



## CONSULTATION ON FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF ALLOTMENTS

Birmingham City Council is reviewing the management function of the Allotment Service in consultation with the Birmingham and District Allotments Council, Associations and tenants.

Given the severe budgetary pressures that we all face, the Council needs to review how the service will be managed in the future.

Initial discussions with the BDAC have given rise to a number of options which now need to be discussed wider. These include:

- Devolution of budgets to individual sites to enable the Associations to directly manage their budgets, this will include repairs and maintenance, water, cesspit and portaloos servicing. Payments will be made twice per annum, on 1 April and 1 October direct to the Associations for all devolved budgets.
- The Associations will be responsible for applying the Allotment Rules, letting of plots, collection of rent, monitoring of Grounds Maintenance, plot cultivation, and initial resolution of complaints and disputes.
- Issue of Letters of Concern and Letters of Intent will be carried out by Associations. Where Notices of Re-Entry are recommended by the Association, this will be ratified by the BDAC before the final Notice of Re-Entry is issued by the Council, acting as the Landlord.
- Associations will still be required to notify the Council, as the Landlord, of structural or other major changes and funding applications prior to anything being submitted. Events notifications will also still need to be submitted to the Council a minimum of 4 weeks before for the event for approval.
- The BDAC will directly manage the current 'Departmental' sites, until such time as they set up their own Associations. Once Associations have been formed on these sites, they will perform all management functions as outlined above.
- The BDAC will operate in an advisory capacity to help Associations where requested. Should disputes arise between tenants and the Associations, the BDAC will act as the arbiter, and ensure consistency in the application of the Allotment Rules across individual and between different sites.
- The Council will act as Landlord and retain the final power of eviction. All rents collected and tenancy records will continue to be maintained and managed by the Council.
- The Council will continue to provide training in rent collection and completion of Tenancy Agreements.

- The Council will remain responsible for making payments to the current 3 Grounds Maintenance Service Providers where applicable.
- Strategic management decisions regarding the future of sites, payments of leases for ground rent, statutory checks e.g 17<sup>th</sup> Edition Electrical Testing, will continue to be carried out and paid for by the Council.
- Future rent levels will be set by the Council, however, full consultation with the BDAC will be carried out prior to any changes.
- Annual Risk Assessments will continue to be carried out by the Council, however, every Association will be required to have a trained Health & Safety/Risk Assessor member on their Committee. Training will be given by the Council's Safety Services Officers.
- Fire Insurance to the Council's buildings will still be met by the Council.
- The Council will retain a small contingency budget for major repairs and maintenance emergencies, which Associations will be able to bid into. The decision to award funds from this budget will be made jointly between the Council and the BDAC.
- Quarterly meetings between the BDAC and the Council will continue, as is the case now, to ensure regular liaison and consultation is maintained.

All of the above are items for discussion, and we must stress that **NO DECISIONS** have been made to date. The Consultation period will continue for a further 3 months to allow due consideration to be made by tenants, Associations and the BDAC, and for them to feedback their views and suggestions which will be considered - before a final draft of the proposals is written and circulated. After a further 4 week period, the final proposal will be submitted in the form of a report to the Council's Cabinet Members to gain authority to proceed with drawing up the new Management Agreements.

It is anticipated that these new Management Agreements will be circulated and signed off by the 1 January 2014, with the start date of the new Management arrangements being implemented in full from 1 April 2014.

All comments and ideas are welcome, and should be submitted to:

[allotments@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:allotments@birmingham.gov.uk)

or for those without email, in writing to:

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