

Agenda Item	Item 8
Meeting Date	06 July 2026
Report Title	Southdown Shaw Allotments – Management Arrangements and Delegated Authority
Recommendation/s	See report
Prepared By	Clerk – Lisa Winter
Detailed Information	

1. Purpose of Report

To seek Full Council approval for the ongoing management arrangements for Southdown Shaw Allotments following the transfer of management responsibility to Meopham Parish Council and to establish clear delegated authority for the administration, maintenance, compliance and enforcement of the allotment site.

2. Background

Meopham Parish Council assumed responsibility for the management of Southdown Shaw Allotments on 1 April 2026.

Prior to the transfer of management responsibility, the allotments were administered by Meopham and District Allotment Association (MDAA), with individual plot holders holding tenancy agreements issued under that arrangement.

Following the transfer, plot holders were advised that their existing allotment tenancy agreements would continue to apply under Meopham Parish Council until such time as they are reviewed, amended or replaced by the Council.

It is now necessary for the Council to formally confirm these arrangements and establish an appropriate framework for the ongoing management of the site.

3. Current Position

Since assuming management responsibility, the Council has commenced a review of the allotment site, tenancy records and current operational arrangements.

A number of matters have been identified which require attention, including:

- health and safety matters requiring assessment and remedial action;
- paths and access routes requiring clearance and maintenance;
- ponds and structures requiring review to ensure they remain safe;
- plots requiring attention due to non-cultivation or lack of maintenance;

- site infrastructure issues, including water supply points, leaking or damaged taps and associated equipment requiring repair or replacement.

Some matters identified require timely action to ensure that the allotment site is managed safely, maintained appropriately and that the Council is able to meet its responsibilities as site manager.

4. Need for Delegated Authority

Effective management of the allotment site requires officers to be able to deal with routine matters promptly and consistently.

Without clear delegated authority, matters such as inspections, tenant correspondence, breach management, health and safety actions and necessary maintenance works would need to be referred to Full Council, which may cause unnecessary delay.

It is therefore proposed that responsibility for the operational management of Southdown Shaw Allotments is delegated to the Clerk and officers acting under the authority of the Council.

5. Proposed Delegation

The proposed delegation would include:

- maintaining allotment tenancy records and the plot register;
- administering allotment rents, fees and associated payments;
- undertaking inspections and maintaining inspection records;
- communicating with tenants regarding tenancy matters;
- issuing advisory letters, breach notices, improvement notices and health and safety notices where required;
- monitoring compliance with notices issued;
- arranging necessary maintenance or remedial works in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations;
- managing tenancy compliance matters in accordance with the existing tenancy agreement;
- making decisions regarding termination of tenancies where permitted under the tenancy agreement;
- issuing notices required under the tenancy agreement.

All decisions made under delegated authority will be recorded, including the reasons for the decision, the relevant tenancy agreement clause relied upon and any evidence considered.

6. Tenant Appeal Process

Where a tenancy is terminated under delegated authority, the tenant will have the right to submit an appeal in writing within 14 days of the date of the termination notice.

Appeals will be considered by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council.

The appeal process will consider whether:

- the correct procedure has been followed;
- the relevant tenancy agreement provisions have been correctly applied; and
- the decision was reasonable and proportionate based on the information available at the time.

The decision of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman following an appeal review will be final on behalf of the Council.

Where either the Chairman or Vice-Chairman has a conflict of interest or has previously been involved in the matter, another suitable Member will be appointed by the Council to undertake the review.

The allotment liaison councillors will continue to support officers with general allotment matters but will not participate in appeal decisions where they have had previous involvement.

7. Recommendations

Full Council is recommended to resolve:

- 1.** That the existing Meopham and District Allotment Association tenancy agreements continue to apply to existing plot holders following the transfer of management responsibility to Meopham Parish Council from 1 April 2026, until such time as they are reviewed, amended or replaced by the Council.
- 2.** That responsibility for the day-to-day management, administration, maintenance oversight, compliance monitoring and enforcement of Southdown Shaw Allotments is delegated to the Clerk and officers acting under the authority of the Council.
- 3.** That the delegated authority includes the issuing of notices, management of tenancy breaches, health and safety actions and termination of tenancies where permitted under the tenancy agreement.

4. That officers are authorised to undertake urgent works required to address health and safety or maintenance matters, in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.

5. That a tenant appeal process is established whereby any tenant whose tenancy is terminated under delegated authority may appeal in writing within 14 days of the termination notice to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council, whose decision shall be final on behalf of the Council.

8. Reason for Decision

To ensure that Southdown Shaw Allotments are managed safely, effectively and consistently following the transfer of management responsibility to Meopham Parish Council, and to provide officers with appropriate authority to administer the site and enforce tenancy conditions on behalf of the Council.