

BRIEFING NOTE

FOR THE ATTENTION OF:
Environment Forum

For Comment

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Subject / Title: Food growing / allotments

Ward(s): All

Date: 2nd January 2024
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Background

Current main food growing opportunities managed by the Council are the allotments situated throughout the borough. The allotments are managed through the Parks Business unit, required maintenance is performed through both the parks operations teams and play and park infrastructure, ensuring pathways, hedges and fence lines are maintained and general infrastructure operational.

Allotment stock

There are 36 allotment sites within the borough, four are leased sites, two are self-managed and the remaining thirty are managed by the Parks Business Unit. The thirty sites managed by the Parks Business Unit equate to 2652 separate plots, which currently sit at a 97% occupancy. The remaining three percent of plots are either in the process of occupation and being prepared for lease, or unusable due to access or infrastructure issues. Plots which cannot be leased at present are being reviewed and necessary works completed to allow for future use and tenancy.

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Allotment activities

Four allotment sites have beehives located at them, these include Trentwood side, Newbury, Chaselands and the Bourne. These installations are used to support local beekeepers and equally provide learning opportunities for interested parties.



Local Bee-Keeper and member of the park Business unit team at LBE

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Honey produced at one of the borough's allotment sites.

Seed and plant swap initiatives are supported and common practice within the communities of our allotment sites, as is plant plug drop off services which

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support established and new tenants, in the provision of food growing and plot use.

Not all allotments have community space, due to the characteristics of the plot lay outs on certain sites and lack of available space. Those sites which have community space are used as a location for inclusion, sharing of ideas and

It is common for the Parks Business Unit to be approached by community groups to lease a plot for learning opportunities for plot holders and equally support community growing initiatives within the allotment sites. If available the group will be leased an individual plot, at the standard fee, allowing for group use at a reasonable rate.

Albany Park – Hub and allotment

London Kitchen have secured tenancy of the allotment space and building to create a kitchen garden at this site. The site will function as a kitchen garden, with food grown at the allotment used as an ingredient of the food found on the hub menu.

As part of the evaluation process for the tenancy, colleagues from Public Health were extensively involved in the specification and evaluation process to ensure that food growing opportunities were optimised at this site.

Learning opportunities and work for local people will be a factor of the success of this tenancy and programme, which has yet to be agreed from a growing perspective.

The project and tenancy will be reviewed and used as a pilot to understand the strengths, weaknesses, and viability of introducing further kitchen gardens within the borough.

Future food growing options

As confirmed in the occupancy of our allotment plots, there is an enthusiasm for food growing within the borough. Equally with the commitment in the

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organisation's climate action plan, to reduce and or reuse waste products, sustainable food growth is a method of supporting achieving this.

The organisation has created a task group of officers from property, environment and communities and public health, to explore viable locations and methods for local food growing options. This group will create terms of reference for the organisation in relation to food growth and how this can be introduced further within the borough and communities

The task group will commence on the terms of reference in early 2024, which can be shared and discussed at a future environment forum

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