

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of People & Places	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	3 September 2012

## ALLOTMENTS SCRUTINY TASK GROUP – MONITORING REPORT

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. To note the update provided in section 12 of the report.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

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

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

4. 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

5. An Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task Group undertook an inquiry into allotments and produced a report with recommendations in November 2010.
6. On 17<sup>th</sup> February 2011, the Executive Cabinet's agreed a response and actions for each of the recommendations in the report.
7. The first overview and scrutiny monitoring report on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2011 outlined updates to all of the actions with the majority having been implemented.
8. On 29<sup>th</sup> March 2012, the Executive Cabinet agreed amended responses to some of the actions as detailed in the update below.

## UPDATE

9. The table below provides an update on the actions outstanding actions since the last update on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2011.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation	Executive Response	Update
<u>Provision and demand for allotments</u>		
That the Head of Planning Services, be requested to develop a set of guidelines and good practice for use by private allotment owners.	Agreed.	Good practice regarding structures and general site conditions have been implemented on new council sites and also incorporated into a local guide covering allotments and planning law.
<u>Tenancy Agreement and monitoring and inspection procedures</u>		
That the Tenancy agreement be reviewed to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate rules and conditions to promote higher standards of maintenance.</li> <li>• Definitive guidance on non-compliance issues, to protect the Council's position.</li> </ul>	Agreed.	Revised set of tenancy agreement in place for occupants of new sites.
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.	Recommendation in place.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation	Executive Response	Update
<u>Allotment charges</u>		
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.	As agreed at Executive Cabinet on 29 <sup>th</sup> March 2012, the Council will not proceed with the phased removal of concessionary rates for allotment plots.	Concessionary rates still in place/
That it be Council policy to reduce 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.	Agreed.	Recommendation in place.
That the present mains water provision be maintained on the two sites but at cost neutral to the Council.	As agreed at Exec Cabinet on 29 <sup>th</sup> March 2012, from April 2012, subject to agreement by the allotment advisory group, the cost for provision of mains water at the Crosse Hall and Windsor Road sites is allocated within the existing allotment budget.  If the allotment advisory group decided not to allocate the costs of mains water within the existing allotment budget that the costs are to be recharged to individual plot holders at these sites as detailed in the report.	The allotment advisory group have decided to retain the use of mains water and have volunteered to remove the use of hose pipes / sprinklers.  The cost for water provision is now being met within the existing allotment budget.
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.		

## SUMMARY

10. All of the outstanding actions have now been implemented.

## IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

11. 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

12. As this is an update report there are no legal issues to raise at this time.

## COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

13. All of the works included in the Task Group recommendations and accepted by the Executive are being contained within the budgets approved by the Council.

JAMIE CARSON  
DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND PLACES

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Jamie Dixon	5250	17 August 2012	O&SAllotmentsupdate 03-09-2012