

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting11th June 2009

1. Title of Item/Report

Allotment provision and meeting future demand within Stockton-on-Tees

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report on allotment provision and future demand within Stockton on Tees. Allotments had become increasing popular over recent years and 2008 saw a dramatic shift in demand for allotments. With the increasing emphasis on healthy lifestyles and current building practices providing reduced outside space for horticulture and vegetable growing areas, allotment provision had become a priority for residents. The report highlighted that there was insufficient allotment provision within Stockton on Tees.

Within Section 23 of the Allotment Act 1908 it was made the express duty of every allotment authority, where there was a demand for allotments; provide a sufficient number of them for residents of that area. There were in excess of 400 names on the waiting lists.

The administration and management of Stockton Borough Councils Allotment Portfolio was within Care For Your Area, Direct Services, however there were 21 sites across the borough that were owned by Town / Parish Councils with management responsibility devolved to Allotment Associations.

There were a total of 1103 allotment plots within the borough, the breakdown of plots was detailed within the report.

There were 23 vacant plots, the majority of which were within the Billingham Area on the Clarences allotment site where there was no demand.

Vacant plots in Thornaby were not ready for occupation and required some redevelopment, yet the demand on this site exceeded the availability even when these plots were brought back into use.

There were 427 people waiting for allotment plots across the Borough with the average waiting time to receive a plot now standing at 2 to 3

years, depending on the location. This figure was expected to rise.

Demand for allotments had fluctuated in recent years, however national statistics and the demand for allotments within Stockton on Tees had proven that there was an under provision of allotment land.

As with all developments funding would need to be sought in order to bring the land back into use, however the Authority was looking at a number of options to meet future demand for allotment land:-

* Future allotment provision was included within the Local Development Framework, a total of 21 out of 26 sites were protected under planning policy.

* Trends for allotment demand had been identified and were being used to identify appropriate land for future use of allotment land.

* The Thornaby Allotments Steering Group was in the process of submitting grant applications to develop disused plots within the Thornaby sites to bring these back into use, it was expected that the waiting list would be reduced to 50 people.

* A consultation exercise was being carried to inform development of the Action Plan for the Stockton on Tees Green Infrastructure Strategy. This exercise would look at residents priorities for open space land and its future use. Allotment provision was included as part of this exercise which would be complete by the end of June 2009. Once land prioritisation was completed a separate strategy would be developed to include funding opportunities to develop further allotment sites across the Borough to meet current and future demand.

Priorities for additional land was within the Stockton South and Billingham areas, where at present little provision existed and waiting list turnover was at its highest. It was suggested that the strategy to be developed include consideration of the size of allotments provided, as often these could be too big for many individuals to maintain; and should examine the potential for Tristar open space or gardens to be included in such a strategy.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Potential new allotment sites be identified as part of the action planning process for Stockton on Tees Green Infrastructure Strategy and plans compliment the Sustainable Communities strategy.

2. A separate strategy be developed to look at the future of allotment

provision within Stockton on Tees, linking in with possible community partnerships and identify potential bodies that might be able to be set up to access charitable or grant facilities.

3. Reasons for the Decision

Stockton on Tees had an under provision of allotments. The recommendations allowed further work on identifying potential additional allotment sites.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Coleman declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of this item as he was an allotment holder.

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not Applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

By Midnight, Friday, 19th June 2009

Proper Officer
16 June 2009