

## **EXETER CITY COUNCIL**

### **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY**

**4 MARCH 2008**

#### **ALLOTMENT STRATEGY REVIEW**

##### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To report to committee the progress made to date on the action plan outlined in the revised Allotment Strategy, adopted by the Council in 2007.
- 1.2 To set out further actions planned for 2008/9 (see Appendix I).

##### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The original allotment strategy was adopted in 2002, and was revised in 2007. This built on the achievements of the first strategy, and identified the significant improvements in occupation levels and meeting the needs of ploholders. Despite the conversion of a large number of full size plot to half plots, which many younger people find attractive, all but one of our 26 allotment sites have waiting lists.
- 2.2 The strategy links to others within the Authority, such as the Environmental Strategy and Leisure Strategy, and to wider aims such as health improvement plans, the Local Development Framework, and government initiatives such as the Good Practice Guide for Allotments 2001
- 2.3 Five target areas are identified within the strategy
  1. Ensuring Sufficient Allotments
  2. Promoting Allotment Gardening
  3. Encouraging Sustainability
  4. Cultivating Good Administration
  5. Maintaining Adequate Resources
- 2.4 Under these headings an action plan has been produced, with specific targets identified.

##### **3. PROGRESS IN 2007**

- 3.1 2007 saw the continuance of a number of projects that originated in the first strategy.
- 3.2 Equalities issues were addressed with further work at Marypole allotments to provide better access for those with mobility restrictions. This site was visited by the Chartermark assessor, prior to the Directorate achieving Chartermark status and received much acclaim.
- 3.3 Full size 10 rod (250m<sup>2</sup>) allotment plots were split into 5 rod plots as they became vacant on sites across the city, to further increase the opportunity for people to take on plots more suited to their means and needs. This has increased the number of plots available to 1316, from 1217 in 2002.

- 3.4 Replacement portaloos were installed at six sites. The new portaloos are disabled accessible and utilise less toxic chemicals than previously used.
- 3.5 Cowick Lane allotments boundary was layered using existing trees and vegetation to provide not only a secure boundary, but an enhanced wildlife habitat
- 3.6 Substantial works have been carried out on allotment tracks and car parks to ensure accessibility.
- 3.7 Guys/Hylton allotments security fencing was upgraded on a vulnerable boundary.
- 3.8 Guys/Hylton trading shed new roof was complemented by six water butts to serve nearby plots.
- 3.9 Areas of poor drainage identified and measures taken to prevent future flooding of plots.

#### **4. PLANNED WORK FOR 2008**

##### 4.1 Key actions are

- Maximising the current available allotment space
- Securing future additional provision
- Introducing greater sustainability awareness
- Water harvesting and other measures to reduce the use of treated water for irrigation
- Provision of two new self-composting fully accessible toilets and the re-location of the existing to replace our last two old style ones
- To provide enhanced security to sites where vulnerable areas are identified

##### 4.2 The 'Action Identified' column in Appendix I lists the works identified for the year in greater detail.

#### **5 RECOMMENDED**

That the progress be noted and future proposals supported.

#### **HEAD OF CONTRACTS AND DIRECT SERVICES**

S:LP/Committee/308SCC5  
21.2.08

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**  
**Background papers used in compiling this report:**

*Exeter City Council Allotment Strategy 2005/11*