

Scoping Scrutiny Review Scoping Template

Review Title: Allotment Provision Scrutiny Review

Responsible Committee: Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 24th August 2020

1. Contact Information:	
Scrutiny Panel Chair: Cllr Tom Anderson Panel Members: Cllr Christina Muspratt Cllr Allan Brame Cllr Chris Cooke Cllr George Davies Cllr Karl Greaney Cllr Ian Lewis Cllr Irene Williams	Lead Officer: Colin Clayton Assistant Director, Community Services colinclayton@wirral.gov.uk Scrutiny Officer: Alexandra Davidson Senior Democratic Services Officer alexandradavidson@wirral.gov.uk
2. Review Aims:	
Wirral Council Priority: “Sustainable Environment” “Safe and Pleasant Communities” Key Issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members have identified issues relating to the current provision of Council allotments across the Borough; including the number of available plots, waiting lists and areas of particular pressure and shortfalls.• Wirral Council’s Joint Partnership Allotments Strategy and Improvement Plan runs from 2015 to 2020 and is due for review this year. Review Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To fully understand existing capacity within allotment provision across the Borough, and how it can be maximised and/or expanded at current sites to provide improved access for all Wirral residents.• To engage with allotment users and representatives of current allotment societies to recognise issues currently faced and how these might be addressed.	

- To contribute to a series of recommendations to ensure the effective management and provision of allotment sites across Wirral.

Scrutiny Outcomes:

- Any recommendation(s) made as a result of this review will be presented to the Environment, Climate Change and Highways Committee in late 2020.

2. Risks and Implications

Potential Risks/Implications:

- By not taking advantage of, or maximising, the Council's allotment provision there is a possibility that the social, health and wellbeing benefits of allotment gardening will not be realised – significantly impacting on Wirral residents.
- The Council is obliged to provide a "sufficient number of allotments, and shall let such allotments to persons resident in the borough, district or parish and desiring to take the same" as part of its responsibilities under the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908. This review will assist in confirming whether the Council is discharging its responsibilities effectively.
- In the wake of Wirral Council's commitment to Climate Change action and the Cool 2 Climate Change Strategy, not seeking improvement to allotment provision may have implications relating to local conservation and environmental sustainability.

3. Review Plan

Review Approach:

It is proposed that the scrutiny review will comprise of one virtual Task & Finish session. This meeting will include the following;

- An update paper to be presented to Members as well as a chance to review key documentation, policy and benchmarking data.
- Discussions with key departmental officers to discuss potential opportunities.
- Communication with allotment societies.
- Review conclusion and recommendation setting.

Review Duration:

1 Month

Scheduled Committee Report Date:

3rd December 2020

4. Sources of Evidence:

Key Witnesses:

- Assistant Director, Community Services
- Senior Manager, Parks Coast and Countryside
- Parks and Allotments Team
- Wirral Allotment Society
- Wirral Allotment Site Secretaries

Supporting Papers / Documentation / Wirral intelligence Service Website:

Supporting documents are likely to include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Wirral Council Allotments Partnership Strategy & Improvement Plan
- Previous Committee Reports
- Case study documents detailing policies at other local authorities.
- Relevant legislation.

Involvement of service users / public:

- The review will involve engagement and communication with Wirral Allotment Society.

5. Key Communications and timings:

Cabinet Member:

- The scope document will be shared with the relevant portfolio holder at the start of the review.

Press Office:

- The press office will be notified of commencement of scrutiny review, and the scope document will be sent on approval for information.