

## Technical Note on Leicester's Allotment Strategy

Leicester City Council's most recent strategy is the Allotment Strategy 2015-20.

A copy of the Strategy is attached. The conclusions in terms of supply and demand were:

*At present the Council provides 3,177 allotment plots over 97.77 hectares of land. Taking the Queens Road provision into account this becomes 3,297 allotment plots over 100.79 hectares of land.*

*Using the latest available census figures for Leicester (2011) the following can be seen:*

- *Households: 123,125 required plots = 123(000) x 20 = 2,460*
- *Population: 329,839 required hectarage = 329(000) x 0.3 = 98.7*

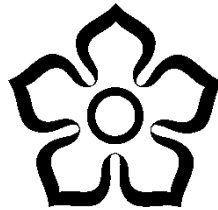
*From this it can be seen that by both the NSALG standard and the Authority's own standard, city-wide provision is more than met.*

*Although the above figures demonstrate that the Council is meeting the required standards for provision, there is increasing housing stock being provided in the city at Hamilton East and the large Ashton Green development, which is likely to alter the figures substantially. To ensure that standards of provision are met there are on-going discussions regarding provision to serve both of these new housing areas. Additionally, the Leicester Food Plan has a target of creating 3,900m<sup>2</sup> of new allotment provision by 2016.*

The Council is in the process of developing a new allotment strategy that takes into account the increasing demand on the Council's existing allotment stock and the increasing demand for community growing space by community led groups. The new strategy is expected to be adopted early in 2025. Until adoption of the new strategy, the 2015-20 Allotment Strategy and the approach to managing allotments contained within it remain relevant.

# **ALLOTMENT STRATEGY 2015-20**

**Local Services and Enforcement**



Leicester  
City Council



# Allotment Strategy Contents

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## **1. Introduction**

Leicester City Council has responsibility for 43 allotment sites spread across the City; two of which are just outside the City border in Braunstone Town. Most of these sites follow a devolved management model and are run on a day to day basis by Allotment Societies.

The Council's previous Allotment strategy from 2001 concerned itself only with the decommissioning of unused sites and the consolidation of under-used sites (at that time there was a 40% vacancy rate). Once this process and the accompanying investment in the remaining sites had been completed the strategy effectively ceased to exist and no further strategy was put in its place. However this process did provide an example of strategic working with regard to allotments which this Strategy aims to take up and develop.

The new Leicester Food Plan has as one of its targets the production of an Allotment Strategy, it also has target for community growing and the appointment of a Food Plan Project Manager. Community growing (as distinct from Allotments) will form part of the Food Plan Project Managers remit, and is thus not covered in this Strategy. However there will be links and opportunities between the two which should be identified and developed.

This strategy aims to take a broader view of the management and development of the City's current allotment stock with the intention of providing a basis for the long term sustainable provision of allotment gardening opportunities for the people of Leicester.

In the absence of any documented strategy, the management of allotments has been a largely reactive process of attempting to deal with specific individual issues as they arise. By providing an agreed strategy it is hoped that a more proactive, considered approach can be taken to allotment management.

There is much primary legislation which directly or indirectly concerns itself with the provision and management of allotments, likewise the Councils planning framework also has specific policies relating to allotments. A brief summary of this legal and planning framework is given in: "Section 2: Legislative and Planning Framework". The existing management models in use are discussed in: "Section 3: Management". The distribution, usage and demand for allotments is covered in: "section 4: Provision, usage and demand". Condition surveys were carried out on all the allotment sites in early 2014. The results of these visits, as well as Allotment Societies "wish lists" and the results of the latest Allotment User survey are referred to in: "Section 5: Condition Survey". All these sections have one or more strategic aims arising from them. These along with, more detailed, associated actions are set out in: "Section 6: Action Plan".

This strategy helps support the larger City Council Green Space Strategy; due for revision in 2015. The Green Space Strategy will have a five year lifespan; therefore it is proposed that this timescale is also applied to the Allotment Strategy.

## 2. Legislative and Planning framework

Allotments are provided within a framework of legislation, planning and policy. There are a number of Acts of Parliament which have a direct effect on allotments and their use; the allotment sites have been given planning designations by the Council as the local planning authority.

### Statutory Legislation

The following Acts of Parliament have relevance to allotment management and provision:

**Table 1: Allotments Legislation for the Period 1908 to 1950<sup>1</sup>**

Act and Date	Description and notes on most important Sections
Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908	<p><b>Repealed and consolidated previous legislation and established the framework for the modern allotments system.</b></p> <p>Section 23 provides that if allotment authorities 'are of the opinion that there is a demand for allotments...in the borough, district or parish the council shall provide a sufficient number of allotments to persons...resident in the borough district or parish and desiring the same'. In determining demand an authority must take into consideration 'a representation in writing by any six registered parliamentary electors or rate payers'. Section 25 gives a local authority the power to compulsorily purchase land for allotments if land cannot be acquired by private agreement.</p> <p>Section 26 provides that an allotments authority 'may' make improvements to allotment land such as drainage, paths and hut construction.</p> <p>Section 32 deals with the 'Sale of superfluous or unsuitable land' and permits local authorities to sell land if they are 'of opinion that any land ... is not needed for the purpose of allotments'. Allotments authorities may sell the land, or exchange it for other land more suitable for allotments, and they may pay or receive money for equality of exchange.<sup>2</sup> However, Section 8 of the Allotments Act 1925 (see below) places restrictions on this process.</p> <p>Section 47 deals with compensation for allotment holders who are required to leave the site. These provisions were amended by the Allotments Act 1922.</p>
Land Settlement Facilities Act 1919	<p><b>This Act was mainly to assist returning servicemen and opened up allotments to all, not just 'the labouring population'.</b></p> <p>Made metropolitan borough councils allotment authorities for the first time.</p> <p>Section 22 enables an allotment authority to appropriate for allotments any land held for other purposes.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Parliament. *The Stationery Office*. [Online] [Cited: 2nd February 2015.] <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> Garner, J. F. (1977) *The Law of Allotments (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.)*, London, Shaw and Sons Ltd.

Allotments Act 1922	<p><b>This Act was established to provide allotment tenants with some security of tenure, laying down specific periods of notice and compelling most allotment authorities to appoint allotment committees, and provided tenants with greater compensation at the termination of their tenancy.</b></p> <p>Section 1 provides that an allotment garden tenancy may be determined by the landlord by notice to quit only if a six months or longer notice is given. This provision was amended by Section 1 of the Allotments Act 1950.</p> <p>Section 2 provides for compensation on being forced to quit an allotment, based on the value of the crops.</p> <p>Section 16 required allotments authorities to exact a 'full fair rent' for allotments. This provision was repealed by Section 10 of the Allotments Act 1950.</p> <p>Section 22 defines 'allotment gardens' as 'an allotment not exceeding forty poles in extent which is mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetables and fruit crops for consumption by himself or his family'.</p>
Allotments Act 1925	<p><b>This Act was intended to facilitate the acquisition and maintenance of allotments, and to make further provision for the security of tenure of tenants of allotments.</b></p> <p>Section 3 specifies that when a local authority is preparing a town-planning scheme, it must 'consider what provisions ought to be included therein for the reservation of land for allotments.' This provision was repealed by the Town and Country Planning Act 1947.</p> <p>Section 8 specifies that land purchased or appropriated by local authorities for use as allotments must not be disposed of without Ministerial consent. The Secretary of State must be satisfied that 'adequate provision will be made for allotment holders displaced by the action of the local authority, or that such provision is unnecessary or not reasonably practicable'.</p> <p>Section 12 provided that a local authority with a population of over 10,000 should appoint an allotments committee which is responsible for all allotment matters with the exception of financial issues. This provision was repealed by the Local Government Act 1972.</p>
Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1926	<p><b>Made minor amendments to previous Acts but was mostly concerned with small holdings.</b></p> <p>Repealed sections 1-22 of Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 which related to small holdings.</p>
Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Act 1931	<p><b>Temporary measure passed at time of economic depression to assist the unemployed.</b></p> <p>Section 13 permitted the seizure of land for allotments and gave the Minister of Agriculture authority to provide allotments for the unemployed. This provision expired in 1939 under Section 19.</p>
Town and Country Planning Act 1947	<p><b>Made no specific reference to allotments but removed requirement made in 1925 Act for town planning authorities to consider allotment provision within town planning schemes.</b></p>
Allotments Act 1950	<p><b>Followed on from the Allotments Advisory Committee report of 1949. Made provision for better compensation following termination of tenancies, and clarified the systems for collecting rent.</b></p> <p>Section 1 increases the period of notice to be supplied to allotment holders to 12 months and this must expire during the winter months.</p> <p>Sections 2 to 6 deal with the compensation which should be payable to an allotment holder according to the season his tenancy terminates. Also, allotment holders who have allowed their plots to deteriorate through neglect are liable to pay for compensation for dilapidations on quitting.</p> <p>Section 9 confines local authorities' obligation to 'allotment gardens'- in effect, making 'farm allotments' no longer statutory.</p>



	<p>Section 10 amends the rent collection systems and allotments authorities may charge such rent "... as a tenant may reasonably be expected to pay for the land". This section also makes provision for the allotments authority to let land "... to a person at a less rent, if the Council are satisfied that there exist special circumstances affecting the person which render it proper for them to let the land at a less rent".</p> <p>Section 12 allows certain forms of livestock (hens and rabbits) to be kept although this is, in some cases, restricted by local bye-laws.</p>
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**Aim 1:** Confirm legal and planning designations of all allotment sites, e.g. "Statutory" or otherwise

Planning Designations

The following are extracts from the current Local Development Framework and any saved policies from the previous Local Plan, which have a direct reference or relevance to allotments in the City. Further work is underway to comply with the latest planning framework introduced by Central Government. It will be important that allotments continue to be promoted and protected in the local planning framework.

**Table 2: Leicester City Council Planning Policies with relevance to allotments**

<b>Current Local Development Framework</b>	
<p>Spatial Objective 12:</p>	<p>To ensure access to high quality outdoor sports, children’s play provision and active recreation facilities for all residents. To improve Leicester’s strategic green network and use quality green space to provide an important recreational, social, health, and educational role. To improve access opportunities to quality open space as the distribution of this is uneven, with some neighbourhoods in the City being under provided.</p>
<p>CS POLICY 8: Existing Neighbourhoods</p>	<p>The Council will work closely with a range of partners including health agencies, education providers, the police, housing associations, community groups and private developers to ensure that each neighbourhood will have access to a local centre, public open space, play facilities, public transport, sport and active recreation facilities and other community and leisure facilities. We want our neighbourhoods to be sustainable places that people choose to live and work in and where everyday facilities are available to local people. To achieve this the following will apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council recognises the importance of allotments across the City and supports the continuing use of existing publicly owned allotment sites where they meet the need of local neighbourhoods;</li> </ul> <p>.....</p> <p>The Council recognises the particularly important role that public open space plays in improving local health and wellbeing within inner areas in view of the lack of significant garden space within many houses. The Council will ensure that residential areas have good access to allotments and will protect the private allotment area to meet demand in Clarendon Park.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Development of new allotments at Hamilton will be supported to address the current under provision.</p>

<p>CS POLICY 13: Green Network</p>	<p>The Council will seek to maintain and enhance the quality of the green network so that residents and visitors have easy access to good quality green space, sport and recreation provision that meets the needs of local people. A Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared to provide detailed guidance and information on green space, sport and recreation provision and to support the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will safeguard and improve green space, sport and recreation facilities that are of value to the green network, local communities and biodiversity, especially those that are of strategic importance i.e. green wedges, the River and Canal Corridor;</li> <li>• Green wedges will be maintained as areas of land that prevent the merging of built up areas of the City and adjoining settlements, guide the development and provide a “green lung” into the inner urban area. Their function as open space for leisure or recreational purposes will be maintained and enhanced. Development within a green wedge will be expected to serve the open space, be of high design quality and of an appropriate scale and size for its location to minimise the visual and environmental impact of the development;</li> <li>• The Council will pursue opportunities to address the imbalances in green space provision by making green space, sport and recreation facilities more accessible and improving links and connections between spaces;</li> <li>• New development proposals should meet the need for provision arising from the development, taking account of local qualitative and quantitative deficiencies in green space, sport and recreation provision. New on-site provision or S106 contributions to improve the quality of, or access to, existing open space, will be expected and commuted maintenance sums will be sought; and</li> <li>• Where there are proposals that affect green space, outdoor sport or recreation facilities, land should not be released, either in total or in part, for development unless it is:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Surplus to requirements for its current green space function; and</li> <li>b) Not needed for another type of green space use; or</li> <li>c) Equivalent or better replacement green space would be provided in the local area.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Saved Local Plan Policies</b></p>	
<p>GE09. Green Space</p>	<p>Planning permission will not be granted for any development, which would endanger or encroach upon Green Space as shown on the Proposals Map unless:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Nature conservation and landscape value is protected in accordance with Policies GE02–GE05 and UD06; and</li> <li>b) Such development would not in itself create an area of public open space deficiency as defined in paragraph 10.34; and</li> <li>c) A local assessment of need identifies the land as surplus to requirements.</li> </ol> <p>In addition planning permission for any development on Green Space will only be granted where:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d) It would service or improve the character of open space uses of the land and the green and open character of the area continues to dominate; or</li> <li>e) It involves the development of playing fields in accordance with Policies GE15, GE16 and GE17; or</li> <li>f) It involves the future of allotments in accordance with Policy GE19.</li> </ol>

GE19. Allotments	Planning permission will not be granted for development which would result in the loss of allotments unless: a) There has been significant and long standing under occupancy of the site despite efforts to secure tenants; b) The nature conservation and landscape value of the site is protected or enhanced; c) There is adequate alternative allotment provision in a nearby accessible location to cater for long term future need.
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**Aim 2:** Ensure the allotment provision remains protected and promoted in development plans

## 3. Management

### Models of management in use

There are two models of management used for the allotment sites in Leicester. The majority of sites are run under a devolved management scheme; where the individual sites are managed on a day to day basis by an independent allotment society (some societies manage more than one site). The societies lease the sites with a 20 year term of tenure. They are then responsible for letting of individual plots, on a year by year basis. The society is responsible for collecting rents and ensuring the individual plots are maintained and cultivated to the standard required by the society. The society also has responsibility for some site wide maintenance tasks as set out in the lease. Plot holders become members of the society and annually elect a committee to act in the role of an executive body.

The other management model used in Leicester is the letting of plots on sites, directly to individuals. In this case, the “direct let” sites are wholly managed by the Council. The plots are let on an annual basis and the rent is paid directly to the council. The Council is responsible for all aspects of management and maintenance on these sites including ensuring that cultivation standards are being met.

Generally the “society” model of management works well in Leicester. It does rely on the hard work and commitment of volunteers at each site, or in each society, this can lead to a variation in the quality of management between different sites. However the site audits carried out in the spring and early summer of 2014, show that on the whole society sites provide more facilities and higher levels of cultivation than direct let sites. Because of this it seems reasonable to encourage the plot holders on the larger direct let sites to take up the society run model. Although on many of the direct let sites, this is not feasible due to the low number of plot-holders on each site.

**Aim 3:** Encourage the setup of allotment societies at the larger direct let sites.

### Management Structure

#### The Council’s management

The team responsible for the management and maintenance of allotments is the Amenities team, which is based at Abbey Park. The team report to the Allotments and Amenities Manager, having responsibility for managing and maintaining direct let sites and to work with the various allotment societies to help manage and maintain some aspects of the society run sites. In these cases the Council’s maintenance responsibilities are set out in the Societies’ leases, which themselves should be a reflection of the maintenance responsibilities falling to Allotment Authorities from the various Acts of Parliament relating to allotments (see section 2).

The Allotment Team comprises of the Allotment Manager, two Team Leaders and ten operatives. They form part of the Standards and Development Service, within the Local Services and Enforcement Division. The Allotment Manager attends the Allotment Users Consultative Committee (AUCC) meetings, which are held quarterly and serve as a formal liaison meeting between Council Members and Officers and representatives of the Allotment Societies.

Currently the team work to ad-hoc arrangements and none of the regular works are managed within a recognised structure. There is need, supported through findings within the site audits, to adopt a more structured approach to maintenance tasks and it is therefore intended to map areas of maintenance and incorporate the data in the Council's grounds maintenance management software.

#### **Aim 4: Review and produce grounds maintenance schedules**

##### Pricing

The prices for renting direct let allotments in Leicester have been compared with prices in a range of Authorities which are nearest statistical neighbours to Leicester<sup>3</sup>. The price of renting this type of allotment has also been compared with prices in Leicestershire. The following table show the results of the latest price comparison exercise carried out in September 2014.

**Table 3: Price comparison of local authority direct let allotment rents (excluding concessions).<sup>4</sup>**

Authority	£	Comments
Leicester	£18.50	All inclusive
Bolton	£50.00	
Bradford	£37.20	£20.00 additional charge for water
Bristol	£70.00	£17.50 discount if no water supplied
Coventry	£35.00	£20.00 maximum discount dependant on location and facilities
Derby	£25.00	
Middlesbrough	£63.50	
Newcastle upon Tyne	£50.00	
Nottingham	£32.50	Plus additional charge for 'relevant' water charges
Wolverhampton	£38.00	Charge for improved sites with facilities; £59.00 for non-residents
Charnwood BC	£47.00	
Harborough DC	£36.00	
Hinckley & Bosworth BC	£50.00	
Blaby Parish Council	£50.00	

<sup>3</sup> Those Authorities most similar in character to Leicester.

<sup>4</sup> Bolton MBC. *Allotments*. [Online] [Cited: 2nd February 2015.] <http://www.bolton.gov.uk/website/pages/Allotments>  
 Bradford MDC. *Allotments*. [Online] [Cited: 2nd February 2015.] <http://www.bradford.gov.uk/bmdc/leisureandculture/allotments/prices>  
 Bristol CC. *Allotments*. [Online] [Cited: 2nd February 2015.] <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/leisure-and-culture/getting-allotment>  
 Coventry CC. *Allotments*. [Online] [Cited: 2nd February 2015.] <http://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/510/allotments/505/allotments/2>  
 Derby CC. *Allotments*. [Online] [Cited: 2nd February 2015.] <http://www.derby.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/parks-and-open-spaces/allotments/>  
 Hull CC. *Allotments*. [Online] [Cited: 2nd February 2015.] <http://www.hullcc.gov.uk/portal/page?pageid=221,655686&dad=portal&schema=portal#>  
 Middlesbrough BC. *Allotments*. [Online] [Cited: 2nd February 2015.] <http://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1603>  
 Newcastle CC. *Allotments*. [Online] [Cited: 2nd February 2015.] <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/leisure-libraries-and-tourism/parks-and-countryside/allotments>  
 Nottingham CC. *Allotments*. [Online] [Cited: 2nd February 2015.] <http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/article/21992/Allotments-E-FORM-NEEDED>  
 Wolverhampton CC. *Allotments*. [Online] [Cited: 2nd February 2015.] <http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/article/3431/Allotments>  
 Charnwood BC. *Allotments*. [Online] [Cited: 2nd February 2015.] <http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/allotments>  
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 Blaby PC. *Allotments*. [Online] [Cited: 2nd February 2015.] <http://blabyparish.leicestershireparishcouncils.org/allotments.html>

It can be seen that the cost of renting a direct let allotment plot in Leicester is very competitive in comparison to both to our nearest statistical neighbours and geographically close allotment authorities. Rent charges in Leicester have been traditionally low, to encourage use.

It is more difficult to compare prices for society managed sites as each is free to set their own levels of plot rental. The societies lease the allotment sites from the Council, with the lease rents set by land surveyors in the Council's Property Services section. The rents are based on the market rent for agricultural land, which is deemed to be the most relevant land value for allotments. This market rent is then subject to a 30% discount based on a long standing arrangement agreed by Councillors, again to encourage use but also self-management. The societies manage the charges to plot holders to cover the lease rental and other charges, such as water rates, as they deem fit.

Allotment budgets, as with other Council budgets, are coming under increasing pressure. Whilst it is not intended to make the service self-financing it is right to consider whether the existing models are still based on sound data.

#### **Aim 5: Review allotment pricing structure**

##### Property Services

Allotment Sites in Leicester are leased to the Societies by the Council's Property Services section using leases created by the Council's Legal services team. These leases are typically for a 20 year term with a five yearly review period. Each Society has its own lease and, as these have been created at different times, there is a possibility that different leases may contain different clauses. The respective maintenance responsibilities of the Council and the Societies will be easier to manage if the leases all followed a standard pattern.

#### **Aim 6: Standardise Leases**

Certain features and facilities on land held from Property Services are maintained using the Central Maintenance Fund (CMF). This function may possibly extend to the allotment sites but needs to be confirmed and, if so, a procedure implemented to call upon the CMF for appropriate maintenance requests.

#### **Aim 7: Investigate use of CMF for appropriate maintenance requirements**

##### Society Structures

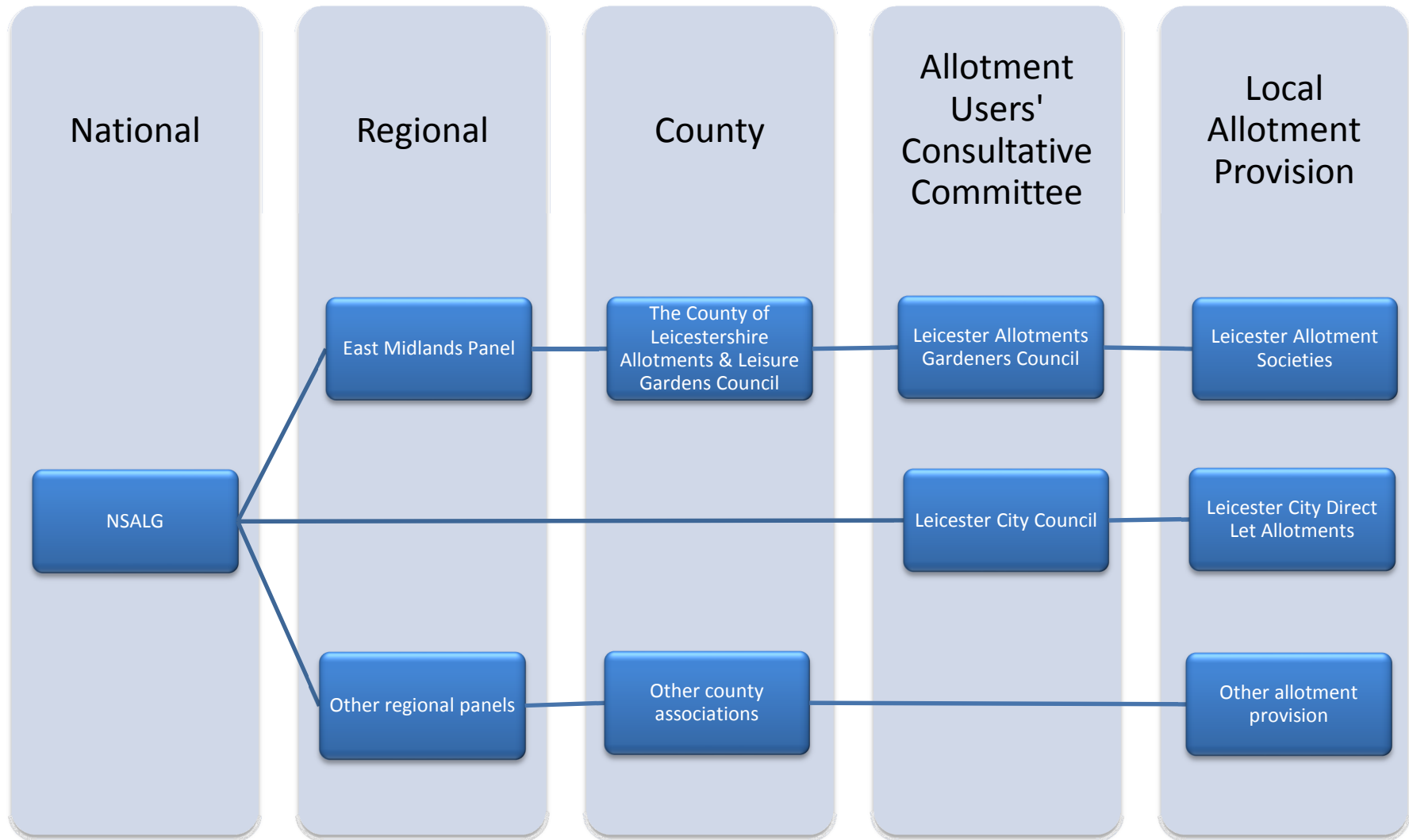
The allotment societies are constituted groups, with an elected committee comprising of, at least a Chair Person, Treasurer and Secretary. They are, generally, affiliated to the National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners (NSALG), which has regional panels. The Societies in Leicester can also join a local organisation: Leicester Allotment Gardeners Council (LAGC).

LAGC has 22 affiliated city allotment societies (with over 2,200 members) and it is affiliated to the National Allotment Society (NAS). The officers of LAGC are also officers of the County of Leicestershire Allotments and Leisure Gardens Council (CLAGC) and of the East Midlands Regional Panel of the NAS. Its purpose is to provide support, advice and mentoring of societies within the city and promote and assist in the creation of new

allotments and community gardening. LAGC also Co-ordinates society Open Days, ordering of skips provided by Leicester City Council and compiling the Void Plot and Card Discount refund claim submitted to Leicester City Council. They also carry out the annual Best Kept Plot competition. The Executive Committee of LAGC also attend the AUCC meetings, these members mentor societies and report their activities at the AUCC.

The following chart describes the interrelationships of the various groups and agencies involved in the allotment movement in Leicester.

Figure 1: Allotment organisational chart





## Funding

As the Allotment Societies are constituted bodies it is possible for them to access appropriate funding streams. The Council wishes to support the Societies in their attempts to obtain additional resources from these sources. Although the Council is, in most cases, unable to apply on the Societies behalf, it is possible that there may be opportunities to provide match funding if this is required by the funding sources.

**Aim 8: Investigate mechanisms for supporting Society funding applications**

## Livestock

At present the keeping of hens, rabbits and bees is prohibited on all Leicester's allotment sites. Section 12 of the Allotment Act 1950 removes any contractual restrictions on keeping of hens and rabbits on land (including Allotments) and it is therefore possible that the Council is acting contrary to primary legislation by continuing to keep in place a blanket ban on the keeping of hens and rabbits.

This was issue considered by the Council in 2010, and legal opinion was that the prohibition of livestock was permissible. Additionally, demand for the keeping of livestock was not registered as a desired improvement by users in the latest Allotment User Survey<sup>5</sup>. However, there has been an increasing questioning of this approach (mainly focussed on the keeping of bees), both by a number of individual allotment holders and local councillors. It is therefore proposed that a small working group consider the matter once more.

**Aim 9: Investigate viability of allowing livestock on some/any allotment sites**

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<sup>5</sup> Provides information about allotment issues generally in Leicester, but not broken down by site

## 4. Provision, Usage and Demand

### How many sites; where are they; how many plots?

There are 43 Council provided allotment sites in Leicester. These vary in size from small direct let sites such as New Park Road, which only contains two plots, to Meredith Road Allotments in Rowley Fields, which has 281 plots. Of these 43 sites, 34 are leased to societies and the remaining nine are direct let sites. The full list is given in Appendix A.

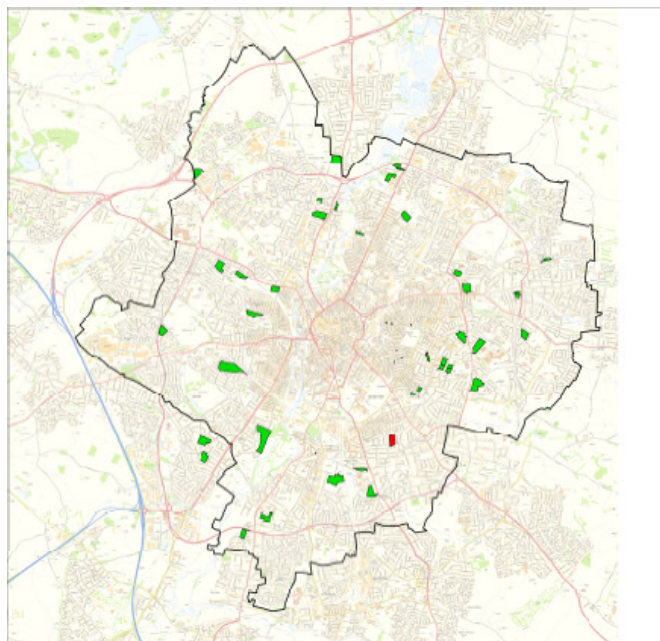
There are two privately run allotment sites in Leicester, at Queens Road and Freeman's Holt. The latter are allotments only provided for use of beneficiaries of the Freeman's of Leicester charity and so are discounted from the strategy in their entirety. Whilst the Queens Road allotments provision is noted in this section, they sit outside the scope of this strategy with respect to improvements.

Provision on all the Council sites total 3,177 individual plots; provision on the privately run Queens Road site totals 120 individual plots. Typically a plot will be approximately 250 square metres in area, although this does vary, mainly due to layout of the sites. Some sites also let half size plots, which are useful for people who would have difficulty in managing to cultivate a whole plot or for those who have never had an allotment before and wish to gain an understanding of what is involved.

### Geographic Distribution

The following plan shows the distribution of allotment sites across Leicester. It can be seen, that although the sites are generally evenly distributed across the City, there are some noticeable gaps in provision.

**Figure 2: Distribution of allotments in Leicester (private provision shown red)**



## Provision

The Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908, sets out the duty of a Local Authority to assess demand for allotments within its administrative boundary and to provide a “sufficient number of allotments”. No further definition of “sufficient” is supplied by this act or any other. Similarly the Allotments Act 1922, states that an allotment plot is no larger than 40 poles (1,012 square metres) but prescribes no minimum size.

Leicester City Council’s Green Space Supplementary Planning Document which was adopted in April 2011 gives a standard of 0.3 hectares of allotment space per 1,000 people. The NSALG has stated that Local Authorities should aim to provide at a minimum, 20 allotment plots (typically taken to be 250 square metres for a standard size plot) per 1,000 households.

At present the Council provides 3,177 allotment plots over 97.77 hectares of land. Taking the Queens Road provision into account this becomes 3,297 allotment plots over 100.79 hectares of land.

Using the latest available census figures for Leicester (2011) the following can be seen:

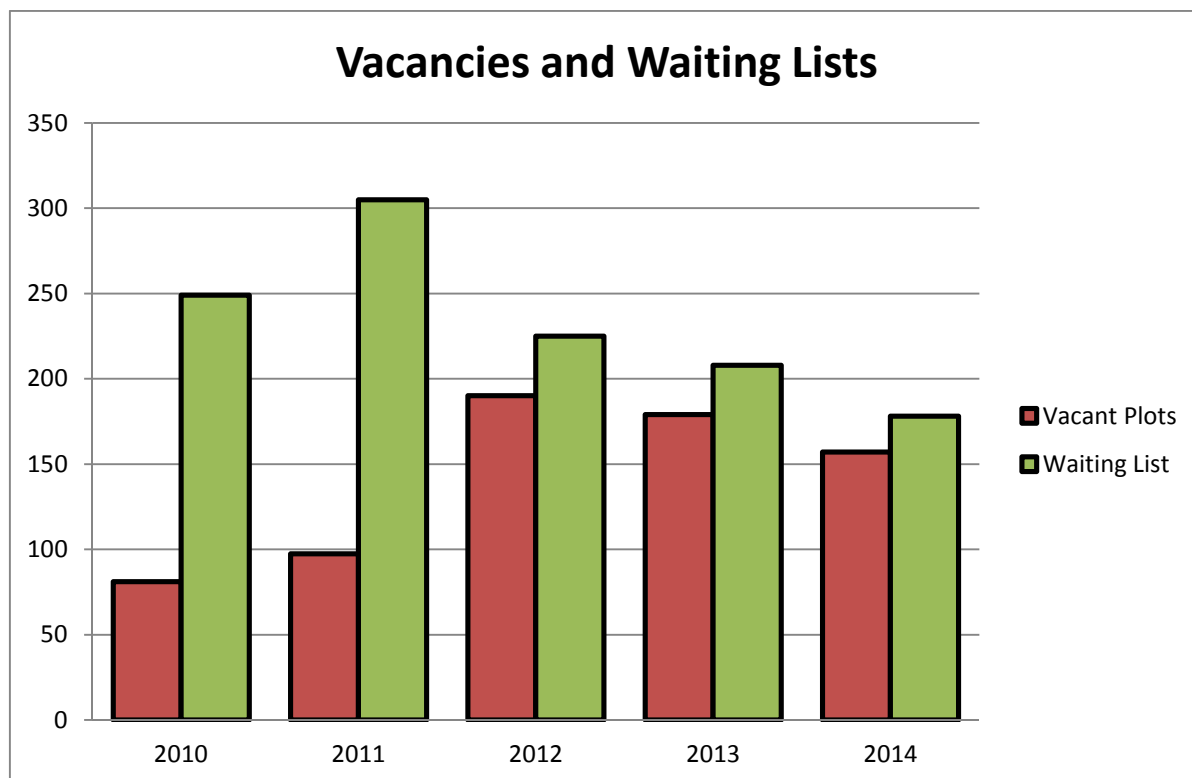
Households: 123,125	required plots = 123(000) x 20 = 2,460
Population: 329,839	required hectarage = 329(000) x 0.3 = 98.7

From this it can be seen that by both the NSALG standard and the Authority’s own standard, city-wide provision is more than met.

Although the above figures demonstrate that the Council is meeting the required standards for provision, there is increasing housing stock being provided in the city at Hamilton East and the large Ashton Green development, which is likely to alter the figures substantially. To ensure that standards of provision are met there are on-going discussions regarding provision to serve both of these new housing areas. Additionally, the Leicester Food Plan has target of creating 3,900m<sup>2</sup> of new allotment provision by 2016. One site has been identified to contribute to this target, which is in an area of known high demand, but the presence of an active badger sett has, for the moment at least, prevented the development of the land as allotments.

## Demand

The latest figures for allotment vacancies and waiting lists for each site are available in appendix A. The chart in figure 3 shows the overall waiting list and vacancy figures for Leicester over the last five years.

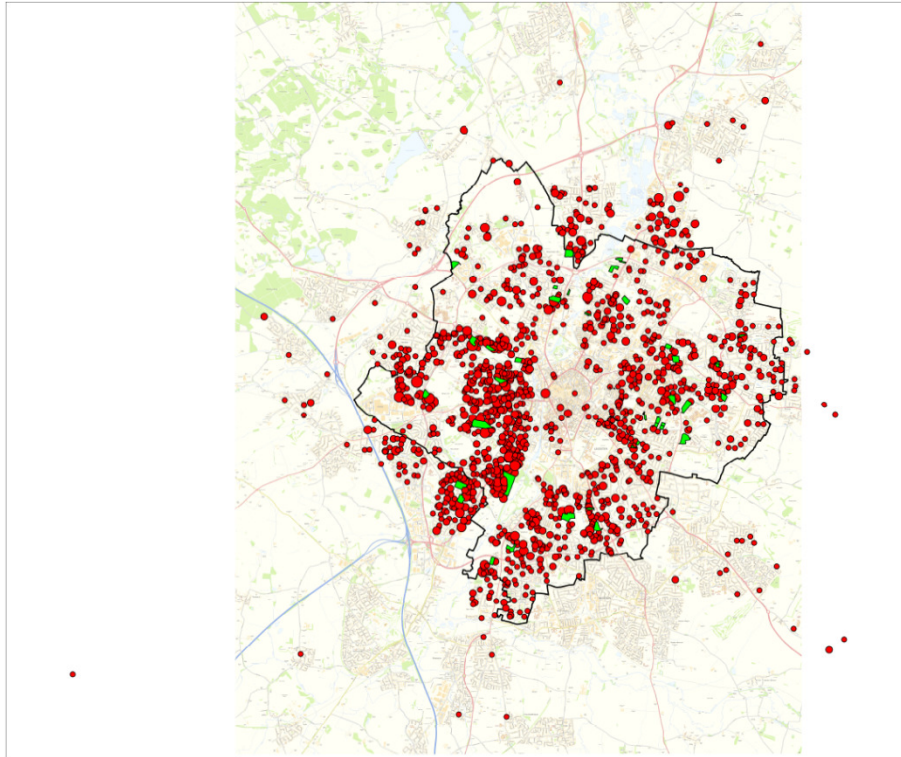
**Figure 3: Allotment waiting lists and vacant plots 2010 – 2014**

In summary, as of June 2014 there were 157 vacant plots and 178 people on the waiting list across all the allotment sites. Although this indicates that the present demand for allotment plots can almost be wholly catered for by existing unused provision, this simple analysis almost certainly does not provide an accurate picture of demand. There are a number of factors to take into consideration:

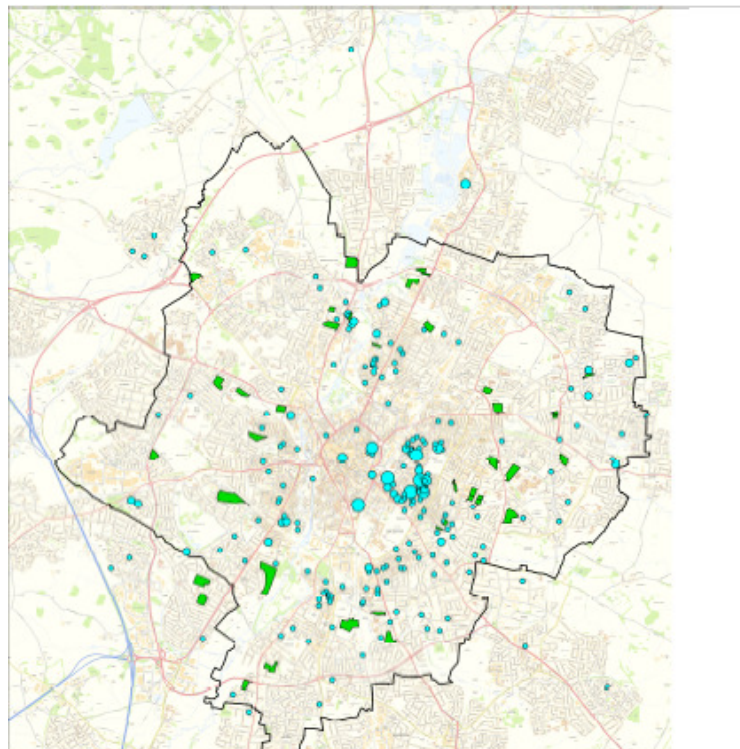
- Although the site by site detail of vacancies and waiting lists in appendix A shows that unsurprisingly they do not correlate, so that sites with high vacancies do not have high waiting lists (some sites do have both vacancies and people on a waiting list) at best this only gives a very high level understanding of the geographic distribution of demand.
- The number of vacant plots on each site might include plots which will be difficult or unable to be brought into use.
- People in areas where there is no obvious allotment provision may never bother to enquire to the availability of an allotment plot and therefore get onto a waiting list. Likewise in areas where there is a perceived over demand people might again not bother to enquire about getting an allotment.

Therefore, in an effort to establish a better understanding of the actual demand for allotments within the City a more detailed analysis was carried out based on post-code data. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this demonstrates that demand is concentrated around existing provision and that those sites with either no or shorter waiting lists experience the largest demand. Figure 4 shows current users plotted, with figure 5 showing those registered on the waiting lists. However, this exercise again does not take into account the latent demand of those not registering on waiting lists.

**Figure 4: Allotment users plotted by post code (larger points show larger demand)**



**Figure 5: Allotment waiting list by post code (larger points show larger demand)**

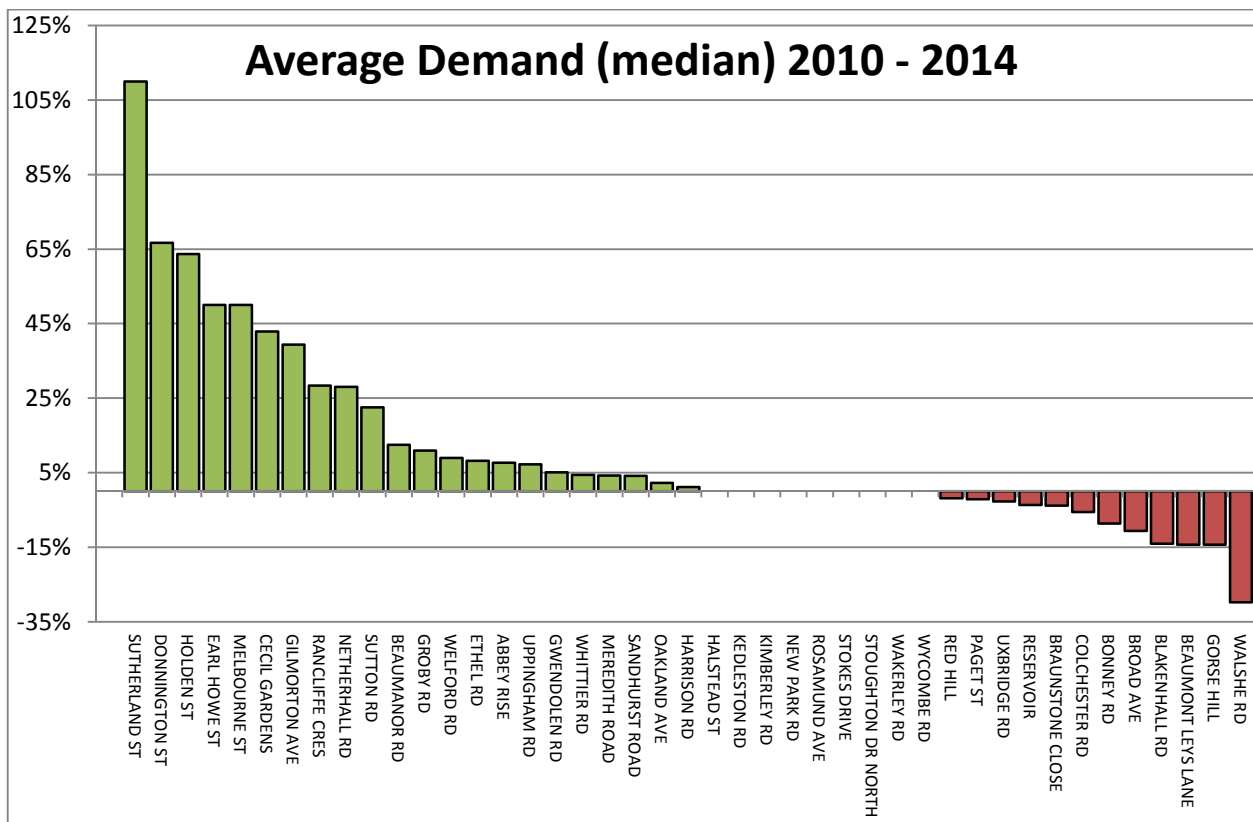


There is clearly a need for more work to be carried out to properly develop an understanding of allotment use and demand, particularly as the supplied post-code analysis does not take into account those that may be on waiting lists for more than one site. Further, the analysis is not detailed enough to determine how long people have been

waiting for, or the reasons for, choosing one site over another nearby. Without this there will always be an element of speculation about the demand for and the subsequent provision of allotments.

Finally, there is a need to engage with those sites and societies that have consistently struggled to attract users, as shown in figure 6. This chart is from the waiting list and vacancy data over the past five years, by site and shows the nett waiting list by subtracting the available vacancies. There are therefore opportunities to promote the under-used allotments locally, particularly as the mapping exercise showed a trend of high use by residents near to sites. Additionally, through the city’s community growing groups there will be opportunities to engage with a collection of users rather than individuals, as has successfully been done on a number of sites across the city.

**Figure 6: Median % demand 2010-2014 by individual site**



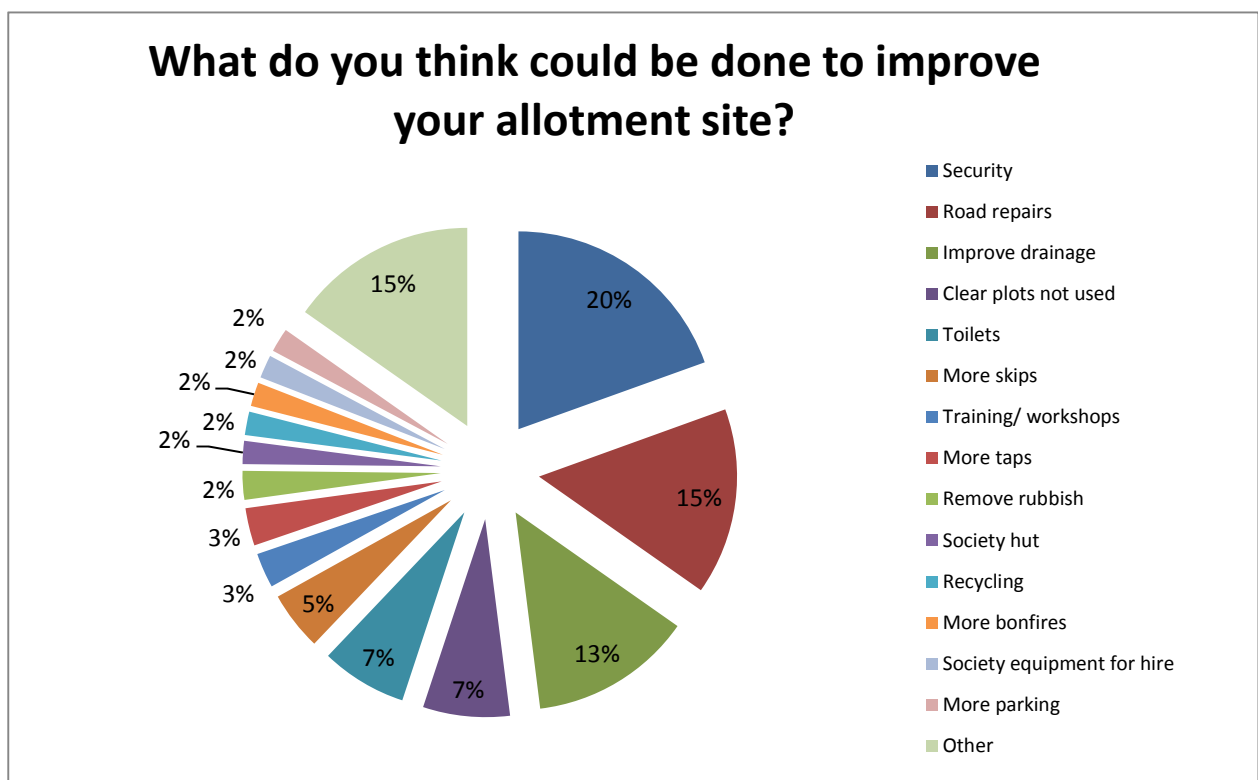
**Aim 10: Investigate need/demand to fill gaps in current provision**

## 5. Condition Survey

To support this strategy work was carried out to try to assess the current “physical” state of the Council’s allotment stock. This work comprised of two main aspects: all societies were asked to provide a list of the issues affecting their particular site(s); the Council carried out a survey of all the sites, both society managed and direct let, to ascertain the level of facilities available and the condition of infrastructure, considering such items as, perimeter fences, roads, and water supply.

Following completion the surveys were provided to the societies for further comment. The collation and analysis of this data has led to a prioritised list of works. Figure 7 below shows the original desired improvements.

**Figure 7: Desired Improvements**



### Prioritisation

The site audits identified a range of improvement works, which have been collated and are presented in appendix C. Figure 8 provides a breakdown, by type, of all works identified in the site audits. Totalling nearly £600,000 there is a clear need to prioritise the works, which has been done with the audit results being arranged into capital and revenue expenditure and then prioritised as high, medium or low.

Figure 8: Total works identified (£) by feature

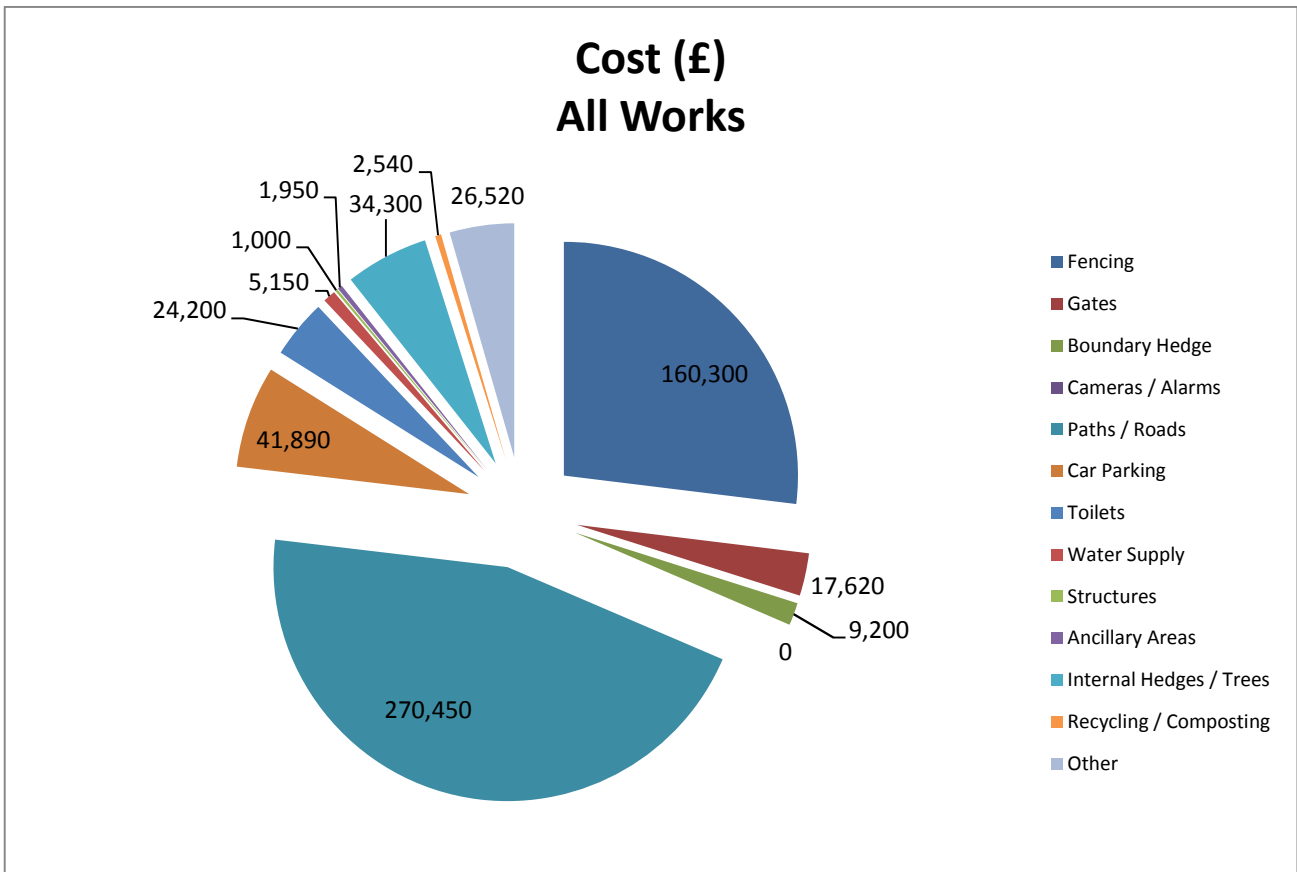


Figure 9: High priority capital improvements

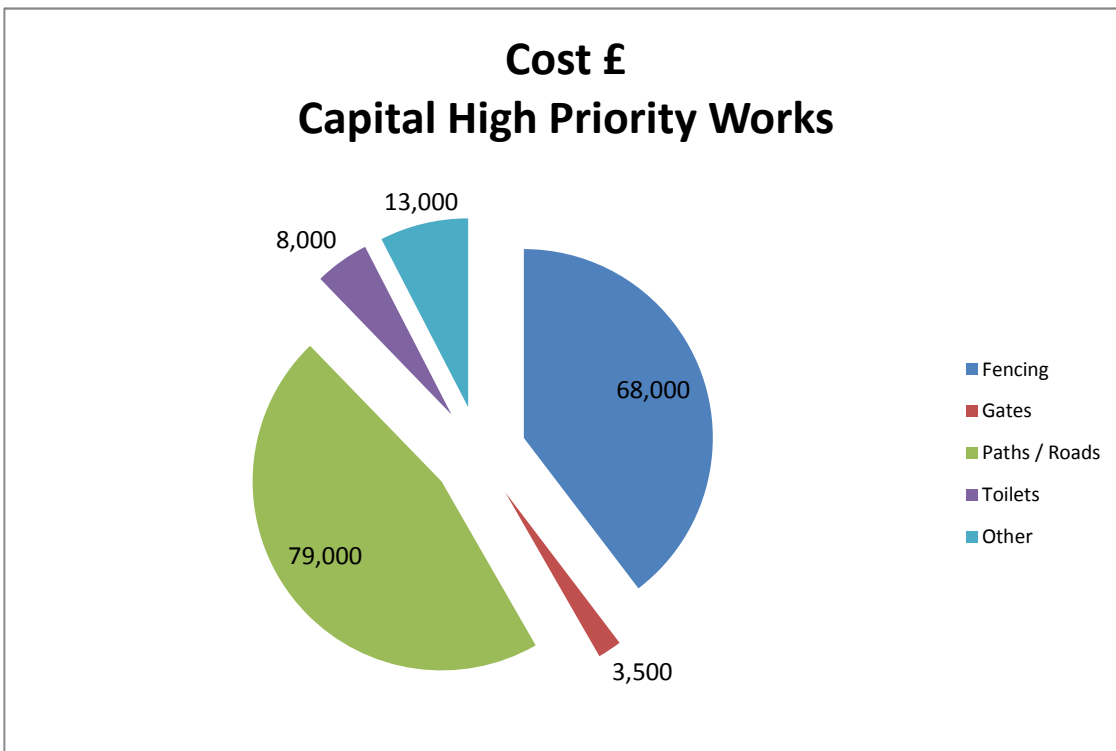
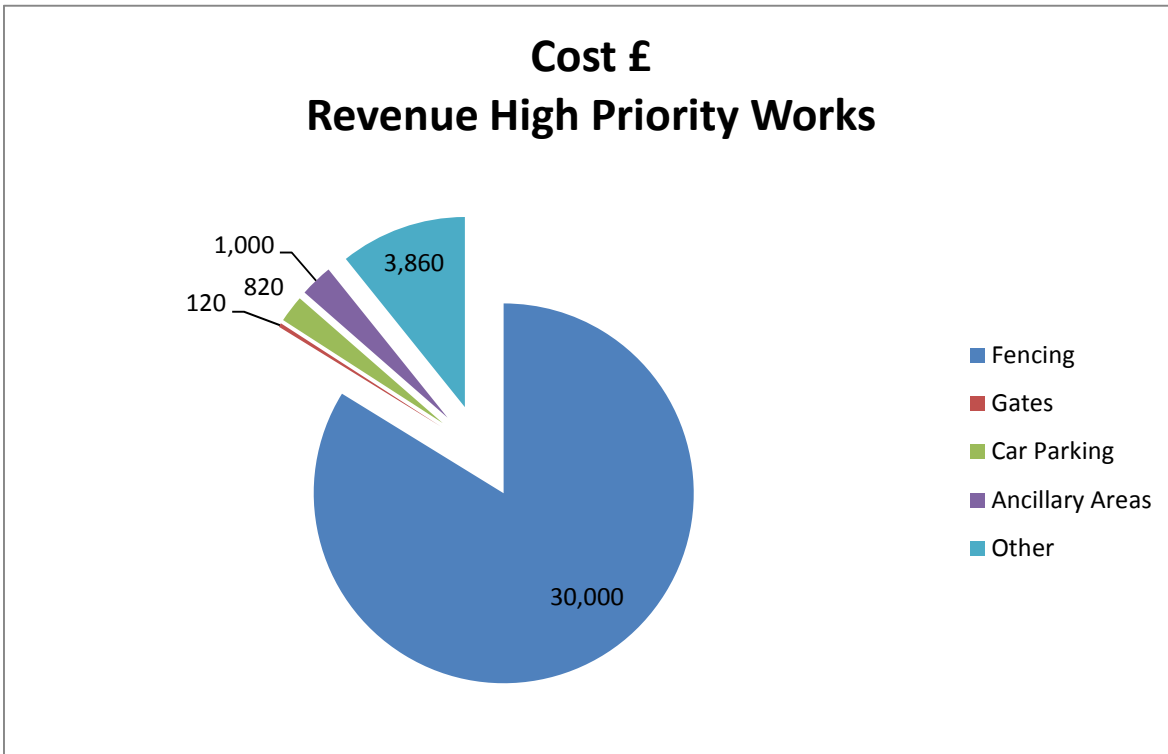


Figure 10: High priority revenue improvements





Figures 9 and 10 reflect this prioritised breakdown but show only those works classed as high priority. Work will begin on this category of work in the 2015/16 financial year. To achieve all the identified works it will be necessary to acquire additional funding contributions, whether they be cash or in-kind, as there is insufficient secured capital to carry out all the identified improvements.

**Aim 11: Improve existing allotment stock**

## 6. Action Plan

### Aim 1: Confirm designation of all allotment sites, i.e. "Statutory" or otherwise

Tasks	Who	When	Resource	Cost	Measure
Confirm how allotment land was acquired or appropriated.	Project Manager	May '15	Legal Services Property Services	Officer time.	Completion of reference document.
Produce definitive reference resource.	Project Manager	Jun '15	Technical Officers	Officer time.	Completion of reference document.

### Aim 2: Ensure the allotment provision remains protected and promoted in development plans

Tasks	Who	When	Resource	Cost	Measure
Confirm current planning designation for allotment sites.	Project Manager	May '15	Planning	Officer time.	Completion of reference document.
Include in reference resource from Aim 1.	Project Manager	Jun '15	Technical Officers	Officer time.	Completion of reference document.
Engage with planners to ensure that allotments are represented in on-going planning frameworks.	Head of Standards and Development	Aug '15	Head of Standards and Development	Officer time.	Inclusion in new planning framework policies.

**Aim 3: Encourage the setup of allotment societies at the larger direct let sites.**

Tasks	Who	When	Resource	Cost	Measure
Agree appropriate mechanism with LAGC.	LAGC Allotments Manager	Apr '15	LAGC Allotments Manager	Officer time.	Establishment of procedure.
Identify suitable direct let sites.	Allotments Manager	May '15	Allotments Manager	Officer time.	Production of suitable sites.
Agree suitable support resource for new societies.	LAGC Allotments Manager Head of Standards and Development	On-going	LAGC Allotments Manager Head of Standards and Development	Officer time.	Agree support package and embed in procedure from above.
Agree viability of long term leases for direct let sites with property services.	Allotments Manager	Jul '15	Legal Services Property Service s	Officer time.	Establishment of leases.

**Aim 4: Review and produce grounds maintenance schedules**

Tasks	Who	When	Resource	Cost	Measure
Confirm current grounds maintenance commitments	Allotments Manager Technical Manager	Nov '15	Technical Officers Graduate Project Officers	Officer time.	Identify works and record in <i>MapInfo</i> .
Setup new dedicated contract in <i>Down to Earth</i> contracts database	Allotments Manager Technical Manager	Nov '15	Technical Manager	Officer time.	Establishment of 'contract' and production of work tickets.

**Aim 5: Review allotment pricing structure**

Tasks	Who	When	Resource	Cost	Measure
Carryout review of pricing model with interested parties	Standards and Development Manager LAGC	May '15	LAGC Head of Standards and Development Property Services	Officer time.	Establishment of model covering both society leases and direct let sites.

**Aim 6: Standardise Leases**

Tasks	Who	When	Resource	Cost	Measure
Check all current leases.	Project Manager	May '15	Project Manager Legal Services	Officer time.	Review of all current leases.
Create standard pro- forma lease to be used when renewing leases.	Project Manager	Oct '15	Project Manager Legal Services	Officer time	Production of lease.

**Aim 7: Investigate use of CMF for appropriate maintenance requirements**

Tasks	Who	When	Resource	Cost	Measure
Negotiate with Property Services to include allotment sites within the scope of the Central Maintenance Fund.	Project Manager Head of Standards and Development	Apr '15	Project Manager Property Services	Officer time	Inclusion in Central Maintenance Fund budgets

**Aim 8: Investigate mechanisms for supporting Society funding applications**

Tasks	Who	When	Resource	Cost	Measure
Provide sign posting to appropriate funding streams.	Allotments Manager	On-going	Allotments Manager	Officer time	Establish and maintain a directory of available funding streams.
Work with local and national allotment bodies to promote funding opportunities.	Allotments Manager LAGC NSALG	On-going	Allotments Manager LAGC	Officer time	Take-up and success of obtaining funding.
Establish provision of partnership funding, either cash, or in kind.	Allotments Manager Head of Standards and Development	On-going	Allotments Manager Head of Standards and Development	Officer time	Allocation and scheduling of Amenities Team time as an in-kind resource.

**Aim 9: Investigate viability of allowing hens, rabbits and bees on some/any allotment sites**

Tasks	Who	When	Resource	Cost	Measure
Confirm legal position.	Project Manager	Apr '15	Legal Services	Officer time	Establish Leicester City Council position with regard to Allotment Law.
Check for the existence of local bye-law restrictions.	Project Manager	Apr '15	Legal Services	Officer time	Establish definitive view for Leicester City Council.
Setup working group with regard to hens and rabbits.	Allotments Manager LAGC	May '15	Allotments Manager LAGC	Officer time	Establish options for Cllr briefing Oct '15.
Setup working group with regard to bees.	Allotments Manager LAGC	May '15	Allotments Manager LAGC	Officer time	Establish options for Cllr briefing Oct '15.

**Aim 10: Investigate need/demand to fill gaps in current provision**

Tasks	Who	When	Resource	Cost	Measure
Identify areas of the City outside of allotment catchment areas.	Project Manager	Mar '15	Technical Officers	Officer time	Mapping of catchment areas.
Describe demographics.	Project Manager	Mar-15	Project Manager	Officer time	Census data projections.
Promote use of <i>Colony</i> by Societies.	Allotments Manager Head of Standards and Development	Apr-15	Allotments Manager Head of Standards and Development LAGC	Officer time £1,500	Uptake of <i>Colony</i> .
Establish comprehensive information base to assess demand and potential provision.	Project Manager	May -15	Technical Officers LAGC	Officer time	Development of data, which covers catchment areas and the mapping of users and waiting lists.
Establish mechanisms for assisting those sites and societies struggling to recruit allotment holders.	Project Manager Allotments Manager	Apr-16	Project Manager Allotments Manager	Officer time	Reduction in waiting lists on those sites identified as having 'negative' adjusted waiting lists, i.e. more vacancies than demand.

**Aim 11: Improve existing allotment stock**

Tasks	Who	When	Resource	Cost	Measure
Create list of works.	Project Manager Allotments Manager	On-going	Allotments Manager	£300,000	Completion of works by Mar '16.
Setup ongoing allotment audit programme.	Project Manager Allotment Manager Technical Manager	Jan '16	Technical Officers	Officer time	Establishment of programme; either build into the EMAS audit programme or establish as a target in the Food Plan for Leicester.
Carry out comprehensive tree survey.	Allotment Manager Trees and Woodland Officers	Nov '15	Trees and Woodland Officers	Officer time	Completion of tree surveys of all allotment sites and the programming of works.

## **7. Appendices**

- A. Waiting list figures – Last 5 years
- B. Latest User Survey Results Plotted
- C. Prioritisation of works from the site audits
- D. References

## Appendix A: Waiting list figures – Last 5 years

SITE	SOCIETY LEASED TO	Ha.	2010			2011			2012			2013			2014		
			NO OF PLOTS	VACANT PLOTS	WAITING LIST	NO OF PLOTS	VACANT PLOTS	WAITING LIST	NO OF PLOTS	VACANT PLOTS	WAITING LIST	NO OF PLOTS	VACANT PLOTS	WAITING LIST	NO OF PLOTS	VACANT PLOTS	WAITING LIST
ABBAY RISE	D/L	0.90	26	0	2	26	0	0	26	0	0	27	0	12	27	0	12
BEAUMANOR RD	D/L	0.68	16	0	2	16	0	1	16	0	1	17	1	9	17	1	9
CECIL GARDENS	D/L	0.06	7	0	3	7	0	3	7	0	3	7	0	10	7	0	10
DONNINGTON ST	D/L	0.02	6	0	4	6	0	4	6	0	4	6	2	5	6	2	5
EARL HOWE ST	D/L	0.04	6	0	3	6	0	3	6	0	3	6	0	7	6	0	7
GORSE HILL	D/L	2.51	56	14	6	56	14	6	56	14	6	55	2	6	55	2	6
HALSTEAD ST	D/L	0.03	7	0	0	7	0	0	7	0	0	7	1	3	7	1	3
HOLDEN ST	D/L	0.65	22	0	10	22	0	19	22	0	19	22	0	14	22	0	14
MELBOURNE ST	D/L	0.06	8	0	4	8	0	4	8	0	4	8	0	9	8	0	9
NEW PARK RD	D/L	0.04	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	1	2	0	1
SUTHERLAND ST	D/L	0.07	10	0	6	10	0	11	10	0	11	10	0	19	10	0	19
BEAUMONT LEYS LANE	Belgrave Allotment Society	3.53	126	3	0	126	18	0	126	25	7	126	25	0	126	22	0
BLAKENHALL RD	Rowlatts Hill Allotment Society	4.16	128	19	0	128	18	0	128	14	0	128	14	0	128	25	4
BONNEY RD	Whitehouse Allotment Society	3.06	109	0	4	109	0	0	139	32	0	139	32	0	139	12	0
BRAUNSTONE CLOSE	Leicester Permanent Society	6.82	104	0	2	104	0	7	104	14	0	104	6	0	104	4	0
BROAD AVE ROAD	Rowlatts Hill Allotment Society	2.99	94	0	0	94	14	0	94	10	0	94	10	0	94	25	0
COLCHESTER RD	Rowlatts Hill Allotment Society	1.25	54	0	0	54	3	0	54	7	0	54	7	0	54	3	0



Allotment Strategy 2015-2020

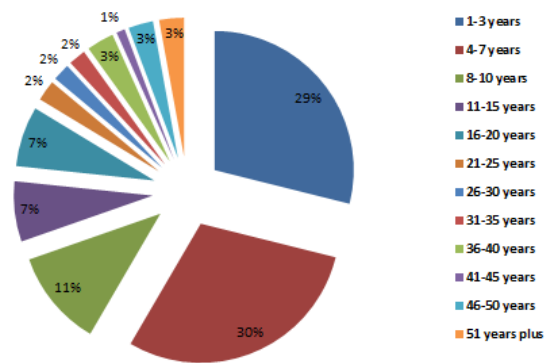
SITE	SOCIETY LEASED TO	Ha.	2010			2011			2012			2013			2014		
			NO OF PLOTS	VACANT PLOTS	WAITING LIST	NO OF PLOTS	VACANT PLOTS	WAITING LIST	NO OF PLOTS	VACANT PLOTS	WAITING LIST	NO OF PLOTS	VACANT PLOTS	WAITING LIST	NO OF PLOTS	VACANT PLOTS	WAITING LIST
ETHEL RD	Evington Parks Allotment Society	1.72	61	0	10	61	0	5	61	2	7	61	2	7	61	3	0
GILMORTON AVE	Eyres Monsell Allotment Society	1.78	61	0	20	61	0	24	61	0	25	61	0	25	61	0	8
GROBY RD	Groby Road Allotment Society	1.89	55	0	6	55	0	18	55	0	7	55	0	3	55	4	0
GWENDOLEN RD	Evington Valley Allotment Society	2.56	98	0	10	98	0	5	98	0	5	98	0	5	98	6	1
HARRISON RD	Belgrave Allotment Society	2.68	84	0	3	84	4	20	84	2	3	84	2	3	84	0	1
KEDLESTON RD	Highfields Allotment Society	0.88	25	0	0	25	0	0	25	0	0	25	0	0	25	0	0
KIMBERLEY RD	Evington Parks Allotment Society	0.48	14	0	0	14	0	0	14	0	0	14	0	5	14	0	9
MEREDITH ROAD	Rowley Fields Allotment Society	8.84	281	5	21	281	8	28	281	1	13	281	9	3	281	7	9
NETHERHALL RD	Humberstone Allotment Society	0.78	25	0	5	25	0	7	25	0	7	25	0	9	25	0	3
OAKLAND AVE	Belgrave Allotment Society	1.71	47	0	0	88	0	12	88	0	6	88	0	2	88	0	2
PAGET ST	The Rookeries (Aylestone) Allotment Society	2.28	74	0	10	47	1	0	47	3	1	47	5	0	47	0	0
RANCLIFFE CRES	Rancliffe Crescent Allotment Society	8.09	210	6	12	74	0	21	74	1	22	74	0	21	74	3	0
RED HILL	Belgrave Allotment Society	3.93	110	6	4	210	0	6	210	0	0	210	18	0	210	6	0
RESERVOIR	Reservoir Allotment Society	2.47	88	0	5	110	6	0	110	8	4	110	8	0	110	4	2
ROSAMUND AVE	Leicester Permanent Society	2.84	94	0	2	94	0	0	94	0	2	94	0	0	94	0	0
SANDHURST ROAD	Glenfield Road Allotment Society	2.72	96	0	9	96	1	5	96	6	9	96	0	4	96	0	5
STOKES DRIVE	New Parks Allotment Society	1.89	64	0	5	64	0	12	64	4	2	64	0	0	64	3	0
STOUGHTON DR NORTH	Evington Parks Allotment Society	0.69	24	0	0	24	0	0	24	0	0	24	0	5	24	0	9

Allotment Strategy 2015-2020

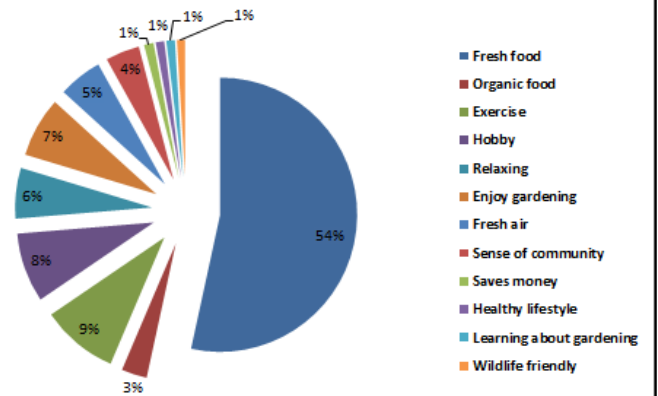
SITE	SOCIETY LEASED TO	Ha.	2010			2011			2012			2013			2014		
			NO OF PLOTS	VACANT PLOTS	WAITING LIST	NO OF PLOTS	VACANT PLOTS	WAITING LIST	NO OF PLOTS	VACANT PLOTS	WAITING LIST	NO OF PLOTS	VACANT PLOTS	WAITING LIST	NO OF PLOTS	VACANT PLOTS	WAITING LIST
SUTTON RD	Knighton Fields Allotment Society	1.02	62	0	9	62	0	14	62	0	18	62	0	14	62	0	0
UPPINGHAM RD	West Humberstone Allotment Society	2.89	97	0	9	97	0	11	97	2	9	97	0	2	97	0	3
UXBRIDGE RD	Belgrave Allotment Society	2.34	73	3	0	73	0	0	73	2	0	73	2	0	73	0	0
WAKERLEY RD	Evington Hill Top Allotment Society	4.52	166	0	19	166	1	16	166	4	0	166	5	0	166	4	4
WALSHE RD	Goodwood Allotment Society	2.29	84	25	0	84	10	0	84	25	0	84	25	0	84	20	0
WELFORD RD	Washbrook Allotment Society	3.11	111	0	26	111	0	26	111	12	14	111	0	2	111	0	10
WHITTIER RD	Aylestone Co-Operative Allotment Society	4.77	205	0	18	205	0	17	205	1	6	205	0	3	205	0	9
WYCOMBE RD	West Humberstone Allotment Society	1.71	56	0	0	56	0	0	56	1	7	56	3	0	56	0	4
<b>Totals</b>		<b>98</b>	<b>3,146</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>3,146</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>3,176</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>3,177</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>3,177</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>178</b>

## Appendix B: Latest User Survey

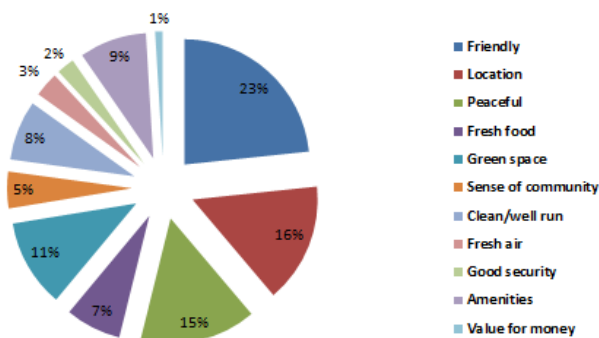
1. How long have you had an allotment for?



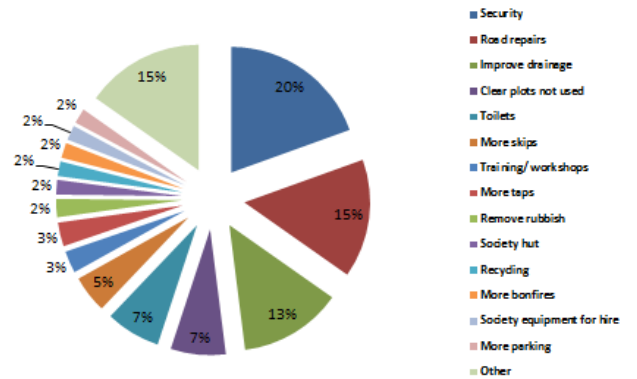
2. Why do you have an allotment?



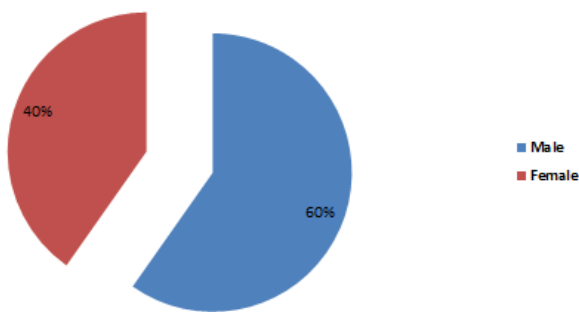
3. What do you like best about your allotment site?



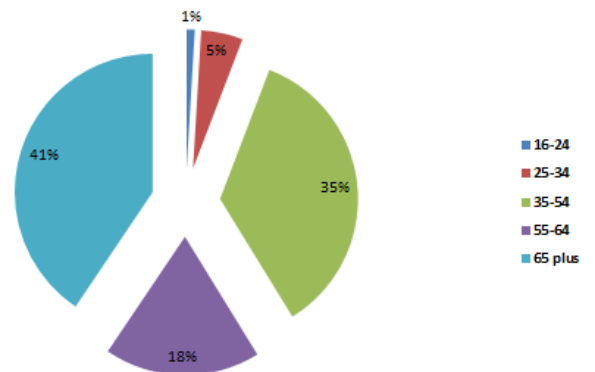
4. What, if anything, do you think could be done to improve your allotment site?



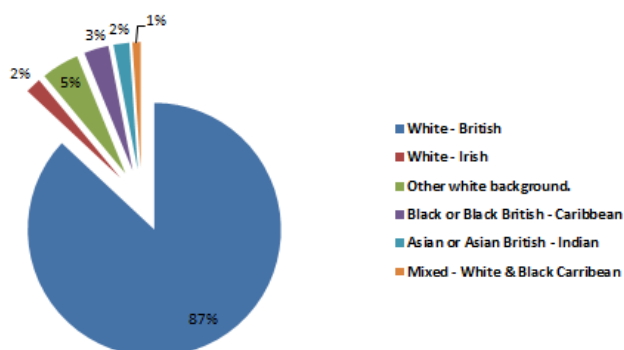
5. What is your sex?



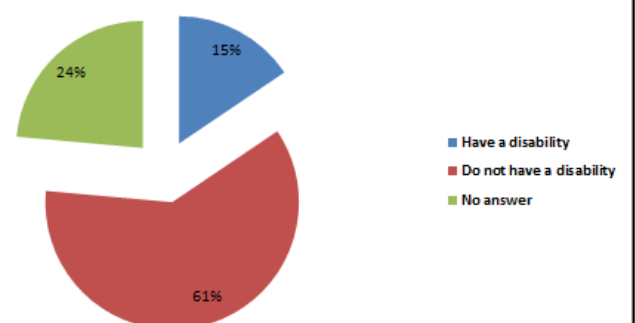
6. What is your age?



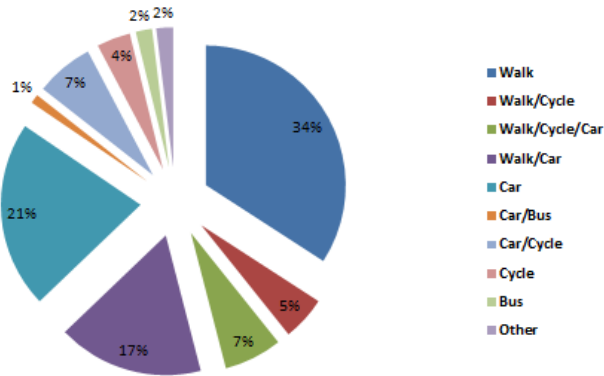
7. Which of these ethnic groups do you consider you belong to?



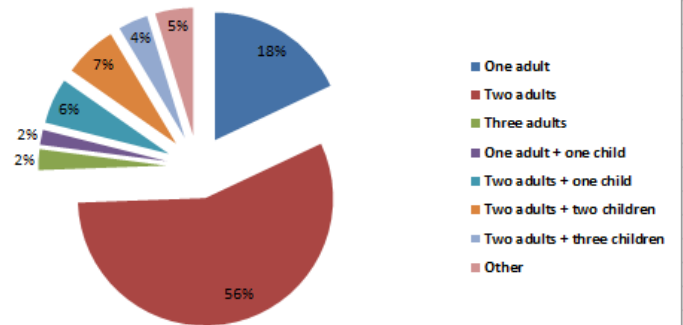
8. Would you describe yourself as having a disability?



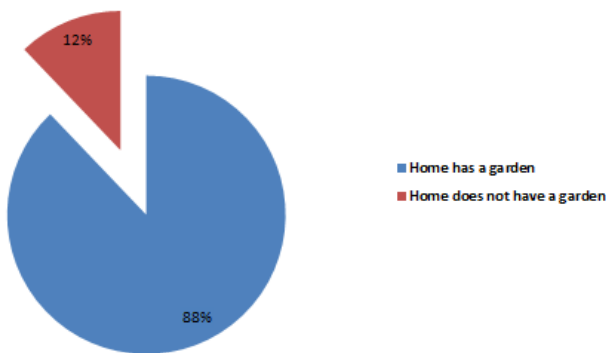
9. How do you travel to the allotment?



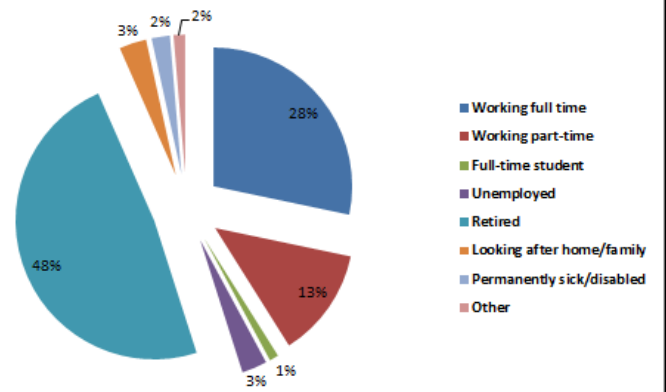
10. How many people are there in your household?



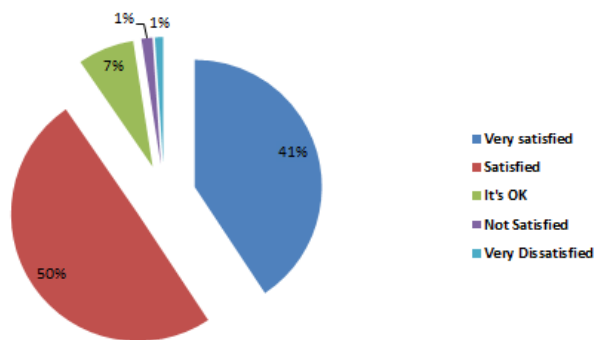
11. Does your home have a garden?



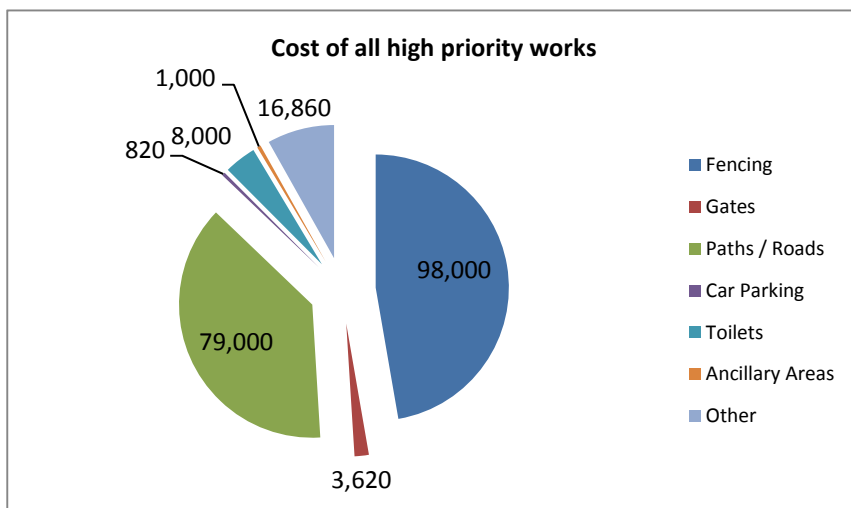
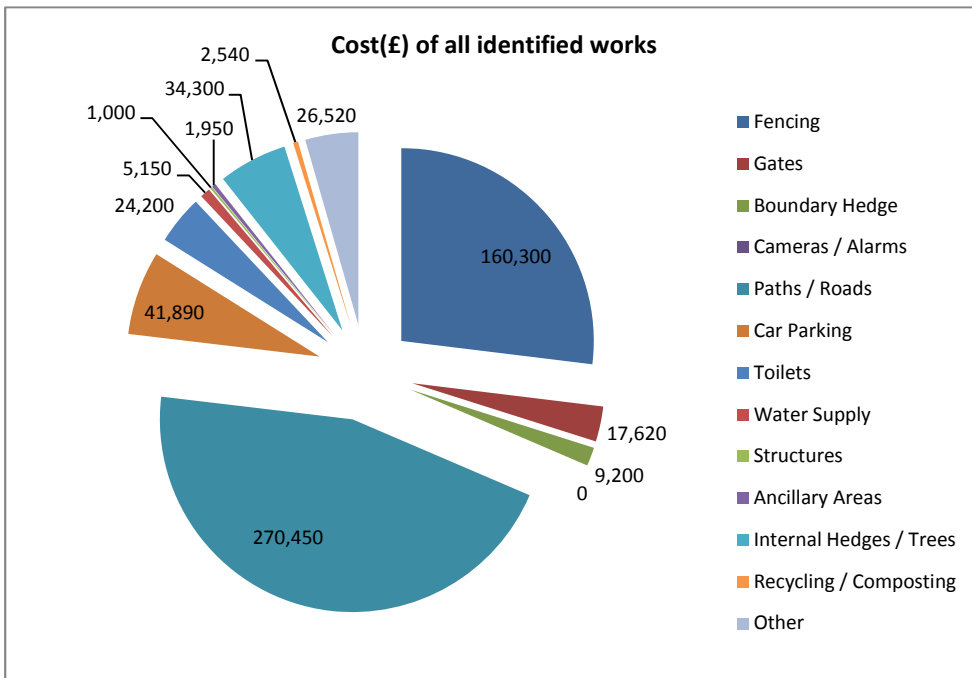
12. What is your employment status?

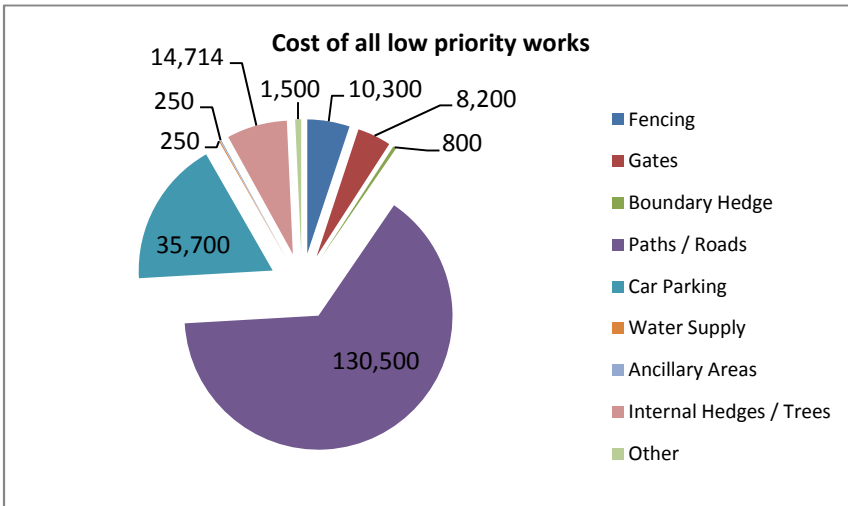
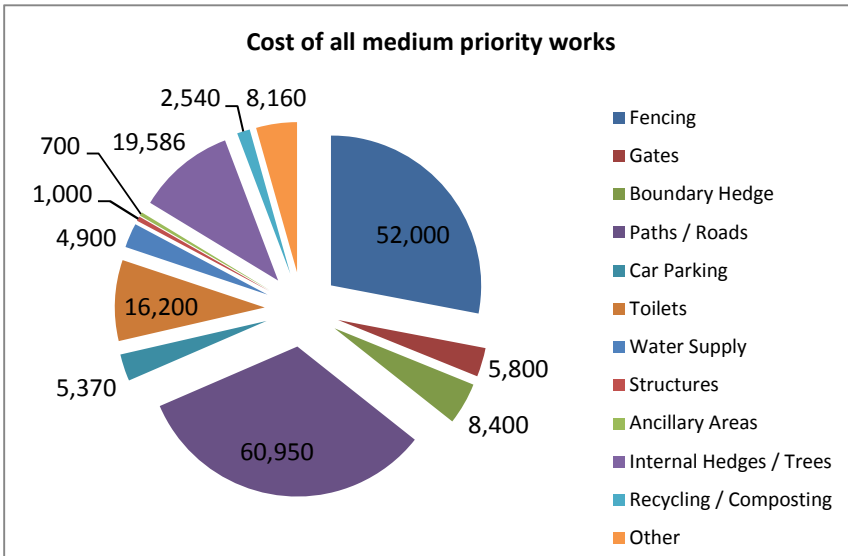


13. Overall, how satisfied are you with the allotments service?



## Appendix C: Prioritisation of works from the site audits





## Appendix D: Bibliography

Garner, J. F. (1977) *The Law of Allotments (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.)*, London, Shaw and Sons Ltd

Wiltshire, R. (2010) *Growing in the Community (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.)*, London, LGA

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[http://www.bradford.gov.uk/bmdc/leisure\\_and\\_culture/allotments/prices](http://www.bradford.gov.uk/bmdc/leisure_and_culture/allotments/prices)

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