

Aberdeen City Council's Allotments (Management) Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Aberdeen City Council is proud of the services it provides to the citizens of Aberdeen. It strives to continually improve these services and obtain the best value from them. It recognises the potentially diverse role allotments can play as a part of the mix of health, recreation and environmental services in the City, and the benefits these bring for people and wildlife.

1.2 The benefits allotments bring go beyond those gained by the individual plot holders. They permeate to their families, their communities and the environment. Allotments are an important and integral part of the City's community infrastructure. They are places for:

- Socialising with likeminded people
- Relaxing and improving mental well being
- Exercising and improving physical well being
- Learning and developing skills
- Conducting community activities and improving community cohesion
- Economical cultivation of produce
- Organic cultivation of produce
- Providing community greenspaces
- Protecting wildlife

1.3 This Policy refers to Aberdeen City Council (Council) owned allotment facilities only. This policy forms part of the Draft Sustainable Environment Strategy for Council Properties and the Greenspace Network Strategy.

2. Statement of Policy

2.1 Aberdeen City Council is committed to retaining, at a minimum, the existing number allotments. It is also committed to realising the diverse benefits its allotments bring to people and wildlife. It aims to develop and secure high quality allotment facilities and management for all citizens across Aberdeen. This will be achieved in conjunction with all stakeholders.

2.2 High quality means meeting the diverse needs of the individual; the community; the Council; and the environment in an efficient, effective & equitable manner, both in terms of overall management of allotments and on the ground at all sites.

Specifically this means allotments sites should be:

- valued local greenspaces;
- safe and secure;
- easily accessible to all users;
- free from unwanted and/or uncontrolled pests, weeds and diseases;

- free of debris and litter;
- maintained to a high standard by both owners and users;
- fit for purpose - have appropriate facilities for their intended purposes;
- consistent in plot sizing;
- consistent, transparent and affordable in cost to the customer;
- consistent in quality - as outlined in this Policy statement; and
- open to community involvement.

They should be managed in a manner that:

- maintains the standards outlined above;
- actively encourages direction from their users, and/or their representatives;
- encourages involvement from all sections of the community;
- actively seeks opportunities and resources for improvement;
- actively protects and enhances the environment;
- meets consistent local demand;
- is efficient in terms of letting; and
- is economically sustainable to the Council.

3. Council objectives:

3.1 In order to achieve the Council's commitment to high quality allotments facilities and management, the Council will:

1. Establish an Allotments Working Group to direct and ensure delivery of this Policy;
2. Engage a community partner(s) to assist with delivering the Council's commitment;
3. Work with allotment holders, local communities and other stakeholders to develop collective management at sites;
4. Provide a transparent and efficient service to allotment holders and/or their representatives;
5. Develop clear and transparent accounting procedures to allow assessment of the full revenue and capital income and expenditure for allotments. This is a legal requirement;
6. Conduct a citywide assessment of allotment provision, including an assessment of individual communities needs;
7. Investigate and remediate economically unsustainable allotments sites and over or under supply within communities, either through marketing, direct improvements, or re-distribution of allotments;
8. If and when allotment re-distribution is required, direct a minimum of 50% of the income from the sale of surplus allotment land into the establishment of new, or improvement of existing, allotments facilities. This means that 50% of the capital income from the sale will be available to support other Council priorities;
9. Conduct a review of Council services provided to allotments. This will take into account administrative management, waste collection and

disposal, mains water, on site storage facilities and occasional grounds services;

10. Conduct a review of the fee structure for allotments after three years. This will take into consideration plot sizes and services provided. It will be benchmarked against other providers, be consistent across all allotments and in line with delivering the Council's commitment;
11. Instruct its planners take note of this Policy commitment for inclusion into the Local Plan process;
12. Attempt to develop and implement management/improvement plans for specific sites. These will take account of the outcomes of citywide, neighbourhood and other community planning processes;
13. Allocate revenue from existing budgets, aligned to the benefits allotments bring in terms of health, recreation and environment, and actively seek funding to meet the Council's commitment and other improvements arising from site specific management plans;
14. Monitor and review the detail of this Policy on an ongoing basis to ensure progress towards the Council's commitment; and
15. Conduct a full review this Policy in 5 years time.

4. Action Plan

- 4.1 This Policy forms a long-term high level plan with the actions required to establish the basis for full implement the Allotments Management Policy. The relevant Council Heads of Service and Council partners will meet to develop a more defined implementation plan with timelines. That plan will be a working document owned and updated by the Council. It will form part of the Team Plans for the relevant services. Within that plan will be an action to develop a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with a community partner(s). This SLA will set out the expectations of the Council in terms of delivering the full Policy commitment.