



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Z615

Cabinet 25 March 2009

Bury St Edmunds Town Council Approach to Borough Council for Land to Increase Allotment Provision (Apr 09/15)

1. Summary and Reasons for Recommendation

- 1.1 The Bury St Edmunds Town Council administers the majority of allotment provision in Bury St Edmunds and currently has a waiting list of approximately 125. They have approached the Borough Council to see if there any suitable sites available to create more allotments.
- 1.2 The Borough Council owns vacant land adjacent to the Cotton Lane allotments and some of this may be suitable for such use.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Bury St Edmunds Town Council be offered suitable land adjacent to the Cotton Lane allotments on a leasehold basis, for allotment use only.

3. Corporate Objectives

- 3.1 The recommendation meets the following, as contained within the Corporate Plan:-
- (a) Corporate Priority: *'To secure a sustainable and attractive environment'*.

Contact Details

Name
Telephone
E-mail

Portfolio Holder

Nigel Aitkens
(01284) 735258
nigel.aitkens@stedsbc.gov.uk

Lead Officer

Ray Lawford
(01284) 757367
ray.lawford@stedsbc.gov.uk

4. Key Issues

4.1 Background

- (a) Under the relevant legislation, when the Bury St Edmunds Town Council was created all allotments held by the Borough Council became the property of the Town Council and responsibility was formally transferred with effect from April 2007.

4.2 Allotment Provision

- (a) The Town Council has a waiting list of approximately 125 for allotments and are actively seeking additional land to develop into allotment provision.
- (b) The Borough Council owns areas of land within the town which are for various reasons undeveloped. This includes approximately 1.75 acres of land off Sicklesmere Road, which is currently under offer to the Town Council and will provide approximately 40 plots.
- (c) In addition, the Borough Council also owns a parcel of land, approximately 2.3 acres, to the rear of the Cotton Lane allotments shown on Appendix A. This land was previously used for allotments some 25 to 30 years ago, but was abandoned because of the high water table.
- (d) However, as a result of drainage works in connection with the Tesco store the water table may have altered and the suitability of the land for allotments may need to be reviewed. The area is overgrown and requires clearing.
- (e) There is a further parcel of undeveloped land of approximately 16 acres in all behind the 2.3 acres, although the ground conditions will almost certainly preclude its use as allotments. Ground tests are required to confirm this.
- (f) Recent housing development at Cotton Lane by Hopkins Homes will allow, subject to negotiation, a contribution as part of a Section 106 Agreement to assist with clearing the site, and it is also hoped that Hopkins Homes can provide advice on ground conditions.

4.3 Future Use

- (a) The Local Development Plan provides for the possible residential development of land at Ram Meadow in the medium term. This will probably necessitate the construction of an access road through the undeveloped land off Cotton Lane through to Compiegne Way. Although no route has been identified it would probably need to link in to a roundabout on Compiegne Way opposite Etna Road, therefore, it could largely avoid the 2.3 acre site and run mainly through the 12.61 acre site (see Appendix A).

4.4 Terms

- (a) The Town Council have been informed that land at Cotton Lane may be available, and they have been given an indication of allotment land values, but no negotiations have yet commenced,.
- (b) In view of the possibility of a future road access requirement it is proposed that any use by the Town Council should be by way of a lease rather than a sale and include provisions to surrender part, if needed for future development.

5. Other Options considered
 5.1 The former wildlife area off Spring Lane has also been looked at but it is considered it is more appropriate for it to be brought back into use as a wildlife area.

6. Community impact *(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and diversity issues)*
 6.1 General
 If all the 2.3 acres at Cotton Lane are suitable for allotments the site should accommodate something in the order of 35 to 40 allotments.
 6.2 Diversity
 It is assumed that the Town Council will distribute the allotments in accordance with its waiting list, which is open to all local residents.

7. Consultation
 7.1 The Portfolio Holder for Economy and Asset Management has been consulted

8. Resource implications *(including asset management implications)*
 8.1 A lease of 2.3 acres should bring an annual rental of around £1,800 to £2,000. This type of land is not included in the Asset Management Plan review. Current freehold value for allotment land is around £8,000 to £9,000 per acre and this has been used as a basis to calculate a rent value.

9. Risk Assessment *(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)*
 9.1 Ground conditions need to be identified.

Risk area	Inherent level of Risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual Risk (after controls)
	High/Medium/Low		High/Medium/Low
Possible need to terminate lease	Medium	Short term lease	Low

10. Legal or policy implications
 10.1 See 4.2 and 4.3 above
 The land at Cotton Lane was not purchased or appropriated by this Council for allotments and is not therefore statutory allotments that would have transferred to the Bury St Edmunds Town Council. Neither was it allotments when the Bury St Edmunds Town Council was created and therefore did not become vested in them.

Wards affected	All in Bury St Edmunds	Portfolio Holder	Economy and Asset Management
Background Papers		Subject Area	Property Management



COTTON LANE SITE, BURY ST. EDMUNDS



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Ivan Sams FRICS - Head of Property Services
St Edmundsbury House - Western Way - Bury St Edmunds - IP33 3YS

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