

March 2011

Briefing 11-11

Local authority allotment provision

To all APSE parks contacts in the UK, including Council Leaders and Chief Executives

Key issues:

A summary of the responses to an APSE email query on local authority allotment provision

Includes information on the cost, subsidy, numbers of plots and sites, concessionary rates and future review of allotments

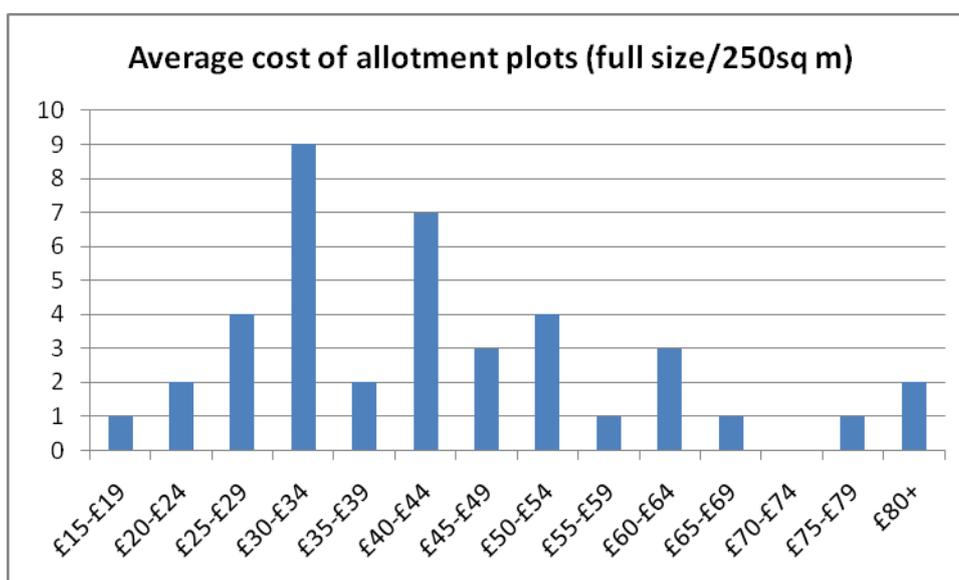
The full responses including contact details from each of the councils is available to APSE members by emailing djohns@apse.org.uk

1. Introduction

APSE issued an email query to its member authorities in December 2010 on the cost of local authority allotment provision. The questions focused on costs, subsidy levels, numbers of plots, concessionary rates and future review. APSE received responses from 42 local authorities to the query and has summarised the responses below. This briefing follows on from previous briefings issued by APSE on allotments, including [State of the Market Survey 2009 – Allotment services](#), [Local Authority Allotments in Scotland](#) and [Local Authority Allotment Provision](#).

2. Current costs of allotment plots

From the responses received, the size of plots varied and some authorities separate charges into size bands, others charge per square meter or per rod whilst other simply charge for a full plot and/or half a plot regardless of size. The most frequent size was 250 square meters.



The average cost for a full plot or plot measuring 250 square meters (including water) was £43; however the range was between £15 and £106. The median (most frequent) cost bandings were £30-£34 and £40-£44. This correlates with the APSE State of the Market for Allotments Survey in 2009, which showed that even though the average cost to rent an allotment in 2008-09 was between £21 and £40 (this figure will differ from the above figures as this was irrespective of size), 60% of respondents to the survey expected the rent costs for 2009-10 to be over £31, representing an overall increase.

The costs for plots in some councils depends on the quality of the land (whether this is subject to flooding) and facilities available at the plots, including:

- Toilets
- Lock up/store shed
- Water
- Fencing
- Clearly defined access roads
- Livestock plot

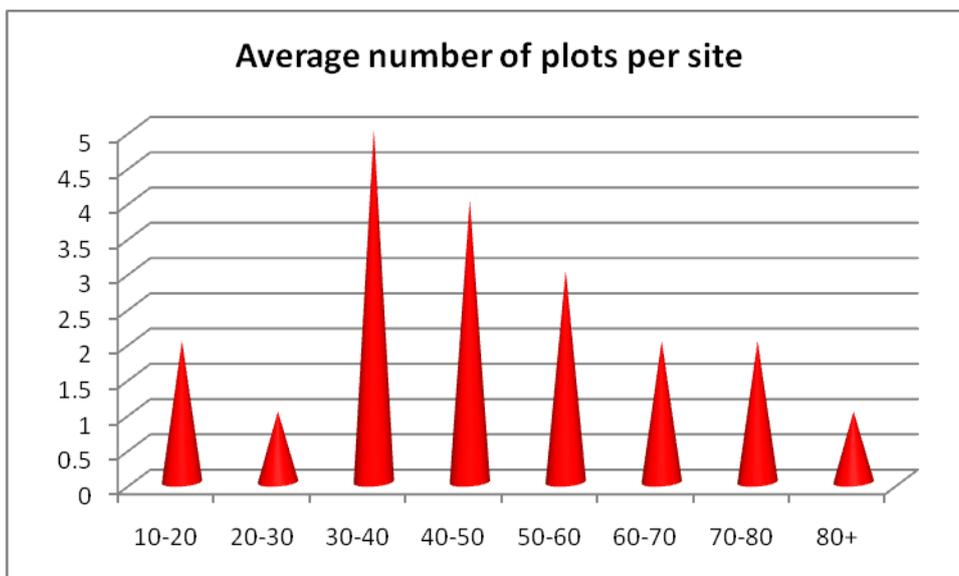
Some councils charge separately for water whereas in other local authorities, this is included in the cost (where applicable). For those councils who charge per square meter, the range is 9.4p to 26p.

3. Current level of subsidy

The level of subsidy varies from break even (0%) to 85% with an average across the authorities who responded to the question of 47%.

4. Numbers of plots and sites

The average number of plots across participating authorities was 937 although this ranges from 58 to 7100. The most frequent number of plots (in bands) was 300-400 plots. The average number of sites was 16, although this ranged from 1 to 68. The average number of plots per site is 49.



5. Concessionary rates

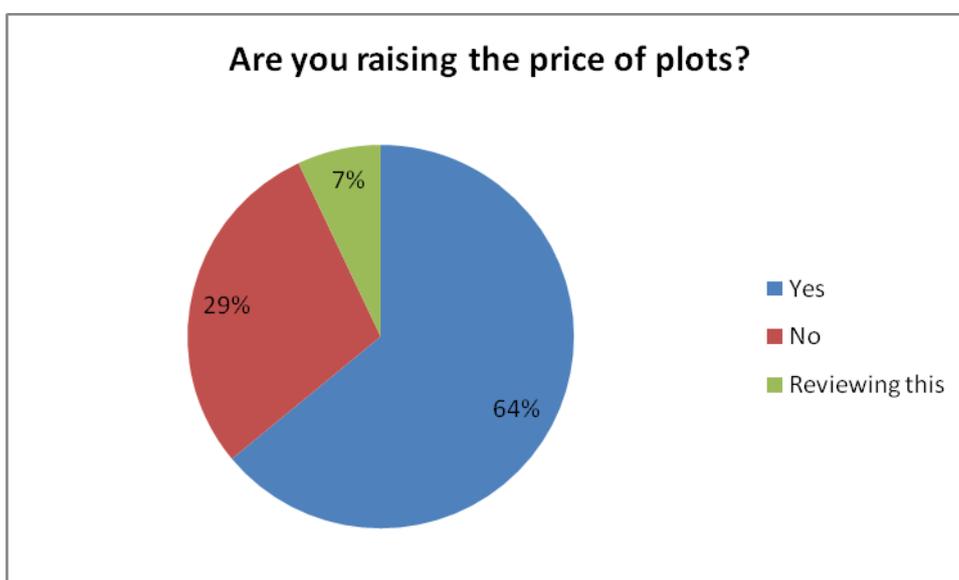
21% of councils who responded to the query do not offer concessionary rates at all and reasons for this included that the rates are already competitive and that the

council does not gain profits from the rentals. The remaining councils offer the following concessions:

- 72% offer discounts for pensioners, over 60's and/or retired persons. The majority of these (81%) offer a 50% discount.
- 28% offer discounts to the unemployed or those on income support. The majority of these (75%) offer a 50% discount.
- 24% offer discount to people with disabilities. The majority of these (86%) offer a 50% discount.
- Other discounts included discounts for those with a resident's card, leisure card and students.

6. Future review of allotments

The last question asked whether council's were looking at raising the price of plots to achieve a cost neutral service and if so, in how many years.



- 64% of respondents were either currently raising or looking towards raising the price of plots. For those authorities who had already a plan in place to increase the price of plots, the timescale ranged up to 5 years.
- 29% are either not raising the price at this time or only raising this in line with inflation.
- The remaining 7% are reviewing this.

Comments included:

- *"It is the water charge that is going up more to get to cost neutral".*
- *"We increased rents this year, but to make this cost neutral would require a massive increase."*

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