

**Cheltenham Borough Council**  
**Council**  
**22 February 2013**  
**Scrutiny Task Group – Allotments**  
**Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

<b>Accountable member</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	<b>Grahame Lewis – Executive Director</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<p>A review of allotments was initiated by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2012 and a task group was set up with defined terms of reference.</p> <p>Following a number of meetings and site visits, the scrutiny task group has come up with 11 recommendations which, if adopted by Cabinet, would enhance allotment provision in the town.</p> <p>The report of the scrutiny task group was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O &amp; S) on 10 January 2013. Whilst welcoming the report, the committee was of the view that the authority should encourage more people to “grow their own” both for the health benefits and in the context of global food shortages over the medium to long term. In addition O &amp; S felt that the use of smaller parcels of land for the provision of both statutory and non-statutory allotments should be examined by officers. A full excerpt of the minutes of the O&amp;S meeting is attached as an appendix. Following the council meeting the report will be considered by Cabinet on 12 March 2013.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>The Council is recommended:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Consider the recommendations of the Scrutiny Task Group Report, and</b></li> <li><b>2. Agree any issues that they would like Cabinet to take into account when deciding whether to endorse/adopt the recommendations of the Scrutiny Task Group Report, and</b></li> <li><b>3. Approve the set aside of up to £600,000 of capital receipts from the sale of land at Midwinter to fund provision of potential new allotments in Cheltenham.</b></li> </ol>

<b>Financial implications</b>	<p>There is a legal requirement for proceeds of the sale of statutory allotment land to be used to discharge debts and liabilities associated with the acquisition of allotment land or in acquiring, adapting or improving new land for allotment purposes. The proceeds of the sale of the surplus land in the midwinter area could therefore be used, in part, to fund additional provision of allotments across the unparished areas of Cheltenham.</p> <p>Section 5 of the report details the estimated cost of providing a potential 290 new allotments (the current estimated shortfall in statutory provision) at £507,000, a more up to date estimate of which is nearer to £600,000.</p> <p>As such, a provisional sum of £600,000 is recommended to be formally set aside from the sale of the land at Midwinter to fund the potential cost of providing all 290 plots.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Sarah Didcote, <a href="mailto:sarah.didcote@cheltenham.gov.uk">sarah.didcote@cheltenham.gov.uk</a>, 01242 264125</b></p>
<b>Legal implications</b>	<p>The Overview and Scrutiny study received advice on the legal position of Allotments and the legislation upon which it is based. This is summarised in the Report itself at paragraph 4.1. In particular the relationship between Parished and non Parished areas of the Council are important as to which Council can use the Allotment Acts powers.</p> <p>Recommendation 9 would require the Council's planning policies to be enhanced to assist with a shortfall within the Borough area. This can be in both Parished and non Parished areas although the ownership and management of them will depend on whether a Parish Council exists or not. Consideration should be given about containing such requirements in appropriate development briefs of proposals but they would need to be connected to the development and comply with planning law.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Gary Spencer, One Legal <a href="mailto:gary.spencer@teWKesbury.gov.uk">gary.spencer@teWKesbury.gov.uk</a>, 01684 272699</b></p>
<b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b>	<p>There are no Health &amp; Safety implications at this stage</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Beverly Kershaw-Cole <a href="mailto:bev.kershaw-cole@cheltenham.gov.uk">bev.kershaw-cole@cheltenham.gov.uk</a>, 01242 77 4921</b></p>
<b>Key risks</b>	<p>None identified</p>
<b>Corporate and community plan Implications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheltenham's natural and built environment is enhanced and protected</li> <li>• People are able to lead healthy lifestyles</li> </ul>
<b>Report author</b>	<p><b>Contact officer: Beverly Thomas –<a href="mailto:beverly.thomas@cheltenham.gov.uk">beverly.thomas@cheltenham.gov.uk</a></b></p>
<b>Appendices</b>	<p>A Allotments review scrutiny task group report</p> <p>B Excerpt of Overview &amp; Scrutiny 10 January 2013</p>