

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of People & Places	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11 July 2013

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

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

- To note the update provided in the report.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- The report provides further update following the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group's inquiry into allotments.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	✓	A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities	✓	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	✓

### BACKGROUND

- An Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task Group undertook an inquiry into allotments and produced a report with recommendations in November 2010.
- At a second monitoring update on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2012, it was reported that all of the agreed actions had been implemented.

### CURRENT UPDATE

- The Manor Road site has now been completed and 11 plots have been made available. A further 10 plots are not available due to drainage issues. The Council is currently working

together with Lancashire County Council to resolve this matter. It is anticipated that the remaining plots will be available for the next growing season.

8. A further 32 allotment units are planned as part of the Rangleys Recreation Ground development which is due for completion in March 2014 providing there are no unforeseen delays.
9. Once both of these sites are fully unitised / available the total number of Council plots will be 199. This represents a 36% increase from the 146 plots that were available in 2010.
10. The waiting list stands at 405 and this has remained relatively constant during the last three years. Once all the plots become available this should reduce to 363.
11. The Parks and Open Spaces team continue to seek and identify further potential sites and this includes working with Parish Councils to also develop non-Council owned sites.
12. A number of potential future sites have also been proposed as part of the Local Development Framework.

### IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

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

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area	✓	Policy and Communications	

### COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

14. At present, none of the updates will result in the Council requiring additional budget.

### COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

15. There are no comments.

JAMIE DIXON  
DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE & PLACES

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Jamie Dixon	5250	24-06-2013	OS Allotments Update 11-07-2013

Appendix 1 – List of agreed actions with updates that have previously been reported.

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 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.
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.	Revised set of tenancy agreement in place for occupants of new sites.
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.	Recommendation in place.
<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.	Following further consultation decision taken to keep concessionary rate.
That it be Council policy to reduce	Agreed.	Recommendation

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.		in place.
That the present mains water provision be maintained on the two sites but at cost neutral to the Council.	Agreed.	The allotment advisory group have decided to retain the use of mains water and have volunteered to remove the use of hose pipes / sprinklers.
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.	The cost for water provision is now being met within the existing allotment budget
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.