

Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Allotments

Agenda and Reports

For consideration on

**Wednesday, 11th August
2010**

In Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Chorley

At 6.00 pm



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6 August 2010

Dear Colleague

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - ALLOTMENTS -
WEDNESDAY, 11TH AUGUST 2010**

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Allotments to be held in Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Chorley on Wednesday, 11th August 2010 commencing at 6.00 pm.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for absence**

2. **Declarations of Any Interests**

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda. If the interest arises **only** as result of your membership of another public body or one to which you have been appointed by the Council then you only need to declare it if you intend to speak.

If the personal interest is a prejudicial interest, you must withdraw from the meeting. Normally you should leave the room before the business starts to be discussed. You do, however, have the same right to speak as a member of the public and may remain in the room to enable you to exercise that right and then leave immediately. In either case you must not seek to improperly influence a decision on the matter.

3. **Minutes of the last meeting (Pages 1 - 2)**

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Allotments meeting held on 24 June 2010 (enclosed)

4. **Scoping of the Allotments Task Group (Pages 3 - 4)**

To agree the attached draft scoping document, compiled following the last meeting of the Task Group

5. **Outcome of the Allotments Site Visit**

To discuss the outcomes of the Allotments Site Visit held on 16 July 2010.

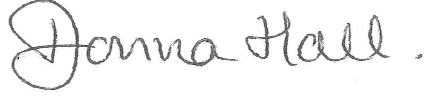
6. **Information for consideration**

The Group will consider the following documentation (to be circulated at the meeting)

- Copy of tenancy arrangements
- Overview of inspection procedures
- Charging details

7. **Any other item(s) that the Chair decides is/are urgent**

Yours sincerely



Donna Hall
Chief Executive

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Distribution

1. Agenda and reports to all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Allotments (Julia Berry (Chair) and Anthony Gee, Marie Gray, Alison Hansford, Harold Heaton and June Molyneaux for attendance.
2. Agenda and reports to Martin Walls (Head of Streetscene) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer) for attendance.
3. Agenda and reports to Jamie Carson (Director of People and Places), Alan Bothamley (Streetscene Co-ordinator (Gronds Maintenance)) and Andy Brown (Greenspace Co-ordinator) for attendance.

This information can be made available to you in larger print or on audio tape, or translated into your own language. Please telephone 01257 515118 to access this service.

આ માહિતીનો અનુવાદ આપની પોતાની ભાષામાં કરી શકાય છે. આ સેવા સરળતાથી મેળવવા માટે કૃપા કરી, આ નંબર પર ફોન કરો: 01257 515822

ان معلومات کا ترجمہ آپ کی اپنی زبان میں بھی کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ یہ خدمت استعمال کرنے کیلئے براہ مہربانی اس نمبر پر ٹیلیفون

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کیجئے:

Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Allotments

Thursday, 24 June 2010

Present: Councillor Julia Berry (Chair) and Marie Gray, Alison Hansford, Harold Heaton and June Molyneaux

Also in attendance: Martin Walls (Head of Streetscene) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

07.CCS.01 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Members to the first meeting of the Allotments Scrutiny Task Group. The aim of the first meeting was to receive an overview of Chorley's allotment provision and to determine the scope and focus of the scrutiny review.

07.CCS.02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Anthony Gee.

07.CCS.03 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

07.CCS.04 MEMBER OF THE PUBLICS REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY

The Group received for information the two requests that had come from Members of the Public for a review of Allotments in Chorley.

RESOLVED – That the requests be noted.

07.CCS.05 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Members considered a report on Allotments and Community Growing that had been submitted to the Equality Forum. The report contained information about current provision, suitable sites for increased allocation, baseline data and the results of a recent survey that was sent out to all existing allotment holders and those people on the waiting list.

Martin Walls, Head of Streetscene also provided the Group with an overview of Allotments in Chorley and updated Members on the £40,000 budget that had been allocated for the 2010/11 financial year.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

07.CCS.06 DRAFTING OF THE SCOPING DOCUMENT

The Task Group considered points to be included within the Scoping document:
The following objectives were discussed:

To investigate, consider and evaluate:

1. Assessment of current provision and demand for allotments within Chorley – Standardisation of existing and future plots and fairness of allocation.

2. Examination of existing tenancy agreements – Improved management controls to be out into place, better enforcement procedures to be implemented.
3. Encourage community growing/partnership working across the borough – training/educating residents on the waiting list to grow on alternative sites/shared facilities or at home.

Other points included, improved communications/publicity of Allotments and Community Growing across the Borough, site access, hard to reach groups and provision for children and young people.

RESOLVED – That the information be compiled into a draft scoping document in consultation with the Chair for consideration at the next meeting of the Group.

07.CCS.07 INFORMATION/WITNESSES

Members requested the following information and witnesses for a future meeting of the Group:

- Members of the public who requested a review of allotments
- Work being done on behalf of the Council to promote a healthy lifestyle in connection with community growing
- Could current allotment land meet demand if plots were standardised and equally allocated?
- Work being done in schools/partnership working
- Comparative information from another authority
- Equality and diversity issues

RESOLVED – That the requested information/witnesses be noted.

07.CCS.08 SITE VISIT

It was decided to hold a site visit prior to the review so that the Group could look at the current provision that was available by the Council and private landlords in the Borough and comparative neighbouring authorities.

Arrangements were to be made for this activity to take place on 16 July 2010 and the Group would visit:

- Crosse Hall Allotment Site, Crosse Hall Lane, Chorley (Chorley Council site)
- Brown House Lane, Wheelton (Privately owned site)
- Plank Lane Allotment Site, Plank Lane, Leigh (Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council site)

RESOLVED – That Members make a note of the date in their diaries.

07.CCS.09 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Group will take place on Wednesday 11 August 2010 at 6.00pm in Committee Room 2, Town Hall.

RESOLVED – That the date of the next meeting be noted.

Chair

DRAFT**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY PROJECT OUTLINE**

Review Topic: Allotments

Objectives:

1. To assess current provision and demand for allotments within Chorley.
2. To examine the content of the tenancy agreements and rules governing occupation.
3. To assess the current monitoring and inspection procedures of allotment sites.
4. To review the current charging mechanism against the cost of administration.
5. Encourage community growing/partnership working across the borough

Desired Outcomes:

To make recommendations which will:

1. Increase the provision of allotments through standardisation of existing and future plots and fairness of allocation.
2. Improve management controls to enforce higher standards on allotment plots, which in turn improves their overall appearance.
3. Ensure charges for allotments are fair and reflective of other authorities and where possible cover the management costs.
4. Introduce training and educating of residents on the waiting list to encourage growing on alternative sites/shared facilities or at home.

Terms of Reference:

1. To make recommendations on an effective management procedure for the provision and maintenance of Allotments to include contractual and enforcement policy.
2. To look at allocation criteria to ensure a fair system of provision.
3. To promote alternative ways of growing across the borough by encouraging better use of community land and residents gardens to ease demand.
4. To improve communications/publicity of Allotments and Community Growing across the Borough.

Equality and diversity implications:

Consider:

- Site access.
- Hard to reach groups
- Waiting List reflective of need
- Provision for children/young people

Risks:

That there will be an expectation beyond the capacity to deliver.

The introduction of more robust enforcement and management procedure may lead to some negative publicity.

Venue(s):

Town Hall, Chorley
Organised site visits

Timescale:

Start: June 2010

Finish:

Information Requirements and Sources:

Documents/evidence: (what/why?)

Allotments and Community Growing Report – Background information
 Existing Allotment Tenancy and procedures that are currently in place
 Current waiting list/allocation

Witnesses: (who, why?)

Mr Bill Taylor and Ms Eleanor Smith – Members of the public who requested review
 Chorley Council Planning Officers – permission for planning
 PCT Officer working for the Council 2 days a week to talk about the work that she is doing in the community to promote a healthy lifestyle.
 Allotment holder who is wheelchair user – access issues.

Consultation/Research: (what, why, who?)

Information about Allotments from a comparable District Authority. Eg. West Lancashire District Council
 Head of Leisure and Neighbourhoods (Liz Morey) – Neighbourhood Working Executive Member for People? (Councillor John Walker)
 Eileen Bee (Disability Forum Co-ordinator) – Equality and Diversity issues
 Lancashire County Council (Stephen Mercer) – work being done in schools/partnership working
 Could current allotment land meet demand if plots were standardised and equally allocated?

Site Visits: (where, why, when?)

Private allotment site – Brown House Lane, Wheelton
 Council allotment site – Crosse Hall Lane, Chorley
 Plank Lane Allotment Site, Plank Lane, Leigh, Wigan

Friday 16 July 2010

Officer Support:

Lead Officer: Martin Walls – Head of Streetscene

Democrative & Member Services Officer: Dianne Scambler

Likely Budget Requirements:

<u>Purpose</u>	<u>£</u>
Total	_____

Target Body¹ for Findings/Recommendations

(Eg Executive Cabinet, Council, partner)

¹ All project outcomes require the approval of Overview and Scrutiny Committee before progressing

