

**Environment & Assets Committee**

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<b>Title:</b>	<b>Hampden Gardens Allotments</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>3 September 2024</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Andrea Oughton, Operations Manager</b>

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To agree the rent for the allotment plots and approve the Allotment Policy and Tenancy Agreement.

**Proposal**

2. The site includes: 17 allotment plots each measuring 10m x 10m, a car park, cycle provision and shed with electricity and water supply, and toilet and hand basin.
3. The level of rent being considered must be in line with section 10 of the Allotments Act 1950 and must therefore be a 'reasonable' amount. Case law has shown that when considering what is a reasonable amount for the rent, the local authority should compare the rent to: other sites in the nearby area, the rate of inflation, increases to other leisure activities and any other relevant factors.
4. Stones Close Allotments charge 11p per sqm with an average plot costing £13 per annum plus £2.50 towards insurance and request a voluntary contribution of £2 per plot holder towards the cost of a chemical toilet. Kingsey Road Allotments charge £29 per annum for a similar size plot. Both sites provide water but no electricity.
5. Given the above, it is recommended that the pricing of £22 per plot per annum is adopted (0.22p per sqm) at the Hampden Gardens site. As well as the allotment rent there will be an annual charge of £2 per plot towards utilities provided to the shed, electricity (lighting and sockets) and water (outside tap, internal toilet and wash basin). Pricing will be reviewed annually.
6. If adopted this will put Hampden Gardens pricing almost midpoint between Stones Close and Kingsey Road. The ethos is to support the community, keeping costs affordable for members who might be retired, on fixed incomes, and families. Keeping the rent affordable encourages allotment holders to take pride in the site and work as a team to undertake repairs and work on plots that require preparation for reletting.
7. The Council will undertake: day-to-day maintenance requirements to the shed, perimeter boundary, gate, grass cutting between plots, enforcing the rules, collection of rents, overseeing plot allocation, plot monitoring, insurance and membership to a recognised national allotment society. Within the Tenancy Agreement the site security is a shared responsibility between the Council and Tenants

**Inspections**

8. The Council will undertake two site inspections per year with a written report issued to the Environment & Assets Committee and well as to each Tenant. Visual inspections will take place during grass cutting and at regular intervals during the winter months.

## Allotment Policy

9. To agree the draft Allotment Policy (Appendix a).

## Tenancy Agreement

10. To agree the draft Tenancy Agreement (Appendix b).

## Risk Assessment

11. Plots remain vacant – plots will be offered in the first instance to residents living on the Hampden Gardens and Thame Park Estates (i.e. occupiers of dwellings on new housing development east of Thame Park Road). If plots remain empty and there is no waiting list, vacant plots will then be offered more widely to Thame residents.
12. Environmental impact: Once established the site will enable people to grow their own fruit and vegetables, it will assist in reducing the carbon footprint, encourages bees and butterflies and be enjoyed as an outside leisure activity enhancing health and wellbeing. Water will be harvested on site to help reduce water consumption costs. Within the tenancy agreement there are controlling measures for bonfires, rubbish accumulation and management of chemicals on site.

## Resource Appraisal

13. The intention is for the Council to manage the allotment site for the first 24 months (two growing seasons) during which time Tenants will be encouraged to form an Allotment Society.
14. A commuted sum is payable by the developers to the Council on the transfer of the site. The commuted sum is indexed link and is currently valued at £121k. The intention is to keep the transferred sum in an Ear Marked Reserve to pay for the installation of a secure gate to the site entrance, make up any shortfall in utility costs, running repair costs to the site and shed until such time as an allotment society is formed and financially viable.

**Legal Powers:** Small Holdings & Allotments Act 1908, s23  
Allotments Act 1950 s10

## Recommendation:

### *The Committee is asked:*

- i) To agree the allotment rent for Hampden Gardens Allotments for the first 12 months of occupation by allotment holders.*
- ii) To approve the Allotment Policy*
- iii) To approve the Tenancy Agreement*