

## BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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<b>Report Originator</b>	Valerie Hitchman Head of Community Services	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i>	
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All	3 <sup>rd</sup> December 2013	
<b>Title</b>	Kettering Borough Council Allotments		

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

- 1.1 To provide general information in respect of allotments provision in the Borough

### **2. INFORMATION**

- 2.1 Kettering Borough Council (KBC) is only one provider of allotment provision in the Borough, other allotments are privately owned and rented out to plot holders. KBC own eleven allotment sites in the Borough that are managed and operated by Allotment Associations or Parish Councils. We do hold contact information for some privately owned sites. Where known, full location and contact details may be found on KBC's website. Private allotment sites are invited to be added to the website on request.
- 2.2 In 2006, KBC commissioned a public open space assessment known as the PPG17. It is hoped that many private allotment sites were captured within this exercise but there may be others that were not identified.
- 2.3 The PPG17 Assessment provided KBC with the information to develop and adopt the 'Open Space Supplementary Planning Document' (SPD). The SPD provides standards for quality, quantity and accessibility standards for different types of open space. This includes 'Allotment and Community Gardens'. These standards are used by KBC when responding to planning applications of ten or more dwellings. As a result of new housing developments, additional allotment provision will be provided in Barton Seagrave, Kettering and Desborough. The full SPD may be found within KBC's website but for ease of reference, the standards have been replicated at Appendix 1. If there is no on site requirement, an off site contribution is sought if there are existing allotment sites within the accessibility standard.
- 2.4 Allotments sites vary in size from those with a few plots to 50 or more plots which come in different shapes and sizes catering for the beginner to the more experienced allotment gardener. The most common plot sizes are half plots (125 sq metres) and full plots (250 sq metres).
- 2.5 In respect of KBC sites, allotments are very popular and there is a waiting list for many allotment sites. The waiting lists are managed by the allotment operator who provides KBC with information on request.
- 2.6 The Green Patch is located adjacent to Margaret Road allotments. This is a community allotment site and provides many services and activities for a wide range of the public. The 2.5 acre site is leased and managed by

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Northamptonshire Groundwork. Further details may be found on the council website.

The Green Patch provides a safe practical-based learning environment for schools, individuals, vulnerable adults and children to gain new skills and qualifications, and also functions as a place where residents from the local community can go to buy fresh eggs, fruit and vegetables. All the proceeds from the sale of vegetables and plants from the Green Patch are reinvested back into the project and local community in the form of local events and school gardening projects.

The Green Patch makes a real difference and has a positive effect on the people who access the project; it has played a major part in the personal development of many volunteers, employees and service users. With opportunities from simply volunteering for an afternoon a week, to work placements and personal development plans, it is a valuable community resource. It is accessible to everyone regardless of age, background or disability and provides a 'community hub' that promotes community cohesion, environmental awareness, sustainable lifestyles, healthy eating/living and improves social and mental well being to all that are involved. The site will be affected by the Kettering East development, but plans are in place to relocate the provision within the Kettering East development.

- 2.7 Research has shown that contact with green spaces and the natural environment promotes better physical and mental health, and also improves self-esteem. More specifically, studies have shown that working on an allotment garden may promote an active life-style in general and contribute to healthy aging. Van de Berg et al (2010) found increased levels of physical activity within allotment users of all ages and improved physical and mental wellbeing for older users. The provision of allotments, in particular community allotments, also gives scope for education around the origins of healthy, natural food with families in the Borough.
- 2.8 Allotments are a great resource and asset for physical health and mental well being. Their provision and benefits cannot be over estimated and can have a significant bearing on health and well being indicators and outcomes for many organisations.
- 2.9 The National Allotment Association provides good and practical advice for allotment associations and gardeners. There is a direct link to their website from the Council website, but again, for ease the website address is [www.nsalg.org.uk](http://www.nsalg.org.uk).

### **3. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT**

- 3.1 In respect of sites owned by KBC, a named officer is provided to allotment associations and Parish Councils to assist with any issues or information sharing. This has worked very well, it provides community ownership to local people, allotment committees and Parish Councils and assists the long term sustainability and provision of KBC allotments.

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## **4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 In respect of new housing developments, the Open Space Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is applied in response to all planning applications of ten or more dwellings.
- 4.2 KBC do not directly operate their allotment sites, the policy is to lease the sites to appropriate allotment associations or Parish Councils for a ten year period. The operators then collect the rents and manage the allotment sites. There is only one remaining allotment site operated directly by the Borough Council. This small site at Rushton is currently being discussed with Rushton Parish Council with a view to it being directly operated and managed by the Parish Council.

## **5. FINANCIAL RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Close contact is maintained with allotment operators and together, funding has been identified to improve allotment sites. The most recent improvements relate to access at Brachers Fields in Rothwell, extensions to Desborough Allotments and Northfield Avenue Allotments and addition of security fencing at Scott Road Allotments. The funding has been secured from various areas e.g. the Council's Small Capital Works Scheme, the Council's Small Grants Scheme and County Councillor Empowerment Funding.

## **6. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no additional human resource implications in respect of this report.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no additional legal implications in respect of this report

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 To advise Council officers of any website information improvements for the benefit of the public.

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