

**David Slater Executive Director of Environment & Regeneration**

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**Our Reference: Nov Council**

**City Council**



**Your Reference:**

This matter is being dealt with by Susan Stokel-Walker, phone 277 3603

8<sup>th</sup> February 2010

Mr Peter Whewell

**Dear Mr Whewell Re: November Council Petition: Wingrove**

**Ward Allotment**

Thank you for your letter of 13 October and the petition that was presented to Council on 4 November, I am now in a position to respond to you formally. I hope you will be aware of our commitment to allotment gardening in Newcastle and our desire to work closely with the Allotment Working Group.

Following Councillor Pauline Alien's meeting with the larger Working Group and the meeting with the smaller subgroup which I attended, I am happy to report back to you and your fellow gardeners in Wingrove Ward that:

- Waiting lists on all sites have been updated; these show in excess of 700 people currently waiting for a plot across the city
- The Allotment Working Group has commissioned a piece of research into the actual demand for allotments across the city - looking at factors beyond the site waiting lists. Total Research will be undertaking the survey in late February; the findings will be used to inform the Allotment Strategy.
- A search through Council owned land will be undertaken to determine if any is surplus and available for use; is suitable for allotment gardening in terms of size, access and services; and if the location is in an area of high demand (as indicated by waiting lists and demographics).
- The sites identified will be examined to determine what it would cost to provide the appropriate resources needed on the site in terms of water, fencing, pathways, etc.
- The total cost will be collated and a report made to City Council with a view to seeking some additional funding towards the work necessary. It is my understanding that the Allotment Working Group are keen to work with the council to achieve this and is prepared to lever in additional funds that the council might be unable to obtain.
- I am also confident that elected members in individual wards would be keen to be involved in helping to identify future areas for allotment provision and to help to source funding for improvement works.
- The Allotment Working Group and officers will be updating the draft Allotment Strategy using information gained from surveys and land searches as well as relevant examples of good practice obtained from other Core Cities (Nottingham; Sheffield; Liverpool; Leeds; Bristol; Manchester and Birmingham). It is hoped to

have the strategy ready to present to Executive in April or May for adoption as policy.

Newcastle is very fortunate to have the Allotment Working Group (AWG) to speak for allotment gardeners. Progress reports will be made regularly to the AWG to allow representatives to report back to the gardeners in their areas.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Slater', written in a cursive style.

David Slater Executive Director of Environment & Regeneration

Cc Cllr Pauline Allen

Lynn Camsell

Susan Stokel-Walker