

**Cheltenham Borough Council**  
**Cabinet - 10th November 2015**  
**Growing Places - Allotment Strategy 2015**

<b>Accountable member</b>	<b>Cllr. Chris Coleman</b>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	<b>Fiona Warin, Green Space and Allotment Officer</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Key/Significant Decision</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<p>The Allotment Strategy 2015 is an updated allotment strategy that explores the demand and supply issues for allotments in Cheltenham and proposes actions in key areas of allotment management, infrastructure, protection and provision, promotion and health and safety, with a view to ensuring the effective provision and management of allotments now and in the future.</p> <p>Within the action plan of the allotment strategy, there are proposals to explore the option to use some of the money currently set aside for new allotment provision for allotment site improvements, particularly in relation to site security, health and safety and provision for disabled gardeners.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>That Cabinet approves the Allotment Strategy and the action plan.</b>

<b>Financial implications</b>	<p>The remaining available capital budget stands at £586,700 as at 13<sup>th</sup> October 2015. In developing proposals for using these allocated funds to support infrastructure requirements, consideration must be given to ongoing allotment provision requirements arising from new housing developments in the town and ensure adequate resource remains available to address these needs.</p> <p>Repairs and maintenance works should either be funded from annual service maintenance budgets or proposed for inclusion within the annual Green Space Programme Maintenance Plan depending on the nature of the expenditure.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Nina Philippidis, Business Partner Accountant</b>  <b>nina.philippidis@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264121</b></p>
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<b>Legal implications</b>	<p>The law relating to allotments is quite complex. In summary, both Parish Councils and District Councils are Allotment Authorities but due to Schedule 29 Part 1 Paragraph 9 of the Local Government Act 1972, Cheltenham Borough Council is prohibited from exercising its allotment functions in parish areas. Therefore the Council is required to consider and provide for demand in allotments as set out in the Allotments Acts in relation to non-parished areas and Parish Councils are required consider and provide for demand it their areas. The action plan refers to the Council and Parish Councils working together to develop joint/shared policies with regard to surplus allotments and waiting lists. If the Council wishes to agree with Parish Councils that, in the event of there being no demand from non-parished residents, that residents in parished areas can rent a Cheltenham Borough Council allotment, detailed procedures for allocating allotments will need to be carefully considered in order to comply with these legislative requirements.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Shirin Wotherspoon, shirin.wotherspoon@tewkesbury.gov.uk, 01684 272017</b></p>
<b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b>	<p>No HR implications</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Richard Hall, Richard.Hall@cheltenham.gcsx.gov.uk 01242 774972</b></p>
<b>Key risks</b>	<p>Allotments are a statutory function. The risk assessment is included.</p>
<b>Corporate and community plan Implications</b>	<p>Allotments make a significant contribution to healthy communities objectives, with an average of 8 people benefiting from each of the 811 allotments, in terms of organic or locally produced food and the health and well-being benefits of fresh air, exercise and the social interaction associated with allotment gardening. In addition, there is the contribution in terms of Cheltenham's environmental quality.</p>
<b>Environmental and climate change implications</b>	<p>Allotment sites are among the most bio-diverse environments within the publicly owned green spaces and they contribute environmentally in terms of the locally produced food, reduction in food miles, increased use of composting. Actions in relation to the water fittings regulations may lead to reduced use of metered water.</p>
<b>Property/Asset Implications</b>	<p>The unknown element is the likely demand for allotments as new developments are built and delivered and whether existing allotment sites could meet that demand.</p> <p>The ability of CBC to make land available for allotments is effectively limited to Priors Farm, which would require significant investment.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: David Roberts david.roberts@cheltenham.gov.uk</b></p>

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The allotment strategy 2015 follows on from the comprehensive allotment strategy of 2005 and addresses the same key themes and areas in relation to the provision and management of allotments in Cheltenham.
- 1.2 A dramatic increase in demand for allotments from 2007 to 2011 led to an action plan being drawn up to increase the number of allotments. Funds from the sale of former allotment land at Midwinter were set aside for new allotment provision.

## **2. Reasons for recommendations**

- 2.1 With the supply and demand situation having stabilised, there is no longer an urgent requirement for additional allotment provision. However, there are new and emerging infrastructure issues relating to health and safety such as uneven paths, theft and vandalism at two sites, new requirements relating to water fittings regulations, new demand for provision for disabled gardeners, lack of toilet provision at one site.
- 2.2 The action plan recommends that the Council explore the options to use some of the funds previously set aside for new allotment provision to support some of the infrastructure requirements identified.
- 2.3 Other actions are designed to ensure the continued good management of the Council's allotments and to secure future additional provision in relation to future population growth using the planning process.

## **3. Alternative options considered**

- 3.1 Various options were considered in terms of additional provision, alternative management arrangements for allotments, options for rental charges. The survey undertaken in 2015 to consult allotment holders gave some good information about plot-holder priority and areas where the Council could be focusing resources.

## **4. Consultation and feedback**

- 4.1 The draft strategy was discussed at the Overview and Scrutiny committee meeting of 26th October 2015. Members made a few additional suggestions which have been incorporated into the document (relating to promotion of allotments for community groups, Open Days to attract new allotment holders, adapted tools for disabled gardeners and exploring the option to have provision for disabled gardeners on all sites). Endorsement of the strategy was indicated.
- 4.2 The draft strategy has been made available to allotment holders and a few have commented.
- 4.3 One raised the issue of how volunteer site wardens were recruited (this was felt to be an operational issue, rather than a strategic one) and another had a query about lone plot-holders and whether the risks associated with working alone on an allotment would be addressed (yes, in the health and safety review).
- 4.4 One site warden encouraged his plot-holders to comment but he responded that he had not received any feedback and he personally had no issues with the strategy.
- 4.5 The draft strategy was sent to the C5 Parish Councils. There was no feedback.
- 4.6 A meeting was held on 22nd October to ascertain feedback on the strategy from the C&DAHA.

"The document was thought to be a reasoned and appropriate set of proposals which took

account of a number of possible scenarios in the borough over the next ten years. The main area of concern of the C&DAHA is to ensure that sufficient funds are retained to be able to satisfy any future additional allotment demand through the provision of new allotment sites and plots. Therefore we would want to see the majority of the funds currently set aside to be reserved for this use." *Dennis Sutton on behalf of C&DAHA*

## 5. Performance management – monitoring and review

- 5.1 Once costings for the infrastructure investments have been obtained, the Cabinet Member and officers will engage in a process to decide priorities and extent of funds set aside that will be used for infrastructure projects.
- 5.2 The strategy will be reviewed after 5 years and a revised Action Plan drawn up to address any new or emerging issues or in response to any significant change impacting on the service.

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<b>Appendices</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Risk Assessment</li> <li>2. Growing Places: Allotment Strategy 2015</li> <li>3. Allotment Survey 2015 - Summary of Feedback</li> </ol>
<b>Background information</b>	

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk					
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register	
	Lack of toilet provision and raised bed plots for disabled gardeners may affect the range of people that can have access to an allotment	Allotment Officer	27.10.15	2	3	6	Reduce	2 people on waiting lists unable to garden as they have need of an adapted plot. Constructing these plots would allow them to access the service	End 2016	Allotment Officer		
	Failure to provide additional security at sites prone to theft and vandalism may impact on allotment take-up	Allotment Officer	27.10.15	2	3	6	Reduce	Install gate extensions, lighting and explore use of remote camera	End 2016	Allotment Officer		
	Using money set aside for additional allotment provision on infrastructure improvements could be a risk if there was a very dramatic increase in demand for allotments that resulted in the Council requiring significant funds to develop new allotments	Allotment Officer	27.10.15	3	2	6	Accept	Continue to use the planning process to acquire additional allotment provision for new populations / housing and continue to divide plots in line with demand for smaller allotments	On-going	Allotment Officer		
	There is a statutory allotment designation on Elmfield Playing Field and a significant increase in demand for allotments could trigger a planning condition requiring the development of allotments on this land	Allotment Officer	27.10.15	4	2	8	Reduce	Transfer designation to alternative council owned land	On-going	Green Space Development Manager		

**Explanatory notes**

**Impact** – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical)

**Likelihood** – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6

(1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability)

**Control** - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close