

CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL
OFFICERS REPORT TO THE FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Meeting Date: 10/03/2026

Subject: Allotments Tenancy Agreement- Operational Management

1. Purpose of Report

To update the Committee on current allotment management matters and to seek approval for a minor amendment to the Allotment Tenancy Agreement. The proposed amendment aims to improve efficiency by aligning decision-making with operational management responsibilities while ensuring the Council does not become embroiled in the management of historic or inherited (legacy) structures.

2. Background

During the renewal of allotment tenancy payments, officers have been reviewing compliance with allotment conditions, including whether plots are being actively maintained. This review has been prompted by a waiting list of more than 20 residents and concerns that several current plot holders may not be tending their allotments appropriately.

Separately, several tenants have recently requested permission to install sheds, greenhouses, and similar structures. Under the current Allotment Tenancy Agreement, such requests require the written consent of the Council, which leads to delays in responding to routine and operational matters.

A recent example includes a new tenant at the Gravel Lane site requesting permission to install a 4m x 3m greenhouse.

The current agreement states:

- *"The Tenant shall not erect a shed, polytunnel, greenhouse or any building or storage on the Allotments without the written consent of the Council."*
- *"Sheds should be no bigger than 2m x 1.5m and 2m high and must not encroach on neighbouring plots."*

3. Assessment

Requiring Full Council approval for every structure is administratively burdensome, slows decision-making, and is inconsistent with normal local government operational practice.

Delegating authority to officers would:

- Significantly improve turnaround times.
- Allow officers to assess feasibility directly on site.
- Support consistent, informed operational decisions.

- Reduce unnecessary pressure on Full Council agendas.
- Enable better management of new applications without becoming entangled in historic non-compliances.

Because there are many long-standing structures of varying sizes, a rigid size limit is no longer practical. A more flexible, officer-led feasibility approach for new structures avoids reopening or challenging historic installations while still setting expectations for future compliance.

4. Recommendations

The Finance & Governance Committee is asked to consider recommending to Full Council that:

4.1 Amendment to Policy Wording

That the following revised clause be adopted to provide clarity, improve operational efficiency, and ensure legacy structures do not become a recurring governance issue:

Suggested Updated Clause:

“The Tenant shall not erect a shed, polytunnel, greenhouse or any structure on the allotment without the prior written consent of the Clerk. All requests for new structures must include proposed dimensions and a plan of the intended location so that officers may assess feasibility relative to the specific plot, neighbouring plots, and overall site layout. Existing structures installed prior to the adoption of this clause will be treated as legacy installations and managed on a case-by-case basis.”

This amendment transfers the point of authorisation from “the Council” to “the Clerk”, enabling timely and consistent administrative handling of requests and aligning decision-making with operational management responsibilities.

4.2 Delegated Authority

That delegated authority be granted to the Clerk to approve allotment structures in accordance with the revised feasibility-based approach set out in the updated clause, ensuring that:

- New structures are considered individually on their merits.
- Legacy structures are not automatically reopened or challenged.
- Decisions remain operational, efficient, and proportionate.

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