

# Enterprise and Wellbeing Committee

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## Briefing paper on progress with Allotment Strategy 2012-2016

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### 1. Introduction

Since its adoption in 2012 the Allotment Strategy and respective Action Plan has been managed by the Council's Sustainability Officer, Peter Corke. However, as a result of the restructuring of Environmental Services in 2013 the direct management of allotment sites is undertaken by the Green Spaces Officer, Andy Pashley. The administration of rental agreements and legal aspects attaining to the Tenancy Agreement continues to be undertaken by Kier (Facilities Management) and Governance respectively.

The main reason for developing an Allotment Strategy, in partnership with the Chesterfield Allotment Network (CAN), was to provide strategic guidelines for the provision and management of allotments in Chesterfield by the Council. The strategy placing emphasis on the importance of allotments as a leisure and recreational facility and for the benefits to communities, health and well-being and wildlife, as well as in producing low cost locally produced food in a sustainable way.

The strategy directly supports the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan objectives:

***A clean, green, and attractive Borough, where our open spaces and built heritage are valued.***

Is linked directly to the following Corporate Programmes, service plans and documents:

- Sustainable Community Strategy
- Asset Management Plan
- Equality, Diversity and Fairness Strategy
- Parks and Open Spaces Strategy
- Greenprint Document
- Replacement Chesterfield Borough Local Plan (2006)

The Aims of the strategy are delivered via an Action Plan containing 5 objectives, monitored by the Sustainability Officer, with progress on each as follows.

## 2. Progress on Action Plan

Objective 1: To cultivate the improved management of our allotment sites.

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TARGET</b>	<b>PROGRESS</b>
1.1	Provide an improved set of rules and suggested constitution to allotment societies.	New set of rules and constitution provided to all allotment associations.	Target achieved September 2012.
1.2	Identify and audit vacant statutory allotment sites and survey/photograph currently occupied sites.	Status of vacant statutory sites and clear record of current provision.	Work to commence April 2014 due to service priorities.
1.3	Review allotment tenancy agreements.	New tenancy agreement.	Target achieved November 2013.
1.4	Assess rents.	Improved rental structure for allotment sites and clarity on charging.	Target achieved June 2013. New and improved rent structure now implemented.
1.5	Infrastructure improvements.	Undertake infrastructure improvements to ensure disabled have access.	This action will be reviewed on the commencement of Action 1.2, above.
1.6	Review the Council's arrangements for the management of allotments.	Clarity on the different departmental responsibilities of allotments in the borough.	Target achieved in part but still some outstanding administrative issues e.g. budgetary responsibility.

Objective 2: To promote allotments as a benefit for the whole community.

2.1	Provide an improved mechanism for vacant allotments to be acquired by the public.	Central data base/website to publicise allotment sites and vacant plots.	Target not achieved as of January 2014 but due for completion by 2016. Enquiries are presently directed to individual Allotment Association secretaries.
2.2	Produce guide for tenants in partnership with Chesterfield Allotment Network.	Guide for allotment holders.	Action to be completed by June 2014 subject to consultation with CAN.

Objective 3: To highlight the role that allotments play in developing a more sustainable environment, encouraging biodiversity and conservation.

3.1	Seek to improve the biodiversity of allotment sites through habitat improvements.	Create wildlife areas where appropriate.	This is an ongoing action that has had real success with the creation of ponds, wildflower areas and bird habitats on allotment sites.
3.2	Engage with allotment associations to map species diversity on allotment sites.	Map wildlife habitats on and adjacent to all allotment sites.	This will commence at the time Action 1.2 begins although some associations, namely Goldwell No.2, have already begun mapping species diversity.

Objective 4: To develop a health agenda for allotments, focusing on benefits, in terms of improving health in the borough.

4.1	Promote the health benefits of allotment gardening.	Produce guide in partnership with health colleagues on the many health benefits of allotment gardening.	Target not achieved due to budgetary but under review.
4.2	Develop local produce network through and with allotment societies.	Promote sales of allotment produce at monthly Farmers' Market.	Target to be developed alongside 4.1, above, when funding becomes available.

Objective 5: To review existing provision of allotments in Chesterfield and to seek to identify area of potential future allotment provision.

5.1	Assess current allotment provision.	Explore opportunities to provide additional allotments as per current deficiency in some wards.	Ongoing and to become targeted action in revised Green Spaces Strategy.
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### 3. Conclusion

The Allotment Strategy has aided the delivery of a more unified approach to managing allotments in the borough. The continued involvement of the Chesterfield Allotment Network through bi-annual meetings helps to maintain good relationships and improvements on all of the sites. This is especially true with the changes made recently to the Tenancy Agreement and annual rents.