

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.
6. To consider the potential for forming Committees and User Groups within individual allotment sites to give tenants greater control and allow them to cover some of the functions currently carried out by Officers.

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.
5. Encourage future self management of the Allotments.

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: End of October/early November 2010

Information Requirements and Sources:**Documents/evidence:**

Allotments and Community Growing Report – Background information
Allotment Conditions of Tenancy and procedures that are currently in place
Current waiting list/allocation
Inspections procedure
Pricing details and policy

Witnesses:

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.
Eileen Bee (Disability Forum Co-ordinator) – Equality and Diversity issues

Consultation/Research:

Information about Allotments from a comparable District Authority. Eg. West Lancashire District Council
Could current allotment land meet demand if plots were standardised and equally allocated?

Site Visits:Friday 16 July 2010

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

Officer Support:

Lead Officer: Martin Walls – Head of Streetscene
With support from Andrew Brown – Greenspace Co-ordinator and Alan Bothamley – Streetscene Co-ordinator (Grounds Maintenance)
Democratic & 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