

**NAS Policy Document 103. Rents**

1. The Society recognises the significance of rents: to plotholders as an expenditure, to allotment providers as an income, and as an advantage of allotments as a model of community food growing that has the capacity to be economically self-sustaining.

2. The Society recognises that rents must be set in accordance with the legal requirement that they be reasonable and that the definition of reasonable is determined by case law. At present the key test established in case law for rent increases is comparability with charges for other leisure services. The Society recognises, however, that there is no single basis for establishing such comparability. The Society therefore believes that providers should make the principles behind their own rent-setting transparent. The Society further recognises that it is the right of providers to change rent levels on appropriate notice, but encourages providers to use this right fairly, recognizing that plotholders are encouraged by the terms of tenancy agreements to make investments in soil, plants and infrastructure that cannot be fully depreciated within the usual period of notice prior to a change of rent.

3. The Society believes that in setting rents, providers should take into account:

• The long-term financial sustainability of the allotments, based on a realistic assessment of future expenditures

• The availability of resources other than rent that can help meet the cost of providing and managing allotment gardens and infrastructure, including grants, subsidies from taxation, community infrastructure levies, the proceeds of properly sanctioned disposals and the voluntary efforts of associations, site representatives and plotholders

• The nature, quality and cost of facilities provided (and desired), including the costs of maintenance and depreciation

• The actual area of each plot

• Expenditures on promotion and administration

• The present level of rent and its historic tradition

• The likely effects of rent levels on plot take-up

• The offer of concessions as permitted by statute

• Charges to users of other outdoor recreational or leisure activities provided by the local authority

The Society does not endorse the use of benchmarking against other allotment providers in the determination of rents, as this fails to take account of differences between localities in present and future costs and the resources available to meet them. The Society believes that rents should be always be determined on the basis of the factors listed above, as they apply to particular localities.