



Reply to Councillor Ellie King
Email cllr.ellie.king@bristol.gov.uk
Date 2nd February 2024

Dear Stakeholder,

I am writing to update you on the proposed changes to the Allotment Rents and Tenancy agreements.

As you will know, the consultations on the draft 'Parks and Green Spaces Strategy and Food Growing and Allotments Strategy' and 'Allotment Rent and Tenancy Agreement' both closed recently. We received over 3,500 responses to the consultations and officers are currently working hard to collate feedback.

Over the consultation period, I had several opportunities to discuss proposals with allotment representatives and food growers. Although I do not yet have the final consultation report, a few emerging themes have stood out to me.

The first is that the key themes and strategic priorities identified in the draft 'Parks and Green Spaces and Food Growing and Allotments Strategy' are supported. Bristol is a leading city in terms of our approach to sustainable food growing and food equality. Everyone recognises the importance of a thriving network of accessible spaces for local people to grow healthy and sustainable food. Residents want a collaborative, equitable and financially sustainable parks and allotment service to deliver against these strategic priorities.

The second is that there are mixed views on the proposed allotment rent increases. It is widely understood that financial pressures faced by the service are due to wider chronic underfunding of local authorities from central government. It is also acknowledged that current allotment rents do not cover the cost of running the current service, let alone deliver the service that we all want to see.

The third and final theme is that there are significant concerns and objections to the proposed tenancy rule changes, and administrative fees and charges. I share some of the disappointment expressed about the process and understand and agree with much of the feedback received.

In response to this feedback, and to allow for more meaningful engagement, I have agreed with the Mayor and the parks service that the proposed changes to tenancy rules, fees and charges will not be taken forward in their current form. A key aim of the proposed Parks and Green Spaces Strategy is for the council to work differently with communities to ensure an inclusive and accessible parks service, so I am taking this opportunity to prove our commitment to this principle.



We are also therefore postponing the workshop with allotment tenants and stakeholders that had been organised for Monday 5th February. I apologise for any inconvenience caused to those who were planning to attend. I have asked the service to prepare a more collaborative process to discuss and redesign the tenancy agreement with representative stakeholders. This will allow the necessary time to make the engagement meaningful and help to build a trusting and constructive working relationship.

Given the pressing need to improve the offer from our allotments service to tenants through improved maintenance, communications, and capacity, I am still considering the consultation feedback on the proposed allotment rents and combined water charges ahead of a final proposal coming to Cabinet for decision in March.

I value all the feedback that we have received so far and appreciate the constructive conversations and challenge that has taken place. I have had the privilege of building positive relationships with food growers across the city in my time as Cabinet Member, and I hope we can continue to work together.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ellie King", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Councillor Ellie King

Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities