

# **ADULT AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

29 JULY 2021

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

### **Present:**

Councillor: Tim Fleming (In the Chair)

Councillors: Gordon Cranney, Angela Falconer, Sue Little, Amy Prince and Carl Richardson.

Also present: Frank Harrison and Evelyn Leck.

Officers: Jill Harrison, Director of Adult and Community Based Services  
Gemma Ptak, Assistant Director, Preventative and Community Based Services  
Sarah Scarr, Heritage and Countryside Manager  
Julian Heward, Communications and Marketing Team  
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

### **6. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Darren Price.

### **7. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Prince declared a personal interest as an allotment holder.

### **8. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2021**

Received.

### **7. Allotment Communication Strategy** (*Assistant Director, Preventative and Community Based Services*)

#### **Type of decision**

Non-key decision.

### **Purpose of report**

The purpose of the report was to provide details of the proposed Allotment Communication Strategy which will gather information to support the strategic Allotment Review.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The Assistant Director, Preventative and Community Based Services reported that the Committee on 12 March 2021 was informed of the need to develop a new Allotment Strategy to understand future priorities, identify service design and operations, and ensure access, inclusion and opportunity for all residents who are interested in being part of the allotment community. Communication with tenants would be a critical part of the ongoing process.

The overall aim of the proposed Allotment Strategy was to focus on the needs of the current user group and the wider community that the allotments serve. It will look to evolve service operations, encourage a wider demographic to access allotments within the Borough and to make the service more customer focused. It is hoped that by doing this, the service will be more inclusive and accessible, and create stronger links into communities.

The Communication Strategy has been developed to inform the process but also to enable effective two way communication with tenants, partners, associations and the wider community on a sustained basis. A copy of the strategy communication plan is provided as an appendix to the report.

Methods of consultation would include;

- Providing hard and electronic copies of questionnaires.
- Holding drop in sessions on allotment sites and at central locations to capture comments that don't fit within the pro-forma of a questionnaire.
- Direct approaches to voluntary and community groups, including Allotment Associations.

A social media campaign and series of press releases will inform people of the opportunity to take part in the discussions, along with information about events on site notice boards and via the e-newsletter. Individuals will be incentivised to take part with the offer of being entered into a prize draw.

The Assistant Director indicated that it was proposed that the consultation will take place from mid-August to the end of September with initial results shared in November. This consultation will feed into the review of the Allotment Service and be the starting point for the development of the Allotment Strategy.

Members indicated their support for the proposed strategy and welcomed the inclusive nature of the proposed consultation. A Member indicated that some sites had more than one association and was concerned that some could be missed. The Assistant Director assured Members that the aim of

the consultation would be to seek views from all allotment holders. Wherever associations existed the team would work with them. A Member also wished to see allotment holders involved in the decision making processes after the consultation. The Assistant Director stated that the strategy would be a two-way communication process with an aim of positive engagement. When that consultation had been carried out then officers would be able to look at the feedback and move on to develop the strategy and the governance arrangements.

A Member raised a question around the Briarfields Allotment Site and a proposed new road in the area. The Assistant Director stated that that scheme was not one in the control of this committee or department and she was not aware of anything related to the scheme that could be shared at this time.

There was some concern expressed by a Member of the public that the consultation should be based on two large open public events. The Assistant Director stated that such events would be significantly less inclusive than what was being proposed. The member of the public also highlighted that many allotment holders wouldn't have access to online consultation. The Assistant Director stated that the online consultation was only part of the proposed package of methods that were being used and all tenants would be directly sent a paper copy of the consultation document.

A recorded vote of the recommendations set out in the report was proposed by Councillor Little and seconded by Councillor Prince.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15 a recorded vote was taken as follows:

Those for: Councillors Cranney, Falconer, Fleming, Little, Prince and Richardson.

Those against: none.

Those abstaining: none.

The following decision was, therefore, approved unanimously.

### **Decision**

That the Allotment Communication Strategy, as submitted, be approved.

## **8. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent**

A Member requested that the agenda for the next meeting of the Committee include a Covid-19 update setting out the current situation with a specific focus on the elderly and vulnerable whose services were managed by this Committee. The Director of Adult and Community Based Services indicated that the Health and Wellbeing Board had recently had a

presentation from the Director of Public Health on the current situation across Hartlepool which Members could refer to for information. The Director stated that she would submit a report to the next meeting which had, as requested, a focus on the services provided by the department.

The meeting concluded at 10.30 am.

**H MARTIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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