

BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL
Environment Committee
21 September 2023
Decision Report 1

Allotment Provision

Recommendation

The Committee RESOLVE to consider:

The need for additional allotments within the Blyth Town Council boundaries.

Ward

Cowpen /Isabella /Plessey

Risk Management

There is no budgetary provision for the additional allotments and members would have to agree to draw on reserves to fund these new allotments.

Objective

Allotments are seen as another form of exercise for all ages and additionally being able to grow fruit and vegetables for a healthy lifestyle.

Report

At a previous meeting of this Committee, Officers were requested to gather further information on land and funding availability, as well as comparing our allotment statistics with neighbouring Councils.

Officers have checked again with NCC for potential allotment sites and other areas were identified. Officers identified several problems, such as poor access to the site and no parking facilities other than on-street only. There are two additional areas of land between Sixth Avenue and Ninth Avenue which members raised previously and between both they would only be able to accommodate ten plots. The entrance width to both would again only be accessible on foot, this would lead to parking concerns and also skip deliveries in the future. Deliveries of manure to the site would

only be achievable if tipped on the road causing more blockages and the road, would require cleansing after.

Location: Weardale Appendix 1

Kitty Brewster Ward

This site would give the Council 10 additional plots, there would be no hard surface lane but will require external and internal fencing along with a water system at an indicative cost of **£70,000**.

Location: Cowpen Hall Road Appendix 2

Kitty Brewster Ward

This site would give the Council 14 additional plots, there would be no hard surface lane but will require external and internal fencing along with a water system at an indicative cost of **£80,000**.

Location: Dovedale Avenue Appendix 3

Kitty Brewster Ward

This site would give the Council 10 additional plots, there would be no hard surface lane but will require external and internal fencing along with a water system at an indicative cost of **£70,000**.

Location: Newsham Road Appendix 4

Isabella Ward

This site would give the Council 50 additional plots, there would be no hard surface lane but will require external and internal fencing along with a water system at an indicative cost of **£175,000 to £200,000**.

Location: Ravensdale Grove Appendix 5

Kitty Brewster Ward

This site would give the Council 5 additional plots, there would be no hard surface lane but will require external and internal fencing along with a water system at an indicative cost of **£40,000**.

Location: Sixth Avenue Appendix 6

Plessey Ward

This site would give the Council 4 additional plots, there would be no hard surface lane but will require external and internal fencing along with a water system at an indicative cost of **£40,000**.

Location: Ninth Avenue Appendix 7

Plessey Ward

This site would give the Council 4 additional plots, there would be no hard surface lane but will require external and internal fencing along with a water system at an indicative cost of **£55,000**.

If any of the options were to progress further, more detailed costs were sought from contractors using the Gov Contract Portal. As in all the above options the rental income as in all the present allotment sites covers water, skips and on-going maintenance.

As far as funding is concerned this is not an option open to Blyth Town Council and any additional sites would have to be met from its own balances. Most funders who will give grants to allotments do so when it is for Community groups or Allotment Associations who are self-managed.

In determining the need for additional plots, the Committee requested our own Council's resources against any standards available and to that of neighbouring Councils.

Some time ago the Government commissioned an independent report, chaired by Prof H. Thorpe, of allotment provisions. This review recommends a minimum of 15 allotments per 1000 adult population.

As the table below shows, this Council meets the minimum standard, and includes neighbouring Councils as a comparator.

Also included within the table are figures provided from the National Society of Allotments and Leisure Gardeners (NASLG) which show a higher provision required, than by the independent report.

Area	Population (Adult)	Plots	Thorpe Min	NASLG Min
Blyth	30,000	539	450	600
Morpeth	12,000	100	180	240
Cramlington	25,000	200	375	500

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Seaton Valley	13,000	320	195	260
Bedlington	13,000	91	195	260
Ashington	23,000	800	345	460
North Tyneside	174,000	1300	2610	3480
Newcastle	250,000	3500	3750	5000

Blyth has 539 plots, and a waiting list of 184 people, and of those only 18 were on the list prior to 2022. These people along with another 17 have stated that they want a plot local to themselves only. They will not accept a plot further than the one that they have asked for.

This indicates a general turnaround of 18 months to 2 years on the waiting list, which is not an unreasonable time period in terms of an allotment waiting period when compared to others.

Examples of other councils waiting list time.

Cramlington Town Council: Two half year to three year

Seaton Valley Council: Three year

Ashington Town Council: Two to three year

North Tyneside Council: Seven year

Newcastle City Council: Seven year

Officers have not carried out a Consultation exercise on additional allotment provision and will be done so dependent upon the decision from this report.

Information tables

Breakdown of waiting list by ward.

Area	
Kitty Brewster	27
Cowpen	21
Croft	20
Isabella	24
Wensleydale	28
Plessey	12
South Beach	17
Newsham	35

Areas where allotments are sited

Bebside	Kitty Brewster	15
10 th Ave	Plessey	15
Laverock Place	Newsham	4
Delaval Gardens	Newsham	4
Beatrice	Newsham	59
Wensleydale	Wensleydale	60
BSHAA	Cowpen/Isabella	262
NNDDAA	Newsham	120

**D Clough
General Services Officer**

11 September 2023