



membership resources

State of the Market Survey 2009

Local Authority Allotment Services



Briefing 09/06

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The state of the market survey was conducted by Debbie Johns, APSE Principal Advisor for Environmental services

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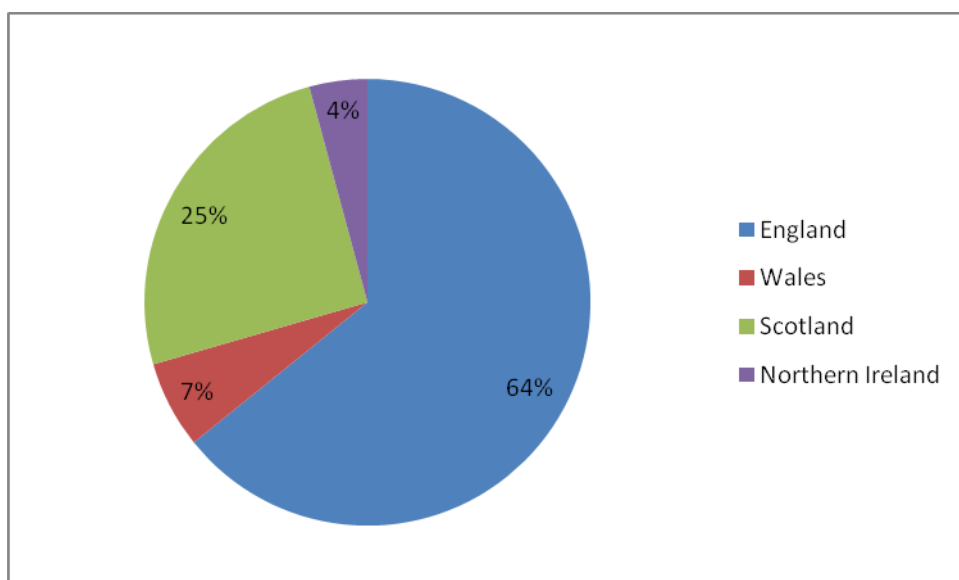


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Local Authority Allotment Services State of the Market 2009

APSE conducted an on-line allotment survey during December 2008. This follows on from a Scotland-only allotment survey, which was carried out during September 2008. Therefore, the survey conducted in December was sent out to England, Northern Ireland and Wales contacts only. The same questions were asked in both surveys and covered the number, size, facilities, budget for and cost of allotments, as well as demand for planned increases in the number of allotments.

In total, 130 responses were received (24 responses from the Scotland-only survey and 106 responses from the survey sent to England, Northern Ireland and Wales). The full breakdown by country is as follows:



This report identifies the key findings of the second survey sent out to England, Northern Ireland and Wales in December 2008. The full analysis for the Scotland-only survey is contained within APSE briefing paper 08/58 and the analysis below will also draw some key comparisons from that analysis.

Results from the survey

a) Number and management of allotments

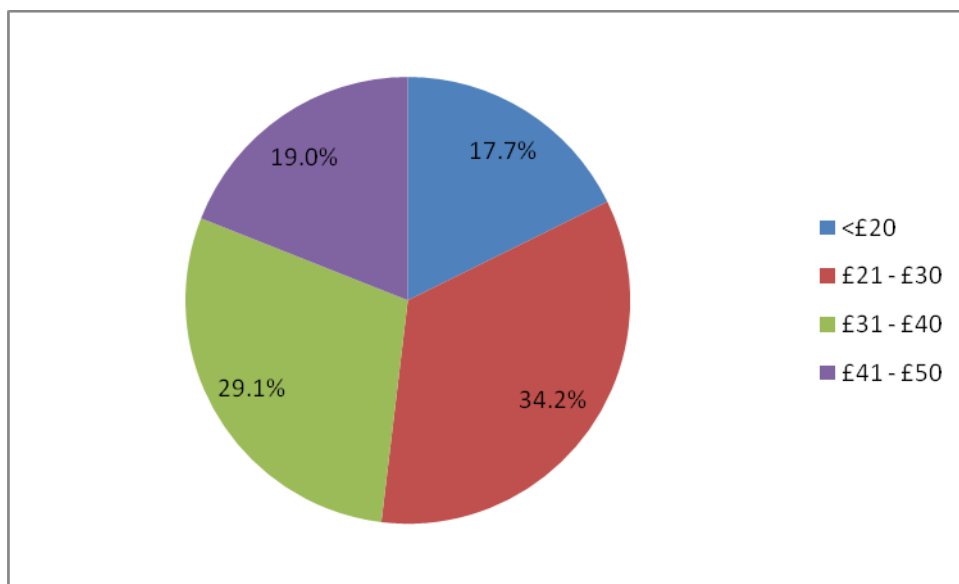
94% of respondents answered that they have council managed allotments within their authority*, compared to 65% in Scotland. From the respondents that answered 'no' to this question; 86% stated that demand has been expressed for these.

*Note: 1 authority had both council managed and self managed sites.

In terms of management of the allotments, 74% stated that they have allotments which are managed by a council officer and 26% stated that these are managed through a site committee or association. This is comparable with the figures from the Scotland survey where over two thirds of responses stated that allotments are directly managed by a council officer.

b) Cost of allotments

The majority of respondents stated that the cost per annum to rent an allotment in 2008/09 was between £21 and £40, which is slightly higher than the cost in Scotland where most authorities charge in the region of £20-£30 per annum. The full breakdown is as follows:



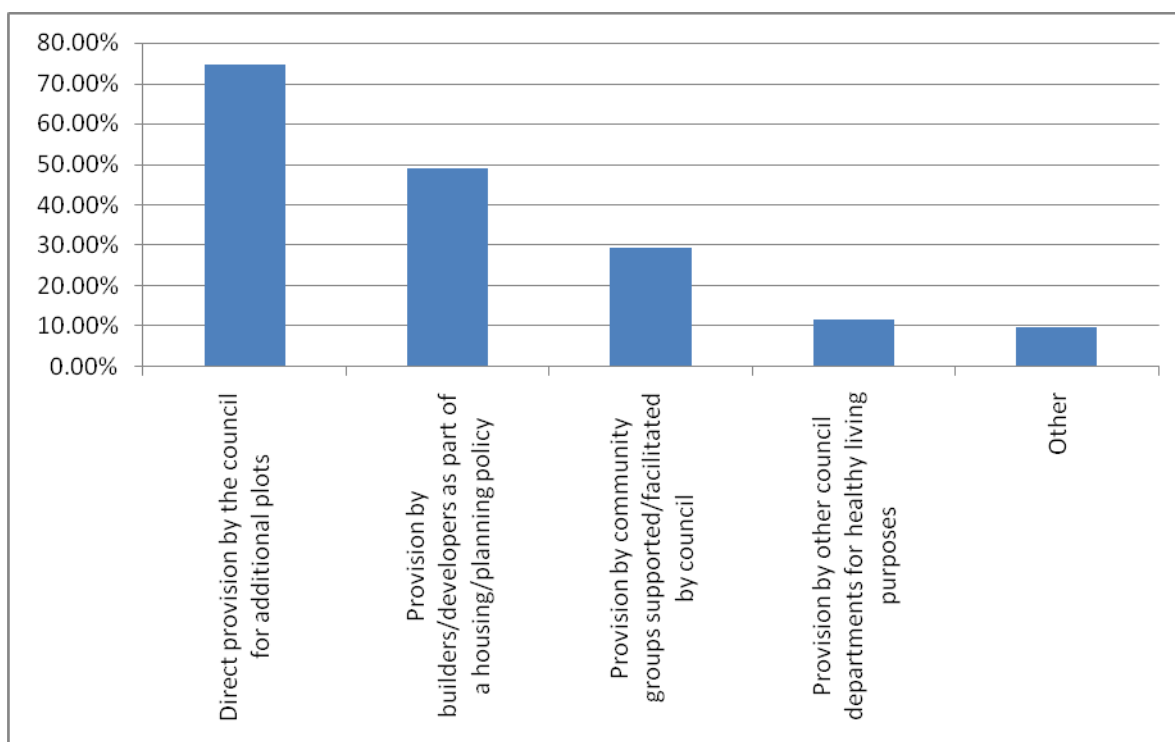
When respondents were asked about the expected cost per annum to rent an allotment in 2009/10, 60% answered that this is over £31, representing an overall increase from the current cost paid. 64% of respondents claimed that the charge is related to the area of the allotment and 27% stated that this is standard regardless of the size. There was also a split in the respondents who answered that concessionary prices are offered (60% yes, 40% no). 60% of respondents who entered the % cost of the concession stated that they offered a 50% discount based on various criteria including over 60's, recipients of benefits or for those who compost their green waste.

c) Size of allotments

In terms of the size of plots available, 43% stated that they have a standard size for a plot, and out of these, the most common size was 250 square meters. When asked for the total number of plots in the local authority, this ranged right up to 4,100. Waiting lists have proved the demand for allotments with the majority of respondents stated that they have between 100 and 600 people on the waiting lists, with 4 respondents claiming over 1,200 people on their waiting list.

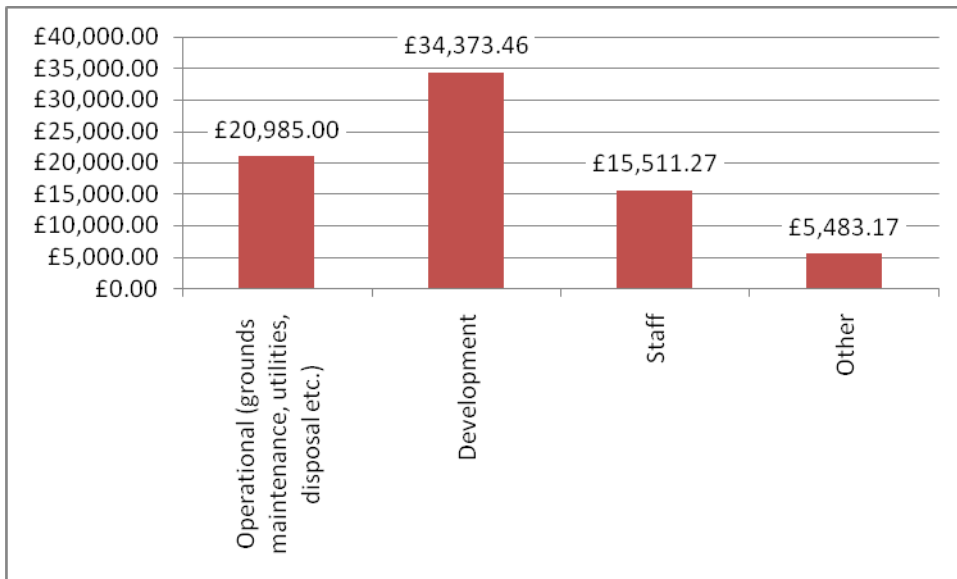
d) Future increases in the number of allotments

67% of respondents stated that their council plans to increase the number of allotments. This compares with 58% in Scotland. From those respondents who stated that the number of allotments is planned to increase, the method of doing this is shown in the diagram below:

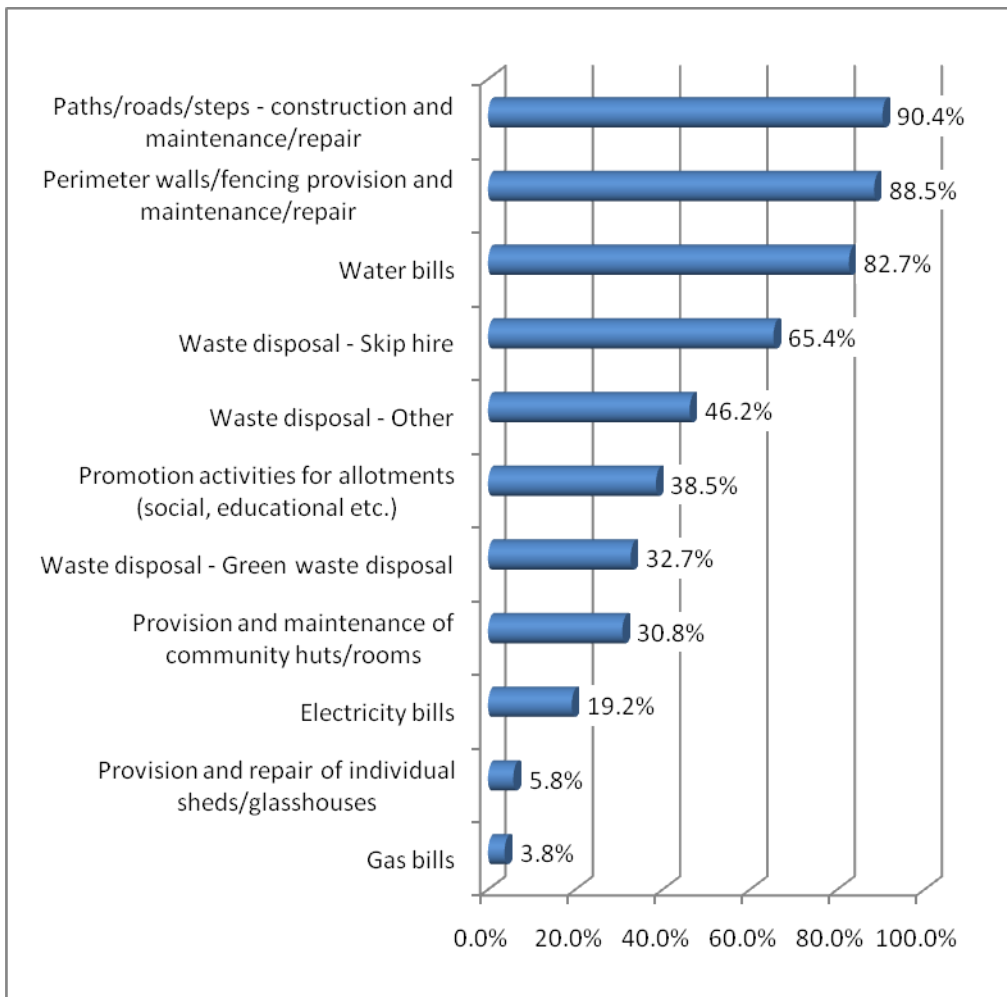


e) Budget for allotments

The average annual budgets for allotments were stated as follows:

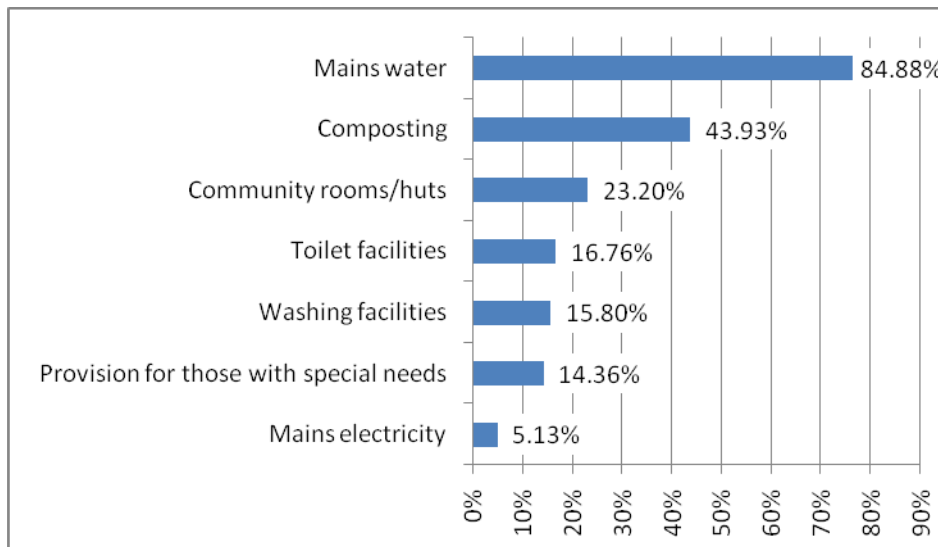


Respondents stated that their budgets include responsibility for the following:



f) Facilities at allotment sites

Most allotment sites have the provision of water and some have other services such as composting, toilet facilities and washing facilities. The full breakdown in terms of the average % of allotment sites with other facilities is as follows:



The majority of respondents stated that grounds maintenance is carried out at allotment sites as an integral part of grounds maintenance operations/contracts (65%). When asked how grounds maintenance is monitored, the majority stated that this is through inspections/site visits by an allotment officer, council officer or site representatives.

g) Security

Plotholders themselves generally manage the security on allotment sites (75%), with 27% of respondents stating that they don't actively manage security. 14% stated community wardens manage security, 10% stated park rangers and 9% a 'plot watch' scheme. The majority of respondents have an allotment forum, friends group or something similar (68%). 72% stated that they allow the keeping of livestock (poultry, bees, etc) on an allotment which is significantly different to Scotland where 75% stated that there is no provision of this.

h) Allotment strategy

53% of respondents stated that they have an allotments strategy and of the 47% that haven't currently got a strategy in place, 73% stated that the council is planning to develop one within the next 2 years.

The Association for Public Service Excellence

APSE member authorities have access to a range of membership resources to assist in delivering council services. This includes our regular advisory groups, specifically designed to bring together elected members, directors, managers and heads of service, together with trade union representatives to discuss service specific issues, innovation and new ways of delivering continuous improvement. The advisory groups are an excellent forum for sharing ideas and discussing topical service issues with colleagues from other councils throughout the UK.

Advisory groups are a free service included as part of your authorities membership of APSE and all end with an informal lunch to facilitate networking with peers in other councils. If you do not currently receive details about APSE advisory group meetings and would like to be added to our list of contacts for your service area please email enquiries@apse.org.uk.

Our national advisory groups include:-

- Efficiencies, procurement and service transformation
- Building cleaning
- Citizen engagement
- Local authority, police and fire authority partnerships
- Community safety and security
- Housing management, construction and building maintenance
- Parks, horticultural and ground maintenance
- Roads, highways and street lighting
- Social care
- Leisure management and community venues
- Vehicle maintenance and transport operations
- Waste management, refuse collection and street cleansing
- Workforce strategy and employee relations