

Report Title:	Allotment provision in the borough
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information?	No - Part I
Meeting and Date:	9 th June 2020
Responsible Officer(s):	David Scott, Head of Communities
Wards affected:	All

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REPORT SUMMARY

1. The report responds to a suggested topic received from a resident for onward consideration by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel.
2. Details of the resident who has submitted this topic have been anonymised.

The suggested topic received was as follows: ***“There is inadequate provision of Allotments in Maidenhead because allocation to a plot is advertised on the RBWM website as taking more than 4 years. In addition, the registration process is inadequate. It does not enable multiple applications; it gives no detail on availability and it gives no feedback on progress of an application. It serves to discourage rather than encourage. The purpose of scrutiny would be to establish these facts and determine if the policy and process of RBWM in regard to the provision of allotments is adequate considering that Allotments are known to positively impact on 1) physical well-being 2) mental well-being 3) diet and 4) community well-being and they can also reduce the need for plastic packaging and carbon miles plus they can be an educational resource for the younger generation. Given the overwhelming benefits, RBWM's climate emergency declaration, RBWM's support for reducing consumption of plastic and support for mental health initiatives against the relatively small cost of provision, scrutiny should ask why has provision not been significantly expanded and promoted?”***

3. This suggested topic has been submitted to the Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel for further consideration. This briefing note provides the Panel with an overview and summary of the current position with respect to the allotments provision across the borough as a whole.
4. Allotments are popular, both locally and nationally and in the Maidenhead area there has been a significant increase in interest and demand over the last couple of 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.
5. 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.
6. There are limited opportunities to provide increased capacity to allotment provision in Maidenhead, due to the location of the existing sites

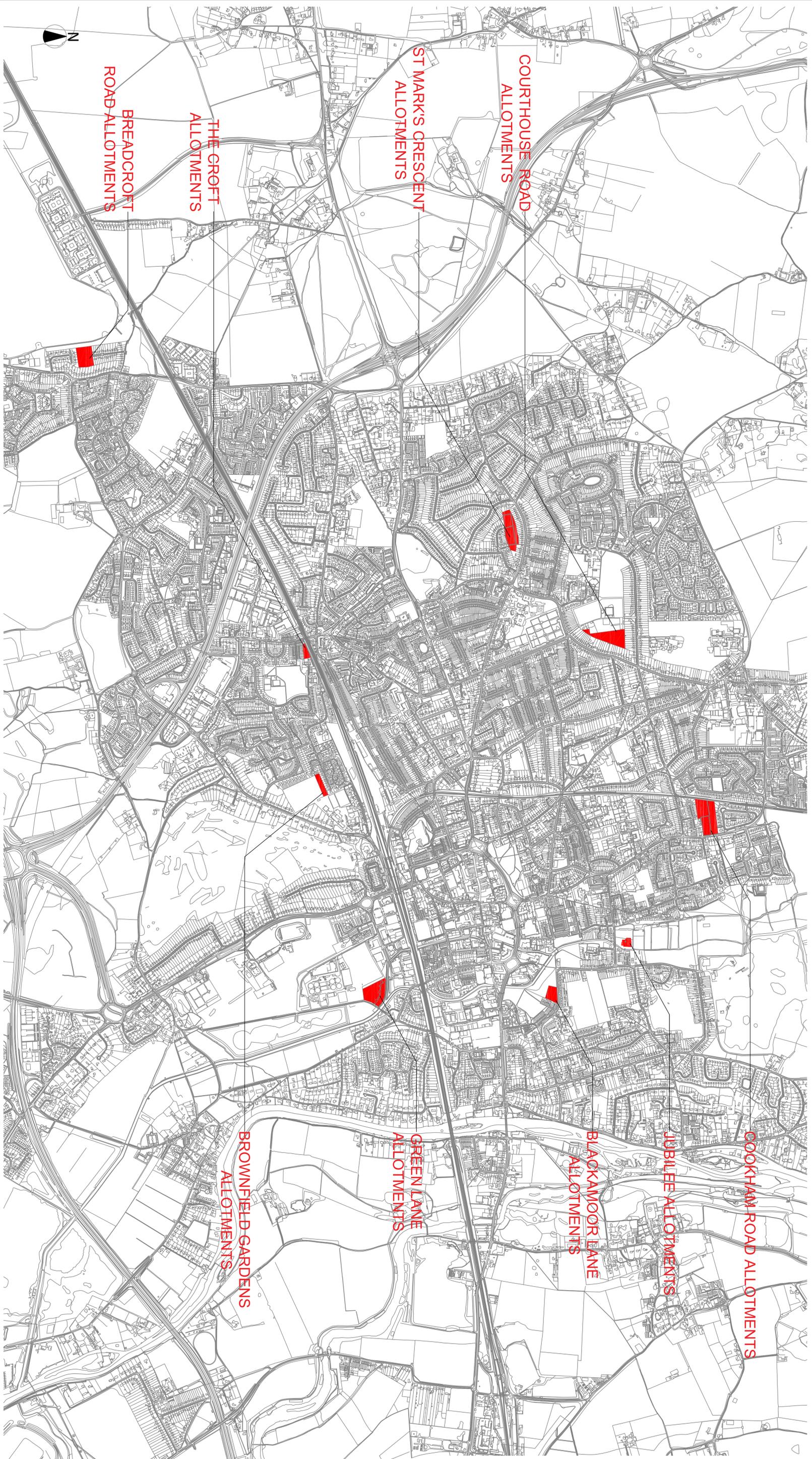
Introduction:

Allotment gardening is a very popular activity amongst borough residents; there are 8 allotment sites in Maidenhead (with a total of 501 individual plots), which are managed directly by the Borough Council's 'Parks & Countryside Team'; 8 sites within the Windsor area, managed by the Windsor Allotment and Home Garden Association; and a number of sites managed by Parish Councils. Most allotment sites have statutory protection under the Allotments Act 1925.

1. There are currently waiting lists for all allotment sites in Maidenhead (see current waiting list details below, and location plan of allotment sites attached). There has been an increase in applications for allotment plots over recent years, and waiting lists are therefore growing.
2. A process is in place to subdivide full sized plots to half or quarter sized plots when plots are reallocated. (An allotment plot is traditionally measured in 'rods' or 'poles', an old measurement dating back to Anglo-Saxon times; 10 'rods' or 'poles' is the traditional size of an allotment, the equivalent of approximately 250 square metres or about the size of a doubles tennis court. Sub-dividing plots in Maidenhead allotment sites over the last 8 years has helped to increase the overall availability of plots, and most plots are now either half or quarter size.
3. A decision was taken to remove multiple applications from the allotment allocations process approximately eight years ago. This helps to keep waiting lists down, and is considered more equitable than allowing multiple applications.
4. Waiting list information for Maidenhead sites is provided on the allotment pages of the borough website, including the numbers of people awaiting plots on each allotment site, and the approximate waiting time for each site. This additional level of information has been added to the website in recent months, in response to public requests. Waiting times do vary significantly between sites but are currently between three and seven years.
5. There is currently a separate process for allotments in Windsor, and this is managed by the Windsor Allotment and Home Garden Association, whereby RBWM pays a contribution towards the maintenance of the plots, but WA&HGA manages the sites and the allocation and usage of the various sites. There are 8 allotment sites in the Windsor area, and waiting lists here are minimal. All borough residents can apply for allotment plots in Windsor, and it is known that some Maidenhead residents do have plots managed by WA&HGA.

Maidenhead Allotment waiting lists over time				
Site	2018	2019	May 2020	Approx. current waiting time
Blackamoor Lane	23	28	52	5 years
Breadcroft Road	16	17	25	3 years
Brownfield Gardens	1	1	19	3 years
Cookham Road	9	14	39	3 years
Courthouse Road	3	13	31	3 years
Green Lane	19	20	74	6 years
St. Marks Crescent	12	13	42	5 years
The Croft	4	8	22	4 years
Jubilee	28	34	36	7 years
Totals	115	148	340	

6. It should be noted that long waiting lists for allotments is not confined to the Maidenhead area: nationally, there are an estimated 300,000 allotment plot holders across the UK, and according to the National Society for Allotment and Leisure Gardeners there are another 100,000 on waiting lists, which can sometimes be decades long.
7. Opportunities for expanding existing allotment sites within Maidenhead to provide more plots could be explored, but such opportunities are very limited: most of the allotment sites are surrounded by other land uses, such as housing areas, roads or private land which would require land purchase; expanding either of the two sites (Jubilee allotments at Ray Mill Road West, and Blackamoor Lane allotments) that do border onto parks would lead to a loss of public open space.
8. We will however continue to manage the allotment waiting lists within the Maidenhead area based on availability and seeking to maximise the number of available plots by sub-division where possible.



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Project
RBWM ALLOTMENTS

Title
**ALLOTMENT GARDENS
MAIDENHEAD**

Rev	Amendments	Init	Date

Date	Scale
18.05.2020	1:1000@A1

Drawn	Checked	Outdoor Fac.
AC		

Dwg No.	Rev.
202003-L-01	

Base Ref.
Y:\ARCVIEW\WLEISURE\LANDSCAPE_Maidenhead Allotments

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