

Board/Committee:	Community Board
Date of meeting:	Wednesday 8 th September 2021
Title:	Allotment Strategy
Author:	Head of Streetscene
Status:	FOR DECISION

Purpose

To seek approval for the adoption of the Allotment Strategy and Action Plan for Council provided allotment sites only (note this does not include the privately owned site managed by the Gosport Allotment Holders and Garden Association (GAHGA)).

The overall objective of the strategy is to improve availability and access for residents to meet the current level of demand and ensure adequate resources are available to support and develop the allotment service provision over the coming years.

Recommendation

That the Board approves the Allotment Strategy 2021-2024 and agrees in principle to the delivery of the action plan.

Improvements and funding would be subject to further approval from Board in the future as this would need to be funded either through Capital Schemes or developer contributions.

1.0 Background

1.1 Gosport Borough Council (GBC) has a statutory duty to provide allotments and places a duty upon Local Authorities to provide allotments where demands exist with the only obligation on the Council under statute law is to make land available for the use of allotment gardening and to provide fresh water.

1.2 The Council recognises allotments as an important asset not only providing green corridors in an urban environment such as Gosport, but providing valuable ecosystems for biodiversity and community spaces for residents for social and active recreation along with the benefits of producing food.

The Council has responsibility for nine sites varying in size across the Borough equivalent to 1123 Plots, details of which can be found in Appendix A, Site plot plans.

1.3 Gosport's demand for allotments is evident and is documented in the wait list statistics per site Appendix B, Wait list for each site. The Council is currently meeting this demand by reducing the amount of land tenanted out i.e. reduced the plot from 10 rods (250 m²) to minimum of 5 rods (125 m²)

with consideration given to exceptional circumstances and is in the process of developing an allotment site at Lee On the Solent at Manor Way Open Space.

- 1.4** The management and administration of Allotments is governed by a network of legislation, which provide the framework for the delivery of the Allotment Service Provision.

2.0 Report

- 2.1** The Parks Open Spaces and Countryside Team under the Head of Streetscene manage Allotments, who have considerable knowledge of allotment provision and law and manages the provision of the service along with infrastructural works.

- 2.2** The Council set up an Allotment Stake Holders Working Group (ASHWG) to ensure that they were liaising with the allotment holders in the management of the facilities, see Appendix C, Terms of reference for ASHWG which was revised and agreed at Community Board 16/09/2017.

- 2.3** The Council in conjunction with the ASHWG undertook a survey early 2019, Appendix D, with its tenants with the focus that the Council were drafting an Allotment Strategy and that their view were important in to the delivery of this document. The Council and the GAHGA and have worked together to produce the Strategy that aims to deliver on the outcomes of the survey looking to improve on the current management and administration and to provide opportunities for improvements to the facilities with the main objectives being:-

- To ensure existing provision of allotments meet current trends and demands.
- To maintain and improve the infrastructure facilities and quality of the authorities' sites, ensuing sites are welcoming, safe and accessible.
- To work in partnership with the Gosport Association and ASHWG to ensure good administrative and management processes.
- To highlight the role that allotments play in developing a more sustainable environment encouraging biodiversity and conservation.
- To promote allotments as a benefit for the wider community, realising the opportunity they offer for education, health and well-being and social inclusion.
- To ensure adequate resources are available to support the long term service provision.

The ASHWG recognises the change in Government Legislation reference to ward boundaries and along with the revised Local Plan and therefore we

would recommend the review of the Strategy within three years then five yearly thereafter.

3.0 Risk Assessment

3.1 The strategy provides an action plan to deliver a modern forward looking approach for allotment provision that meets the expectations of the stake holders and safe guard the sites against future development.

It provides an effective management system that is consistent to all tenants with the opportunity to look at alternative ways to deliver a cost effective service for the future should there be a decrease in funding to deliver an effective service /improvement.

Not investing in allotments will lead to further deterioration of the sites, lack of take up and has the potential to lead to anti-social behaviour and have a detrimental effect on the health and well-being of the existing tenant.

4.0 Conclusion

The adoption of the Allotment Strategy indicates that GBC is committed to continue to develop and support its current service delivery, by working in partnership with the ASHWG and the GAHGA to ensure continual improvements to the management and administrative processes and develop management plans for each site to improve infrastructure and facilities, and to secure funding to undertake these.

<p>Financial Services comments:</p>	<p>No immediate financial implications as GBC look to use the Councils Direct Services Organisation for maintenance and minor improvements with the existing budgets.</p> <p>Long term there could be an impact with the development of Management Plans for each of the sites there could be a financial impact currently unknown. Appendix E expenditure to date on improvements.</p> <p>The Council has receipt income currently at £65 K for allotment improvements and would look to be funded through a planned capital program subject to approval at Full Council.</p>
<p>Legal Services comments:</p>	<p>Allotment Law.</p>
<p>Equality and Diversity:</p>	<p>Comments incorporated within Strategy from Corporate Policy.</p> <p>Allotments are open and accessible for all.</p>
<p>Climate Change implications:</p>	<p>Comments incorporated within Strategy from Corporate Policy.</p>

Crime and Disorder:	The ASHWG has a representative from the Police and works in liaison and has an established allotment watch group administered by the Police
Service Improvement Plan implications:	To be delivered by Streetscene
Corporate Plan:	The Council's aim through the delivery of this Strategy is to improve the quality of service the tenants receive along with providing greater benefits to providing a greener, safer and sustainable future of the allotment sites for the future tenants and the wider community.
Risk Assessment:	As per 3
Background Papers:	Board Report devolved management Allotment Survey Allotment Strategy
Appendices:	Appendix A Site Plans Appendix B Wait list Appendix C Terms of reference ASHWG Appendix D Allotment Survey Appendix E List of Improvement works to date
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The Council's aim through the delivery of this policy is to improve the quality of everyone's life by providing a greener, safer and sustainable future for the boroughs tree stock in accordance with the Council's Plan on a Page.