

Response to Petition Debate: Objections to Bristol City Council's Changes to Allotment Rules and Rent

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.

Allotment rents have not been raised for seven years and the current rental income does not meet the cost of running the service. This means that allotments are currently subsidised by council tax payers who do not benefit from an allotment, which is not financially sustainable or fair. This also creates financial pressure for the Parks service, detracting from investment in parks across the city. The rental uplift that was proposed and carried in March's Cabinet, while not meeting full cost recovery, would have improved the financial sustainability of allotments and the service received by tenants.

Since March's Cabinet and Full Council, the decision regarding Allotment rents and water charges was called-in by a group of councillors. Expert officers from our parks, consultation, equality and legal teams all advised that this decision was made legitimately and provided a robust defence against the claims raised by opponents to the decision. However, in the spirit of cross-party collaboration as we move into a committee system of governance, Cllr Ellie King proposed to pause implementation of the decision and defer until after the election for consideration by the future Public Health and Communities policy committee. This means that the rental uplift will not progress under my administration.