Allotment Water Charges: Executive Summary

Allotments Committee | 28 October 2026 | For decision | Town Clerk and RFO

THE DECISION

Should each site's water bill be shared by **plot size** (square metres) instead of **equally per plot**? And if so, should we make the change now, or ask Tenants first?

Why this has come to Committee

The problem	The proposal
Every plot on a site pays **the same** for water, whatever its size. After heavy water use during the summer 2026 hosepipe ban, many Tenants with half and smaller plots complained this is **unfair**.	Share each site's bill **by plot size**, the same way rent is already charged. **Bigger plots pay more, smaller plots pay less.** The site's total bill does not change.

What it means for Tenants (example site, £1,200 bill)

Plot size	Pays now	Would pay	Difference
250 m² plot	£54.55	£100.00	**£45.45 more**
128 m² plot	£54.55	£51.20	£3.35 less
90 m² plot	£54.55	£36.00	£18.55 less

Six things Councillors need to know

1	**Cost to the Council.** The Council pays the share for any **usable vacant plots**, so there will undoubtedly be a cost to the Council whenever usable plots are vacant. This must be budgeted for. Unusable vacant plots are left out.
2	**No profit.** Water is recharged at cost only. Each site's bill is still paid in full.
3	**Tenants who leave still pay.** A Tenant who surrenders pays for water for the days they held the plot, even if the bill arrives after they have gone.
4	**No change to existing tenancies.** The change is made by adding a new rule to the Allotment Rules. There is no legal notice period, but Tenants should be told before the water goes on in April 2027.
5	**Hosepipe bans made clearer.** During any water restriction, watering cans only.
6	**Timing.** 2026 bills stay as they are. The first bills on the new basis go out on **1 October 2027**.

The choice for the Committee

	Route 1: Change now	Route 2: Ask Tenants first
What happens	Recommend the change to Full Council now.	Four-week survey of all Tenants; results back to Committee in January 2027.
For	Settles the issue quickly; Tenants know well before the 2027 season.	Tenants have a say; decision visibly informed.
Against	No formal Tenant input before deciding.	Extra Committee cycle; results advisory and likely to split by plot size.

Officers recommend charging by plot size. The Committee is asked to choose **Route 1 or Route 2**. The full report, draft rule wording and draft survey follow, and can be reviewed if further clarity is required.