
**ALLOTMENTS: PROPOSAL BY SPRINGWELL TERRACE ALLOTMENT
ASSOCIATION TO BE GRANTED “SELF-MANAGED” STATUS, TO SURRENDER
THEIR EXISTING AGREEMENT AND BE GRANTED A NEW LONG LEASE**

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Stephen Harker
Efficiency and Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Director – Paul Wildsmith,
Director of Neighbourhood Services & Resources
Ian Williams, Director of Economic Growth**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek the approval of Members to allow Springwell Terrace allotment site to become self-managed and to be granted a new 20-year lease.

Summary

2. The principle of the Council agreeing to allotment sites becoming self-managed was accepted in the Allotments Strategy for Darlington 2009-2019. Cabinet of 9 May 2006 referred to a review of the allotments service by the Resources Scrutiny Committee during 2001 and their report and action plan was approved by Cabinet on 18 January 2002.
3. Of the 18 sites the Council has, 12 are now self-managed allotments.
4. Springwell Terrace Allotment Site is now seeking to become self-managed, making a total of 13 self-managed allotments.

Recommendations

5. It is recommended that Cabinet :-
 - (a) Authorise the Director of Economic Growth to offer the latest applicant and any remaining Allotment Associations the same 20-year self-managed lease negotiated and agreed with Cockerton Allotment Association and approved by Cabinet on 7 July 2015.

- (b) The Assistant Director - Law and Governance be authorised to complete the self-managed leases accordingly.

Reasons

6. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

- (a) There is a financial deficit in respect of managing the allotment sites that remain under the direct control of the Council. This should be reduced if more associations become self-managed. Even with the proposed increases in allotment charges, the deficit would remain, so allowing more associations to become self-managed should assist reduce that deficit.
- (b) There should be a reduction in the call on officer time if the relevant association is allowed to go self-managed.
- (c) The granting of a 20-year lease to the successful association should enable them to seek more external funding, which, if granted, could result in improvements to the allotments.

Ian Williams
Director of Economic Growth

Paul Wildsmith
Director of Neighbourhood Services & Resources

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

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S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for crime and disorder
Health and Well Being	There are no Health and Well Being Issues
Carbon Impact	There are no sustainability issues
Diversity	There are no diversity issues
Wards Affected	Haughton & Springfield Ward
Groups Affected	Not Applicable
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	There are no issues adversely affecting the Community Strategy
Efficiency	In allowing an allotment site to become self-managed, the Council should have fewer direct responsibilities for the site and this would have a positive impact on the Councils budget.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. A further allotment site has expressed a wish to achieve self-managed status in the same way in which Cockerton Allotment Association did in October 2016. If allowed, this will mean that individual allotment tenancy holders will no longer pay an annual fee to the Council. They will pay a fee to their own allotment association which will be agreed between themselves collectively and their own association. The allotment association will pay the Council a nominal sum but will in return be responsible for the maintenance of the area included within the boundary of the self-managed lease.
8. When previous allotment associations have sought to become self-managed, the Council has assisted that process by paying the first year's water charges incurred by the relevant association, it is therefore proposed to confirm this arrangement.

Proposed Self- Management Lease Terms

9. The self-managed lease achieved in October 2016 with Cockerton Allotment Association has a relocation clause within it which was the subject of extensive negotiations between the Estates Section and the Allotment Association, as well as a range of other terms that are beneficial to the development of allotments, the resolution of disputes, consultation between the association and the Council, as well as a range of standard terms.

Planning Comment

10. There would be no change of use to the areas subject to allotment tenancies at the relevant sites therefore no Planning comments have been sought.

Financial Implications

11. The proposed rent increases for the allotment plots was intended to make the service break-even, but if the sites are allowed to go self-managed, the effect should be similar because the Council will not be bearing the responsibility for repairs and maintenance, the officer time involved in billing individual allotment rents and managing the relevant sites.

Outcome of Consultations

12. Internal consultations have not raised any objections to the proposal.

Legal Advice

13. Specific legal advice is not required but the Assistant Director - Law and Governance will be required, if the proposal is approved by Cabinet, to document this further self-managed lease and any subsequent leases.