

260223 – ITEM 6 - ALLOTMENT WORKS REVIEW

1. BACKGROUND

At its meetings on 13th January and 3rd February 2026, the Full Council considered the recent hedge and plot reinstatement works at the allotments. The works included hedge cutting, removal of some trees affected by ash dieback, and creation of a new allotment plot. Following concerns raised by allotment holders and volunteers from Trees in Time, the Council resolved to:

- Respond to complaints professionally.
- Leave the bank to settle for 6–12 months before replanting.
- Approve the metal detecting exercise under agreed conditions.
- Keep allotment holders informed of works and future plans.

2. UPDATE ON ACTIONS

- Correspondence with complainants and Trees in Time has been issued.
- Metal detecting agreement signed; insurance documentation received.
- Statements issued to allotment holders via the Allotment Association.
- New plot to be available following metal detecting exercise.

3. KEY LESSONS FOR THE COUNCIL

Area	Lessons Learned
Contract Clarity & Supervision	Tender documentation must clearly specify which trees or hedgerow features are to be retained or removed. Contractors should be closely supervised to prevent unintended removal of mature trees.
Communication & Transparency	Early, clear communication with allotment holders and volunteer groups can help manage expectations and reduce dissatisfaction. Responses to complaints should acknowledge errors openly.
Biodiversity Considerations	All works should explicitly consider wildlife impact and tree preservation. Retention plans for significant trees should be confirmed in advance.
Timing of Works	Winter works were appropriate to minimise disturbance to wildlife. Future projects should continue to consider seasonal timing in planning.

Cost Awareness	Significant works can be costly relative to allotment income. Future budgets and rent reviews should take potential maintenance costs into account.
Follow-up & Restoration	Work on reinstatement (hedge replanting, habitat restoration) should be planned and communicated, including opportunities for community involvement.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

1. Note the key lessons from the recent allotment works.
2. Consider incorporating these lessons into future allotment and open space projects.
3. Discuss any further support required for hedge reinstatement in partnership with Trees in Time.