

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTRACTIVE 20 SEPTEMBER 2010 CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

RESPONSE FROM CABINET – 21 JULY 2010

POLICY REVIEW – ALLOTMENT PROVISION IN SUNDERLAND

**JOINT REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY SERVICES AND THE
PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ATTRACTIVE AND INCLUSIVE CITY**

Strategic Priority: SP5 - Attractive and Inclusive City

**Corporate Priorities: CI01 – Delivering Customer Focused Services, CI04 –
Improving Partnership Working to Deliver ‘One City’.**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide feedback from the Cabinet meeting held on 21 July 2010, which considered the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee's Policy Review into allotment provision in Sunderland.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The investigation into allotment provision in Sunderland conducted by the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee falls under the remit of the City Services Directorate and is within the service area covered by the Attractive and Inclusive City Portfolio Holder.
- 2.2 On 21 July 2010, Cabinet considered the Final Report of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee's policy review into allotment provision in Sunderland. This report provides feedback from the Portfolio Holder following the Cabinet's consideration of, and decisions in relation to this Committee's recommendations.
- 2.3 Following on from this report, progress towards completion of the actions will be monitored through the Action Plan, with standardised six monthly monitoring reports to be presented to the Committee.

3. RESPONSE FROM CABINET TO THE POLICY REVIEW

- 3.1 Following consideration of the Final Report, Cabinet approved the recommendations in their entirety. Details of each recommendation and proposed actions to be taken following approval by Cabinet are provided in the Action Plan attached at **Appendix A**.
- 3.2 Cabinet commended and congratulated the Committee and its officers for their hard work in undertaking the policy review and additional work.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That Members note the proposed actions detailed within the Action Plan, appended to this report (**Appendix A**) and seek clarification on its content where felt appropriate.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 5.1 The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-

(i) Cabinet Agenda, 21 July 2010.

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Appendix A

Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee Allotments Provision Policy Review recommendations 09/10

Ref	Recommendation	Action	Owner	Due Date	Progress Commentary
1	That consideration be given to rationalising the existing waiting list along with the introduction of a points system to prioritise future allotment applications.	a. Officers will contact those on the waiting lists with a view to confirming their continued interest.	E Wilson	a. Nov-10	Agreed.
		b. Officers will contact other Local Authorities, partners in APSE, Allotments Regeneration Initiative and others to investigate the viability of a points system.	I Coburn	b. Sept-10	Agreed
2	That the City Council encourages the take-up of self-managed and leased sites and provides appropriate training and support to interested parties.	Officers will continue to encourage allotment societies/associations to take on self managed and leased agreements. Officers will involve partners and allotment organisations in promoting, this issue. Meeting/workshop will be arranged to progress this issue.	I Coburn	Dec-10	Agreed
3	That in order to bring the City Council's yearly rental charges for allotments in line with those of neighbouring local authorities, a small increase be made to the yearly rental charge for 2010/11 which is ring fenced to the service for re-investment	a. Officers will investigated charges made by other Local Authorities with a view to increasing charges in line with those Authorities. A report recommending increases will be submitted to DLT for consideration and built into the budget cycle for 2011/12.	I Coburn/L Clark	a. Sept-10	Agreed
		b. Officers will explore with Financial function the viability of utilising possible increases in allotment rental		b. Dec-10	Agreed

		income for improvement works within the service.			
4	That consideration be given to the positive contributions that the City Council's Area Committees could play in the sourcing and allocation of resources for allotments across the city	Officers will liaise with Area Co-ordination Team with a view to seeking Area Committee support in funding improvements where they deem action is needed and affordable.	I Coburn	Mar-11	Agreed
5	That the practicalities of raising revenue through the land sale of under utilised allotment sites, where appropriate, be further explored.	a . Establish with the Planning, Legal and Financial functions whether this approach is practicable under the Council's constitutional and policy framework.	I Coburn	Oct-10.	Agree to investigate.
6	That a rolling programme be established to bring the City Council's existing allotment sites up to an acceptable and consistent standard.	<p>a. Officers to produce plans of all sites identifying each allotment plot.</p> <p>b. . Identify sites that we are unable to let owing to derelict condition</p> <p>c. Establish the cost of works required to bring plots to that are capable of improvement to a lettable state and a consistent standard. To include provision of perimeter fencing, internal paths, roadways and a water supply.</p>	I Coburn	<p>a. Sep-10</p> <p>b. Sep-10</p> <p>c. Jan-11</p>	Preparatory work in respect of actions a -c is agreed. However, agreement of this recommendation in full is dependant upon the outcomes of recommendations 3, 4 and 5 investigating funding options. The extent of any rolling programme of improvements will be commensurate with the scale of funding identified.

7	That the City Council's current Allotments Strategy be reviewed and revised to reflect the outcomes of the investigations into recommendations 1-6.	A new Allotment Strategy will be produced following consultation with all interested parties and relevant organisations and will also consider the foregoing actions.	AHCWS and I Coburn	Mar-11	Agreed