

Allotment Rental Charge 2016

Customer First Analysis

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to introduce of a reasonable level of allotment rent charge from 1st January 2016.
- 1.2 Two key aims of the allotment service are to maximise the productive use of the allotment resource and to enable more people to benefit from food growing and the wider social, health and well-being benefits of allotment life. This includes encouraging and providing opportunities for more people from disadvantaged groups to get involved.
- 1.3 There are a number of the equality characteristics which are relevant to the allotment resource and service:-
 - Age, with consideration of older age groups and younger people
 - Disability, including wider considerations of well-being, mobility and mental health
 - Pregnancy and maternity, in relation to suitability of site conditions and facilities
 - Race, religion or belief, in relation to ethnic communities

2. Evidence

- 2.1 For the first time, the Council now has some evidence of the equality characteristics of the allotment community, following an allotment consultation carried out in October/November 2012.
- 2.2 Direct contact has also been previously carried out with the allotment community to guide the detail of site improvements for those with particular needs. This has included disability support groups, tenants, waiting list people, and partner organisations.
- 2.3 122 people responded to the allotment consultation. While it is not certain that they are representative of the whole of the allotment community, the results provide an indication of equality related characteristics of the allotment community.

Age

18 – 24 yrs	1.5 %
25 – 44 yrs	11.5 %
45 – 64 yrs	47%
65 – 74 yrs	35%
Over 75 yrs	5%

Health

Very good	26%
Good	50%
Fair	19%
Bad	5 %
Very bad	0%

Day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability

Not limited	68%
Limited a little	27%
Limited a lot	5%

- 2.4 Age ranges are perhaps more wide ranging than in the past, with 13 % of the respondents in the younger age groups, 47% in the middle age groups and 40% of the respondents in the older age groups.
- 2.5 While health and mobility is good for the majority, it is significant that around 24% of respondents experience less than good health and 32% of respondents have some level of mobility limitation.
- 2.6 23% said their health is better than before they had an allotment. And of those whose health had declined, a massive 83% said that having an allotment had helped to slow down the effects of illness or age.

3. Impact

- 3.1.1 The Council now has tangible evidence that allotment provision contributes to improved health and well-being.
- 3.2 The key equality consideration relating to the rental increase proposal is to ensure that no-one is discriminated from being able to access the allotment resource for reasons of affordability.
- 3.3 The rent review has taken account of all of the relevant factors as follows:-
- Results of consultation carried out with Hyndburn's allotment community.
 - Comparison with allotment charges of other Local Authorities in the North West.
 - Comparison with increased charges for other recreational activities.
 - Affordability, social and health improvement considerations.
- 3.4 The allotment resource includes special provisions with raised beds and 'easy access' beds on a number of sites and accessible and manageable plots of small sizes at Meadoway, Norden, Woodnook, Heys and Peel Park. These provide for people with limited mobility, including older age groups, activities for young people and schools involvement, disability support groups and encourage involvement from more people who are new to food growing or who only have limited time for example due to work, family or study commitments.

- 3.5 The cost of these special provisions is not being increased.
- 3.6 For all other plots, the proposed increases are very reasonable. Full details in the Cabinet Report show that the proposals represent a reasonable level of increase at this time, balancing all of the relevant considerations, including comparison with other recreational activities, amounts which remain at the lowest end of charges in the North West. The comparatively modest amounts, together with no increase for some provisions, reflect affordability for all and the community and social benefits of the allotment resource.
- 3.7 The allotment resource is very wide ranging with plots of many sizes available. This means that people can choose a plot type and size that is directly relevant to their needs and affordability. It is also often possible for an existing plot holder to reduce the size of their plot, or to move to more suitable provision, should their needs change over time.
- 3.8 Overall, with no increase for the special provisions of raised beds, and small plots plus a reasonable level of increase across the other plots, the proposals ensure that the whole of the allotment resource provides affordability for all.
4. Actions
- 4.1 The proposals inherently provide for equality considerations and no further action is required.

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