

# Allotments

## Position statement, July 2010



Allotments are a unique resource and the Council fully recognises the value of allotments in improving people's well being and the quality of neighbourhoods. Allotment gardening provides the opportunity for a year-round healthy lifestyle which is active, socially inclusive and which reflects the ideals of sustainability and well-being. Unlike other leisure activities, it provides not only exercise, mental relaxation and lifelong learning opportunities, but also the fresh fruit and vegetables that benefit healthy living. However, allotment gardening also has the capacity to benefit the wider community. Allotments are multi-dimensional places where the benefits are not confined to fruit and vegetables for the allotment holders. 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.

The purpose of this document is to set out North Norfolk District Council's position with regard to allotment provision in the District.

### **Legal position**

Under section 23(1) of the 1908 Small Holdings and Allotments Act, the responsibility for providing allotments in the district lies jointly with both the District Council and Town/Parish Councils:

- The District Council's duty is to ensure there are sufficient allotments on a district wide basis
- Town and Parish Council's duty is to ensure there are sufficient allotments on a town/parish basis.

### **Current provision**

NNDC does not manage any allotment sites in the district. Sites are currently managed by the relevant Town or Parish Council.

The most up to date survey, carried out for 'Norfolk Allotments the plot so far' which was published in 2007, indicated there are at least 1377 allotment plots (equating to at least 70ha) available in the District.

There is currently no legal requirement for provision of a minimum number of plots per household/population. However, in 1969 the Thorpe Report recommended a minimum standard of 0.2ha per 1000 population. North Norfolk currently exceeds this standard (this minimum would require 20ha).

In 1996 a national survey showed an average of 15 plots per 1000 households in the UK. Our average is 15.2 plots per 1000 households.

However, 'Norfolk Allotments the plot so far' only listed 55 parishes in North Norfolk as having allotments, with 65 parishes having no provision.

This means that whilst provision is generally good across the District as a whole, as often only residents of a parish with allotments are eligible for those allotments, residents living in a parish with no provision have no way of renting an existing plot. There is also a high demand for allotments in some market towns in the district, where gardens are smaller than in many rural parishes.

The Council will seek to make provision for allotments via the planning process as required by Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17). The NNDC Core Strategy contains standards for allotment provision in Appendix A, and the Site Specific Proposals Document (in draft) identifies sites where allotment provision should be included within any future development proposals.

The Council will also actively encourage the private provision of allotments since there may be organisations (e.g. churches) that have land that could be used for new plots. The Council will seek to create partnerships with any organisation or individual who can contribute to the development of allotments. Encouraging provision in areas where there is a waiting list will be prioritised.

### **Quantifying the need**

Both the District Council and Town and Parish Councils have an obligation under Section 23(2) of the 1908 Small Holdings and Allotments Act, to consider the need for allotments if 6 registered electors write to them requesting allotments.

In the event of this situation arising the District Council will work in partnership with the relevant town and parish council in order to determine if there is a need for allotments.

If a need is established the District Council will work alongside the town/parish council to try to identify land suitable for allotments. NNDC will examine whether they have any land holdings in the area that could be used for allotments. In the event of new allotments being created the District Council will strongly encourage the relevant parish council to also make those plots available to residents of adjoining parishes. If council owned land is provided for this purpose this will be a requirement of any tenancy agreements between the district and parishes. Any community consultation required in order to provide new sites will need to be carried out by the relevant town or parish council.

The District Council can offer town and parish councils the following assistance:

- Interpretation of the law surrounding allotments
- Advice regarding the administration of allotments
- Contacts for other local allotment administrations and associations
- A standard tenancy agreement

For all initial enquiries regarding this position statement please contact the Council's Sustainability Coordinator on 01263 516271.