



Report of^[x1]: Environment Scrutiny Committee
To^[x2]: City Executive Board
Date^[x3]: 11th. June
Item No^[EM4]:
Title of Report ^[x5]: Allotment Rebate



Summary and Recommendations




Purpose of report^[x6]: To inform the City Executive Board of a recommendation made by Environment Scrutiny Committee on the rent rebate for the Osney and St Thomas Allotment Association.




Key decision^[x7]: No

Board Member^[x8]: Cllr Timbs/Cllr Price


Scrutiny Responsibility^[x9]: Scrutiny Committees A and B



Ward(s) affected^[x10]: Jericho and Osney


Report Approved by:
 James Pownell – Legal services
 Andy Collett – Finance
Environment Scrutiny Committee ^[EM11]
 Paul Spencer – Environmental

Policy Framework^[x12]: Corporate Plan priority to improve the local environment, economy and quality of life



Recommendation(s)^[x13]: Environment Scrutiny Committee recommend that Executive Board suspends its decision not to grant a rent rebate to the Osney and St Thomas Allotment Association until the matter of rent rebates for allotment associations has been investigated by a scrutiny committee.


Introduction

- 1.1  At its meeting on the 14th April 2008, Environment Scrutiny Committee considered a request from Executive Board to carry out a review of the Council's policy on allotment rents. This review should include guidance on whether the council should make allowances on rent

levels in the event of flooding or other factors outside the Council's control.

- 1.2 Environment Scrutiny Committee agreed in principle to carry out this review early in the new Council year. However, it will be for one of the new scrutiny committee's, in whatever form they take, to confirm that it will carry out this work.

2. Rent Rebate for the Osney and St Thomas Allotment Association

- 2.1 Executive Board asked Environment Scrutiny Committee to carry out this work following a request from the Osney and St Thomas Allotment Association for a rent rebate. The association has asked for a rebate because of the financial loss the association faces as a result of flooding in Summer 2007 and again in the winter of 2007/08. Executive Board did not grant the rebate requested.

- 2.2 Environment Scrutiny Committee recommend that until a review of the Council's allotment rent policy is carried out, it is premature to make a final decision on the request from Osney and St Thomas allotment association. Therefore, the final decision on their request should be suspended until a scrutiny review is completed. Further details can be found in the minutes from the meeting at appendix 1 to this report.

3. Comments from the Executive Director (City Services) – Tim Sadler

We are estimating the financial implications and will update members shortly.

4. Comments from the Board Member

The administration takes the view that a 50% rebate is appropriate in the case of the 2007/8 floods for the associations concerned. However, a longer-term policy position should be established by officers and agreed by members by October 1st 2008.

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Appendix 1

Minutes from Environment Scrutiny Committee – 14th April 2008

82. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE BOARD

1. Recommendation on Allotment Rent Rebate: Councillor Pressel informed the Committee that at a meeting of the Oxford Allotments Federation, she had learned that there were circumstances, such as flooding or prevalence to a travellers sites, which might warrant a rent rebate and that this was available under the terms of the Council's existing allotment management scheme. Members agreed that there was a need for a clear policy and that the situation should be investigated under the revised scrutiny arrangements when set up in the new Council Year.

Resolved to ask the Executive Board to suspend their decision to not grant a rent rebate to the Osney and St Thomas Allotment Association until the matter of rent rebates for allotment associations has been investigated by a scrutiny committee.