

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of People & Places	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	3 October 2011

## UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIONS AGREED FOLLOWING THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP'S INQUIRY INTO ALLOTMENTS

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To provide an update on implementation of the actions agreed following the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group's inquiry into allotments.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. To note the update provided in section 10 of the report.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. The report provides a six monthly update on the actions taken to date following the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group's inquiry into allotments.

### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

5. To ensure that progress on the actions agreed is monitored.

### ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

6. None.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

7. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Strong Family Support	√	Education and Jobs	
Being Healthy	√	Pride in Quality Homes and Clean Neighbourhoods	√
Safe Respectful Communities	√	Quality Community Services and Spaces	√
Vibrant Local Economy		Thriving Town Centre, Local Attractions and Villages	√
A Council that is a consistently Top Performing Organisation and Delivers Excellent Value for Money			

## BACKGROUND

8. An Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task Group undertook an inquiry into allotments and produced a report with recommendations in November 2010.
9. On 17<sup>th</sup> February 2011, the Executive Cabinet's agreed a response and actions for each of the recommendations in the report.

## UPDATE

10. The table below provides an update on the progress made for each of the actions agreed.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation	Executive Response	Update
<u>Provision and demand for allotments</u>		
That the applicants apply annually to the Council for an allotment,	Agreed. This will be introduced at the next point of correspondence.	Recommendation now in place
That vacant plots from within existing allotment provision be offered to applicants who have been on the waiting list the longest.	Agreed. Current letting criteria to change on 1 April to reflect this recommendation.	Recommendation now in place
That applicants on the general 'any site' waiting list only be allowed refusal of one plot, then placed on to the relevant Neighbourhood Area list.	Agreed. Current letting criteria to change on 1 April to reflect this recommendation. Please note the next response and the use of distance from a site rather than neighbourhood area.	Recommendation now in place.
That any new sites be allocated by a 50/50 split between the Neighbourhood Area applicants and the general 'any site' applicants to support Neighbourhood Working.	Agreed in part. The 50/50 split between long standing names on waiting list and local requirements is fair. Rather than use the neighbourhood area as a locality indicator, we plan to use their distance from a Council allotment site.	Recommendation now in place. New plots are now let using this methodology.
That Chorley Allotments Society be consulted on the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.	Agreed. They will be consulted at all key stages of the site allocation process.	Included as part of site allocations (LDF) process
That the Council considers the provision for allotments when negotiating Section 106 monies.	This will be considered on a case by case basis.	To be considered as part of future Section 106 allocations.
That the Head of Planning Services, be requested to develop a set of	Agreed.	To be completed in

guidelines and good practice for use by private allotment owners.		the next 6 months.
That the Chorley Allotments Society working in partnership with the Council be encouraged to facilitate an exchange scheme across all the sites.	This is felt to be good practice and should support future provision.	Being incorporated into the role an Allotment Advisory Group.
<u>Tenancy Agreement and monitoring and inspection procedures</u>		
That the Tenancy agreement be reviewed to include - appropriate rules and conditions to promote higher standards of maintenance - Definitive guidance on non compliance issues, to protect the Council's position.	Agreed.	To be completed in the next 6 months.
That the Council provide suitable perimeter fencing on all its new sites that will be adequately maintained.	Agreed.	Recommendation now in place.
That the Council be responsible for the delineation of the actual plot, but that the allotment holder be then responsible for defining their boundaries, using safe and suitable materials.	Agreed. New sites will be delivered in this manner.	Recommendation now in place.
That the subject to consent, the allotment holder be responsible for erecting structures on the plot for the purposes of storage and cultivation using safe and suitable materials within a total floor space (to be determined).	Agreed. New sites will be delivered in this manner.	Recommendation now in place. To be reflected in revised tenancy agreements
That the new Tenancy Agreement be implemented on all new sites and when an existing allotment is occupied by a new holder.	Current letting criteria to change on 1 April to reflect this.	To be completed in the next 6 months.
<u>Allotment charges</u>		
That the annual charge of £39.50 be increased annually on 1 April in line with inflation.	The Executive support the general principle of increasing charges by inflation. However, the Executive would want to retain the flexibility to set fees and charges on an annual basis.	Recommendation now in place.
That the concessionary rate be phased out over the next two years, 75% of rental to be charged in 2011/12 with the full rental being charged in 2012/13.	Agreed. There is no evidence that the annual charge presents a barrier to take up.	Integrated Impact Assessment and consultation to be undertaken in Qtr 3
That it be Council policy to reduce	Agreed.	Consultation letters

the larger plots as and when they become available, dependant on the site and demand for that location. This would be monitored and the work undertaken, according to need.		to allotment holders with double plots have been sent out. Ongoing.
That the present mains water provision be maintained on the two sites but at cost neutral to the Council.	Agreed.	Water provision maintained. Cost neutrality subject to action below.
That the allotment holders be charged for the water provision based on the usage of the previous rental year. The charge would be implemented in 2012/13 based upon water usage in 2011/12.	Agreed.	Allotment holders to be invoiced Qtr 1 2012/13. Integrated Impact Assessment to be undertaken in Qtr 3
That the provision of a free water butt for all new allotment holders be withdrawn or offered at cost.	Agreed.	Water butts no longer provided.
That information help and guidance be provided to new allotment holders on the sustainability agenda.	Agreed.	Advice available as required.
<b><u>Community Growing</u></b>		
That the Council be encouraged to continue working closely with Lancashire Wildlife Trust over the next three years, sharing information, staff time and resources to ensure the success of the Community Food Growing Action Plan.	Sarah Turner (Community Growing Officer) is in place to help ensure this happens.	Sarah Turner is based at Bengal Street Depot and this ensures that the community growing work is integrated with the allotments.
<b><u>Community Management of Allotments</u></b>		
That allotment holders on any new site be supported and encouraged to pilot a community based management arrangement.	The Council's policy of community management will be developed, as appropriate.	To be developed through the Allotments Advisory Group.
That the Council would endorse the value of its allotment holders joining the Chorley Allotments Society through the contract and other associated paperwork.	Agreed.	Recommendation now in place.
That User Groups be established as and when required for the purposes of consultation.	Agreed.	To be developed as part of the Allotment Advisory Group.

## SUMMARY

11. Progress has been made with implementing a number of the agreed actions. The outstanding actions are expected to be implemented during 2011-12. Some actions require an Integrated Impact Assessment and consultation. They will then be implemented accordingly.

## IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

12. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	√	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		No significant implications in this area	

## COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF GOVERNANCE

13. There are no comments from the Head of Governance.

## COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

14. The recommendations contained in the Overview and Scrutiny report had only marginal financial impact. Decisions regarding charges are ongoing and as such will be dealt with through the Council budget setting process.

JAMIE CARSON  
DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND PLACES

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
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