

# Cambridge Allotments - A Management Policy

Consultation Draft



## **Contents**

1	Executive Summary	3
2	Background and Report Purpose	5
3	Allotment Provision In Cambridge	7
4	Policy Context	8
5	Assessing Quantity, Quality and Accessibility	12
6	Current Management, Resources and Funding	17
7	Recommendations	22
8	Action Plan	27
9	Appendices	28

## **Foreward**

To be completed for final version and following consultation

## 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out what the City Council wants to achieve from its allotment provision, it considers future needs and demands, details how these can be achieved and the resources that may be required.
- 1.2 A report commissioned by Policy and Projects and Active Communities entitled 'A Review of Allotment Provision' was completed by Ashley Godfrey Associates in January 2010. It provides the technical background for this report.
- 1.3 Allotments have evolved through a history of social and economic change, which has been accompanied by a succession of legislation known as the Allotment Acts, which remain relevant today to allotment administration and provision.
- 1.4 Allotments are a unique resource. They are a distinctive component of the City's green spaces with significance for wildlife and as part of the urban fabric. Allotment gardening provides multiple benefits to individuals; communities and the wider environment. Whilst allotment gardening is about the production of good quality, fresh and low cost food, allotments also provide the opportunity for a year-round healthy lifestyle which is active, socially inclusive and which reflects the ideals of sustainability and well-being. Allotments have a significant role to play in the protection and promotion of biodiversity. They represent an important opportunity for community interaction where social and other boundaries can be overcome.
- 1.5 The high level of response<sup>1</sup> shown by allotment holders during consultation demonstrates that allotment gardening is well valued. An audit of allotment sites has found that the majority of Cambridge's allotment sites are well used and successful.
- 1.6 Allotments and allotment gardening feature in several other Cambridge City Council strategies and plans, including the Parks Asset Management Plan 2010-2014, the Open Space and Recreation Strategy, the Cambridge Local Plan 2006, North West Cambridge and Cambridge East Area Action Plans.
- 1.7 Partnership between the Council and Allotment Associations, sharing responsibilities through devolved management, has contributed significantly to increasing the level of participation in allotment gardening throughout the City and to the delivery of the wider benefits that the Council regards as important. Local communities have an important stake in the future for allotments, ensuring they are managed efficiently and effectively.
- 1.8 The aim of this report is to create policies that will maximise the use and the contributions that allotments can make. This is achieved through the formulation of recommendations and the subsequent creation of objectives.
- 1.9 This report details the following recommendations:-

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<sup>1</sup> 60% of those consulted on 'A Review of Allotment Provision' responded.

- the need to meet both current and future demand;
- improvements to the quality of provision to ensure that allotment sites are welcoming and accessible to all;
- improvements to the management and administration of allotment sites;
- safe and secure allotment sites;
- sustainable practices;
- promotion of allotments and gardening; and
- an allocation policy for allotments on growth sites.

## 2 Background and Report Purpose

2.1 The technical report, 'A Review of Allotment Provision', by Ashley Godfrey Associates provides:-

- Information for the monitoring of Policy 3/8 Open Space and Recreation Provision Through New Development; Policy 4/2 Protection of Open Space; Policy 4/3 Safeguarding Features of Amenity or Nature Conservation Value in Cambridge Local Plan 2006;
- Assistance in developing a local evidence base for the Core Strategy, Development Control Policies and Site Specific Allocations DPDs and for the review of the Planning Obligations Strategy Supplementary Planning Document;
- An understanding of the differences between allotments and community gardens and orchards and their legal protection;
- Information to prioritise improvements to existing sites and the provision and maintenance of new sites;
- Information for the drafting of a new lease agreement between the council and the allotment societies;
- Evidence to support future management policies relating to allotments sites within the council's ownership; and
- Informs the future management policy of those allotments sites where the responsibility for site management has been devolved to an allotment association.

2.2 By adapting the overall vision for open space and recreation provision developed for the Open Space and Recreation Strategy the following **draft vision** for allotments provision is offered:-

*"To provide, improve and maintain a network of allotment sites that are accessible to all, physically, culturally and socially, and which meet the needs of those who live in the City including the proposed urban extensions while also protecting and enhancing the environment. Local communities should be actively involved in decisions relating to improving and creating allotment sites and their future use and management. The design of allotments should provide opportunities for ploholders to grow vegetables, fruit and flowers for their own use. Allotment sites should places that are safe, celebrate cultural diversity, provide opportunities for learning and socialising whilst also offering a peaceful and quiet respite from daily routine."*

2.3 This report provides a framework for the development and management of allotments in partnership with the users which aims to:-

- enable Council allotment sites to be used to their full potential;
- ensure that there are sufficient allotments available for the community;
- increase the benefits derived from allotments;
- build on the improvements already achieved in order to create an efficient, flexible, effective Allotments Service that reflects best practice in allotment management;
- provide a plan to guide the work of the allotment management team;
- increase the sustainability of allotments;

- reflect good practice in allotment management;
- reflect wider corporate objectives;
- promote allotment gardening;
- support good administration;
- maintain adequate resources;
- secure the provision of new sites in areas of under-provision and high demand where this is feasible;
- improve the standard of service provision;
- support the uptake of allotments; and
- provide good practice guidelines;

2.4 This report will also inform the development of a service from which people can expect:-

- safe and secure allotments sites with good security, good access, and adequate toilet facilities;
- fair, efficient and effective allotment administration;
- effective and appropriate allocation of resources;
- adequate water supplies by means of mains water standpipes; storage butts; and recycled rainwater provision;
- opportunities for developing gardening skills;
- fair and equitable rents and charges;
- absence of neglected plots; and
- encouragement for sites to develop self-management.

### 3 Allotment Provision in Cambridge

- 3.1 Allotments are an important asset to Cambridge, providing a wide range of benefits to local communities and the environment. They are a valuable green sustainable open space that benefits wildlife and provides a recreational activity that offers health, exercise, and social contact at a low cost. They are also readily accessible to those members of the community who find themselves socially or economically disadvantaged.
- 3.2 Allotment gardening benefits the individual gardener by providing access to affordable, fresh vegetables, physical exercise and social activity. In addition, there are associated environmental and social benefits that extend into the community, which can support Cambridge City Council's efforts towards sustainable development.
- 3.3 In 1966 a review of Cambridge allotments resulted in allotment societies surrendering land in return for better facilities. The upturn in interest in the 1970s resulted in some allotments being brought back into use. In the early 1980s, more allotments were lost to development and in the 1990s, the trend continued with the release of 10 hectares at Histon Road.<sup>2</sup>
- 3.4 In 1997 it was reported that there were approximately 43 hectares of allotment land in Cambridge, or 1600 plots, on 27 sites. All but one of these were owned by the City Council with most being leased to allotment societies on a three year lease. One site was not in Council ownership, being owned and managed by Peterhouse, one of the colleges of the University of Cambridge.
- 3.5 A survey in October 1996 showed that approximately 18% of all the plots were uncultivated. There was a wide variation between sites, some being fully cultivated and some being relatively unused. Sites with particularly high levels of vacancy were Newmarket Road, Nuffield Road, Stourbridge Grove, Fairfax Road, Peverel Road, and Foster Road.
- 3.6 The report concluded that land should be released for social housing on Nuffield Road, Stourbridge Grove, and Burnside.
- 3.7 At present there are substantial waiting lists at nearly all the allotment sites in Cambridge. There is substantial current demand and there will also be a substantial number of new homes built in and around the City over the next few years and it will be necessary to ensure that the demand from these additional areas of population is met by enhancing existing and creating new provision of allotments.

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<sup>2</sup> Histon Road Allotments are located within the South Cambridgeshire District Council boundary but are in the ownership of Cambridge City Council. The 10 hectares of allotment land released in the 1990's was located within the City Council's boundary.

## 4 Policy Context

### 4.1 The Council's Medium Term Objectives

Cambridge City Council has four Medium Term Objectives to:-

- Promote Cambridge as a sustainable city, in particular by reducing carbon dioxide emissions and the amount of waste going into landfill in the City and sub-region;
- Ensure that residents and other service users have an entirely positive experience of dealing with the Council;
- Maintain a healthy, safe and enjoyable city for all, with thriving and viable neighbourhoods; and
- Lead the growth of Cambridge to achieve attractive, sustainable new neighbourhoods, including affordable housing, close to a good range of facilities, and supported by transport networks so that people can opt not to use the car.

### 4.2 Cambridge Parks – Managing the City's Asset

This report examines the value and role of green space in contributing to the City Council's Medium Term Objectives and the principles of the Cultural Framework. It provides an approach to managing Council-owned green space assets for the period 2010 to 2014. The 'Green space assets' include those Parks, Amenity Green Spaces, Children's Play Areas, Allotments, Outdoor Sports, Closed Churchyards and Natural Green Space managed by the City Council.

- 4.2.1 A full audit of the green space asset provides the evidence to support policies based on the understanding of relationships between quality, quantity, accessibility and value.

### 4.3 Cambridge Environmental Framework 2009-2012

In this framework, Cambridge City Council identified the promotion of sustainable development as a priority, with the objective to:

*"Promote Cambridge as a sustainable city, in particular by reducing carbon dioxide emissions and the amount of waste going into landfill in the City and sub-region".*

- 4.3.1 The document outlines the corporate environmental objectives of Cambridge City Council and provides a framework for co-ordinating actions which contribute towards their fulfilment.

The City Council's Environmental Outcomes & Objectives are: -

- A. Tackle the causes and consequences of climate change
  - A1. Reduce carbon dioxide emissions;
  - A2. Manage climate change risks;
  - A3. Reduce fuel poverty;
- B. Minimise waste
  - B1. Reduce the amount of waste generated;
  - B2. Increase waste reuse, recycling and composting; and
  - B3. Reduce waste sent to landfill.

#### 4.4 Allotments Local Habitat Action Plan for Cambridgeshire (Reviewed: May 2008)

4.4.1 This Action Plan is concerned with biological status of allotments in the County and makes specific reference to allotments in Cambridge. There is evidence<sup>3</sup> that allotments have on average an up to 30% higher species diversity than urban parks.

#### 4.5 Standards of Provision

There is no legal national minimum standard of provision. However, Local Authorities are required to audit their allotments, set local standards of provision and assess the actual level of provision against this standard in order to comply with the requirements of PPG17.

4.5.1 A review of the provision and standards of other similar or exemplar Local Authorities has been undertaken. The selection of similar Local Authorities was guided in the first instance by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) Corresponding Local Authority data. The ONS has produced a list of the Local Authorities whose characteristics are most similar to Cambridge

4.5.2 These are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: ONS Corresponding Local Authorities

Similarity	LAD
Most similar	Oxford
2nd	Southampton
3rd	Brighton and Hove
4th	Bristol

4.5.3 There is no information available for the most similar local authority, Oxford City Council. However, data is available for the remaining three Local Authorities and this is shown in **Table 2** below.

Table 2: Standards of Provision and Existing Levels of Provision in other Local Authorities

Local Authority	Standard (hectares per 1,000 population)	Existing level of Provision (hectares per 1,000 population)
Brighton & Hove	0.23	
Bristol	0.175	
Cambridge	0.4	0.32
Carlisle		0.14
Chester		0.16
Colchester	0.2	0.16
Coventry	0.38	0.38
East Northamptonshire	0.34	0.34
Erewash	0.31	0.29
Exeter		0.36
Gloucester	0.2	0.2
Harlow	0.3	
Harrogate	0.4	
Hull	0.24	0.21
Ipswich		0.53
Kingston		0.28

<sup>3</sup> 'The allotment and leisure gardens and the sustainable development' Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux

Local Authority	Standard (hectares per 1,000 population)	Existing level of Provision (hectares per 1,000 population)
Brighton & Hove	0.23	
Bristol	0.175	
Cambridge	0.4	0.32
Lincoln		0.3
Luton	0.2	0.17
Milton Keynes	0.25	
Northampton	0.2	
Redcar	0.4	
Salisbury	0.55 (Urban) & 0.30 (Rural)	0.36
Sandwell	0.31	
Shrewsbury		0.4
Solihull	0.3	0.12
South Northants	0.38	
Southampton	0.2	
Stevenage	0.09	
Taunton		0.24
Thurrock	0.375	0.25
Welwyn Hatfield	0.13	0.13
Wolverhampton	0.2	
Worcester	0.4	0.29
York	0.292	

#### 4.6 The impact of growth of the City

Cambridge is expected to grow by at least 19,000 additional new homes by 2021. The City Council has made a commitment to achieving attractive, sustainable new neighbourhoods close to a good range of facilities. The Open Space and Recreation Strategy, Cambridge Local Plan 2006 and North West Cambridge and Cambridge East Area Action Plans sets out the standard of provision for allotments in the Growth Areas of 0.4 hectare per 1000 people to meet the needs of these new and growing communities.

##### 4.6.1 Table 3 below details the provision secured in the growth areas.

**Table 3 Proposed Allotments In Growth Areas**

Growth Area Location	Proposed Allotment Provision
Trumpington Meadows – up to 1200 homes	0.9 hectares
Glebe Farm – up to 300 homes	0.27 hectares
Clay Farm - up to 2300 homes (Note: total between Clay and Glebe is 2,550 homes)	2 hectares (0.6 of this is within development area in the form of community gardens)
Bell School - about 350 homes	0.3 hectares
<b>Southern Fringe Total</b>	<b>3.5 ha</b>
North West Cambridge (between Madingley Road and Huntingdon Road) – approx 3,000 dwellings and 2,000 units of student accommodation)	0.4 hectares per 1000 people Likely to be around 3.5 hectares
NIAB Site (between Huntingdon Road & Histon Road) – 1780 dwellings on main NIAB site, and approx 1,100 dwellings on NIAB extra (recently allocated in South Cambridgeshire District Council)	1.6 hectares in NIAB Site and further provision based on 0.4 hectares per 1000 in NIAB extra
Cambridge East - up to 12,000 homes	0.4 hectares per 1000 people. Likely to be approx 10ha

##### 4.6.2 The Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group population forecast projects a likely increase in population of 35,500 persons over the period 2006 to 2021. The City Council's Development Control, Development Plan

Document will consider and develop new standards of provision, to address this growing population.

#### **4.7 Community Gardens and Orchards**

Community gardens are locally managed areas of land that have been developed in response to the needs of the communities in which they are based.

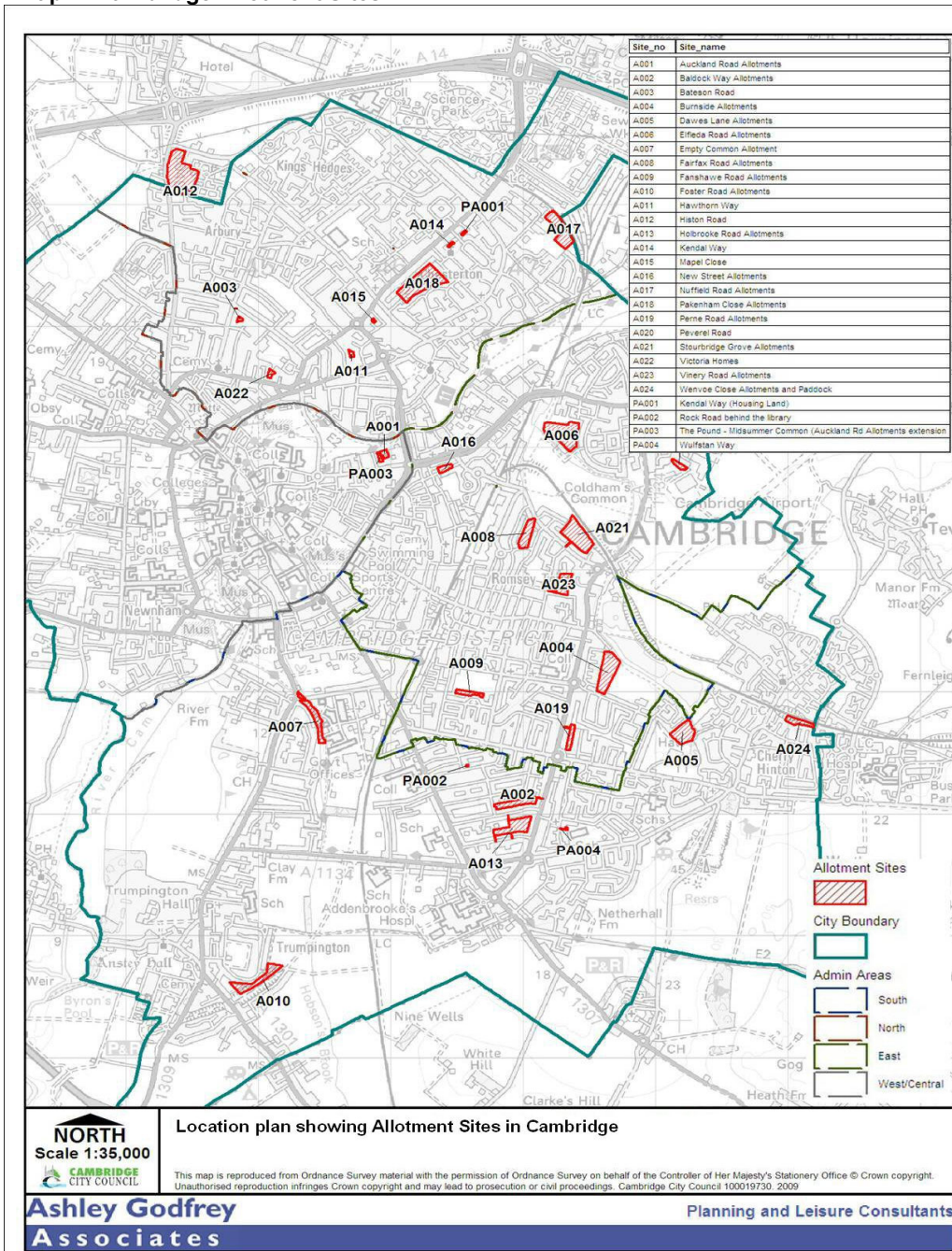
4.7.1 Many community gardens have been created when local residents sought to transform vacant sites into green spaces that included vegetable plots, wildlife areas and flower gardens. Community gardens all grow plants but many also provide a wide variety of social, recreational, educational and environmental services, facilities and opportunities that are generated by and help meet local needs.

4.7.2 The community gardens to be provided within the Clay Farm development are slightly different in that they are part of the provision to meet standards for allotments. They are of different character, with more formal lay out and generally smaller plots than the allotments in the green corridor. The site will not be fenced and will have a public footpath through it.

## 5 Assessing Quantity, Quality and Accessibility

5.1 The audit of provision found that there are 23 sites within the boundary of Cambridge City Council. These are shown on Map 1. However, there is an additional site at Histon Road (A012) which is owned by the City Council but is located within the boundaries of South Cambridgeshire District Council but which is occupied primarily by Cambridge City Council residents.

Map 1: Cambridge Allotment Sites



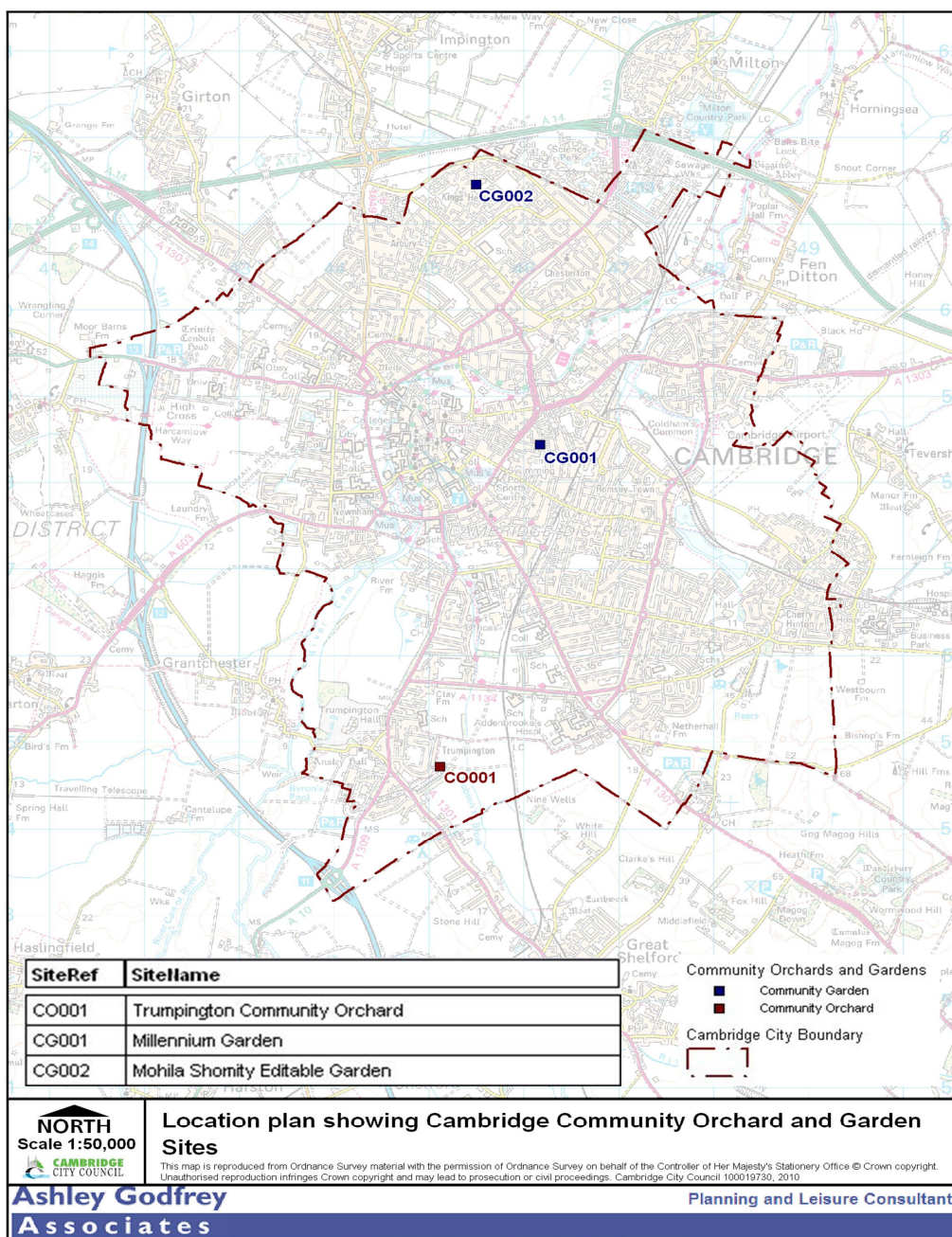
## 5.2 Community Gardens and Orchards

There are currently three community gardens and orchards in Cambridge shown in Map 3 and detailed in Table 4. A further additional site is currently being developed on Midsummer Common.

**Table 4: Community Gardens and Orchards in Cambridge**

Site Ref	Site Name	Location
CO001	Trumpington Community Orchard	Foster Road
CG001	Millennium Garden	Corner Norfolk Street and St Matthews Street
CG002	Mohila Shomity Edible Garden	Red Hen Community Centre, Northfields Avenue

**Map 3 Community Gardens and Orchards in Cambridge.**



### 5.3 Demand for Allotments

A survey of the allotment waiting lists held by the English principal Local Authorities in 2009 found that of the 351 authorities surveyed, 346 (99%) responded, and 236 of these held waiting list data, for a total of 3,839 allotment sites. These allotment sites contained 156,490 plots and the waiting lists contained 76,330 people<sup>4</sup>.

5.3.1 In Cambridge, the survey undertaken for a Review of Allotment Provision found that there are 558 people on waiting lists for allotment sites in Cambridge together with one site in South Cambridgeshire (A012 Histon Road) and these allotment sites have 1185.25 plots<sup>5</sup> (see appendix A). This is an average of 47 people per 100 plots although like the national report there are uncertainties about the data.

5.3.2 There are uncertainties around allotment waiting list figures because of other factors including:-

- People may add their names to more than one list if there are a number of allotment sites that would be acceptable to them;
- Names may be on a list for several years and a change in personal circumstances may not be apparent until a plot becomes available;
- Long waiting lists may deter some people from applying;
- Allotment Associations may close their waiting lists once they reach a certain size;
- The number of plots available may not be accurate because of differences in the measurement of a plot size<sup>6</sup>;
- These factors mean that the survey may have overestimated or underestimated the true figure.

Despite any reservations about the veracity of the data, it is clear that demand for allotments in Cambridge is very high and is comparable with the national picture.

### 5.4 Allotment Supply

An audit of the waiting list was completed in December 2008. This audit included a review of those that wished to remain on the waiting list. By introducing 'starter plots' a further 41 plots were created in 10 months.

Table 5 – Waiting List changes since introduction of 'starter plots'

Site Name	No. of people waiting 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2009	No. of people waiting December 2008
Empty Common	83	94
Fanshawe Road	18	10
Auckland Road	57	76
New Street	44	74
Kendal Way	5	5
Hawthorn Way	8	11
Bateson Road	5	5

<sup>4</sup> A Survey of Allotment Waiting Lists in England, June 2009. Margaret Campbell and Ian Campbell, Transition Town West Kirby in conjunction with the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners

<sup>5</sup> Cambridge Allotments Survey, September 2008.

<sup>6</sup> NSALG state that the standard measure is the 10 rod plot.

Site Name	No. of people waiting 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2009	No. of people waiting December 2008
Maple Close	2	6

#### 5.4 Allotment Quality

Site visits were undertaken to all 24 allotment sites in Cambridge. Each site was assessed using a quality assessment sheet which was based on the Greenspace Scotland, guidance document 'Greenspace Quality – a guide to assessment, planning and strategic development' (2008).

5.4.1 This quality assessment sheet has been used to assess other types of open space in Cambridge for Cambridge Parks - Managing the City's Asset 2010 to 2014. The scoring sheet was adapted to make it appropriate for allotment sites. It retained the set of criteria or indicators relating to five themes that represent what people expect to find in quality greenspaces:-

- accessible and connected;
- attractive and appealing;
- bio diverse and support ecological networks;
- promote activity, health and well-being; and
- have community benefits.

In addition, quantitative assessment has been undertaken. This included:-

- an assessment of the level of overall cultivation of sites based on cultivation levels of individual plots;
- the proportion of plots with compost heaps;
- proportion of plots with sheds and of those plots where rain water was being collected;
- the number of plots containing fruit or nut trees;
- the extent of mains water supply to the site; and
- Other attributes considered were the extent of provision for disabled people, of car and cycle parking spaces, number of polytunnels, any communal composting facilities and communal sheds, storage facilities and noticeboards, extent of keeping livestock and of problems with pests.

5.4.2 When the individual criteria scores are aggregated to form a total score for each site, there are wide variations in the scores. The sites with the highest overall scores are Baldock Way, Fairfax Road and Foster Road and Wenvoe Close – all with over 70%. Three sites scored just under this at 70% - they were Pakenham Close, Perne Road and Histon Road,

5.4.3 The larger sites which scored lowest were Burnside and Elfleda Road with 53% and 55% respectively. Empty Common also scored 53%. Smaller City Council-run sites with the lowest scores were Bateson Road and Kendal Way, both with scores of less than 50%. Overall audit scores are shown in Appendix B. Scores for the five themes are shown in Appendix C.

#### 5.5 Allotment Use

A questionnaire survey of all ploholders was undertaken in Cambridge. It took into account City Council, Association and Privately run allotment sites. The questionnaire covered four aspects:

- The allotment – including size of plot, length of time of waiting list, how long allotment has been held and method and ease of access to site.
- How the allotment is used – how often it is visited and for how long, crops grown and methods of cultivation;
- The allotment facilities – respondent’s views on the facilities on the site and relative importance of different facilities to them; and
- Monitoring information – age and sex, occupation, sexuality and ethnicity of respondent.

5.5.1 A total of 1304 questionnaires were distributed and 800 were returned giving an overall response rate of 61.4%. This was extremely high compared with other surveys undertaken in Cambridge and reflects the high level of interest among Cambridge Allotment holders on the subject of allotment gardening and the supply of allotments.

## 5.6 **Provision of New Sites**

Areas of land that may be suitable for allotments are notified to Active Communities after having been given priority to land searches for affordable homes. Two areas of land that are not suitable for affordable housing have been identified for appropriation at Wulfstan Way and Kendal Way.

5.6.1 The financing of the set-up and running of these proposed sites through S106 funds are discussed at paragraph 6.9.1.

5.6.2 Active Communities is currently reviewing existing Council maintained sites and determining what capacity there is for expansion. Funding for this approach is discussed at section 6.9.

5.6.3 Other solutions being considered by Active Communities include the creation of community gardens and taking on leases of land in private ownership.

## 6 **Current Management, Resources and Funding**

6.1 Cambridge City Council owns 22 allotment sites and manages 8 of those sites directly; these are mainly the smaller sites such as Kendal Way and Bateson Road with 8 and 6 plots respectively but also the larger sites such as Empty Common with 56 plots and New Street with 29. The remaining 14 sites are managed by 9 Allotment Societies. The Rock Allotment Society manages three sites at Baldock Road, Holbrook Road and Perne Road. Whitehill Allotment Society manages the large site at Elfleda Road and the small site at Peveral Road. Romsey Town and District Gardening Society manages the sites at Fairfax Road and Stourbridge Grove. Vinery Road Allotments Society manages the sites at Vinery Road and Burnside. Societies managing one site are Nuffield Road Allotment Society (Nuffield Road site); Old Chesterton Allotment Society (Pakenham Close); New Chesterton Allotment Society (Histon Road); Trumpington Allotment Society (Foster Road) and Cherry Hinton Allotment Society (Wenvoe Close).

### 6.2 **Site Size**

Sites vary greatly in size with the largest site being Histon Road with 191 ten pole plots. Other large sites are Pakenham Close (159 plots), Elfleda Road (140 plots) and Stourbridge Grove (117 plots). The smallest sites are managed directly by the City Council; the smallest Association-run sites are Wenvoe Close, Cherry Hinton and Peveral Road (both with 16 plots).

### 6.3 **Plot Rents**

Plot holders on sites managed by the City Council pay £34 per year for a 10 pole plot. Rents for plots on sites managed by the Societies include an affiliation fee and payment for water supply except for those sites with no mains water supply. Rents vary from the lowest charged by Whitehill Society at £18.50 for a 10 pole plot to the most expensive at Cherry Hinton Society which charges £3.20 per pole plus £2 per pole for water making a total of £59.60 for a 10 pole plot including affiliation fees. The majority of Societies charge between £22 and £24 for a full size plot with proportionately lower rentals for smaller plots. Several societies operate a concessions system, such as Rock Society, whereas others, such as Histon Road, charge everyone the same amount.

### 6.4 **Plot Size**

Currently Active Communities offers starter plots (25 or 50 Square metres) which has helped to reduce waiting list and create opportunities for residents to take up an allotment plot.

### 6.5 **Waiting Lists**

Active Communities offers new plot holders a starter plot but may give them the opportunity to move up to a standard plot of 125 square metres, or 5 poles, at a later date. If someone 'outgrows' a starter plot and would like to upgrade they are given priority over those on the waiting list, and in turn their space would be filled by a new person waiting on the list.

6.6.1 Some of the Association sites offer tenants a small plot initially and allow new ploholders extra space if they prove they can cultivate their allotment satisfactorily after a trial period. The sites both at Foster Road and Stourbridge Grove operate both an internal and an external waiting list. Societies tend not to have a precise policy as to whether internal or external applicants would take priority.

6.6.2 The Trumpington Society encourages those who cannot manage their plots to take on a reduced size of plot on the understanding that, if their circumstances change and they are able to manage more space, they will be given priority for this.

### 6.7 **Management Structure**

All the Society-run allotment sites are governed by a management committee. These vary in size from 5 to 12 members. In some cases the committee undertakes all the voluntary functions and in others there are volunteers or helpers who are not on the committee or do not have the status of full members. The period of committee meetings varies from every six weeks to once annually.

### 6.8 **Community Initiatives**

Many societies have close links with local schools and some schools have plots such as at Cherry Hinton, Histon Road, Blacklands and Stourbridge Grove.

6.8.2 Others have initiatives with local community groups such as Nuffield Road where Cam Mind and Cambridge Ethnic Community Group have plots; Faifax Road with the Night Shelter Project for people moving on from a homeless shelter and Elflada Road where the Cambridge Cyrenians have plots.

### 6.9 **Funding**

The Council Budget for 2010/11, agreed on 25 February 2010, included net funding of £8,970 for Allotments made up of:

Direct Costs £15,620  
Capital Charges £3,060  
Income (£9,710)

In addition, the Allotment Improvements Capital scheme (SC348) currently holds a budget of £17,000 for future projects. This is available to Allotment Societies for expenditure, which historically has included a mower and larger powered tools, fencing, poly tunnels and water trough points together with ongoing maintenance to the various sites.

#### 6.9.1 **S106 Funding**

The provision of allotments and monies towards allotments is only formally required in the urban extensions. It would not be appropriate in terms of the parameters of the existing policy documents and the Planning Circular 05/05 Planning Obligations for monies for informal open space to be used to support allotment provision or improvement within the City.

6.9.1.1 The conclusions from the Review of Allotment Provision completed by Ashley Godfrey Associates and the results of the Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Infrastructure Study will be used to review of the Council's approach to standards for allotments and the requirement for commuted sums towards the provision and/ or enhancement of allotment sites.

## 6.9.2 City Council Grants

### 6.9.2.1 *Sustainable City initiative*

The Sustainable City initiative offers grant funding to local groups and organisations whose work brings environmental and community benefits. Environmental project grants are allocated in support of specific, one-off environmental projects that are based in or being carried out in Cambridge.

### 6.9.2.2 *Community safety grant*

Community safety grant schemes are currently available and are administered by the community safety team. Grants are typically £500 - £2,000 and are awarded to voluntary groups to tackle crime and disorder in their area, e.g. through security fencing and lights, as well as activities for young people aimed at reducing youth nuisance.

## 6.9.2 External Funding Sources

6.9.2.1 **Local Food**<sup>7</sup> has been developed by a consortium of 15 national environmental organisations, and is managed on their behalf by the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT).

Local Food is supported by the Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces programme, and distributes grants to a variety of food-related projects including allotments. Local Food's main aim is to make locally grown food accessible and affordable to local communities. It will achieve this by funding projects that will help achieve one or more of the following:-

- to enable communities to manage land sustainably for growing food locally, to enable communities to build knowledge and understanding and to celebrate the cultural diversity of food to stimulate local economic activity and the development of community enterprises concerned with growing, processing and marketing local food;
- to create opportunities for learning and the development of skills through volunteering, training and job creation to promote awareness and understanding of the links between food and healthy lifestyles.

### 6.9.2.2 **Awards For All**<sup>8</sup>

Awards for All England is a simple small grants scheme making awards of between £300 and £10,000. The programme aims to help improve local communities and the lives of people most in need.

Projects must meet one or more of the following outcomes:-

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.localfoodgrants.org/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.awardsforall.org.uk/>

- People have better chances in life - with better access to training and development to improve their life skills;
- Stronger communities - with more active citizens working together to tackle their problems;
- Improved rural and urban environments - which communities are better able to access and enjoy; and
- Healthier and more active people and communities.

#### 6.9.2.3 **Landfill Tax Credit Scheme**<sup>9</sup>

Projects seeking funding must be within 10 miles of an active landfill site. Guidelines for the scheme stipulate that allotments are excluded 'since they are used by individuals, not the general public'. However, a number of allotment associations have secured funding for activities that provide a public amenity (e.g. wildlife gardens, community composting, community building).

#### 6.9.2.4 **Community Development Foundation**<sup>10</sup>

This £130 million scheme is managed by the Community Development Foundation (CDF). It is aimed at helping small voluntary and community organisations provide support in their communities, particularly those who are most vulnerable. Grants have been spent on a range of community activity helping communities to deal with the individual challenges that face each local community. Small and local community groups with annual incomes below £30,000 can apply for the grants of between £250 and £5,000.

#### 6.9.2.5 **Primary Care Trust**

Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) run small grants schemes. Grants are typically small (£500 - £3,000) and fund small scale community led projects which contribute to improving the health of local people. Criteria may focus on healthy living or healthy eating projects, schemes to increase physical activity or facilities for disabled people.

### 6.10 **Other Resources**

Transition Cambridge Garden Share<sup>11</sup> is a scheme created to allow people who have space in their garden which is under used, to offer it to people who want to grow their own fruit and vegetables but do not have a garden to do it in. This scheme has potential to help address current and future demands, encourage sustainable practices, and promote the use of allotments and gardening.

### 6.11 **Fees and Pricing**

There is evidence to support the view that the increased demand for allotments is driven predominantly by economic factors and health benefits.

6.11.1 Currently we cannot use S106 funding, however the City Council recognises the need to improve the infrastructure of existing allotments. A review of fees and pricing may provide additional income to effect these improvements.

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<sup>9</sup> [www.ltcs.org.uk](http://www.ltcs.org.uk)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.cdf.org.uk/>

<sup>11</sup> [www.transitioncambridge.org/](http://www.transitioncambridge.org/)

6.11.2 In some parts of England private land management companies are offering land for allotments with prices typically around £300 per annum for a third of a 10 pole plot.

6.11.3 Some Cambridge based Allotment Societies are charging considerably more than the rates the Council sets for its allotments.

6.11.4 It is recommended to review pricing, and consider a standardised fee structure to include discounts for people on low incomes.

## **7 Recommendations**

7.1 There are seven key recommendations with a subset of objectives.

### **7.1.1 The need to meet both current and future demand;**

There are substantial waiting lists at nearly all the allotment sites in Cambridge. There will also be a substantial number of new homes built in and around the City over the next few years and it will be necessary to ensure that the demand from these additional areas of population is met through new provision of allotments.

#### **Recommendation 1;**

**To provide a sufficient number of allotments in the right locations to meet both current and future demand.**

#### **Objective 1.1 - Safeguarding existing provision.**

- Existing allotment sites should be safeguarded from development and should be specifically protected for allotment use in the Local Development Framework.

#### **Objective 1.2 - Meeting changes in demand by**

- Investigating the potential to address any deficiencies from existing underused open space;
- Determining the potential to develop new private sites;
- Investigate potential additional sites;
- Creating and approving an allocations policy for sites related to new developments.

#### **Objective 1.3 - Maximise the use of existing allotments by**

- Reclaiming unused plots;
- Enhance the utilisation of plots by subdivision from the traditional 10 rod plot to plots of 5 rods or less;
- Making improvement measures such as improved roadways, better layout and improved water supply will encourage increased occupancy across the whole site.

### **7.1.2 Make improvements to the quality of provision to ensure that allotment sites are welcoming and accessible to all;**

A high level of unkempt plots reduces the condition and perception of the whole site, leading to a sense of dereliction and a lowering of value. This can lead to an increase in the rate of failed tenancies. The Disability Discrimination Act Part 3 places a responsibility on all providers to make reasonable alterations to services and infrastructures to improve accessibility for all, irrespective of any physical or mental impairment of the user.

#### **Recommendation 2;**

**To provide allotment sites, which are welcoming and accessible to all**

**Objective 2.1 - Make sites look positive and inviting:-**

- Maintain the entrances to a high standard;
- Provide welcoming notice boards at sites;
- Ensure that the entrances to allotment sites are clear of rubbish and that graffiti is removed;
- Ensure easy access to the site and good access within it;
- Working with Allotment Association representatives and tenants to ensure all sites are attractive throughout by clearing unsightly and neglected areas of allotment sites;
- Improved maintenance of structures and boundaries to enhance the appearance of allotment sites.

**Objective 2.2 – Adopt a Quality Standard for Allotment Sites**

- New and existing allotment sites should aspire to meet quality standards.

**Objective 2.3 - Good and safe access to sites**

- Well-maintained main paths or roadways with good quality surfaces ensure good access.
- Safe and secure parking for cars

**Objective 2.4 - Sites, which are inclusive**

- The entrances to allotment sites should be accessible to all and relevant to people's needs;
- The creation of a network of accessible plots across the City would improve participation by people with disabilities by provision of the following facilities.

**Objective 2.5 – Improvements to waste management**

- Encourage ploholders to reduce the amount of non-compostable waste that has to be removed from allotment sites.
- Provision of communal compost heaps on allotment sites.

**Objective 2.6 – Well designed new allotment sites**

- New allotment sites should conform to the Quality Standard set out in Objective 2.2 above.

**7.1.3 Improvements to the management and administration of allotment sites;**

The Council wants to ensure that it provides the very best service for tenants, ensuring that performance remains high when compared with other local authorities. The need for administrative improvement is necessary to provide more efficient letting of plots; management of tenancies; and the collection of rents and charges

**Recommendation 3;**

**Improved management and administration of allotment sites**

**Objective 3.1 – Produce a set of allotments management procedures**

that set out in detail the Council's approach to the following:-

- the terms of the devolved management agreement;
- responsibilities for day-to-day administration;
- basis for determining rent levels;
- concessions and the definition of concessionaries;
- collection of rents;
- expenditure of rental income;
- any other fees that can be charged;
- payment of utility charges (eg. water);
- restrictions on utility use;
- responsibility, payment and organisation of maintenance and improvement
- management of lettings;
- conditions for offering tenancies and how are they determined;
- content of the tenancy agreement and how can it be varied;
- responsibility for setting and controlling the standards of cultivation and compliance;
- service of notices of non-compliance and notices to quit;
- maintenance of the waiting list;
- constraints on structures (size, design, type, materials etc)
- reporting requirements to the council (e.g. accounts, general report etc)
- responsible for site security (fences, gates etc).
- preparation of vacant plots
- provision/maintenance/insurance/storage of equipment e.g. mowers and strimmers
- arbitration of disputes between the society and ploholders

**Objective 3.2** – To improve the efficiency of site management by

- Developing partnerships with other local agencies which might also have an interest in promoting allotment use, such as the local Primary Care Trust and the Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service;
- Promoting allotments and monitoring vacancies, with the aim of having all sites fully tenanted;
- Investigating the advantages of introducing an Allotment Management software package.

**Objective 3.3** - To increase tenant involvement with the management of allotment sites by

- Ensuring effective communication and consultation with both allotment associations and individual plot holders;
- Setting up a regular forum for Council officers and representatives of Allotment Associations to meet to discuss relevant allotment issues;
- Reviewing the Council's web site to ensure it provides clear and relevant information;
- Offering the option of delegated self-management agreements to allotment sites.

**Objective 3.4** - To provide efficient allotment administration by

- Preparing an allotment operations manual for Site Secretaries and Site Representatives;
- Reviewing procedures and where necessary these will be updated to include: -
  - Standardisation of the rules for tenants who fail to cultivate their plots.
  - A new tenancy agreement will be introduced in 2010 and this provides an opportunity to update the rules and make the tenancy agreement more relevant and easier to read and understand. This should be drafted in consultation with Site Representatives, Allotment Associations, the Allotment Panel and the Council's Legal section.

**Objective 3.5** - Improve funding for allotment sites

- Investigate ways of securing financing to ensure the continual improvement of the allotment service.

**7.1.4 Recommendation 4;**

**To provide, safe and secure allotments;**

**Objective 4.1** - To offer sites that are secure places for all members of the community.

- Carry out an individual site security and community safety audit of sites on an annual basis
- Liaise with and involve the Neighbourhood Police, Community Patrol and Community Safety Team in safeguarding sites.
- Promote best practice in health and safety on all allotment sites.

**Objective 4.2** - Ensure that all livestock are well cared for

- In partnership with Allotment Associations, create an animals on allotments policy, stating which species of animals may be kept, how many, and the standards of care.

**Objective 4.3** - Allotments should be free from dog fouling and dogs kept under proper control.

**Objective 4.4** - To ensure that health and safety policies are in place, in practice and regularly reviewed.

- promote best practice in health and safety on all allotment sites.

**7.1.5 Recommendation 5;**

**Encourage sustainable practices;**

**Objective 5.1** - To encourage a more sustainable approach to allotment gardening.

**Objective 5.2** – To encourage 'thinking green'

- Encourage natural methods of pest control;

- Encourage the use of 'green manures';
- Encourage plot holders to collect rainwater and reduce the reliance on mains water systems.

**Objective 5.3 - Reducing the use of chemicals**

- Encourage organic gardening practice.

**Objective 5.4 - To improve waste management**

- Explore opportunities to reuse, recycle and recover waste products.

**Objective 5.5 - To improve water efficiency**

- Reduced mains water usage by increasing rainwater storage.

**7.1.6 Recommendation 6;**

**To promote the use of allotments and gardening;**

**Objective 6.1 - Promote and widen access to allotments;**

**Objective 6.2 - Promote allotment gardening as a healthy leisure activity;**

**Objective 6.3 – Provide guidance on allotment gardening methods;**

**Objective 6.4 - Promote the Garden Share Initiative<sup>12</sup>**

**7.1.7 Recommendation 7;**

**To approve an allotments allocation policy for growth sites.**

**Objective 7.1 – Create an Allocation Policy for Growth Sites detailed in Appendix D**

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<sup>12</sup> [www.transitioncambridge.org](http://www.transitioncambridge.org)

## 8 **Action Plan**

TO BE COMPLETED AFTER CONSULTATION

## Appendix A – Site Audit

Ref No.	Site Address	Area (Hectares)	Number of Plots
A001	Auckland Road Allotments	0.3	12
A002	Baldock Way Allotments	1.5	56
A003	Bateson Road	0.12	4
A004	Burnside Allotments	3.34	98
A005	Dawes Lane Allotments	2.21	72
A006	Elfreda Road Allotments	4.29	140
A007	Empty Common Allotment	1.65	47
A008	Fairfax Road Allotments	1.64	58.5
A009	Fanshawe Road Allotments	0.62	29
A010	Foster Road Allotments	2.08	59.25
A011	Hawthorn Way	0.15	5
A012	Histon Road	5.94	191
A013	Glebe Road/Holbrooke Road Allotments	2.34	85.5
A014	Kendal Way	0.1	3
A015	Maple Close	0.06	2
A016	New Street Allotments	0.47	18
A017	Nuffield Road Allotments	2.58	66
A018	Pakenham Close Allotments	4.84	159
A019	Perne Road Allotments	0.68	23
A020	Peverel Road	0.4	16
A021	Stourbridge Grove Allotments	3.47	117
A022	Victoria Homes	0.23	16
A023	Vinery Road Allotments	1.48	47
A024	Wenvoe Close Allotments and Paddock	0.87	16
	<b>Total</b>	<b>41.36</b>	<b>1340.25</b>

## Appendix B Overall Quality Audit Scores

Allotment Site	Accessible	Attractive	Biodiverse,	Health and well being	Community	Total	%
<b>Potential Score</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>120</b>	
Auckland Road	14	32	11	12	9	78	65.0%
Baldock Way	26	25	10	14	15	90	75.0%
Bateson Road	16	12	5	12	13	58	48.3%
Burnside	17	16	10	9	11	63	52.5%
Blacklands,	21	15	12	12	16	76	63.3%
Elfreda Road	19	19	7	11	10	66	55.0%
Empty Common	15	16	12	9	12	64	53.3%
Fairfax Road	24	22	12	12	18	88	73.3%
Fanshawe Road	23	22	8	13	10	76	63.3%
Foster Road	23	24	11	13	15	86	71.7%
Hawthorn Way	20	16	10	12	13	71	59.2%
Histon Road	24	25	10	14	11	84	70.0%
Holbrooke Road	24	17	10	11	16	78	65.0%
Kendall Way	16	13	5	9	11	54	45.0%
Maple Close	22	22	3	13	15	75	62.5%
New Street	16	17	8	11	12	64	53.3%
Nuffield Road	21	23	9	12	11	76	63.3%
Pakenham Close	24	23	9	14	14	84	70.0%
Perne Road	27	22	9	13	13	84	70.0%
Peveler Close	23	19	8	9	13	72	60.0%
Stourbridge Grove	19	21	12	12	12	76	63.3%
Victoria Homes	24	30	9	13	18	94	62.7%
Vinery Road	22	18	8	12	18	78	65.0%
Wenvoe Close/ Arran Close/ Pen Close	26	20	10	12	18	86	71.7%

### Appendix C – Quality Scores by Themes

Allotment Site	Accessible	Attractive	Biodiverse	Health	Community
Auckland Road	46.7%	80.0%	73.3%	80.0%	45.0%
Baldock Way	86.7%	87.5%	66.7%	93.3%	75.0%
Bateson Road	53.3%	54.3%	33.3%	80.0%	65.0%
Burnside	56.7%	60.0%	66.7%	60.0%	55.0%
Blacklands,	70.0%	71.4%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%
Elfleda Road	63.3%	62.5%	46.7%	73.3%	50.0%
Empty Common	50.0%	57.5%	80.0%	60.0%	60.0%
Fairfax Road	80.0%	75.0%	80.0%	80.0%	90.0%
Fanshawe Road	76.7%	70.0%	53.3%	86.7%	50.0%
Foster Road	76.7%	80.0%	73.3%	86.7%	75.0%
Hawthorn Way	66.7%	74.3%	66.7%	80.0%	86.7%
Histon Road	80.0%	75.0%	66.7%	93.3%	55.0%
Holbrooke Road	80.0%	65.0%	66.7%	73.3%	80.0%
Kendall Way	64.0%	54.3%	33.3%	60.0%	73.3%
Maple Close	73.3%	72.5%	60.0%	86.7%	100.0%
New Street	53.3%	60.0%	53.3%	73.3%	80.0%
Nuffield Road	70.0%	72.5%	60.0%	80.0%	55.0%
Pakenham Close	80.0%	80.0%	60.0%	93.3%	70.0%
Perne Road	90.0%	77.5%	60.0%	86.7%	65.0%
Peverel Close	76.7%	67.5%	53.3%	60.0%	65.0%
Stourbridge Grove	63.3%	70.0%	80.0%	80.0%	60.0%
Victoria Homes	80.0%	75.0%	60.0%	86.7%	90.0%
Vinery Road	73.3%	62.5%	53.3%	80.0%	90.0%
Wenvoe Close/ Arran Close / Pen Close	86.7%	72.5%	66.7%	80.0%	90.0%

## **Appendix D - Draft allotments allocation policy for growth sites**

### **1. Principles**

- 1.1 Priority for allotments will be given to residents of that growth site until eight years after the completion of that site.
- 1.2 Residents in later stages of the build out of the growth site should not be disadvantaged by all plots having already been allocated.
- 1.3 The majority of the allotment site should be fully cultivated throughout the development of the growth site.
- 1.4 If actual demand for allotments exceeds supply, the sizes of plots let will be adapted and opportunities explored to provide more allotments.
- 1.5 Any surplus supply should be offered to 'non growth site' applicants on a temporary basis.
- 1.6 Allotments will be managed in accordance with the approved Allotments Management Policy.
- 1.7 In the absence of an allotment society, the City Council or successor will be responsible for allocation.
- 1.8 This allocation policy shall be kept under review and revised as appropriate.

### **2 Allocation Policy (see definitions below)**

- 2.1 Only applicants living on the growth site will be allocated plots on a permanent basis until 8 years after the completion of the growth site.
- 2.2 During the build out of the growth site, the following procedure will be followed in February of each year:
  - a. The appropriate proportion of the allotment site will be allocated on a permanent basis. This annual supply will be calculated as defined below. If the actual demand exceeds the annual supply, permanent allocations will be made after a ballot on 1<sup>st</sup> February.
  - b. Any applicant from the growth site failing to achieve a permanent allocation through the ballot shall be given a temporary allocation if available, by further ballot if necessary.
  - c. Applicants from the growth site unsuccessful in two previous annual ballots for a permanent allocation will be given a permanent allocation, without the use of a ballot.
  - d. Priority can be given to Community Group applications linked with the growth sites without ballot, either as a temporary or permanent basis.

- e. Applicants not from the growth sites will be given temporary allocations if there are vacancies on the site after all the allocations have been made to residents of the growth site.
- 2.3 For the first 8 years following completion of the growth site, permanent allocations will be given to residents of that site as plots become available. If necessary, a waiting list shall be set up. On 1 February of each year, if there are vacancies on the site after all the allocations have been made to residents of the growth site, temporary allocations will be made to non-residents.
- 2.4 After 8 years from the completion of the growth site, allocation is open to all. It may be appropriate to vary this on a site by site basis if this is justified, for example there could be a separate policy on the allotments provided in association with University key workers to take into account that the residents will generally be on short term tenancy agreements.

### 3 **Definitions**

**Growth Sites** – Trumpington Meadows, Clay Farm, Glebe Farm, Bell School, NIAB and NIAB Extra, North West University, and Cambridge East.

**Completion** – Date of completion of last dwelling;

**Potential Demand** – Number of Properties still to be completed within the growth site / Years of anticipated future build out = Potential applicants per year;

**Actual Demand** – Number of residents seeking allotment plots each year;

**Annual Supply** – Area of allotment site remaining / Years of anticipated build out from that time = Available area per annum;

**Temporary Allocation** – Allocation for a period up to the 1<sup>st</sup> February on the following year;

**Permanent Allocation** – an allocation until such times as the applicant surrenders their plot. This can be an allocation of full, half or any proportion of an allotment plot;

**Allotment Society** – a collective of allotment holders usually a constituted group administering the allotment site, under licence; and

**Community Group** – a collective of residents with a constitution with stated aims and objectives.

