

Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 - Allotments

**Guidance For Local Authorities Section 119
Duty to Prepare Food-Growing Strategy**

November 2018



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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MINISTERIAL FOREWORD



I am delighted that the legislative framework relating to allotments, set out in Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, has now come into force. It confirms our commitment to community growing and to increasing the accessibility of the land to those who wish to grow their own food or to learn and share the experience with local groups. More and more of us want to have the opportunity to grow our own food and I am pleased that this Government is taking action to make this happen.

Growing our own food increases the availability of nutritious and affordable food. It has real benefits for our health, our fitness, our society and our environment. It also contributes to our goal of Scotland becoming a Good Food Nation by enabling people from all walks of life to enjoy and learn about nutritious and healthy food.

The 2015 Act places a number of duties on local authorities with regard to allotments, including a requirement to produce and publish a food-growing strategy. This guidance for local authorities is important because it will help to ensure the development of strong strategies that deliver our aim of increasing the availability of grow-your-own land.

I am confident that in having regard to this guidance when developing their food-growing strategies, local authorities will help to open up the many benefits of allotments and other grow-your-own options to the wider population. I look forward to seeing the positive results this will bring for our communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mairi Gougeon'.

Mairi Gougeon

Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment

November 2018

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INTRODUCTION

1. Commitment to Grow Your Own

1.1 The Scottish Government's aspiration is for the country to become a Good Food Nation; a land of food and drink, not only in what we produce but also in what we buy, serve and eat.

1.2 Food is one of the most important components of life and it is a key part of what makes the people of Scotland proud of their country – food which is tasty to eat and nutritious, fresh and environmentally sustainable.

1.3 We embrace community food-growing in all its forms, one of which is growing on allotments. Grow-your-own food ("GYO"), be it on an allotment, community garden or elsewhere, can increase our access to affordable, healthy and environmentally sound food; the very essence of being a Good Food Nation.

1.4 The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 ("the Act") aims to help empower communities across Scotland and for those wanting to GYO, it will improve access to land for food growing purposes.

1.5 By supporting all forms of community food-growing, improving access to land for food-growing purposes and giving more people the opportunity to grow their own food, we will help to improve food security.

2. Legislative background for a food-growing strategy

2.1 Section 119 of the Act places a duty on every local authority to prepare a food-growing strategy which must be published by 1st April 2020, that is within two years of section 119 coming into force. Details of the requirements placed on local authorities are set out in Section 1 below.

2.2 Local authorities should have regard to the wider-ranging guidance in the remainder of this document when developing their food-growing strategies.

3. Purpose of the food-growing strategy guidance

3.1 This guidance, issued under section 137 of the Act, includes specific guidance about the carrying out of the function of a local authority to prepare a food-growing strategy under section 119 of the Act. More generally, it explains how we expect local authorities to deliver on our vision for grow-your-own in Scotland, setting out the statutory requirements and also policy advice on how to develop strong food-growing strategies. It brings increased focus to the new functions of local authorities

under Part 9 of the Act, specifically the identification of land for food-growing within our communities, and sets out how we expect local authorities to achieve this. It is intended to assist local authorities with the new duties and help them to create their own strategies.

3.2 Many people in Scotland would like to grow their own food. Two of the biggest factors stopping people from growing their own food are access to land, and lacking the skills and knowledge to begin growing their own food. In the 2017 Greenspace Use and Attitudes Survey by greenspace scotland¹, 44% of people surveyed said that they had no garden in which to grow their own and a further 14% said they were unable to get an allotment or that the waiting list was too long. 32% of people said that they lacked the knowledge or skills to grow their own vegetables or fruit.

3.3 Central to the theme of this food-growing strategy guidance is ensuring that more opportunities are developed for those who would like to grow their own food. Local authorities and other delivery partners are essential in both delivering access to land for food growing, and in signposting people to sources of guidance to help them begin to grow their own. We want to avoid people being given access to food-growing space but not having the knowledge to properly use the land to begin to grow their own food.

4. Acknowledgements

4.1 We are grateful to the Tripartite Group, greenspace scotland and local authority colleagues who have helped to shape this guidance through their comments and feedback.

¹ <https://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/FAQs/research-and-surveys>

5. Document Structure

This document is set out as follows:

Section 1

Provides an overview of the legislative background to this food-growing strategy guidance. It also sets out the goals of the food-growing strategy in the context of the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework.

Section 2

Sets out guidance on what is in scope for local authority food-growing strategies, how we see the strategies being developed and matters local authorities should consider when preparing their strategies.

Section 3

Sets out a proposed template for local authorities to adopt when developing their local food-growing strategy.

Section 1 – Context

6. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

6.1 The Scottish Government is committed to communities being supported to do things for themselves (i.e. community empowerment), and to people having their voices heard in the planning and delivery of services (i.e. community engagement and participation).

6.2 The Act received Royal Assent on 24 July 2015 and came into force on 1 April 2018. Part 9 of the Act, which updates and modifies allotments legislation, was developed through discussions with stakeholders in the wider public, private, third and community sectors and also through consultations.

6.3 The Act repeals allotments legislation dating from 1892, simplifies provisions and acknowledges and endorses the rising interest in community growing – both on allotments and through other grow-your-own (GYO) models, recognising the multiple benefits it can offer. Part 9 of the Act outlines the rights of individuals in our communities, and the corresponding duties and responsibilities of local authorities, in relation to allotments.

Local authority responsibilities under Part 9 of the Act

6.4 Part 9 of the Act lays a number of statutory duties on local authorities, including:

- a requirement to have regard to any guidance issued by Scottish Ministers about the carrying out of functions set out in Part 9 (including this food-growing strategy guidance and any other statutory guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers to local authorities regarding sections of Part 9²;
- a duty to maintain an allotments waiting list;
- when certain trigger points of demand are reached, a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure: (1) that the number of people on their waiting list for an allotment does not exceed half the total number of allotments owned and leased by the authority; and (2) that a person on the list does not wait more than five years for an allotment³;
- a requirement to make allotment site regulations;
- a duty to develop a food-growing strategy. This includes the identification of land for allotments and other community growing and describing how the authority will meet demand for such land;
- a duty to produce an allotments report for its area each year. This includes such matters as the location and size of each allotment site and

² Such other guidance will be published in 2019

³ Point (2) takes effect as regards each local authority eight years after the coming into force of its first allotment site regulations made under section 115(1) of the Act.

the number of allotments on each site.

Specific new statutory requirements on local authorities with regard to a food-growing strategy

6.5 Section 119 of the Act places a duty on every local authority to prepare a food-growing strategy which must be published by 1st April 2020, that is within two years of section 119 coming into force.

6.6 Section 119 requires local authorities to include the following in their food-growing strategies:

- land identified in the area that could be used for allotment sites;
- other land identified in the local authority area which could be used by a community to grow vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers;
- a description of how the authority intends to increase the provision of allotments or other land for community growing, should the authority be required to take reasonable steps under section 112(1); and
- when detailing how the authority intends to increase the provision of allotment sites and community growing areas of land in its area as it is required to take reasonable steps under section 112(1), a description of whether and how this will apply to communities which experience socio-economic disadvantage.

6.7 Each local authority must publish the food-growing strategy it prepares on a website or by other electronic means.

6.8 Section 120 of the Act requires every local authority to review its food-growing strategy. This review must be carried out within 5 years of the date of the publication of the initial food-growing strategy, and every five years thereafter. When the local authority decides to change its strategy following a review, the local authority is required to publish an amended strategy electronically.

6.9 For the purposes of the Act, an allotment is land owned or leased by a local authority for use by people to grow vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers on a non-profit basis.⁴

6.10 Part 9 of the Act offers added protection for allotments owned or leased (or intended for lease) by a local authority. These sites cannot be sold, their use changed or, in the case of leased sites, lease renounced without the consent of Scottish Ministers. These protections do not apply in relation to other privately leased or owned allotment sites.

⁴ See section 107 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 for full definition.

6.11 In addition to the functions conferred by Part 9 of the Act, section 70 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (“the 1973 Act”) confers powers on a local authority to acquire land (by agreement) for the purposes of the benefit, improvement or development of its area⁵. Section 73 of the 1973 Act enables a local authority to appropriate land for another use⁶.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

6.12 As per the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, local authorities are required to undertake and consult on a Strategic Environmental Assessment when a qualifying plan, programme or strategy is likely to have significant environmental effects⁷.

7. Goals of the food-growing strategy in the context of the Scottish Government’s National Performance Framework

7.1 The Scottish Government’s Vision for National Wellbeing, contained in the National Performance Framework,⁸ sets out 11 National Outcomes together with a suite of National Indicators and UN Sustainable Development Goals.

7.2 The framework seeks to build a more successful and inclusive Scotland and sets out the way in which progress can be measured. It describes a vision for national wellbeing in Scotland across a range of economic, social and environmental factors.

7.3 The goals of each local authority’s food-growing strategy (highlighted in bold below) will work towards aiding the achievement of some of the Scottish Government’s National Outcomes, and National Indicators and UN Sustainable Development Goals, as set out in the National Performance Framework, such as:

- ***We are healthy and active;***
- ***We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment;***
- ***We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe.***

⁵ This power may also be used for the purposes of functions conferred on a local authority by certain other legislation, but this does not include functions conferred by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. This is because ‘enactment’ in section 70 of the 1973 Act does not include an enactment comprised in, or in an instrument made under, an Act of the Scottish Parliament (by virtue of the Interpretation Act 1978).

⁶ The power in section 73 of the 1973 Act is now subject to sections 117 and 118 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which provide that a local authority may not dispose etc. of any allotment site which it owns or leases without the consent of the Scottish Ministers.

⁷ Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidance :

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Environment/environmental-assessment/sea>

⁸ http://nationalperformance.gov.scot/?_ga=2.37117352.949846794.1528801190-293333834.1519296213

7.4 Over the next 5 years we encourage local authorities, through their food-growing strategies, to achieve the following key goals which will meet a number of National Outcomes and National Indicators and UN Sustainable Development Goals:

1. Local authorities will underpin the National Outcome “*We are healthy and active*” by:
 - **Taking steps to make food-growing opportunities available to all residents of Scotland to improve their health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities;**
 - **Helping to alleviate food poverty and raising awareness about the benefits of food-growing to mental and physical well-being through public engagement and encouraging uptake of food-growing opportunities.**

This underpins a number of the “*We are healthy and active*” National Indicators, including *mental wellbeing, healthy weight, and physical activity*.

2. Local authorities will underpin the National Outcome “*We value, enjoy and protect our environment*” by:
 - **Providing opportunities for local production of food through all forms of community growing/grow-your-own which will reduce carbon mileage of food;**
 - **Encouraging biodiversity, contributing to a Low Carbon Scotland, encouraging climate change mitigation through changed behaviours, improving soil condition and carbon retention in the soil through appropriate food-growing site design, practice and management, signposting to training and learning opportunities, and encouraging behavioural change, which will all contribute to protecting our environment.**

Authorities should be careful to avoid negative impacts, for example by the excessive removal of existing pollinator species or hedgerows, loss of ponds or wetland areas, creation of hard-standing parking areas etc., or creating a heightened risk for contaminated land by introducing activities (such as permitting food-growing on the land) on areas already affected by contamination. Local authorities should take appropriate site-specific steps to limit such negative impacts.

This underpins a number of the “*We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment*” National Indicators, including *visits to the outdoors, waste generated, biodiversity, climate action, and life on land*.

3. Local authorities will underpin the National Outcome “*We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe*” by:

- **Making all of Scotland’s local authority allotment and other food-growing sites well managed, accessible by public transport and active travel, and community empowered with quality facilities, as far as is practicable;**
- **Making the supply of allotment and other food-growing sites transparent to all and compliant with the provisions of the Act;**
- **Encouraging all forms of community-led enterprise and/or social enterprise through making available and encouraging uptake of food-growing opportunities.**

This underpins a number of the “*We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe*” National Indicators, including *perceptions of local area, loneliness, access to green space, and social capital.*

8. Impacts and benefits of community growing

8.1 Community growing in all its forms can provide wide-ranging, and long-lasting, benefits to communities and to individuals. The goals for local authority food-growing strategies set out above will help authorities achieve a number of cross-cutting impacts and benefits in the five key areas of **health, environment, economy, society** and **education**. Details of the impacts and benefits of community growing are set out in Annex A.

Section 2 – Shaping the food-growing strategy

9.1 It is for local authorities to decide how best to meet the statutory requirements set out in the Act (see Section 1 above) but this guidance provides advice to help ensure appropriate consideration is given to the development of relevant aspects of the food-growing strategy.

Partnership approach to preparing local food growing strategies

9.2 A partnership approach is crucial and so local authority officers responsible for allotments provision or drafting the authority's food-growing strategy are encouraged to work with their planning colleagues and other relevant internal and external stakeholders including :

Internal stakeholders:

9.3 Internal stakeholders are likely to include the local authority's:

- Biodiversity team;
- Economic development team;
- Equality and diversity team;
- Environmental health department and the local contaminated land officer,
- Planning department;
- Relevant parts of the NHS such as health improvement and facilities management teams, and;
- Schools/education colleagues.

External stakeholders:

9.4 Local authority officers should, in preparing the authority's food-growing strategy, engage with a wide range of stakeholders. This might include the following, as appropriate, but this list is not exhaustive:

- Allotment associations;
- Community councils;
- Current allotment holders, possibly through site visits;
- Delivery partners (see paragraph 10 and Annex B below);
- Grow-your-own groups including community gardens and orchards, school growing groups etc.;
- Local private landowners;
- Other public sector local landowners;
- Other relevant local authority colleagues such as environmental health contaminated land officers, public health, economic planning/strategy, planning, Sustainable Development, Climate Strategy/Sustainable Energy Action Plan etc.;
- People on allotment waiting lists, including people on non-local authority lists;

- People otherwise interested in grow-your-own who are not on an allotment site waiting list or other form of grow-your-own site waiting list;
- Representatives of relevant organisations e.g. Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society or Social Farms and Gardens;
- Scottish Land and Estates;
- Third sector organisations with an interest in allotments and grow-your-own opportunities;
- Wider public consultation, if appropriate.

9.5 If it is considered appropriate at a local level, local authorities may establish working groups involving the local authority and local stakeholder groups to assist with the development of their food-growing strategy. Such groups may also provide longer-term opportunities in relation to information sharing and the promotion and development of good practice. Local authorities should ensure that they encourage people (including, in particular, people from communities which experience socio-economic disadvantage) to become involved in the process as authorities are developing their food-growing strategies, and use everyday language that people can understand and engage with.

9.6 When developing their food-growing strategies, local authorities should also consider other relevant local strategies around, for example, social care, health and wellbeing including health inequalities, social isolation, education, environment/biodiversity, climate change, economy, local outcome improvement plans, food poverty plan/food security/holiday hunger, and planning strategies. This list is not exhaustive, and authorities should consider all appropriate local strategies.

9.7 Local authority partners should also be encouraged by the local authority to have regard to the authority's food-growing strategy when developing or reviewing other local policies or strategies.

10. Delivery partners and advisory bodies

10.1 The ongoing success of any food-growing strategy will depend on inclusive partnership working with key stakeholders and advisory bodies providing advice and guidance to local authorities. Included at Annex B is further information on key delivery partners, advisory bodies and umbrella organisations. This list is by no means exhaustive.

11. Land and planning

Planning background

11.1 Planning is key to meeting the requirements of section 119. The National Planning Framework 3⁹ recognises that **land for food production within towns and cities will become increasingly important**. A principle of the Scottish Planning Policy¹⁰ is that planning should **protect, enhance and promote green infrastructure**, including open space and green networks, as an **integral component of successful placemaking**.

What type of land should be included when considering a food-growing strategy?

11.2 Local authorities must ensure that they take a **balanced and considered approach when considering what greenspace, both existing and planned, could be used as growing space**. Account should be taken of **current and future demand for growing space** in order to match people with the growing space that they need and want.

11.3 There are many different forms of food growing spaces that local authorities can include in their strategies, from the traditional to the innovative. Local authorities should incorporate as many appropriate forms of growing sites, and types of growing, as their local areas allow. Examples of these are shown in the tables below:

Types of growing

- Allotments;
- Community growing spaces;
- Edible hedgerows;
- Green walls and roofs;
- Hydroponics/aquaponics;
- Orchards;
- Other forms of growing such as market gardens, peri-urban and urban farms run as social enterprises.

Growing sites

- Appropriate spaces for green roofs / green walls;
- Community establishments with open areas;
- Growing spaces in schools, hospitals, prisons, universities, colleges and other public areas;
- Indoor growing;
- Land which is due to undergo future development and may be suitable for “meanwhile use”;

⁹ <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-3/>

¹⁰ <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/scottish-planning-policy/>

- Landshare or gardenshare schemes;
- Non public sector land suitable for leasing (or purchase) from a private landowner;
- Places for beehives;
- Planters or containers in hard-landscaped areas;
- Suitable 'street corner' space;
- Unused or underused areas of land;
- Vacant, derelict or brownfield land, considering alternative growing methods where decontamination is not feasible (see advice on contaminated land, paragraphs 11.24-11.26).

11.4 Further forms of growing space and types of growing are set out in greenspace scotland's Community Growing Matrix¹¹.

11.5 If they consider it appropriate to their local area, local authorities may consider other food-growing locations such as in local residents' homes or care homes with large private gardens. For example, an agreement brokered whereby a person grows produce in a neighbour's private garden, in exchange for a share of the produce grown, may satisfy that person's growing space needs, resulting in them voluntarily removing their name from the authority's allotments waiting list. If such arrangements do not meet that person's food-growing needs, then they will remain on the waiting list. Organisations such as Edinburgh Garden Partners¹² facilitate such arrangements in their local area.

Open space audits

11.6 Scottish Planning Policy expects relevant, up-to-date audits, strategies and action plans covering green infrastructure's multiple functions including open space to inform local development plans (and any sub-plans).

11.7 Local authorities are required to carry out an Open Space Audit. Local authorities should make use of the typology in Planning Advice Note 65¹³ (PAN 65) (which includes 'allotments and community growing spaces') as a starting point for auditing open space but may also consider whether some categories require further classification.

11.8 Local authority officers carrying out the open space audit should contact their local contaminated land officer to **ensure that food-growing sites identified are suitable, or can be made suitable for growing**, as soon as possible in the process.

11.9 The PAN recognises the role of community involvement and users of open space/ interest groups in inputting to the open space audit and strategy process (PAN 65 para 36). This can help identify demand for allotments and other growing

¹¹ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Q8_Uk87Gn1MCed2LsVWhANelRe-EHep3/view

¹² <http://www.edinburghgardenpartners.org.uk/>

¹³ <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2008/05/30100623/0>

spaces and local authorities should ensure that consultation is carried out with appropriate stakeholders. Waiting list data will also help to identify demand for allotments. Local authorities should set out how this demand for allotments and growing space will be met via their Open Space Strategy and Local Development Plan.

11.10 The outcome of the Open Space Audit, detailing existing growing space and existing demand and anticipated demand, should be mapped or otherwise recorded.

11.11 Demand for growing space, and the multi-function growing space identified, should be evidenced to prevent such spaces from becoming stalled spaces. Such evidence may be obtained, for example, by analysing waiting lists and considering what future demand might come from new housing developments etc.

Identification of land audit

11.12 In consultation with their internal stakeholders (listed at paragraph 9), local authorities should carry out an audit of land, both to identify all existing growing areas and to identify new land which will be suitable for growing. Such an audit to identify growing land must be balanced with other greenspace land requirements. The local authority should decide, according to local preferences, the format, layout and content of a land audit and how to set out in their food-growing strategy the land identified as suitable for food-growing.

11.13 New land identified which will be suitable for growing can be any appropriate land – local authority owned land, other publicly owned land, or privately owned land that the authority could lease (or purchase).

11.14 Excluding private gardens, there are a total of 119,299 hectares¹⁴ of greenspace in urban Scotland. Nationally, there are approximately 33,000 hectares of land in local authority ownership, a further 856,000 hectares¹⁵ of land in public ownership, and 2,478 hectares¹⁶ of vacant and urban derelict land in public ownership. Local authorities should consider assessing the suitability of appropriate areas of such land for community growing, in addition to identifying suitable areas of privately owned land which could be leased (or purchased) for growing.

¹⁴ Para 2.1, The Third State of Scotland's Greenspace Report, Feb 2018
<https://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/statistics>

¹⁵ Fig 7, LRRG Final Report, 2014 <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00451087.pdf>

¹⁶ Table 16, Scottish Vacant Derelict Land Survey, 2016 <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/scottish-vacant-derelict-land-survey-2016/>

11.15 The Open Space Audit will identify land currently used for growing. When looking for other land which will satisfy future demand for growing space for allotments and other community growing space, a variety of methods should be used, such as:

- Analysis of datasets such as the OS MasterMap Greenspace¹⁷;
- Vacant/derelict/brownfield land mapping, and whether identified sites could be used as growing spaces;
- Other local open spaces, e.g. schools, hospitals and other community establishments with open spaces;
- Public workshops/consultation to identify current and potential future growing sites;
- Temporary or “meanwhile use” of land due to undergo future development, such as the temporary use of land as an allotment site at the Grove, Edinburgh, where raised beds were placed on pallets as site development was expected to take a number of years in that particular instance¹⁸;
- Options for leasing (or purchasing) land from local private landowners;
- The local development plan which will identify new residential land releases and developments which may be suitable to incorporate growing space.

11.16 When identifying new areas of land suitable for growing, local authorities must also be satisfied that there is a current demand, or that there will be a future demand, for food-growing land in that area for it to be deemed suitable land.

11.17 Local authorities should consider all options for land and other type of growing space when considering what land may be suitable, from the traditional types of growing land to the more innovative approaches such as green walls or hydroponics; from large spaces to suitable ‘street corner’ growing space.

11.18 The outcome of the Open Space Audit, detailing existing growing space should be mapped or otherwise recorded. Authorities should also map planned future growing space, such as within future housing developments.

11.19 In addition to mapping existing and future growing *space*, local authorities should also assess and map current *demand* for growing space – both allotment site demand and other growing space demand. Engaging with community gardens and their volunteers, independent allotment sites and other growing spaces will help to identify current demand, in addition to demand identified via local authority allotment waiting lists. When considering demand, authorities should also map where future demand for food-growing space is likely to be, such as where new housing development sites are being planned, particularly those developments which will provide little or no garden space to residents. Local authorities may also wish to take steps to retain quality topsoil in the gardens and food-growing spaces of new housing developments;

¹⁷ <https://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/greenspace-map>

¹⁸ <http://www.growyourownsotland.info/case-studies/629-2/>

11.20 Local authorities should also consider any existing ‘unofficial’ sites there may be in their local area. The history of Granton Community Gardeners¹⁹, Edinburgh, is an example of how an initially ‘unofficial’ site flourished and continues to grow and benefit the local community. Authorities may identify and consider appropriate action, for example if the unofficial site is on local authority land, and adopt and include such sites within their list of local authority allotment sites. This may also assist the authority to increase their allotment or growing space land. If the community group who have been managing the ‘unofficial’ site wish to request delegation of certain functions of site management, this should be considered in the usual way, in accordance with section 123 of the Act.

11.21 If it is appropriate, a local authority may wish to consult a neighbouring authority and work across boundaries if there is suitable land available in a different region which would help to satisfy current or future identified demand for allotments and other community growing spaces.

11.22 Local authorities may also wish to consider how to engage with schools not only to raise the profile and highlight the benefits of growing in schools, but to identify possible growing areas within school grounds. Support or alternative arrangements may also be needed at particular times of the year at school sites, such as during school holidays, to prevent the areas from becoming neglected during such periods.

11.23 Local authorities might also find the Eco-Schools Scotland framework a useful way to engage with schools²⁰.

Contaminated land

11.24 When identifying land which may be suitable for food-growing, it is important for the local authority’s environmental health team or contaminated land officer (CLO) to be contacted at the earliest opportunity.

11.25 The environmental health team or CLO can provide advice at all stages in the process, including the environmental risk assessment, to ensure that the soil is suitable (or can be made suitable) for food-growing.

11.26 If the soil is found not to be suitable for food-growing due to contaminants in the soil, the environmental health team or CLO will advise on the steps to be taken to make the site safe for food-growing. Full details of the contaminated land process are contained at Annex C, and a flowchart of the contaminated land evaluation process is contained in Annex D.

¹⁹ <http://www.growyourownscotland.info/case-studies/granton-community-gardeners/>

²⁰ <https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/sustainable-development-education/eco-schools/>

Local Development Plans

11.27 Local Development Plans are key to safeguarding existing and potential allotment and food-growing sites. The plans seek to enhance existing green infrastructure sites, and promote the creation of such new sites. For example, new-build residential development plans should have sufficient nearby green space for a range of recreational uses, including food-growing.

11.28 Local Development Plans also encourage the temporary use of unused or underused land as green infrastructure, but making it clear that such temporary use will not prevent future development of the site.

11.29 Local authorities may wish to embed in their local development plans a percentage of open space requirements based on the size of the development, an approach undertaken by Moray Council in the Safeguarding Open Spaces section of their Local Development Plan²¹. Such an approach could also set out the requirement for edible food-producing species to be provided, including hedgerows and fruit trees.

11.30 Authorities may also wish to consider developer contributions towards the provision of allotments and community growing spaces in new housing developments.

Flowchart

11.31 Local authorities may find helpful the planning / food-growing strategy flowchart, which sets out the links between the open space audit, open space strategy, local development plan and the food-growing strategy. The flowchart can be found at Annex E.

²¹ <http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file108746.pdf>

12. Not for profit/more than profit

12.1 A food-growing strategy should include grow-your-own initiatives which are run other than with a view to making a profit. In particular, it may include social enterprises run other than with a view to making a profit, such as where any income generated is put back into communities or back into the social enterprise, and is not used for the purposes of a trade or business.

12.2 This approach will still allow growers on allotments²², on a not-for-profit basis (if their lease permits the sale of produce), to sell excess produce to local people and enable them to access food that is grown locally when they are unable to, or do not wish to, grow it themselves.

12.3 This not-for-profit criterion will be relevant in identifying land in a local authority's area that it considers may be used as allotment sites, but it is not relevant in identifying other areas of land that could be used by a community for the cultivation of vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers.

13. Assistance to local community groups

13.1 Local authorities should work in partnership with community groups and other stakeholders to identify land, including vacant land, in local authority ownership which could be used for food growing. The authority's internal stakeholders (listed at para 9) should also be consulted at the outset when considering land for food-growing. Authorities should also consider what other assistance can be provided to community groups, such as signposting the groups to various sources of funding, providing assistance with Land Registry searches to determine ownership of land, or assisting/advising community group investigations into contaminated land.

13.2 Local authorities may find that community groups wish to approach the authority to make a Participation Request (Part 3 of the Act), or make an Asset Transfer Request (Part 5 of the Act)²³.

13.3 Such Participation Requests, and Asset Transfer Requests if granted, may assist local authorities to meet their requirements to provide additional suitable land for growing, in addition to empowering communities.

²² Meaning of "allotment" as set out in section 107 of Part 9 of the Act.

²³ Guidance is available in the Scottish Government website

<https://beta.gov.scot/publications/community-empowerment-scotland-act-summary/>

14. Waiting lists and signposting to alternative options

14.1 It is recognised that local authorities may face difficulties in providing additional land for allotment sites and in resourcing such a policy. The ongoing requirement for additional allotment sites will remain visible through local authority waiting lists, however local authorities may wish to consider parallel activity to identify other food-growing options, such as signposting a person on the allotments waiting list to a community garden or land/garden-share arrangement, where their food-growing needs may be met. If their food-growing needs are not met then the person will remain on the waiting list. It is for the local authority to manage its waiting list as it sees fit.

14.2 Other possible benefits to be gained from signposting people on the waiting list to community gardens are the learning opportunities to be gained by people on the waiting list, and the value of additional volunteers being available to help a local community garden. Some community gardens experience difficulty in attracting and retaining sufficient volunteers to maintain the community garden. Paragraph 3.2 of this guidance highlights the number of people lacking the skills to grow their own. Linking people on the waiting list to local community gardens might therefore help to address both of these points by providing additional volunteers to community gardens and increasing the knowledge and skills of those wanting to grow their own, in preparation for them being offered a lease for their own allotment. Local authorities should also consider relevant training or mentoring opportunities or informative websites that they can direct prospective tenants to when signposting them to other food-growing options, to help the prospective tenant equip themselves with the knowledge and skills to begin to grow their own produce.

14.3 The provision of other food-growing options must not be used by local authorities as a reason to provide fewer allotments, unless waiting lists show this is necessary. To assist those wanting access to food-growing land, local authorities may wish to identify and signpost prospective tenants to other food-growing options whilst activity is ongoing to identify additional land for allotment sites, and while local authorities consider how they intend to meet the requirements set out in section 112 of the Act (duty to provide allotments). **Prospective allotment tenants on the waiting list who are signposted to other food-growing options may or may not decide to take up such alternative food-growing options, however they will remain on the allotments waiting list unless they decide to remove their name voluntarily.**

Section 3 – The food-growing strategy template

15.1 The local authority's food-growing strategy should be delivered and reviewed through the local food-growing strategy template for the authority's area. Local authorities are required to review their strategy at least every five years.

15.2 A suggested template for the food-growing strategy is provided at Annex F. Local authorities are not bound to use the template but can use it as they see fit. The local authority's food-growing strategy template may include, but is not limited to, the points listed in the template provided at Annex F.

15.3 Where appropriate, the local food-growing strategy template should reflect upon identified and time-lined actions; any delivery partners; funding requirements; what other resources are required; and expected outputs and outcomes.

15.4 As set out in paragraph 9, it is essential that stakeholder participation, engagement and consultation is included and maintained throughout the process to develop an authority's food-growing strategy.

IMPACTS AND BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY GROWING

Health

- Fruit and vegetable consumption increases when people are involved in community growing, as evidenced by a 2008 survey where participants reported that household members involved in community gardening consumed 40% more fruit and vegetables per day than those who did not, and they were 3.5 times more likely to consume the recommended 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day;²⁴
- Diets are seen to improve and people acknowledge that they eat more healthily when they are involved in growing their own food²⁵;
- Gardening activities can provide low-impact exercise and improve physical health and can be a more sustainable form of exercise than when the exercise itself is the primary driver²⁶;
- Community growing can lower stress levels, offer mental health benefits and a supportive social environment, where growers view the growing space as a “safe” space where they can relax and unwind from the stresses of other parts of their lives²⁷;
- Creating green space in built up areas improves air quality and provides recreational opportunities that encourage socialising, decrease isolation and lead to improved confidence and self-esteem;²⁸
- GPs and healthcare professionals can consider social prescribing to connect people to non-medical sources of support and resources in the community, for example a GP or healthcare professional might consider it appropriate to prescribe gardening-related activity to improve the health and wellbeing of the individual;²⁹
- Community growing spaces in hospital spaces, for example, can prove useful spaces for occupational therapists and other medical specialists when working with their patients;³⁰
- Horticultural therapy through community growing can provide wide-ranging health-related benefits to ease suffering and promote recovery from illness. Such therapy can, for example, help to reduce physical pain, assist with rehabilitation and recovery, and alleviate the symptoms of dementia³¹;
- In January 2018, the Scottish Government concluded a public consultation on a draft diet and healthy weight strategy, which also helps to underpin the

²⁴ https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/sites/www.gardenorganic.org.uk/files/GrowingHealth_BenefitsReport_0.pdf

²⁵ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10460-016-9717-0>

²⁶ https://ww2.rspb.org.uk/images/natural_fit_full_version_tcm9-133055.pdf

²⁷ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10460-016-9717-0>

²⁸ <http://www.growyourownsotland.info/case-studies/gorgie-city-farm/>

²⁹ https://www.volunteerscotland.net/media/984713/volunteering_on_prescription_-_final_report.pdf

³⁰ <http://www.growyourownsotland.info/case-studies/>

³¹ https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/sites/www.gardenorganic.org.uk/files/GrowingHealth_BenefitsReport_0.pdf

Environmental

- Community growing spaces can improve biodiversity³³ and, when linked with other greenspaces, create important green corridors for wildlife, particularly if green hedging (and indigenous hedging such as hawthorn) is used in place of fencing;
- Although the food-growing strategy is intended for food growing for human consumption, there can be many benefits to biodiversity gained during that process. The authority's food-growing strategy will also help to meet the requirement for them to further the conservation of biodiversity by helping to meet the objectives of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy³⁴ and Local Biodiversity Action Plans, as well as the Pollinator Strategy for Scotland;
- The Pollinator Strategy for Scotland 2017-2027 sets out how Scotland can continue to be a place where pollinators thrive, along with actions that are needed to help achieve that objective;³⁵
- Community growing sites also provide educational and Citizen Science³⁶ opportunities to work in partnership with Local Biodiversity Action Plan partners such as Local Record Centres undertaking the recording of bees, butterflies etc.;
- Community growing can mean enhanced space and habitat for wildlife, such as through planting to attract pollinators or companion planting on the grow-your-own site³⁷; there are many examples of positive steps taken on community growing sites to encourage biodiversity;³⁸
- An organic approach to community growing can help to reverse soil degradation. Reversing this trend will help to address the loss of organic matter from the soil, reduce soil compaction and erosion, and help to reverse the trend in mineral decline in vegetables;³⁹
- Some soil management methods, such as regenerative agriculture – including “no tillage” and avoiding the use of synthetic nitrogen fertilisers which contribute to the release of greenhouse gas – help to enhance and sustain the health of the soil by restoring and increasing carbon content.⁴⁰ Such methods may also help to produce greater quantities and more nutritious produce. By avoiding tilling the soil, this will help to stop exposure of so much soil to the air which avoids the decay of organisms

³² <https://consult.gov.scot/health-and-social-care/a-healthier-future/>

³³ <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=31684&p=0>

³⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/25954/0014583.pdf>

³⁵ <https://www.nature.scot/pollinator-strategy-2017-2027>

³⁶ <https://www.environment.gov.scot/get-involved/>

³⁷ <https://www.buglife.org.uk/sites/default/files/Buglife%20B-LINES%20-%20CREATE%20A%20BUZZ%20VEG%2024Jun2016%20ENG%20d2.pdf>

³⁸ <https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/local-environmental-quality/community-projects/planting-for-pollinators/your-stories/>

³⁹ http://www.nourishscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/AA_Conference-Report-NovemberFINAL.pdf

⁴⁰ <http://www.drawdown.org/solutions/food/regenerative-agriculture>

in the soil which would reduce soil quality, in addition to releasing carbon into the air. Research has also indicated higher quality soil on a GYO site compared to its surrounding agricultural land⁴¹;

- Community growing sites can help to alleviate climate change through good soil management and appropriate ground cover management via healthy and appropriate plant cover.⁴² Growing methodologies such as forest gardening can also offer such opportunities⁴³;
- Community food growing spaces contribute to mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change through carbon reduction and sustainable design. Other sustainability benefits can be considerable, such as reduction in air miles, reduction in carbon emissions and improvements to air quality through locally grown food⁴⁴;
- Carbon emissions (including reducing energy use, more sustainable transport and less waste) can be reduced by between 2kg and 5kg of carbon equivalent for every kilogram of vegetable produced⁴⁵;
- Community growing can lead to a reduction in food waste through composting and reduced food packaging, contributing to the national and local zero waste agenda,⁴⁶ and help to meet the food waste reduction target;⁴⁷
- People are also less likely to waste the food that they grow, and are more likely to put grow-your-own waste into the compost, thereby returning nutrients to the soil;
- People can be encouraged to contribute towards making Scotland a Low Carbon country and aid climate change mitigation in many other ways, including buying or growing local seasonal foods rather than purchasing exotic foods from supermarkets and so reducing food miles;
- Care must be taken to avoid creating a heightened risk for contaminated land by introducing activities (such as permitting food-growing on the land) on areas already affected by contamination, and to ensure compliance with any relevant statutory requirements including under the Environmental Protection Act 1990;
- Community growing, in all its forms, should be considered at the early planning stages, and steps taken to retain and reuse for food-growing purposes the quality topsoil. People living in new housing developments could also be encouraged to participate more in grow-your-own activities if quality topsoil is retained in the gardens/growing areas;
- Community food growing spaces can also make positive contributions to sustainable drainage through the permeable surfaces of food growing

⁴¹ <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/news/nr/allotments-could-be-key-sustainable-farming-1.370522>

⁴² <http://www.sags.org.uk/docs/GardenScotland/GrowingScotlandDocument.pdf>

⁴³ <https://www.agroforestry.co.uk/about-agroforestry/forest-gardening/>

⁴⁴ <http://www.sags.org.uk/docs/ReportsPresentations/climatechangeandgardens.pdf>

⁴⁵ <https://www.fcrn.org.uk/research-library/potential-urban-household-vegetable-gardens-reduce-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

⁴⁶ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Environment/waste-and-pollution/Waste-1/wastestrategy>

⁴⁷ <https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/content/zero-waste-scotland-welcomes-bold-new-targets-food-waste-and-circular-economy>

spaces and the harvesting of rainwater;⁴⁸

- Local authorities may also wish to make use of an environmental monitoring system run by Keep Scotland Beautiful. The system is the national benchmarking monitoring system, the Local Environment Audit and Management System⁴⁹, which gathers evidence on environmental quality;
- Many community growing projects have an ethos of upcycling and can be exemplars of inventive uses of what otherwise may be waste products, e.g. pallets, scaffolding planks, food waste, etc.;⁵⁰
- Community food-growing spaces and food-growing can contribute to, and benefit, the environment and improve the quality of life for local residents, for example by addressing areas prone to anti-social behaviour, cleaning up blight sites and fly-tipping sites, revitalising unused spaces or bringing vacant or derelict land back into use.⁵¹
- Community growing can provide a good source of environmentally sound, healthy, locally sourced food and make this more readily available to local people.⁵²

⁴⁸ https://www.sustainweb.org/planning/for_planners/

⁴⁹ <https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/environmental-services/environmental-auditing-assessments/>

⁵⁰ <http://allotment-ideas.co.uk/>

⁵¹ <http://www.growyourownsotland.info/case-studies/629-2/>

⁵² <https://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/blakestevensonfeasibilitystudycfhs-6705.pdf>

Economic

- Community farms and gardens tend to spend grant money locally, such as through buying local goods or services, or by employing local people, and on occasions secure funding to employ staff or to pay volunteers' expenses;⁵³ and therefore may help to bring in jobs to a local area;⁵⁴
- The option for people to grow their own food to supplement the buying of produce from retail outlets should offer them monetary savings. For example, an experienced allotment holder succeeded in producing 298kg of fruit and vegetables from his 200 square metre plot in one year, which is calculated to be sufficient to provide the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables for a family of 4 for over 6 months⁵⁵;
- Taking part in community growing activities can develop 'soft' skills such as communication skills, problem solving, team working etc. that increase employability. This will support the local economy indirectly by preparing more people for employment;⁵⁶
- A 2011 social return on investment (SROI) study of community gardens has shown that for every £1 invested by funders, £3.56 of social value was returned⁵⁷. This study sought to measure benefits such as significant positive changes to stakeholders, including volunteers and local people, involved in or visiting community gardens;
- A similar SROI study from 2012 of the social return from investing in a horticultural training and community growing facility shows that for every £1 invested around £9 of community benefits was returned through benefits such as new skills;⁵⁸
- If the lease terms allow, selling excess produce and generating local business from produce grown on grow-your-own sites (excluding produce grown on an allotment site which is grown not-for-profit) will have a positive impact on the local community through the purchase of local goods and services, such as hiring local contractors and buying local goods and services, and may aid job creation;⁵⁹
- From selling fruit and vegetables to value added products like jams and chutneys, on a not-for-profit basis (if the lease terms allow), and providing training and continuing personal development opportunities, community growing can help to contribute to the local economy and encourage enterprising activity;⁶⁰
- Community growing spaces can provide a wealth of educational opportunities, both informal and formal, whether it be through hosting horticultural training courses, to more informal learning about biodiversity or

⁵³ https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/system/files/true_value_report.pdf

⁵⁴ https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/system/files/true_value_report.pdf

⁵⁵ <http://www.sags.org.uk/docs/AllotGrowingStatistics/PeterProduce.pdf>

⁵⁶ https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/system/files/true_value_report.pdf

⁵⁷ (https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/system/files/gorgie_city_farm_sroi_assured.pdf)

⁵⁸ <https://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/FAQs/sroi>

⁵⁹ https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/system/files/true_value_report.pdf

⁶⁰ https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/system/files/true_value_report.pdf

communication skills;⁶¹

Social

- A sense of community is encouraged when people participate in food growing activities;⁶²
- Access to community growing spaces can help to encourage more vulnerable people to get involved in local food-growing, and many growing spaces can evidence a reduction in isolation and loneliness for those taking part, for example through organised social activities such as dances and barbeques that occur periodically;⁶³
- Community growing can offer “social horticulture”, where the outcome is to be socially inclusive and involve client groups (such as those with dependency problems, or immigrants or migrants) who may otherwise feel socially excluded;⁶⁴
- Community growing spaces can offer volunteering opportunities, events and festivals throughout the year;⁶⁵
- Community growing can take place in many unexpected locations. For example in HMP Dumfries, a group of prisoners involved in gardening, cookery and joinery work together on a community growing project with support from Trellis Scotland (Annex B). In addition to providing produce for the prison kitchen, the prisoners created a number of exhibits for the Cultivating Futures Garden Exhibition.⁶⁶

⁶¹ https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/system/files/true_value_report.pdf

⁶² <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10460-016-9717-0>

⁶³ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10460-016-9717-0>

⁶⁴

https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/sites/www.gardenorganic.org.uk/files/GrowingHealth_BenefitsReport_0.pdf

⁶⁵ <http://www.growyourownscotland.info/case-studies/gorgie-city-farm/>

⁶⁶ https://trellisscotland.org.uk/sites/default/files/dumfries_garden_2018.pdf

Education

- One of the eight Curriculum for Excellence⁶⁷ areas allows children to learn about health and wellbeing matters to ensure that they acquire skills to live healthy, happy lives;⁶⁸
- Community growing can contribute to learning. People working in a community growing environment learn techniques, such as organic techniques, which they can then apply;⁶⁹
- People involved in community growing can benefit from a therapeutic learning environment through which they gain insights into themselves as well as transferable life skills;⁷⁰
- Food growing programmes in schools can have positive impacts on pupil nutrition and attitudes towards healthy eating, specifically related to the willingness to try new foods;⁷¹ and allows pupils to learn about their natural environment, how to grow and harvest food, and to be less wasteful of natural resources.
- Food growing programmes in schools might offer useful opportunities for school holiday clubs, and would allow children to become involved in more gardening activities, such as harvesting their fruit and vegetables during their summer holidays;
- Food growing spaces provide a learning environment, where young and old can learn about a wide range of topics, including:
 - Biodiversity;
 - Food origins;
 - Skills to grow-your-own;
 - Botany;
 - Climatology;
 - Cookery;
 - Geography
 - Recycling/upcycling;
 - Local history, for example when a former industrial area of land is brought back into use.

⁶⁷ https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/cfe-%28building-from-the-statement-appendix-incl-btc1-5%29/What%20is%20Curriculum%20for%20Excellence?&_ga=2.235029445.518786960.152767450-0-293333834.1519296213

⁶⁸ <https://beta.gov.scot/policies/schools/wellbeing-in-schools/>

⁶⁹ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10460-016-9717-0>

⁷⁰ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10460-016-9717-0>

⁷¹

https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/sites/www.gardenorganic.org.uk/files/GrowingHealth_BenefitsReport_0.pdf

ADVISORY BODIES AND DELIVERY PARTNERS

The following list of advisory bodies and delivery bodies, which is not exhaustive, may be of help to local authorities as they develop their food-growing strategies.

Environmental Protection Scotland (EPS)

EPS provides environmental advice and policy updates on areas including air quality, land quality, noise and other environmental issues.

Environmental Health or Contaminated Land Officers

Environmental Health or Contaminated Land Officers, available within each local authority area, can provide a wealth of knowledge and guidance on potential land contamination and how to make sites safe and useable for food-growing. They can signpost community groups towards sources of funding to allow new sites proposed for food-growing to be investigated to ensure that they are free of contamination, or to advise on remediation work to make the site safe for food-growing.

greenspace scotland

greenspace scotland is a social enterprise and an independent charitable company. They work with a wide range of national and local partners to improve the quality of life of people living and working in urban Scotland through the planning, development and sustainable management of greenspaces as a key part of the green infrastructure of our towns and cities. Their goal is that everyone living and working in urban Scotland has easy access to quality greenspaces that meet local needs and improve their quality of life.

greenspace scotland developed the Our Growing Community toolkit to help Scottish communities explore new places and more ways to grow their own food and has since supported Twechar Community Action (East Dunbartonshire) to develop a growing map and action plan for Twechar – Edible Twechar. More information is available at: <https://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/food-growing-publications>

greenspace scotland has worked with Aberdeen City, Clackmannanshire, Dundee, Falkirk, Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire Councils to support the development of their Food Growing Strategies. A suite of learning notes based on this work will be available here: <https://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/food-growing-projects>.

Grow Your Own Working Group

The Scottish Government established and continues to support the Grow Your Own Working Group. The terms of reference for the group were to take forward the aspects of the National Food and Drink Policy 'Recipe for Success' relating to growing your own food. This included:

- Ensuring that allotments and GYO projects are strategically supported, and the objectives of the projects are, too;
- Providing practical advice and best practice guidance that would appeal to public bodies, communities and individuals to help them develop local GYO initiatives.

The group was set up in December 2009 and produced a Recommendations Report⁷² in February 2011. The report detailed 27 recommendations under six themes – planning, legal, skills, community land, guidance and funding.

In September 2016, the Grow Your Own Working Group delivered a national food growing strategy event⁷³ aimed at local authorities and the third sector to explore the details of Section 119 of the Act. Elements of that event, for example discussions around identifying land, increasing provision and working in areas of socio-economic disadvantage have helped to shape this statutory guidance to local authorities.

Members of the Grow Your Own Working Group can be found on the [Organisation page of the Grow Your Own website](#). Membership of the group as at October 2018 is:

- [Social Farms & Gardens](#)
- [greenspace scotland](#)
- [Central Scotland Green Network Trust](#)
- [Keep Scotland Beautiful](#)
- [Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society](#)
- [Scottish Government](#)
- [Nourish Scotland](#)
- [Royal Horticultural Society](#)
- [Community Health and Food Scotland](#)
- [Trellis](#)
- [East Dunbartonshire Council](#)
- [Community Land Advice Service](#)
- [Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society](#)
- [Fife Council](#)

Any organisations wishing to enquire about participating in, or contributing to, the Grow Your Own working Group should contact Social Farms & Gardens⁷⁴.

⁷² <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/grow-your-own-working-group-recommendations-report/>

⁷³ Details of the 2016 FGS event can be found at:
<http://www.growyourownsotland.info/resources/food-growing-strategies/>

⁷⁴ <http://www.growyourownsotland.info/find-out-more/>

Keep Scotland Beautiful

The Climate Challenge Fund, administered by Keep Scotland Beautiful on behalf of the Scottish Government, has funded community-led organisations across Scotland since 2008. As at September 2018, the Climate Challenge Fund has supported 497 projects involving food which aim to reduce carbon emissions associated with food by encouraging the growing and consumption of local food.

Through keep Scotland Beautiful, local authorities may have the opportunity to open communication channels with these groups to tap into the wealth of knowledge, experience and skills directly related to the process of developing and encouraging food growing on a local community scale, and to learn from their experiences.

Planning Advice Scotland (PAS)

PAS is a volunteer-led organisation supported by a network of over 400 specialist volunteers, including professionals from across the built environment sector. PAS provides impartial advice and skills training and supports communities to develop and deliver their own aspirations for their place.

Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS)

REHIS promotes the advancement of environmental health by stimulating interest in, and promoting education and training in environmental health. REHIS also maintains high standards of professional practice and conduct of Environmental Health Officers in Scotland.

Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)

The RTPI champions the power of planning in creating prosperous places and vibrant communities. The RTPI shapes planning policy, raises professional standards and is the only body in the UK to confer chartered status to town planners, the highest professional qualification.

Scottish Allotments & Gardens Society

The Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society works for allotment sites and allotment holders throughout Scotland to:

Protect sites by:

- Networking among allotment associations;
- Campaigning nationally and locally;
- Raising awareness of the planning process and new legislation.

Preserve skills in gardening and design through:

- Recording the ongoing history of allotments;
- Coordinating the conservation of seeds and plants.

Promote the value of allotments for:

- Healthy activity and good food;
- Celebrating our open air communities;
- Saving the ecosystem and enhancing biodiversity.

The Scottish Allotments & Gardens Society produced Scotland's Allotment Site Design Guide in 2013.⁷⁵

The society also produced the *Finding Scotland's Allotments*⁷⁶ report in 2007 which recorded that there were 6,300 allotment plots in Scotland. Recent research indicates there are now in excess of 10,000 allotment plots in Scotland.

Through individual and association subscribing members plus affiliation of Federations and Forums in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee, Scottish Allotment & Gardens Association seeks to represent the majority of allotment holders in Scotland.

The Society, with support from the Scottish Government, has produced a series of *Galvanising Grassroots*⁷⁷ guides to assist and inform both existing plot holders and potential new plot holders with their ongoing development in the context of the new allotments legislation.

⁷⁵ <http://www.sags.org.uk/docs/ScotlandAllotmentDesignGuide.pdf>

⁷⁶ <http://www.sags.org.uk/docs/ReportsPresentations/AuditReport07.pdf>

⁷⁷ <http://www.sags.org.uk/docs/SiteAssociationDevelopment.pdf> &
<http://www.sags.org.uk/docs/GG2GoodGovernance.pdf>

Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)

SEPA can provide advice and guidance in relation to waste management issues (for example, re-use or disposal of waste soils). They also work in partnership with local authorities and others in relation to flooding and land contamination and may be able to provide further support and information on these matters.

Social Farms & Gardens

Social Farms & Gardens, created through the merger of the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens and Care Farming UK, is a registered charity working across the UK to support, represent and promote community-managed farms, gardens, allotments and other green spaces, creating opportunities for local communities to grow.

In Scotland, Social Farms & Gardens has over 170 members as at September 2018. Membership is free to community managed organisations and works to help empower local people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to build better communities, often in deprived areas, and to make a positive impact on their surrounding environment.

Social Farms & Gardens provides core services including the provision of training, advice and publications. Specialist services include the Community Land Advisory Service, Growing Together, and Care Farming. Their members cover a total of 130 acres of land, employ over 200 people, give opportunities to approximately 4,000 volunteers, and host approximately 100,000 visitors a year.

Sustainable Scotland Network

The Sustainable Scotland Network consists of sustainable development officers and advocates from Scottish local authorities. It is Scotland's network for public sector professionals engaged in sustainability and climate action. The network showcases action taken to reduce emissions and they support deeper commitment and innovation on climate change and sustainability.

The network's strategic partners involve those engaged in climate change duties, including NHS Scotland, EAUC Scotland (Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges Scotland), and COSLA.

Trellis Scotland

Trellis is a national organisation for therapeutic gardening and supports over 376 projects that help people to transform their lives through growing activities and green spaces.

Their garden projects work to tackle health inequalities, poor diet and many health conditions including depression and stroke. Over 90% of these projects dedicate part, or all, of their growing space to food.

Trellis provides information services, training, advice, good practice exchange, a collective voice and hands-on support in the field to help garden projects succeed, maximising health benefits for more than 9,000 people every week.

Tripartite Group

In 2016, a Tripartite Group was established by Scottish Ministers to develop constructive dialogue with key allotment stakeholders and to monitor the implementation of Part 9.

The group consists of:

1. Local authority representatives (primarily allotment officers);
2. Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (SAGS) members;
3. Scottish Government officials.

The Group meets quarterly and is accountable to the Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment.

Annex C

CONTAMINATED LAND

When identifying land for food growing, it should be borne in mind that most land has been exposed to centuries of human activity, along with the proximity to industrial processes and traffic exhaust pollutants from busy roads, these activities will all impact on soil quality. This may result in the presence of a variety of contaminants in the soil such as heavy metals, polyaromatic hydrocarbons, asbestos and persistent organic pollutants. Food growers are subject to a much higher level of exposure to potential contamination in the soil than other site users, predominantly through contact with soil, ingestion and inhalation of soil/dust and ingestion of produce. In deciding whether the soil is suitable (or can be made suitable) for food-growing it is therefore necessary to undertake an environmental risk assessment.

If it does not form part of the site assessment process, an environmental risk assessment for food-growing should identify likely chemical, biological and physical hazards and evaluate how they might impact on the health of people who will be using the proposed site and upon the surrounding environment.

In determining the feasibility of designing a site for food-growing it will be necessary to gather information about the land to get an idea of the work that might be required to make it suitable for food-growing. The local authority's environmental health team or contaminated land officer (CLO) should be contacted at the earliest opportunity when a potential site is identified for food-growing; they will be able to offer guidance and may be able to provide additional support.

CLOs have collated a significant amount of land quality information as part of their duties under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to identify potentially contaminated land within the local authority area. An environmental information request (EIR) can be sent to the local authority for any relevant environmental information held about a site (this may incur a small charge).

As part of the environmental risk assessment, it is likely that ground investigations involving soil sampling and laboratory chemical analysis will be required. Soil contaminant concentration limits will be dependent on the nature of food growing activity proposed. To ensure a proportionate response to findings it is essential that the investigation and environmental risk assessment be carried out by a competent expert.

Allow enough time and considerations for health and safety regulations when investigating a site. It is typical to investigate a site in a phased approach and depending on the findings, it may be more investigations are required to inform the site design and remediation approach.

The CLO will be able to provide advice throughout the environmental risk assessment process. There are numerous standards, codes of practice and guidance documents available; the CLO will be able to direct you to the appropriate publications.

Contaminants might be identified but the concentrations may not present an unacceptable risk (i.e. below soil assessment criteria) and food-growing can proceed without any other actions.

In the event that the ground is found to be contaminated at unacceptable concentrations, steps will need to be taken to make the site safe for food-growing. There will be a variety of possible intervention solutions from contamination removal to raised beds. The site may not be suitable for the type of food-growing that is proposed and an alternative approach might be to change the type of food-growing activities or have zoned areas e.g. wild areas where food-growing is not appropriate. It will also be important to consider management of other possible issues such as non-native invasive plants, protected habitats and waste soil. Liaison with the CLO is strongly advised to ensure that the proposed remedial measures are acceptable to the regulatory authorities.

Best practice in food-growing and site management should be followed so as not to inadvertently contaminate food-growing soil.

The CLO has a regulatory role under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (“Part 2A”) to inspect their areas periodically to identify contaminated land and enforce remedial actions where there is unacceptable risk of harm to human health or the wider environment, or risk of pollution to the water environment. If food-growing activities commence without consideration of these risks and elevated contaminant concentrations are confirmed above tolerable limits it is likely that food-growing activities would need to cease until all necessary works are carried out.

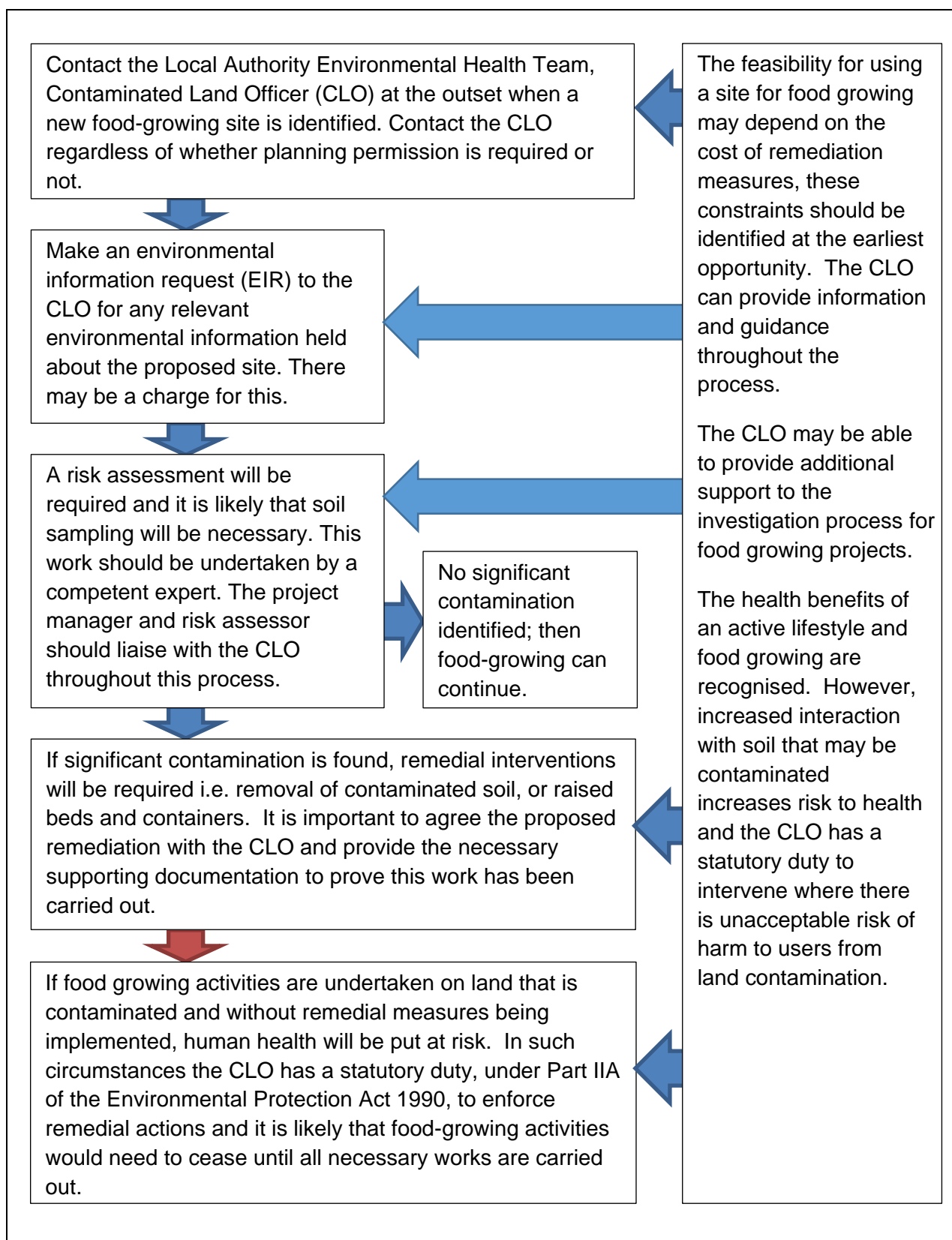
CLOs do not wish to prevent food-growing activity from taking place and will provide as much assistance as they can. They will provide guidance throughout the assessment process and may be able to advise on proportionate sustainable remediation solutions that will make the site safe for food-growing.

Landowners should undertake an environmental risk assessment before making land available to communities for food-growing. Local authorities should allocate funding for sites they wish to make available for food-growing so this work can be carried out.

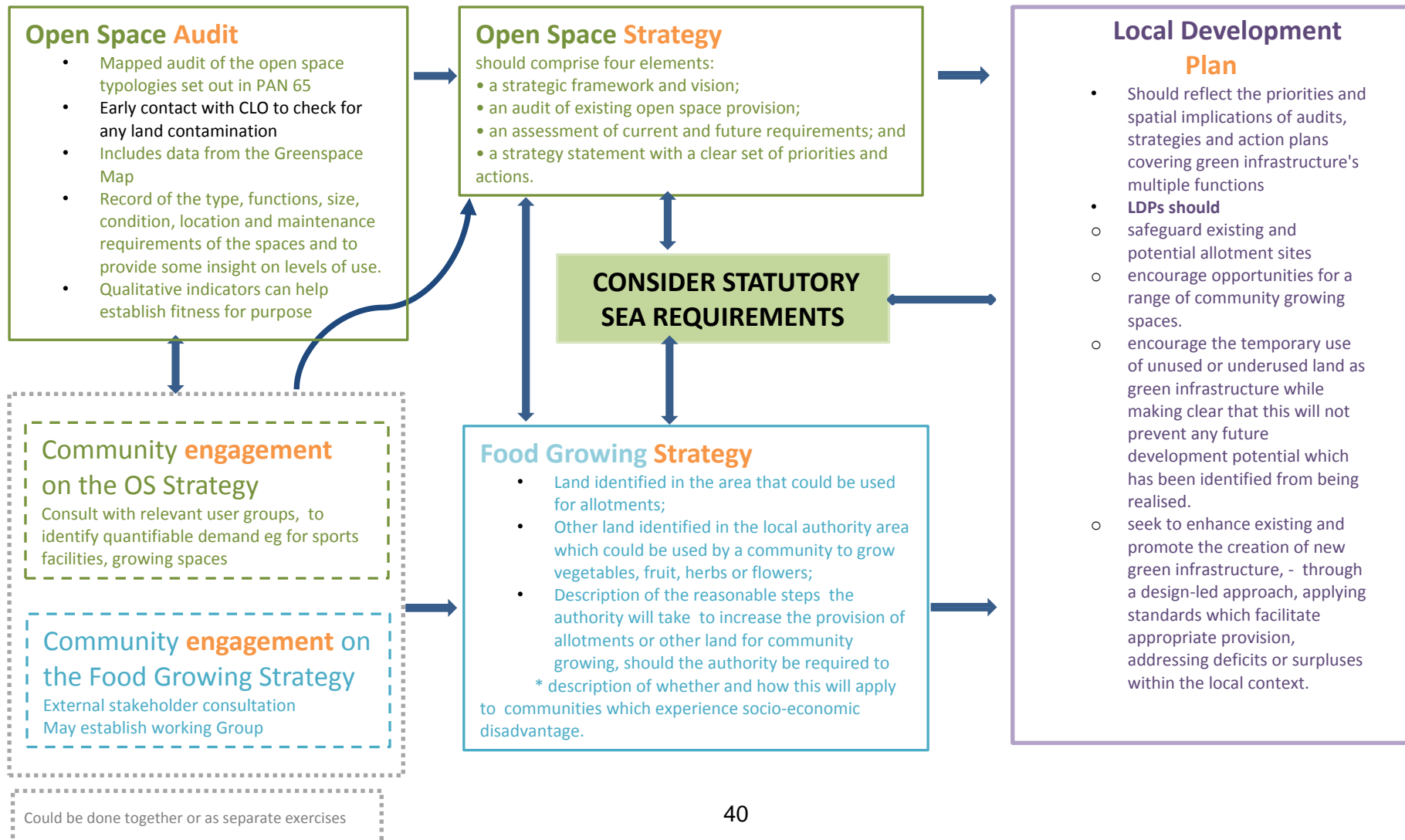
The Grow-Your-Own-Working-Group’s *Guide for growing on land which may be contaminated*⁷⁸ and Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society’s *Allotment Site Design Guide*⁷⁹ both contain useful guidance on the potential problems with contaminated land and how to deal with it.

⁷⁸ <http://growyourownsotland.info/wp-content/uploads/images/Guide-for-growing-on-contaminated-land.pdf>

⁷⁹ <http://www.sags.org.uk/docs/ScotlandAllotmentDesignGuide.pdf>



Planning / food-growing strategy flowchart



**<Local authority name>
Local Food-Growing Strategy <date >**

(para 6) **Legislative requirements** of s119 – the authority must set out in its food-growing strategy how it will meet the requirements of section 119 of the Act. The food growing strategy must achieve the following:

- (a) identify land in its area that the authority considers may be used as allotment sites (as defined by the Act),
- (b) identify other areas of land in its area that could be used by a community for the cultivation of vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers,
- (c) describe how, where the authority is required to take reasonable steps under section 112(1) of the Act, the authority intends to increase the provision in its area of—
 - (i) allotments, or
 - (ii) other areas of land for use by a community for the cultivation of vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers, and
- (d) when describing the matters required in paragraph (c), describe whether and how the authority intends to increase the provision of land in areas which experience socio-economic disadvantage.

Vision – of the local authority’s strategy. The authority’s food-growing strategy should set out the overall vision of what the strategy is to achieve until the strategy is next reviewed, for example the vision may set out the authority’s vision of what additional growing space it will have provided in five years’ time, and the community benefits which will be gained through this vision.

The vision may also include a statement that the authority plans to make more growing space available in its local area to meet future anticipated demand, having regard to the desirability of making available allotments that are reasonably close to the residence of persons in the list maintained under section 111(1) of the Act.

The vision of the strategy will be tailored towards the needs of that particular authority, and will identify how needs or gaps identified by the authority will be addressed.

Any relevant background – to the authority’s particular strategy approach.

Even if there is no duty to do so, the local authority may wish to include further background which is not captured in other areas of the template, such as background to particular local issues it addresses, approaches to stakeholder engagement, or how the food-growing strategy links to other local authority health / biodiversity / social / economic policies etc. (para 9).

The authority may likewise wish to include funding / budgetary information within its food-growing strategy, even if there is no requirement to do so.

(para 9, 11) **Local authority responsibilities: planning, partnership working** – interactions / outcomes with local authority stakeholders and partners e.g. inclusion of allotments or other growing spaces on Local Development Plans / master-plans for areas of development / housing expansion etc, interactions with CLOs, interactions with external stakeholders.

(para 7) **Goals** – consider how the goals are being met by the strategy.

(para 8, annex A) **Impacts and benefits to be realised** – Consider social / economic / health / education / environmental benefits to be gained from current / future plans set out in the strategy.

(para 11) **Identification of land** – consider whether all forms of land and growing spaces are being considered. Include explanation of why certain types of land are excluded or why it is not appropriate to consider them

(para 11) **Outcome of the land audit** – audit and map sites of growing space and locations of demand.

Authorities should audit and map all existing allotment sites and other growing spaces so that the authority can set out its current position. The authority should also map newly identified / future proposals for growing land/growing spaces.

Authorities should map demand, both current and anticipated future demand to take account of planned housing developments etc.

Details of the audit and mapping activities should include processes used / not used / outcomes.

(para 9) **Stakeholder engagement** – details of the stakeholder engagement or consultation carried out to implement the steps set out in the strategy.

(para 13) **Assistance to community growing groups** – detail any assistance (financial and non-financial) provided to local community groups and details of information and training opportunities for people who want to get involved in allotments or grow-your-own.

Other information – the authority should include any further information relevant to their local area which should be included in their food-growing strategy. This may, for example, include any training programmes, sources of help or other assistance available.

Review date – the date the authority's strategy as a whole is to be reviewed. If there are any actions or steps to be reviewed before the next strategy review date, how and when they will be monitored and reviewed.



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