace Strategy: Supplementary Planning Document
- Future plans and development

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

(a) Would the enlarged Poorlots site in Cadishead retain the existing right of way. This would be the case, with it effectively being two sites divided by the current public footpath.

(b) How many allotment plots would be available at the redesigned Poorlots site? Provisionally this would be 23, but the size and mixture of plots at the site were currently being reviewed, particularly the possible creation of more of a smaller size, for which there was a growing demand, in turn determining the final total number.

(c) Were the needs of people with disabilities catered for? This was an important factor which was considered when designing new sites and modernising older ones.

(d) What remedial measures had been taken in terms of the contaminated soil issues at the Beechfield site in Swinton. Section 106 funding had been secured to clean up the site and make it suitable for growing, however the cost of the complete removal of the contaminated soil was prohibitive, instead raised beds were to be installed, above and separate from the existing topography, so as to allow the growing of fruit and vegetables. Members sought more details as to the reasoning for this approach.

(e) How were allotment plots allocated? This was done by individual application to the City Council, from which a waiting list was compiled on a "first come first served" basis, with this periodically reviewed.

(f) Was there potential benefits in developing, or renewing, links with local allotment groups and Salford CVS (Council for Voluntary Services), so that the latter could assist the former in accessing funding sources and other support? This was something which could be investigated and promoted.

(g) What impact had Covid-19 pandemic and the arising lockdowns had on allotment use? This had been mixed, some people had been shielding, so were unable to visit and maintain their plots, an issue which had been managed accordingly. For others, lockdown had effectively provided them with more free time, so for them allotment use had increased. With other leisure activities unable during lockdown, the recreational, physical and mental health benefits allotments provided for many people, had to be acknowledged.

(h) What caused allotment sites to fall into disrepair? During the 1980s there had been a decline in the use of allotments, but in the intervening years that had demand had completely changed, to such an extent there was now a waiting list. It was against this background there was a need to bring derelict allotment sites back into use.

(i) In terms of new developments was there the potential to incorporate allotments sites within these? This remained an ambition and the ability to incorporate it into the City

Council's planning policy currently being investigated, but the relative size and nature of developments ultimately put limitations on this.

RESOLVED: THAT the presentation be noted and thanks extended to all those involved in the successful management and development Salford City Council's allotments.

#### 4. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AND STREETSCENE SERVICE

5. The Strategic Director for Place gave a presentation which provided an overview and update of the Grounds Maintenance and Streetscene Service and its activities, covering the following key areas/themes:

- Overview
  - Staffing numbers
  - Service coverage
  - Responsibilities
  - Street sweeping and fly tipped waste - collection rates
  - Littering and fly tipping offences - issuing of FPNs (Fixed Penalty Notices)
- City Mayor £500k additional investment into the service/activities in 2020
- New technology and future plans
  - Vehicle fleet replacement in 2021/22
  - CONFIRM software management - improved record retention and quicker customer and team interaction
  - Litter bin sensors
  - Improved use of CCTV for fly-tipping and littering offences
- Service successes and compliments

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

(a) What was the success rate in terms of successful prosecutions for fly-tipping offences. The legal process was complex and often made successful prosecutions time consuming and difficult, in addition there were issues around people being willing to give evidence in support of cases. That aside, lessons were being learned and improvements being made which in turn increased the level of successful prosecutions.

(b) How many of the FPNs issued had been paid, and what was the number still outstanding? It was indicated this information would be provided.

(c) What efforts and initiatives were there to encourage a behavioural change in people to deter them from littering and fly-tipping? This was a massive and complex issue into which research was being conducted at a national level the findings of which were monitored. Currently the City Council adopted a "carrot and stick" approach, but was constantly evaluating and adapting this.

(d) Where did the City Council's "Behavioural Change Officers" operate? There were four such officers, who worked closely with both community committees and area management teams, as well as in response to any specific requests for assistance

received. They were newly created posts, so it would be better to provide an update of their activities and achievements once they had become more established and active in their roles.

(e) Particularly in certain areas of Salford, there was a major problem of people vacating generally rented accommodation and dumping unwanted furniture outside, or nearby, how was this tackled? It was acknowledged this was an issue and currently enforcement was undertaken in tandem with housing partners. It was suggested this was something which required further consideration by the panel and incorporated into the Work Programme accordingly.

(f) Reference was made to damaged trees in Peel Park, Irwell Riverside and whether audits were undertaken. It was indicated there was regular inspection of trees and any found to be damaged were removed, or dealt with appropriately. Reporting of relevant issues by members of the public also allowed for prompt action to be taken if necessary.

RESOLVED: THAT the presentation be noted and thanks extended to all those involved with the valued Grounds Maintenance and Streetscene Services in Salford.

6. WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

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

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

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Panel would be held on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021, commencing at 2.00 pm.