

COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY PANEL

17 October 2022

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

PRESENT: Councillors Barnes, Brabiner, Fletcher, Mullen and
Gina Reynolds.

Councillor Barbara Bentham - Lead Member for Environment,
Neighbourhoods and Community Safety
Councillor David Lancaster - Executive Support, Environment,
Neighbourhoods and Community Safety*
Councillor Stephen Coen - Executive Support, Culture, Leisure and
Sports*

OFFICERS: *David Seager* - Asst Director, Operational and Community Services*
John Wooderson - Head of Service, Urban Renewal
Julie King - Lead Practitioner, Regulatory Services
Steve Dennison - Environmental Co-ordinator
Jo Regan - Environmental Programme Manager*
Mike Relph - Senior Democratic Services Officer

*Attended via Teams

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

RESOLVED: THAT, in the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair, Councillor
Gina Reynolds, be appointed as chair for the meeting.

(Councillor Gina Reynolds - in the Chair)

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Boshell, Dickman
Karen Garrido, Wain, Walters, Ward and Warner.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor John Mullen declared an interest in the item detailed in Minute 7.

4. MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

The minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 18 July 2022, were approved as a
correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Citywide School Meal Service (Previous Minute 5(a) - 18 July 2022)

In response to the progress on the provision of Kosher and Halal school meals, David Seager advised this matter was currently being considered by the Lead Member for Environment, Neighbourhoods and Community Safety, on which the Panel would be updated in due course.

(b) Work Programme 2022/23 (Previous Minute 7 - 18 July 2022)

RESOLVED: THAT, future editions of the Work Programme contain an appendix detailing recommendations of the Panel, their progress and subsequent outcomes.

(c) Salford Quays - Water Safety (Previous Minutes 4(h) and 7(2) - 18 July 2022)

David Seager reminded the Panel in July, the City Mayor had commissioned an independent third party review into water safety and unauthorised swimming at Salford Quays. It was anticipated that this review would present its findings early in 2023, at which time they would be submitted to the Panel for consideration.

6. PESTICIDES USE IN SALFORD

Jo Regan gave a presentation providing an overview of Salford City Council's use of pesticides in controlling weeds on streets and pavements and other public areas and land in its ownership within Salford, which focussed on the following key themes:

- Use of pesticides.
- Treatment options.
- Control options.
- Safety concerns.
- Chemical control option.
- Thermal.
- Mechanical/manual.
- Acetic acid (vinegar).
- Perceptions.
- Design options.

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

(a) **Clarification was sought on the use of acetic acid (vinegar) as means of weed control.** It was indicated this method had been trialled by Bristol City Council with some success, but there had been "odour" problems, which had resulted in more traditional approaches being reintroduced. The substance used was stronger than household table vinegar.

(b) With Giant Hogweed generally most prevalent along water courses, what precautions were taken to ensure there was no contamination of rivers or harm to fish stocks? There were strict guidelines and procedures in place when using pesticides in such locations, with the need to apply for a licence from the Environment Agency.

(c) Had there been instances where claims had been made against the City Council due to individuals being injured by Giant Hogweed located on land in their ownership? There had been no such cases.

(d) How did members of the public go about reporting weed infestations, including those of Giant Hogweed? This could be done in the same way as reporting any issue to the City Council and through either the website, or call centre.

(e) Did the chemical treatment of Giant Hogweed pose a danger to animals? When using pesticides, the safety of humans and animals, both wild and domestic, was paramount and appropriate measure taken to ensure this was the case. No issues of harm being caused to animals had been reported.

(f) The City Council's use of pesticides had been reduced by 50%, were there any plans to reduce this even further? While there were no planned targets this remained a long-term objective, but was dependent on the introduction of alternative effective control methods.

(g) Were the locations of Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed in Salford mapped? This information was mapped and could be provided if required, though it was only for land in the City Council's ownership.

RESOLVED: (1) THAT the presentation be noted, and thanks be extended to the Environmental Services Team in continuing to provide quality services and facilities to the residents of Salford.

(2) THAT Strategic Director for Place being asked to consider the trialling of acetic acid as method of weed control.

7. ALLOTMENTS IN SALFORD

(Councillor John Mullen declared an interest in this item in that, he was (i) a trustee of the Tindall Street Allotment Association and (ii) a member of Salford Allotment Federation (see Minute 3))

Jo Regan gave a presentation providing an overview of allotments in Salford, their use and management which focussed on the following key themes:

- Developing an allotment strategy
- Meeting growing demand
- Promoting self-management
- Salford allotment Federation
- Tatton Street, Ordsall - case study
- Rediscovering derelict plots

- Beechfield Allotments, Swinton Park - case study
- Site updates
- Community growing schemes
- Greenspace Strategy: Supplementary Planning Document
- Future plans and development

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

(a) Was the information listed on the Salford City Council website accurate in terms of the waiting lists for allotment plots? It was believed to be the case and there had been a recent “audit” of applications which confirmed this.

(b) Was there active monitoring of allotment use, particularly when they became vacant and untended? There was such monitoring, but it created challenges. Where there were instances of non-payment of fees these would be pursued in accordance with the City Council’s normal debt recovery practices, but these could cause delays in identifying individual allotment plots were no longer being used. The Covid-19 pandemic had compounded this problem. As an allotment owner, Councillor John Mullen, commented in his personal experience the system did operate effectively and there was an element of self-monitoring by owners. He said allotment owners while they respected neighbouring owners for personal reasons, such as illness, may be unable to take care of their plots, if in the long term this remained an issue, they would be drawn to the attention of the City Council.

(c) It was suggested there was not effective use of Community Payback as a means of clearing and renovating derelict allotment sites, so they could be brought back into use. The need for suitable on site toilet facilities for those participating in such schemes was highlighted and whether this was a statutory requirement for allotment sites? In accordance with the Greenspace Strategy, requirements for toilet facilities only applied to new sites, not existing ones. Councillor David Lancaster provided an update on the Community Payback scheme and the types of activities which could be supported by it.

(d) What was the anticipated the new allotment sites which were proposed would be operational? It was hoped this would be late summer or autumn of 2023.

(e) The creation of a “Salford Allotment App” providing general information and advice was suggested.

(f) It was suggested there was a need for a more proactive and community engaged focus in identifying new allotment sites, particularly engagement with the many allotment associations across Salford, with an overarching strategy for this to ensure a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach.

(g) Whether there could be better use of Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 106 money to create new allotments, upgrade existing ones and bring derelict sites back into use etc? It was recognised that funding was fundamental to many of the challenges faced and realising the City Council’s ambitions in terms of delivering allotments in Salford and all potential finance streams were identified and rigorously pursued.

RESOLVED: THAT the presentation be noted, and thanks be extended to the Environmental Services Team in continuing to provide quality services and facilities to the residents of Salford.

8. PEST CONTROL AND DOG WARDEN SERVICE

John Wooderson, Julie King and Steve Dennison gave a presentation providing an overview of pest control and dog warden services in Salford, which focussed on the following key themes:

- Background
- Legal requirements
- Trends
- Rats in Public Places (RIPP)
- United Utilities
- Improvements in 2022
- Next steps

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

(a) **The rise from £15,000 to £18,000 paid by United Utilities to Salford City Council for sewer baiting was noted and welcomed, but was there any potential for this to be increased further?** This payment was similar to that paid to other Greater Manchester local authorities for the same service and it was unlikely to be increased in the short term.

(b) **Whether the leaflet produced by the Service, advising Salford residents how to identify if they have a rodent problem, and how to avoid getting a rodent problem, could be placed in Gateway centres across the City?** This was something which could be investigated.

(c) **Had any reasons been identified for the rise in bedbug treatment cases and could details be provided of the locations of these?** No definite causes had been identified, though an increase in people purchasing second hand furniture could be one possibility, infestations in communal areas of multi occupancy premises was another. An analysis of cases on ward by ward basis could be provided.

(d) **Were pesticides used in the treatment of bedbug infestations?** Treatment by steaming was the preferred option, but the use of chemicals remained an option held in reserve if the former proved unsuccessful.

(e) **Other than baiting, what activities were undertaken in terms of treating, or deterring rats?** Providing general advice and education for householders about avoiding things, or activities, which could encourage rats, or taking simple practical preventative measures, was having a positive impact.

(f) **Was the Manchester Ship Canal seen as a major conduit for rats coming into the City?** There was no specific evidence to suggest this was the case, but in any event was outside the responsibility of Salford City Council, if identified as a problem this instead could be raised with the Port Health Authority.

(g) It was suggested there was a need to have a comprehensive and localised approach to gathering information on rat infestations/sightings, which would enable a quicker and more effective response. This was recognised and already links were being established between the City Council and relevant stakeholders in Salford, including housing providers, to achieve this.

(h) The decision to waive pest control fees for residents experiencing financial hardship was welcomed.

(i) Was dog fouling a significant problem? This appeared to be less of an issue than it once had been. It was suggested preventative and educational initiatives had played a part in this, but it was something the service remained alert to.

(j) Was there data available of pest treatment visits in Salford? This information could be provided on a ward by ward basis.

RESOLVED: THAT the presentation be noted, and thanks be extended to the Regulatory Services Team in continuing to provide quality services and facilities to the residents of Salford in terms of pest control and the dog warden service.

9. WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

Members considered the Panel's Work Programme for 2022/23.

RESOLVED: (1) THAT the Panel's Work Programme for 2022/23, be noted.

(2) THAT the findings of independent third party review into water safety and unauthorised swimming at Salford Quays as commissioned by the City Mayor be scheduled into the Panel's Work Programme for early 2023 (see also Minute 5(c)).

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Panel would be held on Monday, 21 November 2022, commencing at 2.00 pm.