

Allotment Improvement Programme

Environment and Sustainable Communities 23 November 2022

Members of the ESCOSC welcomed the opportunity to provide comment on the County Council's Allotment Policy at its meeting on 23 November prior to the policy being considered by Cabinet in the New Year.

Members were pleased to hear of the excellent progress made on the committee's review recommendations as they felt allotments was an area that had been neglected for a long time.

Members welcomed the initiatives being put forward in the report as this fitted with long term plans of the authority. Particular reference was made to the proposal for an allotment grants scheme to be introduced and members paid tribute to the expansion in staffing for allotments by the service which had obviously increased the service capacity to introduce those initiatives referenced within the report and presentation.

Members did raise concerns regarding those allotment sites that were not used for that purpose but were used as garage sites, as private gardens or used for business purposes and felt that if allotment plots/sites were being used for these purposes then as a minimum individuals should be paying the correct fees associated with the use of the land and not allotment fees. Members would like cabinet to strongly consider this element when making their decisions. To this end the plans for undertaking rent reviews were also supported by the Committee.

However, on the whole members did feel that the balance was right but that there was no place on allotments for large animals as the plots were not large enough to accommodate their wellbeing needs.

Members suggested that a strategy should be put in place regarding new allotment sites and to look for areas of land that could be utilised to accommodate new sites.

Members highlighted that if there were groups of residents that wanted allotments the local authority was obliged to find a suitable area of land to accommodate their request.