

Appendix 2 Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Impact Assessment



As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration. In all appropriate instances we will need to carry out an equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment.

This form:

- can be used to prompt discussion when carrying out your impact assessment
- should be completed either during the assessment process or following completion of the assessment
- should include a brief explanation where a section is not applicable

Directorate: City Development	Service area: Parks and Countryside
Lead person: Joanne Clough	Contact number: 3957448
Date of the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment: 20 August 2014	

1. Title: Allotment Charges 2015 /16 to 2017/18
Is this a:
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service <input type="checkbox"/> Function <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Is this:
<input type="checkbox"/> New/ proposed <input type="checkbox"/> Already exists and is being reviewed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is changing
(Please tick one of the above)

2. Members of the assessment team:

Name	Organisation	Role on assessment team e.g. service user, manager of service, specialist
Joanne Clough	LCC	Manager
Lynne Rogers	LCC	Allotment Inspector
Simon Frosdick	LCC	Business Development Manager
Geoff Turnbull	LCC	Equalities Unit

3. Summary of strategy, policy, service or function that was assessed:

This assessment relates to the impact regarding the proposed increase in allotment rental charges to ensure the financial sustainability of the allotment service provision.

Allotment plot holders are given a minimum of 6 month notice in advance of any proposed increase in allotment rental charges ready for implementation on the 1st October in any year. Water charges where relevant are not subject to this proposed increase in allotment rental charges and therefore, are not included within this assessment. .

4. Scope of the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment
(complete - 4a. if you are assessing a strategy, policy or plan and 4b. if you are assessing a service, function or event)

4a. Strategy, policy or plan
(please tick the appropriate box below)

The vision and themes, objectives or outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>
The vision and themes, objectives or outcomes and the supporting guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>
A specific section within the strategy, policy or plan	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide detail:

4b. Service, function, event
please tick the appropriate box below

The whole service (including service provision and employment)	<input type="checkbox"/>
A specific part of the service (including service provision or employment or a specific section of the service)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Procuring of a service (by contract or grant) (please see equality assurance in procurement)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide detail:
The scale of charges applicable for the provision of allotments and water.

5. Fact finding – what do we already know

Make a note here of all information you will be using to carry out this assessment. This could include: previous consultation, involvement, research, results from perception surveys, equality monitoring and customer/ staff feedback. (priority should be given to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration related information)

The following outlines the current charges applicable from October 2013:

Rental	Non-Concession holders	Concession holders	Water Supply (Council Managed)
Full plot price (250 sq m)	£38.50	£19.25	£19.00
Half plot price (125 sp m)	£19.25	£9.63	£8.00

Following the outcome of a recent Judicial Review challenge allotment rental charges from October 2014 will remain at the same level as the previous year. The details and the impact of this Judicial Review is set out within the Executive Board report.

In order to gain a better level of understanding of the demographic profile of allotment users, around 4,000 questionnaires were sent out during the summer of 2012 to all plot holders who currently have an allotment and to those on waiting lists. 629 completed questionnaires were returned representing a 16% response. The following summarises the percentage profile of allotment users where respondents indicated a status for each category:

Gender	Male	59.4%
	Female	40.6%
Age	18-25	0.5%
	26-35	8.8%
	36-65	57.3%
	66-75	25.9%
	76+	7.5%
Stated a disability	Physical impairment	11.4%
	Sensory impairment	12.6%
	Mental health impairment	26.3%
	Learning disabilities	6.6%
	Long standing illness	43.1%
Relationship Status	Married	61.6%
	Co-habiting	12.1%
	Civil Partnership	1.8%
	Single	18.6%
	Other	5.9%
Ethnic Origin	White	96.2%
	Asian	0.8%
	Black, African or Caribbean	2.1%
	Mixed race	0.9%
Religion / belief	Christian	62.4%
	No religion	32.6%
	Other religion / belief	5.0%
Sexual Orientation	Hetro / Straight	93.7%
	Lesbian / gay woman	2.8%
	Gay man	1.6%
	Bisexual	1.9%

In relation to allotment rental charges, the Parks and Countryside service receive an income of £45k per year which includes rental, water charges and the proportion of income via allotment associations. A projected expenditure of £178k in 2012/13 was incurred thereby creating a net deficit of £133k. This information was set out in a report that was considered by the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board in November 2012 and was based on a projected full year spend.

Prior to deciding how to address the net deficit a consultation document was distributed to around 3,400 plot holder households in the city in July 2013. It was also included on 'Talking Point' and the Council website. Copies of the document were also sent to all ward members and the Leeds and District Gardener's Federation.

The consultation document set out three options as follows:

- Option 1: review prices by applying an increase to all plot holders in proportion to what they currently pay to recover a £133k subsidy.

The table below shows the affects on rental prices on implementing option 1.

Rental	Non-Concession holders	Concession holders
Full plot price (250 sq m)	£103.07	£51.53
Half plot price (125 sq m)	£51.53	£25.77

- Option 2: review prices by applying an increase to plot holders who currently pay the full rate whilst retaining plot rental levels for those entitled to concessions to recover a £133k subsidy.

The table below shows the affects on rental prices on implementing option 2.

Rental	Non-Concession holders	Concession holders
Full plot price (250 sq m)	£123.43	£18.50
Half plot price (125 sq m)	£61.71	£9.25

- Option 3: review the management arrangements to seek a third party operator for allotment provision who would determine pricing arrangements and meet all costs associated with provision.

People were also invited to put forward any other options that they felt the Council should consider. One such option included reducing the management and maintenance expenditure associated with allotments. By not appointing the Community Food Growing Officer post and by reducing the improvements budget an overall efficiency saving of £53k can be achieved. This would leave a net deficit of £80k as opposed to a net deficit of £133k

The following table provides analysis of options selected by respondents.

Option	Number of responses	Proportion
Option 1	304	52.6%

Option 2	34	5.9%
Option 3	128	22.1%
No option identified	112	19.4%
Total	578	

From this analysis it can be observed that nearly 60% were in favour of a price rise, with the overwhelming majority in favour of option 1.

It is clear from consultation undertaken that the provision of allotments is valued and there is a strong desire to see this provision retained in a high quality, sustainable way. However there is also a clear need to address a budget deficit and users and stakeholders strongly expressed a desire to see proportional increases including to concession holders. Whilst many preferred option 1, this does not recognise the importance of concessions for those who would not be able to afford the proposed price increase. It is important to ensure those who genuinely can not afford to pay are not excluded from the enjoyment of managing an allotment. Therefore, it is proposed to retain concessions for those who are registered disabled, unemployed, full time student or in receipt of pension credit and introduce a new 20% concession for those who are in receipt of a state pension.

The proposed charges will only affect those allotment sites that fall under the management of the Parks and Countryside Service and do not have any influence on those charges made by other service providers across the city e.g. Town Councils. As part of the allotment rules and tenancy agreements, concessions are and remain available for those on low incomes

Following the consultation process, the service did reduce the net deficit to £80k by not filling the vacant post of Community Food Growing Officer in addition to reducing the development budget and the effect of this reduced the allotment rental charges from that originally set out within the consultation paper.

This meant that a full size allotment plot would now be £72 phased in over a three year period as opposed to £103 as was set out within the consultation paper.

The table below sets out the proposed allotment rental charges.

Proposed charges for future years:

Rental	2015/16			2016/17			2017/18		
	Con- cessio n	Con- cession Pensioner	Full	Con- cessio n	Con- cession Pensioner	Full	Con- cessio n	Con- cession Pensioner	Full
Full plot price (250sq m)	£29.00	£46.40	£58.00	£32.50	£52.00	£65.00	£36.00	£57.60	£72.00
Half plot price (125sq m)	£14.50	£23.20	£29.00	£16.25	£26.00	£32.50	£18.00	£28.80	£36.00
Quarter plot price (62.5sq m)	£7.25	£11.60	£14.50	£8.00	£13.00	£16.25	£9.00	£14.40	£18.00

In addition to carrying out a consultation exercise, the service also looked at comparable data from core cities and other neighbouring authorities as well as looking at land valuation assessments. The results of this are set out within the Executive Board report. As a general rule, land valuation is usually based on location rather than on whether a tenant can afford to pay the rental charge. Whilst an average assessment could be made across the city to try and establish an average rental charge this is not regarded as an equitable approach for setting allotment rental charges, as this could potentially lead towards one area subsidising another area based on location of an allotment site.

Are there any gaps in equality and diversity information
Please provide detail:
 It is acknowledged that not everyone completed this section that was included within the consultation paper therefore there may be a potential gap in the data. However, from those who did, the equality questionnaire demonstrates that the number of allotment holders from BME communities are low and that there is a higher proportion of allotment holders who have an impairment / mental health illness.

Action required: To actively promote the enjoyment and use of having an allotment across all groups and to ensure that concessions and allotment prices are regularly checked for accuracy.

6. Wider involvement – have you involved groups of people who are most likely to be affected or interested

Yes **No**

Please provide detail:
 We have consulted with our allotment plot holders, including the the Leeds and District Gardeners Federation.

Action required:
 Undertake further consultation and surveys to build upon the established bench mark data within the allotment service provision.

7. Who may be affected by this activity?
 please tick all relevant and significant equality characteristics, stakeholders and barriers that apply to your strategy, policy, service or function

Equality characteristics

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion or Belief
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex (male or female)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	

Other

(for example – marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, social class, income, unemployment, residential location or family background, education or skills level)

Please specify: Those on low income or in receipt of benefits

Stakeholders

Services users

Employees

Trade Unions

Partners

Members

Suppliers

Other please specify

Allotment Working Group and the Leeds and District Gardeners Federation

Potential barriers.

Built environment

Location of premises and services

Information and communication

Customer care

Timing

Stereotypes and assumptions

Cost

Consultation and involvement

specific barriers to the strategy, policy, services or function

Please specify

8. Positive and negative impact

Think about what you are assessing (scope), the fact finding information, the potential positive and negative impact on equality characteristics, stakeholders and the effect of the barriers

8a. Positive impact:

The introduction of a phased price increase over the next three years for the provision of allotments across the city will secure the future provision being managed by the Council.

This will create many opportunities to involve local communities by bringing them closer together to enhance and improve their local allotment site. These sites have created many opportunities to tap into funds that in turn has ensured that the City Council can make the best use of any limited resources.

Action required:

To encourage more city controlled sites to become self administered or to establish a friends of group for those sites who do not wish to become self managed.

8b. Negative impact:

The proposed increase in charges is over 100% and may have a negative impact on those on limited incomes or in receipt of benefits.

Action required:

To ensure that allotment plot holders are aware of the existence of concessionary rates and to ensure that allotment plot holders are aware of the offer of reduced size plots so that these remain affordable.

9. Will this activity promote strong and positive relationships between the groups/communities identified?

Yes

No

Please provide detail:

The increase in fees will enable the City Council to continue to develop allotments by working in closure partnerships with each individual allotment association. This in turn will create safer and stronger communities - by establishing local community links via the Allotment Associations.

It will ensure the sustainable provision of these facilities whilst still offering value for money thereby providing an opportunity to undertake a healthy activity and to foster social and inter-community activity through increased interaction. Allotment plot holders assist one another and provides an opportunity for competition between other Allotment Associations which would otherwise not exist.

It also fosters and promotes membership and attachments to the community facility as well as fellow plot holders strengthening their ownership and sense of belonging.

Action required:

To promote the existence of the provision across the city including reduced size plots making these more affordable and manageable.

10. Does this activity bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other (e.g. in schools, neighbourhood, workplace)?

Yes

No

Please provide detail:

Cultivating allotment plots encourages a wide range of ages and abilities at differing levels of experience.

With just under 1,000 people on the waiting list also provides anecdotal evidence that allotments are in demand. Reducing the size of the allotment plots will also provide more opportunities to reduce waiting list numbers.

Self managed allotment sites and sites where there are active friends of groups often provide a staple regular meeting point and increased social interaction which would otherwise not exist.

Financial un-sustainability of the service provision would threaten the ongoing availability of these opportunities.

Action required:

To promote the existence of the provision across the city .

11. Could this activity be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another?

Yes

No

Please provide detail:

This price increase only affects those allotment sites that are in control of the Parks and Countryside Service. Other providers across the city such as Parish and Town Councils or Housing may operate a different process.

Action required

The increase in fees are across all allotment sites that are within the control of the Parks and Countryside service.

12. Equality, diversity, cohesion and integration action plan

(insert all your actions from your assessment here, set timescales, measures and identify a lead person for each action)

Action	Timescale	Measure	Lead person
Promote reduced size plots	April 2015 to April 2016	Promotional Material and take up	Allotment Inspector
Raise awareness of the existence of concessionary rates	November 2014	All those claiming a concession will be evidenced and reviewed annually.	Allotment Inspector
To reduce waiting list numbers	From November 2014	By the provision of new allotments and the allocation of allotment plots as soon as possible including reduced size plots	Allotment Inspector
To encourage more sites to become self administered or establish active friends of groups for those sites who do not wish to become self managed.	Ongoing	Increase in number of active allotment community groups	Allotment Inspector

13. Governance, ownership and approval

State here who has approved the actions and outcomes from the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment

Name	Job Title	Date
Joanne Clough	Trading & Operational Support Manager	20 August 2014

14. Monitoring progress for equality, diversity, cohesion and integration actions (please tick)

- As part of Service Planning performance monitoring
- As part of Project monitoring
- Update report will be agreed and provided to the appropriate board
Please specify which board
- Other (please specify)

15. Publishing

Date sent to Equality Team	20 August 2014
Date published	