

Adoption of the Green Spaces strategy by Council Executive on Wednesday 7 March 2007.

Spoken representation from Bath and N E Somerset Allotments Association

We would like to lend our overall support to the proposed adoption of this Strategy, which will ensure that this authority is compliant with PPG17.

There is one point we wish here to address.

Your officers' response to one of the issues we raised in the consultation process was that:

"It is recognised that there is a statutory duty for the relevant Councils to meet demand for allotments in their area. The proposed 3 sq m per person standard exceeds current known demand."

However:

Firstly, the true level of demand has been obscured by the recent halving of plot size for new tenants.

Secondly, the extent of *true demand* has not been adequately assessed by the Strategy.

The waiting list evidence demonstrates active demand but we can offer several strands that indicate the extent of latent demand too:

- a) The regeneration of Moorfields Road site brought 8 new tenants on Opening Day 2003, along with 4 more soon after. None of these were on the existing waiting list. All 26 plots were filled by June 2006. This was in an area of Bath where it was widely believed that supply and demand were already in balance. All the original tenants were from the local neighbourhood and all are still active on the site.
- b) Our survey in The Avenues brought an indication that as many as one in 4 households were interested in having an allotment, or already did have one.
- c) Our survey in Twerton suggests about one in 8 households are interested in having an allotment, in two streets where we found not one person who currently rented a plot.

Assuming 2.5 persons per household and a standard plot size of 300 sq m: the proposed provision standard would be one plot per 40 households. If the half size plot became standard, it would be one plot per 20 households.

We thus calculate from the above evidence that a standard of 3 sq m per person is likely to be too low by a factor of at least $(20 \div 8)$ or 2.5.

This evidence directly challenges your officers' statement that the proposed 3 sq m per person standard exceeds current known demand. We therefore ask you to adjust the proposed standard for allotment provision to 7.5 sq m per person.

Written representation

Our Evidence:

The Avenues in Oldfield Park

One of our Members surveyed residents of First and Second Avenue, Oldfield Lane and Durley Park in December 2006.

37 households were approached. Of these, 11 expressed interest in an allotment; 3 already had one. This sample may be biased as not every door was called on.

One of our members surveyed Third Avenue on 14 Jan 2007.

Every door was called upon and out of 92 households there were 40 responses.

16 were student houses

14 expressed no interest

5 already have an allotment (+ 1 who is gardening at a student house)

4 would like an allotment. None of these were on a waiting list.

Overall, the indicative level of interest in allotment gardening here is about 1 in 4 households.

Twerton: in the part of town currently furthest from any allotment site.

Two of our members surveyed Sheridan Road and Long Valley Road area, Twerton, on Sunday 4 Feb 2007, which was sunny; and Sunday 18 Feb 2007, which was cloudy and dry; in each case from about noon to about 2.15pm.

Each door was knocked on. Of 227 potential households, we had 124 respondents.

None of these respondents currently has an allotment.

Fourteen did in the past (11 Sheridan Road, 3 Long Valley Road), including at Lansdown, Sandpits, Pennyquick x 3, Royal Crescent, Odd Down, Bay Tree Road, Weston, Marlborough Lane, Larkhall and Elmshirst. This included 'helping out father / grandfather many years ago'.

21 out of 107 respondents to the specific question knew that the council is committed to providing an allotment for anyone who wants one. (1 in 4)

103 are not currently interested in having an allotment; 16 expressed interest; with 3 possibles additionally.

These comprised 8 out of 78 (ie 1 in 10) in Sheridan Road (more established houses with some memories of the old Pennyquick allotments); and 8 out of 35 in the newer houses of Long Valley Road, Boyces Close and Tanners Walk (which were built on the old Pennyquick

site). This suggests a stronger demand from newer households. An additional factor mentioned by some Sheridan Road residents was that they already had quite a large garden. Gardens in Sheridan Road are variable in size; some residents live in flats.

Their acceptable travel distance answers included: 3 miles; 5-10 minutes; 10 minutes x 5; half a mile; 20 minutes; 30 minutes; 'round here' x 2. (We didn't get an answer from all 16).

16 people interested out of 124 is about 1 in 8 households. On the same ratio, the 103 households who were out or not answering could include an additional 13. However, for several reasons we think it would be fewer. Some of the 103 could be currently empty houses; some people may be in hospital or care or may be too unwell to come to the door; and some may well have been out on their allotment when we called.

So, maybe we could add another 8, making a total of 24.

It is difficult to know how many of these would actually take up an offer of a plot. Some wouldn't, but on the other hand we found at Moorfields that one or two people jumped at the chance spontaneously, seeing a ready-to-go plot that could be rented that very day, with even some ready-to-go plants alongside. One of these was out shopping and just followed the arrows, intrigued. All of these "21 June 2003" tenants are still going strong, and presumably socially supportive.

If just half followed through their intention then a site of a dozen plots needs to be provided for these two roads, somewhere nearby.

We also discovered a long stretch of wire fencing serving no purpose whatever, as it was now simply dividing one public area from another public area. This could be recycled to form a functional boundary fence of a new site.

Helen Woodley 4 March 2007.