

# COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

TUESDAY, 13TH APRIL, 2021

At 6.15 pm

by

VIRTUAL MEETING - ONLINE ACCESS, ON [RBWM YOUTUBE](#)

## SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

### PART I

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PAGE NO</u>
6.	<u>UPDATE ON ALLOTMENTS</u>  An update to be presented on allotments.	1 - 6

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Report Title:	Allotments update
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Lead Member	Councillor Stimson, Lead Member for Climate Change, Sustainability, Parks and Countryside
Meeting and Date:	Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel 13 <sup>th</sup> April 2021
Responsible Officer(s):	Anthony Hurst, Parks and Countryside Manager
Wards affected:	All

## REPORT SUMMARY

The report responds to a suggested topic on the Work Programme; the report provides the Panel with an overview and summary of the current position with respect to the allotments provision across the borough, with particular reference to Maidenhead where there is a shortfall in allotment provision.

Allotments are popular, both locally and nationally and in the Maidenhead area there has been a significant increase demand for allotment plots over the last two years; previously, waiting lists were reducing over a number of years, due largely to sub-division of plots and supply was keeping pace with demand.

At the current time demand outstrips supply, but every opportunity is taken to subdivide full sized plots to half or quarter sized plots when a plot becomes vacant, either by way of an existing users surrendering their interest or a non-cultivation notice being issued, and the plot being taken back.

There are limited opportunities to provide increased capacity to allotment provision in Maidenhead, due to the location of the existing sites, but there may be scope to explore the expansion of sites, or the feasibility of acquiring land for additional capacity.

## 1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

### RECOMMENDATION:

**That the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel notes the contents of the report and asks questions thereon.**

## 2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

### Options

**Table 1: Options arising from this report**

Option	Comments
Note the update report and comment thereon <b>This is the recommended option</b>	

2.1 The report responds to a suggested topic on the Work Programme.

### **3. KEY IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 Allotment gardening is a very popular activity amongst borough residents; there are 8 allotment sites in Maidenhead, with a total of 510 individual plots (see plan of Maidenhead allotment sites attached); these sites are managed directly by the Borough Council's 'Parks & Countryside Team'. There are 9 allotment sites within the Windsor area, managed by the Windsor Allotment and Home Garden Association (WAHGA) on the Council's behalf, and one further site in Windsor managed by the Clewer Allotments Trust. Additionally, there are a number of allotment sites managed by Parish Councils.
- 3.2 There are currently waiting lists for all allotment sites in Maidenhead (see waiting list details below). There has been a significant increase in applications for allotment plots over the last two years, and waiting lists are therefore growing. This increased interest in acquiring allotment plots may in part reflect increased concerns about environmental sustainability, and also the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on individual lifestyles. Developments of flats and apartments within the town may also result in an increased demand for allotments from residents of properties without gardens.
- 3.3 There are currently 494 people on the waiting list for an allotment plot in Maidenhead, spread across the 8 Maidenhead allotment sites; this compares with waiting lists of 340 in 2020 and 148 in 2019. A process has been in place over the last 8 years to subdivide full-sized plots to half or quarter sized plots when plots are reallocated. A traditional full-sized allotment plot is approximately 250 square metres, or about the size of a doubles tennis court; sub-dividing plots in Maidenhead allotment sites has helped to increase the overall availability of plots, and most plots are now either half or quarter size; of the 510 allotment plots in Maidenhead there are only 60 full-sized plots remaining, and these will also be sub-divided as opportunities arise when plots are reallocated.
- 3.4 There is currently a separate process for allocation of allotment plots in Windsor, and this is managed by the Windsor Allotment and Home Garden Association (WAHGA), whereby RBWM pays a contribution towards the maintenance of the plots, but WAHGA manages plot allocation and usage of the various sites. There are 9 allotment sites in the Windsor area managed by WAHGA, and waiting lists here are minimal. Preference is given to new applicants who live or work in Windsor, but there is no geographical restriction on membership, and it is known that some Maidenhead residents do have allotment plots in Windsor managed by WAHGA.
- 3.5 As shown below waiting times for an allotment plot in Maidenhead vary between the different sites, but are generally between 3 and 7 years.

Site	Total number of plots	Waiting list at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021	Approx. current waiting time
Blackamoor Lane	32	61	5 years
Breadcroft Road	55	33	3 years and 7 months
Brownfield Gardens	24	25	2 years and 10 months
Cookham Road	112	57	3 years and 3 months
Courthouse Road	90	64	3 years
Green Lane	75	103	4 years and 7 months
St. Marks Crescent	90	71	3 years and 8 months
The Croft	17	34	3 years and 3 months
Jubilee	15	46	7 years
<b>Totals</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>494</b>	

- 3.6 During the Covid-19 pandemic, allotment sites across the borough have remained open, including during the various stages of lockdowns, and indeed allotments have provided plot-holders with a much-valued opportunity for outdoor activity and exercise, as well as growing produce.
- 3.7 Management of allotment sites has continued throughout the past year, including improvements to site security, regular monitoring to ensure that plots do not become neglected, and pest control measures have been put in place as and when required. Additional guidance on effective management of plots has been added to the allotment pages on the borough website, including advice on effective composting to minimise problems such as rat infestation.
- 3.8 In order to significantly increase the availability of allotment plots in Maidenhead, and reduce current waiting lists and waiting times, opportunities for expanding existing allotment sites within Maidenhead to provide more plots should be explored. However, such opportunities are likely to be limited: most of the allotment sites are surrounded by other land uses, such as housing areas, roads, or private land where expansion of the site would require land purchase. There are two sites (Jubilee allotments at Ray Mill Road West, and Blackamoor Lane allotments) that border onto parks; expansion of these sites could provide some additional plots; although this would lead to a loss of public open space this option could be explored further.
- 3.9 Consideration should be also be given to the feasibility of incorporating allotment plots into existing public open spaces (this could include land at Ockwells/Thriftwood) and submitting capital bids for funding to acquire additional land on the outskirts of Maidenhead for new allotment sites, or entering into partnership with private landowners for leasing land for allotments. This should include working with the Property team to identify sites coming up for sale, for example there may be sites within flood zones or other sites with limited potential for residential development.

#### **4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation provided in this update report.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendation provided in this update report.

#### **6. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 There are no risk management implications arising from the recommendation provided in this update report.

#### **7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS**

- 7.1 Equalities. No impacts arising from the presentation of the information provided in this update report.
- 7.2 Climate change/sustainability. Effective management and potential expansion of the Council's allotments service has a beneficial impact on sustainability by encouraging and facilitating residents to grow their own produce.
- 7.3 Data Protection/GDPR. No impacts arising from the presentation of the information provided in this update report.

#### **8. CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Not applicable.

#### **9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 9.1 Not applicable as this is an information/update report.

#### **10. APPENDICES**

- 10.1 Appendix 1. Allotment sites in Maidenhead

#### **11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- 11.1 None

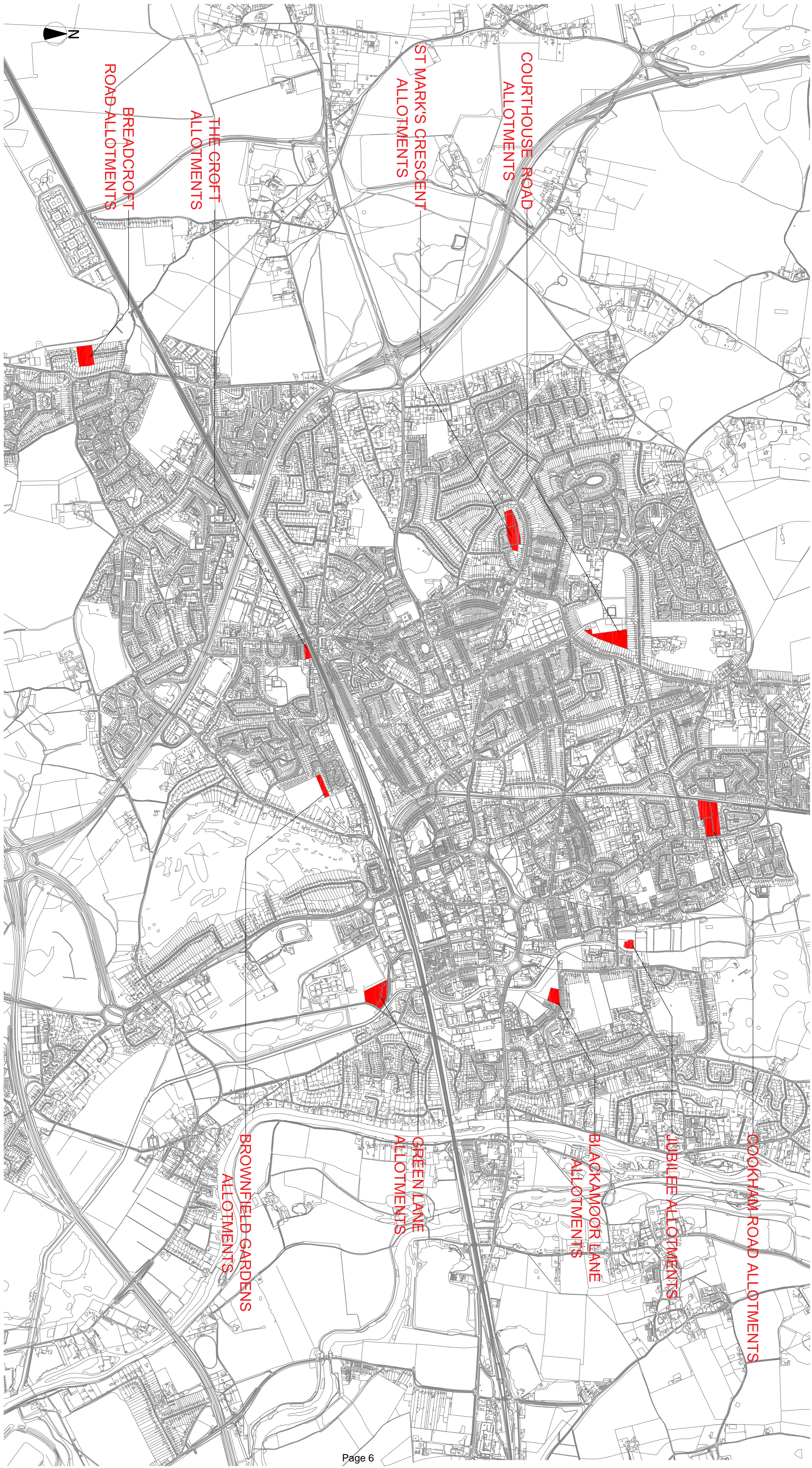
## 12. CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

<b>Name of consultee</b>	<b>Post held</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date returned</b>
Chris Joyce	Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth	26.03.21	02.04.21

### REPORT HISTORY

<b>Decision type:</b>	<b>Urgency item?</b>	<b>To follow item?</b>
For information	No	Yes, additional information being sought

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Project

**RBWM ALLOTMENTS**

Title

**ALLOTMENT GARDENS  
MAIDENHEAD**

Rev	Amendments	Init	Date

Date

18.05.2020

Scale

1:1000@A1

Drawn

AC

Checked

Outdoor Fac.

Dwg No.

202003-L-01

Rev.

Base Ref.

Y:\ARCVIEW\WLEISURE\LANDSCAPE\_Maidenhead Allotments

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