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Sefton Public Engagement and Consultation Panel

Date: Friday 11th March 2022

Title: Feedback and Evaluation report – Allotment Consultation

Report of: Martin Sarbutts, Facilities Development and Management Officer
x2932

1. **Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To provide feedback on the consultation that occurred for Allotments in summer 2021
- 1.2 The Panel have agreed to appraise the Feedback and Evaluation Reports in accordance with the standards of public engagement and consultation and will consider:-
 - How the activity was carried out;
 - the opinions of the people taking part on how they found the process;
 - The number of people who took part and the costs of the different methods of getting them involved;
 - How successful different methods were at getting the views of people who are not normally heard, for example, children, young people and people with disabilities;
 - How the results will be fed back to the public; and
 - How will the results influence policies and service plans.

2. **The Consultation Process**

- 2.1 Consultation was carried out via a questionnaire (Appendix 1) to plot holders (tenants), those on the waiting lists as well as local residents.

The consultation window was open for 8 weeks during June to August 2021 during which 815 questionnaires were completed.

3. **Summary of the Consultation Results**

- 3.1 From the questionnaire it is fair to say that the response was large with only 6% not on either the waiting list or currently on a plot, giving a strong representation of views.

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- 3.2 64% of respondents felt that the fees charged for an allotment were reasonable which given that Sefton are some of the highest in the Northwest implying that tenants are unconcerned with the current rental level
- 3.3 If rental was to be increased, the survey indicated they would like improved water and investment on site rather than more Green Sefton Staff time
- 3.4 There was strong support for having concession reductions on site but don't wish for their fees to increase to cover this.
- 3.5 The survey then asks questions about the physical infrastructure on our allotment sites. In summary the survey showed:
- There was a general dissatisfaction with the condition of pathways / communal areas.
 - Tenants were broadly happy with the water supply provided to sites (NOTE: one site does not have a supply).
 - Where provided, respondents were happy with the toilets on site, however most sites have no toilet provision.
 - Communal buildings were seen positively by the respondents.
 - There was strong satisfaction with the growing conditions overall but analysis shows dissatisfaction comes from waterlogged sites.
 - We found that many respondents were unhappy with vacant plots / those in an unkempt state.
 - There were mixed responses to waste disposal provision, but generally more were dissatisfied than satisfied. This requires further analysis as we have not regularly provided skips.
 - Vandalism was not a major concern and we had a majority 'neutral' response on this matter.
 - Tenants were often dissatisfied with boundaries.
 - In terms of site security, respondents were strongly satisfied overall.
 - Respondents were more satisfied than dissatisfied with the availability of site information. The results reflect whether the site in question had a noticeboard and association meetings or not.
 - Fly tipping was not identified as a serious concern.
 - Respondents were largely satisfied with vehicle access.
 - Respondents indicated strong satisfaction with feeling safe / personal safety.
- 3.6 Most tenants travel by car and spend up to 20hrs a week at their plot in the summer and up to 10hrs in the winter. Tenants clearly make use of skips but limit use of communal areas. Tenants are generally 'green' in their approach and use environmentally friendly materials on site and utilise their own compost.
- 3.7 Despite a ban on glass on allotments, there is still a large issue with two thirds of tenants reporting glass on site. Significant time and resource will

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be required to remove this from site to see them eventually become glass free.

- 3.8 Tenants were asked about their willingness to get involved in the wider activities on site but there was little support for an Allotment Forum but there is support for assisting the Council in maintaining communal areas on site.
- 3.9 Overall, there was a minority support for how Sefton manages and inspects plots and at the same time there was strong support for seeking accreditation for sites as some form of Quality Award.
- 3.10 Tenants also ranked what their priorities for improvement would be and the top three were: toilets; drainage; better access.
- 3.11 It is acknowledged that waiting lists are long, however the majority on those lists would rather wait longer than share a plot with any other tenant on site.

4. **Feedback**

- 4.1 The collated results have been summarised and will be published (see appendix 2) and sent to all those with an allotment and on the waiting list. Copies will be sent to allotment associations and the report will be shared on-line and through social media platforms to get the information out to the wider public.
- 4.2 The results from this consultation are being used to drive a new Allotment Strategy for the borough which will shape the way allotments are managed in future years.

5. **Future engagement**

- 5.1 Any future engagement will be through the same channels as used in this consultation process. Social media, association contacts and through the newsletter on site will ensure a good coverage for any future engagements.

6. **Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Public Engagement and Consultation Panel are recommended to
 - a) Note the contents of the report and feedback and evaluation forms
 - b) Request that lead officers provide the Public Engagement and Consultation Team with the results and reports so that they can be uploaded onto e-Consult.

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- c) Request that lead officer's report to a future Panel meeting to update the panel as to any additional changes that have occurred as a result of the consultation feedback.