

Information Needed To Consider Consent To Dispose Of Allotments



Details of the allotment to be disposed of	<p>Farm Terrace Allotments, Watford, Herts.</p> <p>The Farm Terrace allotment site is a statutory allotment site of 2.63 hectares. It comprises 128 plots. (see Appendix A).</p> <p>The site is owned by Watford Borough Council.</p>
The name and address of the allotment site to be	Farm Terrace Allotments, Occupation Road, Watford.
Are the allotments statutory? (Consent of the Secretary of State is not required for NON statutory allotments)	Statutory
Nature of disposal? (i.e. appropriation from allotment use to another Council use/sale/lease licence)	<p>The disposal being sought is for the appropriation of the Farm Terrace allotments to support a major regeneration scheme in the west of the borough of Watford.</p> <p>See Appendix B for up to date facts and statistics on Vicarage ward in which Farm Terrace allotments are located.</p> <p>This scheme – the Watford Health Campus – is of significant importance to the town and the wider region. The Campus development helps secure the delivery of new acute hospital facilities for west Hertfordshire and, through the regeneration of what is mainly old, under-used industrial land, assists the delivery of new homes and much needed open, green space in West Watford. The council and West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust (WHHT) are working together as partners in the scheme.</p> <p>See Appendix C for an overview of the Watford Health Campus site as it is today.</p> <p>Farm Terrace allotments are located on land adjacent to the current Watford General Hospital site. Due to their proximity to the hospital and their location within the area overall, they have been identified as the most suitable location for additional hospital facilities and for family housing as part of the Health Campus scheme.</p>

	<p>Watford Borough Council is, therefore, now seeking the appropriation of the allotments in readiness for transfer into a joint venture company (in the form of a Local Asset Backed vehicle – see Appendix D for details). This Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) will be responsible for the delivery of the Watford Health Campus scheme through the development of a circa 30 hectare site (if the allotments are included), the majority of which is brownfield and under utilised.</p> <p>The current 65 Farm Terrace allotment holders have been kept fully up to date and engaged about the future of the site, since the possibility of it being incorporated into the Health Campus emerged in Spring 2012. Consideration has already been given to the re-provision of Farm Terrace and to offering alternative provision to current tenants at sites within the borough.</p> <p>Some of the allotment sites in closest proximity to Farm Terrace have vacancies and no waiting lists, so there is an opportunity for tenants to relocate directly to these sites. Additionally, the council intends to maintain the current provision of allotment plots within the town through substantial investment at two sites within the south and west of the borough – Paddock Road (1.6 miles from Farm Terrace by road, 1.1 miles directly – measured on GIS) and Holywell (0.5 miles from Farm Terrace). The majority of new plots will be at Paddock Road.</p>
If lease licence – what is the length of time?	Not applicable.
What is the proposed future use of the land? i.e. residential, playing fields etc)	<p>The proposed future use of the site is for hospital expansion (approx 1.1 hectares) and family housing (approx 1.5 hectares). The Watford Health Campus scheme is a long-term project that has at its heart the delivery of new hospital facilities for Watford and the wider west Hertfordshire community. This brings with it an exciting opportunity to improve the area surrounding Watford General Hospital, much of which is currently derelict, contaminated and unused. This will involve providing new homes, 35% of which will be affordable housing, as well as a range of other amenities and facilities that support the creation of a new, sustainable community.</p> <p>The Health Campus scheme has already received recognition from government with £7 million funding from the Department of Health to assist the delivery of the much-needed new road into the site – a critical part of the Campus' infrastructure. In addition, the Hertfordshire LEP has awarded the scheme £6 million from its Growing Places Fund.</p> <p>A masterplan for the Health Campus scheme was developed in 2007. The council resolved to grant outline planning permission for the Health Campus scheme in 2008, subject to the signing of a planning obligation/Section 106 agreement. The planning obligation/Section 106 agreement was signed in 2010 and planning permission was subsequently granted. At this stage, Farm Terrace allotments were not included within the site.</p>

However, the delivery of the 2008 masterplan relied on WHHT attaining PFI financing. This would not only have provided the capital investment required for the delivery of a new hospital but would have made a significant contribution to the not insubstantial infrastructure and 'abnormal' development costs associated with the site. The latter are currently estimated at £40million.

Clearly, since 2010, the economic and political environment has changed considerably and PFI, as was, is no longer available to support the Health Campus. In addition, the economy is facing a period of low growth, which makes the delivery of any major, long-term, mixed use scheme, such as the Campus, more complex and potentially more financially precarious.

In view of this, the Health Campus partnership reviewed the most appropriate way to facilitate the delivery of the scheme. In September 2012, following a thorough tender process, Kler Project Investment Ltd was appointed to work with the partnership, through the LABV vehicle.

Although the fundamental vision and objectives for the Health Campus remain unchanged, the needs of WHHT for the future delivery of the hospital and the financial viability of the development overall are issues that are now identified as critical to the scheme's success.

The main reasons, therefore, for proposing the relocation of the Farm Terrace allotments are that it would:

- i) **Provide space for the re-provision of the hospital on the Watford site.** The demand for treatment at Watford General Hospital has been such in the last 2-3 years that WHHT has had to make additional provision on its current site to accommodate the needs of its patients. This has meant that previous room for expansion has now been allocated and the Campus partnership has had to look beyond the hospital's current site for space. WHHT prepared a number of different options for the re-provision of their facilities at the Vicarage Road site (the site of Watford General Hospital). Part of the allotment site has been identified as the preferred area for future provision – not only because it offers the best configuration of hospital facilities and services but also because it provides the most cost effective option. The Trust's clear preference, therefore, is to expand south of their current facilities (see attached letters from the previous Trust CEO and the Trust's Chairman, Appendices E & F). This would enable them to better configure clinical and non-clinical facilities with public access/car parking adjacent to the existing Princess

Michael of Kent building which will continue to host patient care services in the long-term. It provides for less cramped facilities and re-providing south of their existing buildings is a far easier prospect than constructing new facilities literally in the middle of their current site. The 2007 plan of moving down and towards Willow Lane (which is located to the south west of the site) is now not feasible due to the need to rebuild the hospital in phases and the location of a 'surge ward' to the back of WHHT's Acute Assessment Unit (AAU) building in response to high levels of demand for patient care. Hence, to enable the hospital redevelopment in line with increasing clinical requirements, the hospital has to move south easterly and occupy part of the allotment space.

The requirements of the Trust have been shared publicly on a number of occasions over the past six months. This has included meetings at which Farm Terrace allotment holders have been present. The Trust's representatives (including the Chairman) are on public record stating that for them the key considerations include:

'The hospital would, however, require a certain amount of de-canting whilst work was underway and this would not be possible without the facilities to move from one location to another. The footprint of the site without the allotments would make this very difficult and expensive and reduce the amount of flexibility required as the building work was taking place'. (Professor Hanahoe, Chairman of WHHT – Watford BC Cabinet 3 December 2012)

and

'what was best for the hospital and what was best for the patients; this included clinical connectivity' 'construction would necessarily be a phased approach; it was imperative that the hospital remained operational at all times and that all departments allowed for physical connection once the hospital [sic] were completed. Inclusion of the allotment land would allow sufficient space for full access between departments whilst building was in progress. Without the allotments this would be very difficult to deliver'. (Louise Gaffney, Director of Strategy & Infrastructure, WHHT – 20 December 2012- Watford BC Overview and Scrutiny Call-In meeting)

(see Appendix E and Appendix F for WHHT letters outlining their issues and requirements).

ii) Improve the viability of the Campus scheme and

speed up the development of the site. As the allotments are out of the flood plain and are more easily developed, the Health Campus financial viability is more likely to be secured through the inclusion of the allotments, allowing the many benefits of the scheme for the wider community (as outlined below) to be realised.

In view of the significant infrastructure and abnormal development costs the Health Campus scheme is only marginally viable and already relies on grant funding. With the inclusion of the allotments in relation to the housing provision the land value increases by an estimated £7 million (which includes a contingency of £2 million to pay for relocation and improved and extended allotment facilities at Paddock Road). The allotment land is outside the flood plain and not contaminated; its inclusion would mean a significant improvement in value of the scheme overall. A scheme of circa £350m with only a small net land value, creates significant nervousness from investors, the improved viability will improve the scope to attract external funding and future occupiers. It obviously improves the financial return to the council (although this is not substantial) and, as it is not contaminated, the allotment site will pull forward the pace of redevelopment.

- iii) **secure more much-needed family housing.** The nature of the site is such that much of it sits within a floodplain and there are significant changes in level across the site. This restricts the amount and type of new homes that can be built – particularly family housing. The allotment site is outside of the floodplain and will allow around 80 family style homes to be included in the scheme (once space has been allocated for the hospital). The council is looking to achieve 35% affordable housing on the site overall, a percentage that would have to be reconsidered without the allotments due to the issues of financial viability (ii above). Less affordable housing would negatively impact on the council's ability to meet its statutory homeless obligations and Local Plan (Core Strategy) targets.

See Appendix G for evidence of the need for affordable housing in Watford

- iv) **provide for a better designed Campus scheme to be developed of sufficient size to make a greater overall improvement for residents of West Watford.** We know that the area of West Watford faces a number of challenges that would be expected of an urbanised community with a highly diverse population.

For example, a key issue for Vicarage ward is that it

currently lacks public open space that is accessible for the whole community and that can support a variety of healthy, out door activities. The Campus masterplan will be underpinned by improved open space that will afford greater opportunity for local people to gain the health and wellbeing and wider community benefits associated with better access to green space.

The designation of 'Health Campus' to the scheme was not just because of the hospital on site. The Watford Health Campus partnership sees health in its wider context which includes:

- Access to good quality housing
- Mitigation of potential health issues such as contamination on the site
- Scope to open up green space for local people, visitors to the hospital and its staff who can enjoy the health benefits it affords
- Increased use of public transport to reduce congestion in the area

v) **remove the impact on the amenity of allotment holders.** By relocating the site it avoids significant disruption and the impact of pollution that they will otherwise be subject to over the circa 15 year duration of the Campus development.

The inclusion of the allotment site, therefore, will make a significant contribution to the delivery of the Campus' overall vision and objectives. In particular, it will provide the level of flexibility and scope required by WHHT to facilitate the re-provision of Watford General Hospital – the major acute hospital for west Hertfordshire, which serves a population of around 500,000 people in the region – see

<http://www.westhertshospitals.nhs.uk/about/> for details of the Trust's catchment population -

West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust provides acute healthcare services to a core catchment population of approximately half a million people living in west Hertfordshire and the surrounding area

WHHT plans indicate that up to fifty per cent of the allotment site would be needed to meet their requirements. The remaining allotment land has been identified for housing (particularly 3 bedroom family homes). In order to meet the needs of Watford's growing population the borough has an overall housing target of 6,500 new homes to be provided by 2031. These homes are to be accommodated in sustainable locations such as the Health Campus, in line with Watford Borough Council's Local Plan (Core Strategy), which states:

' Policy SS1 Identifies a number of locations (Special Policy

Areas) for planned regeneration or other physical enhancement and environmental improvement. Most new development will be directed to these areas to help protect the residential character of much of the rest of the Borough.' These SPAs areas have special policy status due to there being a significant level of change expected in the area, or a particular need for some change, either in terms of new development and infrastructure or through wider opportunities for improvements to be made to the physical environment.

The Watford Health Campus has been designated a SPA (SPA3).

The Core Strategy was found sound and legally compliant by a Planning Inspector in November 2012 following an examination in public and was adopted by the Council in January 2013.

Kier is currently developing a **detailed masterplan** for the scheme and will now potentially include the new allotments, depending on the Secretary of State's decision.

The final masterplan is expected to build on the strengths of that approved in 2008 and to deliver:

- safeguarding and facilitating the delivery of a major new modern hospital in Watford
- regeneration of derelict land
- economic growth through new employment space (circa 25,000 sq. m) and over 1,600 new local jobs
- improved and increased open and accessible green space, including investment in the Colne river park. This will increase the open space in the scheme area from 5.11 hectares to 8.06 hectares (if the allotments are included)
- range of around 600 good quality homes, including much needed affordable and family housing
- **a community garden** for the use of local residents (NEW PROVISION). This will maintain a community focused amenity on the site where local people can come together to enjoy benefits of gardening and growing produce in a way that is shaped by and involves a wider community than can currently participate through the allotment amenity
- a local neighbourhood centre with shops and other services
- reduced traffic congestion through improved transport infrastructure building on the government's approval to extend the metropolitan line to Watford in 2016 (Croxley Rail Link) which will create a new station serving the Health Campus.
- high quality design, making the most of opportunities for

	<p>energy conservation, renewable energy provision and water recycling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ viable and deliverable scheme <p>Watford BC, therefore, is primarily undertaking investment in West Watford through the Health Campus scheme to facilitate the retention of a major hospital in this location, secure employment, provide places for people to live and improve the urban area of West Watford, with access to higher quality green space and neighbourhood shops.</p> <p>The current iteration of Kier's masterplan is attached as Appendix H - Proposed Kier Masterplan. It should be noted that this does not currently include the provision of a community garden as requested by Watford Borough Council's Cabinet on 3 December 2013 in response to feedback from Farm Terrace allotment holders. It is anticipated that this amenity will be approximately 0.4 hectare in size.</p>
<p>Are there any local development plan implications? (i.e. was the site identified for closure? Zoned for housing etc Policy supporting L/A requirement to provide allotments)</p>	<p>The Council's Core Strategy was found to be sound by the Inspector in November 2012 and adopted by the Council in January 2013.</p> <p>The link to the council's Core Strategy Local Plan is:</p> <p>http://www.watford.gov.uk/cem/content/planning-and-development/core-strategy/adopted-local-plan-core-strategy.en</p> <p>The Council's strategy is to direct significant growth to special policy areas as referred to in Policy SS1 and set out above.</p> <p>The Watford Health Campus has been designated a Special Policy Area (SPA3)</p> <p>"Policy SPA 3 Health Campus</p> <p>Objective</p> <p>To deliver a major mixed use development project providing a new quarter for west Watford which seeks to provide new housing, jobs and community facilities with the catalyst of a significantly enhanced new acute hospital. This new quarter will be integrated seamlessly with the existing surrounding neighbourhoods, and will enhance the local services and amenities for the existing local communities in west Watford.</p> <p>Proposals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved major acute hospital providing new facilities for patients and staff • Residential development, including affordable housing • Commercial office development • Local centre shops and community facilities • Leisure facilities including the support of Watford Football club as an important local asset • New combined heat and power plant

- New road access arrangements to alleviate congestion on Vicarage Road and site circulation improvements to assist walking and cycling
- Traffic signalling improvements to Junction 5 of the M1 motorway
- Improved quality and quantity of green infrastructure

Design and Sustainability

The new development should where possible provide good physical, social and economic links into the existing West Watford community.

The new development should be of high quality design making the most of opportunities for energy conservation, renewable energy provision and water recycling.

The new development should maintain and add to open space for recreational and biodiversity purposes to further promote the health of the community.

The new development should provide local employment opportunities and affordable and key worker housing to promote a viable community and a local economy with a reduced reliance on private transport.

Delivery

The procurement process for the project is ongoing. Any changes proposed to the approved outline permission should take account of the spatial strategy and infrastructure requirements set out in this Core Strategy. Any changes should positively contribute to the emerging new neighbourhood and be complementary to the town centre."

If the scheme is not delivered this will adversely affect the borough's ability to meet the adopted housing and jobs targets and thereby accommodate the needs of Watford as a growing town.

As well as providing jobs and housing the site will provide a significant amount of public open space this is dealt with in the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Policy GI 1 In the Local Plan (Core Strategy) deals with Green Infrastructure and states:

"The council will seek a net gain in the quality and quantity of Green Infrastructure..."

The proposals for the Health Campus increase the quality and quantity of accessible green space within the site from **5.11 hectares to 8.06 hectares** – this is including the allotment site. Without the allotment there would be less accessible green space available for the wider community (7.68 as opposed to 8.06 hectares)

	<p>The provision and improvement of open space in the Colne Valley will provide a valuable new area of open space in a part of the town that is currently deficient and will provide a green corridor for residents to use. Improvements to the Colne Valley are a priority within the Green Infrastructure Strategy.</p> <p>Current Planning Permission The Watford Health Campus Masterplan was submitted to the local planning authority in 2007. It was also submitted to the Secretary of State through the Government Office for the East of England as a "departure" from the local development plan. The letter of 22 August 2008 states that the Secretary of State was satisfied that the council's consideration of issues has been both thorough and comprehensive and that they have addressed and taken account of the relevant policies in reaching their conclusion to grant planning permission for the Health Campus scheme. It was for this reason that the Secretary of State did not call in the application for her own determination.</p> <p>Specifically one of the issue that was considered related to open space and recreation uses:</p> <p>"meeting the sports, open space and recreation requirements of the whole community by protecting existing facilities and securing appropriate new provision."</p> <p>Copy of the letter is attached (Appendix I).</p>
What is the area of the allotments to be disposed of and the total number of plots that will be lost.	<p>Farm Terrace allotments are 2.63Ha in size and equates to 128 plots ranging from 10 to 5 pole plots. The whole site is proposed to be appropriated so all 128 plots will be lost.</p> <p>The council is proposing an increase in number of plots at Holywell and Lower Paddock Road sites – both within the borough.</p>
How many plots are in use and how many not in use?	At present (January 2013), 80 plots are in use, 47 are vacant and 1 plot is used for the existing site toilet facility.
How many plot holders are affected	65 allotment holders are affected as several have more than 1 plot.
Alternative site provision	
The name and address of the proposed new allotment site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lower Paddock Road, Watford, WD19 (see Appendix R) ▪ Holywell, Watford WD18 (See Appendix S)
Area of proposed alternative allotment site and number of plots to be provided	<p>The council has plans for full re-provision of 2.63 hectares (the size of Farm Terrace).</p> <p>At Paddock Road, where the largest number of plots will be re-provisioned, the land is currently used for grazing and borders</p>

	<p>the existing Paddock Road allotments, a current and vibrant allotment site. It is a green field site so there are no issues of contamination and new allotments can be developed from scratch to a good specification. As there is already a vibrant and committed allotment community established at paddock Road, the council believes there will be effective support to ensure the successful integration of the new plots into the site overall.</p> <p>Recent discussions with the NSALG have highlighted the importance of improving the soil quality at the proposed site. This is an area the council will ensure is taken into account when it commissions the work to create the new plots at Paddock Road as part of the circa £800,000 investment it will set aside for re-provision. We would hope to work with our allotment holders on our future plans so they can shape the new plots and associated amenities to best meet their needs and those of future plot holders.</p> <p>The plots on Holywell will be on currently uncultivated land. They will provide an additional opportunity for those Farm Terrace allotment holders with any specific need (e.g. a disability, age, difficulty with transport) to relocate within half a mile of the Farm Terrace site. This is something we are exploring with current tenants through our engagement programme.</p> <p>We also know from our allotment survey 2011 that 55% of the borough's allotment holders choose to drive to their allotments rather than walk, although many people live within walking distance of their allotment (less than 10 minutes away).</p>
Publicity	
Details of / or copies of publicity showing that the proposed disposal and alternative provision has been actively publicised.	<p>The Watford Health Campus development is a long term regeneration initiative. As outlined above, the original scheme, that had planning permission, did not utilise Farm Terrace allotments, and when Watford BC issued the initial tender documents, the allotments were not included.</p> <p>However, in light of feedback from the potential developers considering the scheme and the needs of WHHT, the requirement to look at options for the future of the allotments within the scheme was raised (100% appropriation, 50% appropriation or not appropriated). Once this was identified, a report outlining the issue was sent to Watford Borough Council's Cabinet highlighting the possible need for appropriation and Cabinet agreed in June 2012 that the three options for Farm Terrace allotments be considered in light of the emerging Campus scheme.</p> <p>At this stage, the elected Mayor of Watford, Dorothy Thornhill, wrote to all Farm Terrace allotment holders to advise them of</p>

the situation. (Appendix J).

At the Cabinet meeting in June, a commitment was made to engage with all allotment holders to provide opportunities to share their views on the future of allotments within the borough. This commenced with a meeting for all allotment holders on 17 July 2012, with over 100 allotment holders in attendance. At this meeting, and through subsequent communications allotment holders, who expressed an interest were invited to get involved through two working groups:

1. A Farm Terrace Group – focusing on the future of the Farm Terrace allotments as part of the wider Watford Health Campus scheme.

The meetings covered:

- explanation by the Watford Health Campus team as to the current status of proposals and the project;
- discussion with the West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust to clarify why the Trust needs part of the allotment site for the future hospital; and
- a participative Planning for Real session to enable the group to understand the Health Campus site more fully and explore alternative development scenarios for the Campus.

2. An Allotment Stakeholder Panel – looking at the council's Allotment Strategy, an acceptable quality standard for allotments and the level of investment needed to achieve this standard across all sites in the borough.

The meetings covered:

- Current issues of concern to allotment holders;
- The 'model' allotment and how this might relate to Watford;
- Priorities for potential investment and improvement.

A joint meeting of these two groups took place on the 7 November 2012. Kler provided an update of their Watford Health Campus proposals including masterplan proposals if there were 0%, 50% or 100% usage of the allotments for the Campus. A report was presented on relocation options and the investment strategy for improving all allotments across Watford was covered. A representative from the National Society for Allotments and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) was present. Farm Terrace allotment holders in attendance raised a number of issues in terms of the masterplan for the Campus, which were considered within the report to Cabinet on 3rd December 2012.

Following that meeting, a letter was sent to all current Watford allotment holders apprising them of the areas covered at the meeting and bringing them up to date on the current situation and next steps. This was also circulated to councillors and to the NSALG. Allotment holders were invited to feedback on the

	<p>issues raised in the letter.</p> <p>In January 2013, a session was arranged for Farm Terrace allotment holders to discuss their options, should approval be given by the Secretary of State. This was set up partly in response to requests from some tenants who wanted to gain an understanding of their future options.</p> <p>The council is committed to continuing to engage with Farm Terrace allotment holders. The allotments will be impacted by Health Campus development whatever the outcome of the Secretary of State decision. This has been appreciated by some current tenants who understand that 'no change' is not an option, given that the site will be surrounded by a major regeneration scheme for at least 10-15 years.</p> <p>All paperwork relating to engagement with allotment holders is attached as Appendix J and Appendix N.</p> <p>In addition, the Health Campus scheme has been promoted through a number of sources. This has included reference to Farm Terrace allotments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ About Watford – January 2013 http://www.watford.gov.uk/ccm/content/strategic-services/about-watford-files/about-watford---january-2013.en ▪ Watford Borough Council website - http://www.watford.gov.uk/ccm/content/strategic-services/press-releases/2012-12/important-step-for-health-campus-development.en/ ▪ Watford Health Campus website - http://watfordhealthcampus.info/ ▪ Communication to local residents (in the area surrounding the Campus site) – January 2013 – Appendix K <p>The issue has also been covered extensively in the local media (Watford Observer / Watford My News).</p> <p>Recent coverage in the Watford Observer includes Richard Harrington, MP for Watford's, support for the scheme and for the need for Farm Terrace allotments to be included in the Campus project.</p> <p>http://www.watfordobserver.co.uk/news/10198773. Farm Terrace Allotment plans absolutely crucial says MP/</p>
Details/ or confirmation that the local authority has actively promoted and	<p>Promotion of the Council's allotments is primarily via the attached web-link: http://www.watford.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment-and-</p>

<p>publicised the availability of allotment sites.</p> <p>Confirmation that the NSALG has been consulted on the proposals and copies of their views.</p>	<p><u>planning/parks-and-open-spaces/allotments/</u></p> <p>Allotments are also promoted through the council's magazine and vacancies are promoted at individual sites.</p> <p>The local NSALG representative for the Eastern Region (Karen Kenny) has been kept informed and engaged throughout the current process. For example, the NSALG attended the joint meeting with allotment tenants on the 7 November and made a number of helpful comments and suggestions.</p> <p>A letter was sent to Ms Kenny (following email invitations) to discuss this application on 15 January 2013 – see Appendix M. The letter included a request that feedback from the NSALG on the council's proposals be documented in writing.</p> <p>This resulted in a meeting at Watford on 1 February 2013. Notes of this meeting are attached as Appendix N.</p> <p>The meeting was very productive and highlighted areas where, as members of the NSALG, the council can work with the National Society both on the outcomes of this application (if successful or not) and on wider allotment issues in the borough.</p> <p>Ms Kenny advised the council that she would be responding to this application once it is submitted and not in advance to the council directly.</p>
<p>Do the NSALG support the proposals.</p>	<p>Ms Kenny indicated at 1 February meeting that the NSALG would not be supporting the council's proposals. The council does not have this view in writing but feedback at the meeting indicated that the reasons would chiefly be around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of allotments – this is an area the council disagrees with the NSALG's conclusion as there is evidence that its web based promotion is effective and allocations remain consistently high. The council pointed out to Ms Kenny that DCLG do not expect local authorities to produce either glossy leaflets or translated material. Additionally, promotion is an area being considered by the council's Allotment Stakeholder Panel to inform the revised Allotment Strategy • Maintenance of allotments – again this was an area that the council believes the NSALG was being over critical given that as a small district authority its maintenance regime is in line with many other local authorities • Deprivation in the Vicarage ward area – the council has a good understanding of its borough overall and of specific areas. Vicarage ward is not one of the borough's most deprived areas – see Appendix B – and so has to

	<p>disagree with some of the conclusions about the ward presented by the NSALG at the meeting on 1 February. The council also sees the improvement in access to open space and the inclusion of a community garden on the Campus site as enhancements to the area, which does need to improve local people's opportunities to enjoy good quality green space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-provision proposals – the council believes its re-provision proposals for Farm Terrace are fair and offer a good solution to ensuring the number and quality of allotment plots in the borough is maintained.
<p>Confirmation that existing plot holders been consulted on the proposal to dispose including the alternative land offered</p>	<p>As outlined above, there has been extensive engagement with allotment holders on the proposal to deregulate and on proposed alternative provision and future investment (see Appendix O for presentation by Parks and Open Spaces section head on relocation and investment – 7 November 2012).</p> <p>Workshops / sessions were held on the following dates and comprised:</p> <p>17 July 2012</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All allotment holder meeting to launch the engagement programme <p>29 August 2012</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Terms of Reference for the Group ▪ Watford Health Campus update – current position ▪ What are the issues the Group needs to address <p>1 September 2012</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watford General Hospital – how its plans are progressing Kyle McClelland - Associate Director - Strategic Developments, West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust – attended this meeting at the request of the Group • Update on issues identified by Group • Sustainability / Environmental issues • Health / Community issues • Impact of Health Campus scheme on allotments • Engagement and communications • Other areas <p>KIER PLANS FROM THE Best And Final Offer (BAFO) STAGE WERE MADE AVAILABLE FOR THE GROUP TO LOOK AT</p> <p>The Group requested a further opportunity to look at plans and gain understanding of the issues impacting on the site – see 11 October where a specialist was invited to lead the meeting so</p>

that the Group could get a practical understanding of the site.

11 October 2012

- Site constraints
- Hospital constraints and requirements
- 'Planning for Real' Workshop session on the Health Campus site

7 November 2012

- Watford Health Campus – the vision and emerging masterplan - this gave people an opportunity to see the 3 options for the masterplan -0% allotments, some allotments incorporated, all the allotments incorporated.
- Update on taking options forward
- Relocation options
- Investment to support Allotment Strategy

23 January 2013

- Drop in session to discuss relocation options (**see Invitation letter survey outlining all areas for consideration – Appendix P**)

Further consultation and engagement has included:

- **FAQs**
To answer questions at critical points in the process
- **Freedom of Information requests**
FOIs were requested on information relating to Farm Terrace allotments – this was not information that was ever sought through interaction with officers. Had officers been asked for relevant information it would have been released provided it was not commercially confidential.
- **Sustainability workshop – 16 October 2012**
A number of allotment holders (mainly from Farm Terrace) took part in this session and were able to raise issues regarding sustainability to feed back to the Health Campus scheme.

Following the Cabinet decision on 3 December to recommend the incorporation of the Farm Terrace allotments into the Health Campus scheme, a formal scrutiny in public (undertaken by the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the Council**) of the decision took place on 20 December. At the scrutiny, allotment holders were formally involved in questioning the decision and presenting their case. The Committee decided after considering all of the issues to endorse the Cabinet's decision to incorporate the allotments. For minutes of this meeting see:

	http://watford.moderngov.co.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=1981
Demand for allotments	
How many people are on the Council's waiting list?	<p>Overall there are circa 67 (as of January 2013) people on the waiting list. The waiting list varies on a daily basis as plots are let or current holders end their tenancies.</p> <p>As with any area, some allotment sites are more popular than others and so some have no waiting list.</p>
How many people are waiting for plots on the subject site?	8 – all of these have been offered alternative local sites.
How many plot holders are affected?	65 plot holders are affected.
Information on how the number of people on the waiting list will be or has effectively been taken into account by the council.	<p>There are 13 sites (with 1249 plots available to rent) in Watford totalling just over 28 hectares (69 Acres). This is equal to 0.34 ha per 1000 people (3.4m² per person). Provision per head of population in Watford is also higher than the recommendation by the NSALG.</p> <p>The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) suggests a national standard of 20 allotment plots per 1000 households (i.e. 20 allotments plots per 2,000 people based on 2 people per house) or 1 allotment plot per 200 people. This equates to 0.125 hectares per 1000 population (1.25m² per person) based on an average plot size of 250m².</p> <p>Across the Borough, the waiting list is relatively short and is generally related to people wanting plots on specific sites. For example, of the 67 currently on the waiting list nearly a third (21) are waiting for a plot at the Timberlake site and a further 20 are waiting for a vacancy at Briar Road.</p> <p>The council continues to promote allotments across the town with occupancy rates high and the waiting list has reduced significantly over the last few years. This is because it has been actively managed since 2008, resulting, on average, in 140 plots being allocated per year. The success of our current approach can be evidenced by the fact that in 2007 (pre active management) just 25 plots were allocated. We now apply a fair but robust termination policy to ensure plot holders are committed and contribute to the overall upkeep of the site (non-cultivation is one of the biggest issues of concern for our allotment tenants). This means that sites are made available for potential new tenants when they are no longer required by existing tenants.</p> <p>At present, there are vacant plots and low (if any) waiting lists at three of the sites closest to Farm Terrace. If Farm Terrace is deregulated it is envisaged these sites might meet the requirements of many of the displaced allotment holders,</p>

	<p>particularly those whose needs might mean they are best placed at as local a site as possible. In addition, the current vacancies will be actively promoted to the local community through targeted engagement. The council would look to promote allotments in West Watford in a way that targets specific groups within the local community (for example the Pakistani community) rather than just a 'blanket' campaign which would not necessarily engage harder to reach groups. This will be addressed through the new Allotment Strategy, which will be reported to Cabinet in April 2013.</p> <p>We would also foresee the new plots at Paddock Road and Holywell providing good quality new facilities that will positively enhance the borough's overall provision and help meet any emerging demand.</p> <p>The council's Cabinet has also agreed an investment strategy to bring all allotments to a new improved level, including implementing universal standards for fencing, toilets, access, water supply etc at an overall cost of £800k. This will stimulate higher levels of user satisfaction and would address many of the issues raised through engagement with Allotment Stakeholder Panel.</p> <p>See Appendix Q (Draft Allotment Strategy)</p>
Sites identification required	
Plan of proposed disposal site and also a plan of the replacement land that is to be provided. (Plans must outline the boundaries of the land in a distinctive manner).	<p>See Appendix A: Farm Terrace</p> <p>See Appendix R: Replacement Site at Paddock Road</p> <p>See Appendix S: Additional plots at Holywell</p> <p>See Appendix T: Allotment plots in Watford</p>
Details Above Should Be Considered Against The Criteria Set Out In DTLR Letter Dated 27 Feb 2002 And Re-Iterated In CLG Letter Of 1 July 2009:	
The allotment in question is not necessary and is surplus to requirements	<p>Whilst Farm Terrace allotments are not deemed to be unnecessary or surplus to requirements they are critical to the Health Campus project.</p> <p>The Farm Terrace allotments are an active site but when balanced against the wider benefits to the West Watford and wider Watford community through the Health Campus scheme, the inclusion of the allotments is vital.</p>

	<p>The Council has committed to re-allocate and re-provide a new site at Lower Paddock Road, the closest available site that allows a full and comprehensive relocation. There will also be some new provision made available at the Holywell site (this is in addition to the current vacancies on the Holywell site – see below).</p> <p>The council has also committed to re-provide some local Farm Terrace plot holders with plots at the existing Holywell, Brightwell and Wiggshall allotments where there are existing vacancies and no waiting lists. These are all located in close proximity to Farm Terrace.</p> <p>Initial dialogue with some Farm Terrace allotment holders has indicated a preference to move locally and we can accommodate their requirements</p>
Adequate provision will be made for displaced plot holders or that such provision is not necessary or impractical	<p>The council is clear that re-provision is necessary.</p> <p>Watford BC employed Community First Partnership Ltd (CFP) to review potential options for relocating the Farm Terrace allotments. Under current allotment legislation, there is a requirement to re-provide any statutory allotment land so that overall provision within the local authority area is unaffected. CFP's full report is attached. See Appendix U.</p> <p>CFP delivered a very thorough analysis. A desktop review of all green spaces south of Cassobury Park was undertaken, and included public and private sites and sites just outside of WBC boundary close to Farm Terrace. CFP created a short-list of relocation sites for further consideration. Options were rejected on the basis of being too small, other land uses and high sports value. Key criteria used included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distance to Farm Terrace Allotments and centre of demand; • current land use; • known soil quality; • potential number of plots; • water and flood risk; and • likely timescale of availability. <p>The results were, in order of CFP's recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Holywell Allotments (distance 0.5 miles) 2. Paddock Road (distance 1.1 miles as the crow flies, and 1.6miles by road. These measurements were undertaken using the council's GIS system in February 2013) 3. Oxhey Park Sports Ground (subject to the new road alignment) (distance 0.4 miles) <p>The recommendations from the consulting team in terms of relocating were:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 To redevelop Paddock Road option covering 2.56 hectares, which equates to more than existing Farm Terrace Site 2 Consider accommodation of an estimated 15 plots at Holywell Allotments <p>Oxhey Park was not prioritised given the uncertainty of the exact location of the new Link road, and it did not remove the impact of construction pollution on the allotments and could not be re-provided at the start of the programme.</p> <p>There are significant advantages to the Paddock Road site. With existing allotments at this site, the combination would provide sufficient critical mass, subject to affordability, provision could be made for toilet and other facilities including consideration of communal space. The estimated costs for relocation are circa £700,000 for Paddock Road and £100,000 (depending on size of plots) for the Holywell allotment site. Officers therefore believe the Council would be in a position to offer relocation to existing tenant holders and provide a net increase of allotment plots if the Farm Terrace allotments were relocated.</p>
The number of people on the waiting list has effectively been taken into account	<p>There are 8 people on the Farm Terrace waiting list who are aware of the current situation and have been offered alternative allotment plots, which they have not taken up.</p> <p>Of the additional 59 currently on the waiting list, the majority (41) are waiting for a specific site or plot to become available. They are aware of alternative vacancies but these are not of interest at present.</p> <p>The council is confident that it has taken into account the needs of those on the waiting list as it engages with them on a regular and ongoing basis. This is why allocation figures have shown a marked improvement since 2008.</p>
The authority has actively promoted and publicised the availability of allotment sites and consulted the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners	<p>The council promotes the availability of allotments across the Borough through a number of channels. This is chiefly through the council's website www.watford.gov.uk/allotments but has also included 48 sheet bus posters, dedicated leaflets, articles in the council's magazine and news releases. In addition, each individual site is able to promote its work and any vacant plots. The government has extended clear advice to councils that it does not expect them to produce glossy leaflets to promote its activities and to encourage the majority of the community to access information online (for example DCLG's document: '50 ways to save' has as way number 44 : "Cut printing costs: Stop producing glossy brochures. Publish online only, unless local residents ask for a hard copy." Additionally, councils have also received clear guidance from DCLG that they should not be translating promotional material into languages other than English. If the council is made aware of a requirement for translation or for printed material, we are happy to provide this to</p>

	<p>meet the specific needs of our customers.</p> <p>The website figures for the council's allotment page show that there has been a steady increase in people accessing this information online over the last three year:</p> <p>1 Jan 2010 to 31 Dec 2010: 1,585 1 Jan 2011 to 31 Dec 2011: 1,993 1 Jan 2012 to 31 Dec 2012: 2,053</p> <p>We currently have an active Allotment Stakeholder Panel that is working with us on issues affecting allotments. These will be reflected in the revised Allotment Strategy currently in draft, which will be ratified at Cabinet in April 2013. Future promotion of allotments will form a significant part of this Strategy.</p> <p>The council is currently working with tenants from Callowland Allotments in relation to self management and this is now being progressed.</p> <p>The council has met and consulted the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners. We are members of the Society and have sought their support and advice on a number of issues relating to relocation such as appropriate compensation as well as the development of the proposed community garden on the site.</p>
<p>The implications of disposal for other relevant policies in particular development plan policies have been taken into account</p>	<p>Yes the Council's planning policies support this appropriation.</p> <p>The Local Plan (Core Strategy) recognises the importance of the Health Campus site to the town's overall economic, social and environmental ambitions (shown by its designation as an SPA) and the Green Infrastructure policy within the Core Strategy clearly outlines the expectation for improved green, open space within the development site. This will be addressed through the masterplan but is already identified overall, although the community garden provision is currently being considered and developed.</p> <p>Economic Watford has a strong economic base but is not complacent about its future economic prospects. The Core Strategy recognises the importance of maintaining and building on its current economic prosperity and that achieving the needed level of growth will require improvements to the quality and range of employment space on offer. These additional jobs will mainly be accommodated in part 'within mixed use schemes at the Health Campus' (see Policy EMP 1). The Hospital itself provides a significant number of jobs and we would expect to see this increased if its future plans are delivered.</p> <p>Social The Health Campus will create a sustainable, new community in West Watford. The developing masterplan recognises that a</p>

sustainable community requires a range of infrastructure, amenities and services including:

- good public transport links
- well-designed and attractive homes that cater for a range of needs (including 35% affordable housing)
- high quality open space that will provide safe and welcoming areas for the new and current community in West Watford to meet, play, relax
- a dedicated community garden that specifically provides an opportunity for the local community to share the enjoyment of gardening and come together as a community to grow produce
- the hospital itself is an important social facility within the heart of the town and on a daily basis a community comes together to provide health care and facilities for the wider population. This community requires a range of facilities and amenities and will benefit from improved access (both by public transport and car), shops and other services and the open public space that will be created

Environmental

A large amount of the Health Campus site is contaminated industrial land, which will be mitigated through the development. The NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to:

'remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate'.

The scheme will deliver more open, public green space than is currently available to the local community and issues of biodiversity will be addressed through an environmental impact assessment (EIA). An EIA will be carried out for the submission of a planning application which will include the Farm Terrace allotments if the Secretary of State gives the council this permission. This will be considered in conjunction with the original EIA through the masterplanning process. WBC as landowner is committing itself to comply with the EIA.

The Local Plan (Core Strategy) itself meets the criteria for soundness in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

In relation to NPPF the council has taken into consideration the following sections in particular in relation to the disposal:

8. Promoting healthy communities

Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

The current Health Campus site has very limited opportunities for sport and recreation and this is being addressed through the masterplan. Although it is acknowledged that allotments are a means of promoting healthy communities, the opportunity afforded to the West Watford community to access good quality, safe public green space on the sites is currently limited. The aim of the Health Campus is to increase the amount of open space on the site and to ensure this provides a range of opportunities for the local community not currently available. Even simple activities such as walking, kicking a ball or having somewhere for children to play are not possible and the council genuinely believes the inclusion of a community garden will continue to provide people with the opportunity to garden and grow healthy produce. We would very much hope and expect more people will take advantage of the community garden than can currently access the allotment site.

The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location;
The council plan to provide equivalent allotment provision but with the level of investment planned the quality will be better – and not just of the reprovisioned site but of all the allotments across the borough

Equalities

The council conducted an equality impact analysis to inform Cabinet's decision making on the future of Farm Terrace allotments – **Appendix V.**

The profile of the Farm Terrace allotment holders as of 2011 was:

1. Sex

Male - 51% Female - 49%

2. Ethnicity

White British - 90% White other - 7% (1 not answered)

3. Disability

13% have a disability

4. Age

16-24 years - 3%, 25-34 years - 13%, 35-44 years - 17% 45-54 years - 17%, 55-59 year – 1%, 60-64 years – 20% 65+ - 27%

These figures indicate higher:

- Percentage of people with disabilities using Farm Terrace allotments than the Watford population overall
- Percentage of White British users of the allotments than the Watford population overall

- Percentage of 60+ users of the allotments higher than the Watford population overall

The overall conclusion of the Analysis is that, should Farm Terrace allotments be incorporated into the Watford Health Campus scheme, the overall impact on the Watford community is positive.

This is because the benefits of releasing the land will have a positive impact on all Watford residents (as well as on people from outside the borough whose main access to health facilities is at Watford General Hospital), outweighing the potential negative impacts identified. In addition, opportunities have been identified to mitigate the potentially negative impacts (such as working with individual holders to address any specific needs and the community garden initiative, which will help foster good community relations).

Asset of Community Value

The Farm Terrace Community Association (established formally in February 2013) has submitted a non-compliant application for the site to be nominated by the Council as an asset of community value under the Assets of Community Value Regulations 2012, pursuant to S89 of the Localism Act 2011.

The Council's Deputy Head of Legal has written to seek further information from the Association to establish the validity of the nomination.

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Watford Borough Council

Information needed to consider consent to dispose of allotments

Farm Terrace Allotment – February 2013

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