



Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru Countryside Council for Wales

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN: MORGAN PARRY • PRIF WEITHREDWR/CHIEF EXECUTIVE: ROGER THOMAS

Countryside Council for Wales
Maes y Ffynnon
Penrhosgarnedd
Bangor
Gwynedd
LL57 2DW
23rd March 2010

Mr. Mike German AM, Chair
Sustainability Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff bay
CF99 1NA

Dear Mr. German

Sustainability Committee Inquiry into Allotment Provision in Wales

The Countryside Council for Wales has a statutory remit in relation to outdoor access and recreation, which is important for regeneration, health and well being, environmental quality, and quality of life - all key components of sustainable development. CCW works with local planning authorities on a range of access and recreation issues, such as Rights of Way Improvement Plans, access routes such as national trails, green-space assessments¹, and the Coastal Access Programme. CCW's green space toolkit provides a mechanism to provide evidence for the need for natural green spaces in urban areas. Whilst allotments do not fall neatly into the remit of CCW, they have been helpful in progressing our duties.

CCW has grant aided the BTCV Green Gym and Growing Greener programmes both of which have used allotments to help rehabilitate people with health problems alongside more traditional countryside management activities. In this case allotments have served as tree nurseries, wildflower nurseries and as a stepping-stone for participants to develop their skills before venturing on to environmental improvement projects.

Allotments' biodiversity conservation value is likely to be similar to that of a park but more than the equivalent sized agricultural field. They will support populations of common species that migrate around the uncultivated plots and the uncultivated margins. If there are lots of uncultivated areas they could provide foraging areas for "herptiles", but individual sites would need to be surveyed properly to give an indication of their importance in this respect.

For many allotment holders their plots will be a source of positive contact with nature. Provision of more allotments might therefore bring more people into contact with nature and help them to understand how life responds to the changing seasons etc. They may also encourage people to use various pesticides to kill weeds, aphids, whitefly, slugs and other

¹ Information on CCW's Green-space Toolkit can be found at: <http://www.ccw.gov.uk/about-ccw/newsroom/press-releases/green-space-toolkit.aspx>

pests. In this respect allotments are in a similar position to private gardens, although there are numerous campaigns and programmes aimed at encouraging garden management in ways which benefit wildlife and these could be applied equally to allotments.

There are wider sustainability issues to consider when assessing the impact of allotments. At present, whilst local authorities have a duty to provide allotments if petitioned, they are under no obligation to site them anywhere near where they are needed. In urban areas allotments are un-built spaces which play a role in providing ecosystem services, including ameliorating the effect of urban heat islands and keeping unsealed surfaces to aid urban rainwater management.

Yours sincerely

Keith Davies
Head of Policy, Countryside Council for Wales



Gofalu am natur Cymru - ar y tir ac yn y môr • Caring for our natural heritage - on land and in the sea

Prif Swyddfa/Headquarters
MAES-Y-FFYNNON, PENRHOSGARNEDD, BANGOR LL57 2DW; FFÔN/TEL: 01248 385500; FFACS/FAX: 01248 355782

<http://www.ccw.gov.uk>