

**Cultivating Communities - A Growing Success**  
**The Third Allotments Strategy for The City of Edinburgh**  
**2016 – 2025**

**DRAFT**

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## 1. Introduction

Allotment gardening provides the opportunity for a year-round healthy lifestyle which is active, socially inclusive and which reflects the ideals of sustainability and well-being. Unlike other leisure activities, it provides not only exercise, mental relaxation and lifelong learning opportunities, but a place to make and meet friends along with gathering the harvest of fresh fruit and vegetables. Allotments have a significant role to play in the protection and promotion of biodiversity and provide the opportunity to spend time out-of-doors enjoying nature.

Interest in gardening and allotments has risen dramatically over the last decade as more people appreciate the social, environmental and health benefits to be gained from gardening an allotment plot. Many factors have contributed to the idea of growing, cooking and eating your own produce, from concerns regarding health and nutrition, to raised awareness of climate change and the rise in “lifestyle” television programmes. In 1998 the waiting list for an allotment in Edinburgh was 417 for 1065 plots, now, in 2016, it stands at 2510 for just 1465 Council operated plots.

The City of Edinburgh Council produced its first allotment strategy “Cultivating Communities” in 2002. This was followed by “Cultivating Communities – A Growing Challenge” on 2009. This new Strategy, “Cultivating Communities - A Growing Success” continues the themes of its predecessors and aims to provide a strategic approach to the planning and management of allotments for the next 10 years and contains a 5 year Implementation Plan.

Cultivating Communities was considered a great success. It was instrumental in improving the quality of allotments across the city between 2002 and 2009 and influential in the development of support for allotments in other council areas and at government level. Its successor, “A Growing Challenge” was similarly successful in giving even more people the opportunity to grow their own food by increasing the number of allotments in Edinburgh and by promoting other food growing initiatives. It focussed on a strategic approach to accommodate the unprecedented demand for allotments and aimed to ensure that the benefits of allotment gardening were properly recognised and available to all. In addition, an Allotment Strategy Implementation Plan was also developed to support the strategy and to guide the work of the Council’s Allotment Service.

This Strategy and the Implementation Plan within it has been written in consultation with the Allotment Strategy Steering Group, which includes representatives of Federation of Edinburgh and District Allotments and Garden Associations (FEDAGA) and Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (SAGS), allotment holders, and the City of Edinburgh Council Parks and Greenspace Service.

The strategy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and a formal review carried out after five years. The Allotment Strategy Steering Group will actively monitor progress of the Implementation Plan ensuring, where possible, that key milestones are met.

## 1.1 Legislation & Policy

### 1.1.1 Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

The Community Empowerment Act came into force on 17 June 2015 and it is intended to simplify the law regarding allotments. Local authorities now have to manage waiting lists for allotments and take reasonable steps to address high demand. Councils also have to seek permission from Scottish Ministers before they sell off land used for allotments or use it for something else. Finally, they have to report on their allotment provision every year and have and enforce active regulations relating to ploholders.

The provisions of the Act relating to allotments seek to:

- Increase the number of allotments
- Increase the amount of land made available to communities to grow their own food
- Make it easier for communities to take over land for allotments and other “Grow Your Own” purposes
- Update and simplify existing allotments legislation

The main areas of the new policy are:

- The definition of an allotment
- A duty on local authorities to hold and maintain waiting lists
- A duty on local authorities to provide allotments and to keep waiting lists below a set target
- A duty for local authorities to publish an annual report and produce a food growing strategy
- A duty for local authorities to produce allotment regulations
- Protection of allotment sites from closure
- Allowing the sale of surplus produce

The Act places a duty on local authorities to provide allotment sites. These allotments will be provided principally to people on the allotments waiting list. Allotment provision is demand led and the waiting list will record all those who want to let an allotment plot. The Act replaces the provisions within the Allotments (Scotland) Acts 1892, 1922 and 1950, which are repealed in their entirety by schedule 5, and some provisions of the Land Settlement (Scotland) Act 1919.

In Edinburgh, Allotment Regulations were initially verified by the Secretary of State for Scotland in 1913, and amended in 1924. They govern a number of aspects of the City of Edinburgh Council’s allotment provision, including the fixing of rents and have not been amended since 1924. Revised regulations have been produced by the Council however, further development has been delayed pending consultation and the final enactment of secondary legislation to be contained within Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act.

### **1.1.2 Policy Context**

Allotment provision is influenced by a number of national and local policies.

Scottish Planning Policy (2014) introduces a presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development. Guiding principles of this relevant to greenspace include improving health and well being by offering opportunities for social interaction and physical activity, including sport and recreation. It also protects, enhances and promotes access to natural heritage including green infrastructure, landscape and the wider environment.

Paragraph 227 states that “Local development plans should safeguard existing and potential allotment sites to ensure that local authorities meet their statutory duty to provide allotments where there is a proven demand. Plans should also encourage opportunities for a range of growing spaces”.

Housing allocations in the second proposed Local Development Plan include opportunities to provide allotments in areas such as Newmills Road, Balerno, Leith Links extension, Brunstane, Curriemuir and Mordunvale.

New allotment provision has been secured through private sector housing development at Newcraighall North adjacent to the Innocent Railway Core Path.

Allotment design is not covered by the Edinburgh Design Guidance under Landscape and Biodiversity but comprehensive advice can be found in Scotland’s Allotment Design Guide produced by SAGS. Design of external spaces is covered by Design Policy Des 5 in the Edinburgh City Local Plan and will be replaced by Policy Des 8 Public Realm and Landscape Design.

The Central Scotland Green Network was launched in May 2010 and the City of Edinburgh Council signed a declaration in 2012 committing to deliver its objectives. Its overarching aim is to increase public wellbeing while reducing carbon footprint. It aims to co-ordinate the efforts of a number of bodies, including local authorities, community organisations and land owners, in order to create and support a network of quality green spaces for recreation, including cycling and walking networks, public woodland areas, parks and also growing spaces for local food production such as allotments and community gardens.

### **1.1.3 The Open Space Strategy**

The preparation of an Open Space Strategy is a requirement of National Planning Policy. The policy requires the creation of an audit, a strategy and action plans. The Strategy ensures that a coordinated approach is taken to protecting and developing the city’s network of open space and is accompanied by 12 action plans, one for each Neighbourhood Partnership area, setting out site-specific proposals for change in open spaces.

The action plans are not themselves operational targets, but represent medium and longer term aspirations. Progress towards meeting the standards will be dependant both on the rate at which development proposals are approved and then implemented and the availability of Council resources to invest in open spaces. The existing strategy supports the creation of new allotments to meet food-growing demand.

### **1.1.4 Sustainable Cities Index**

The Sustainable Cities Index ranks cities on 20 indicators in five key areas: the economy, business, risk, infrastructure and finance. It also breaks the results down into three sub-indices; social, environmental and economic. All of which combine to provide a ranking of each city's overall sustainability.

### **1.1.5 Lets Make Scotland More Active (LMSMA)**

LMSMA is the Scottish Government's over-arching policy objective to make Scots active for life. The aim of LMSMA is to:

- To get and keep Scots active
- Help Scots to be the best by dealing with a spectrum of physical activity
- Help those who are inactive at one end of the scale to supporting elite athletes at the other
- Aligning sport and physical activity more closely together and to strengthen the links between the two activities

The Scottish Government has made physical activity a new national indicator to reflect its importance. Physical inactivity contributes to nearly 2,500 deaths in Scotland and costs the NHS around £91 million per year. It is a health challenge that the Scottish Government is passionate about taking on. An annual investment of £3 million is aimed at increasing physical activity, including those furthest away from meeting the physical activity guidelines - teenage girls and older adults. This is in addition to National Programmes such as Active Schools, which provided over five million opportunities for young people to be physically active.

### **1.1.6 Edinburgh City Local Plan and Structure Plan**

The Edinburgh City Plan sets out the Council's policies to guide development in the city and its proposals for specific sites. The Plan covers the whole of the urban area, and part of its rural, Green Belt fringe. The Edinburgh City Local Plan is a replacement for five existing local plans. The purpose of the Local Plan is to:

- Provide a clear basis for determining planning applications
- Allocate land to meet needs and targets set out in the Structure Plan
- Provide a clear framework for regeneration strategies
- Provide support for wider Council strategies particularly the Local Transport Strategy, and help infrastructure providers to plan for the future

The Local Plan and the Structure Plan together make up the development plan for the area that they both cover.

### **1.1.8 Open Space Strategy**

The strategy is under review and will be updated during 2016/17. This statutory document will include reference to allotments, the Allotment Strategy, and the Council’s obligations to support food growing under the provisions of the Community Empowerment Act.

### 1.1.9 National Food and Drink Policy for Scotland

The aim of Scotland's Food and Drink policy is to promote Scotland's sustainable economic growth by ensuring that the Scottish Government's focus in relation to food and drink, and in particular its work with Scotland's food and drink industry, addresses quality, health and wellbeing, and environmental sustainability, recognising the need for access and affordability at the same time.

### 1.1.10 Health Inequalities

Reducing inequalities in health is critical to achieving the Scottish Government's aim of making Scotland a better, healthier place for everyone, no matter where they live. While the health of the country as a whole is improving, the fact is that some inequalities are widening. That requires concerted action across government.

Health inequalities can be a matter of personal lifestyles such as smoking or lack of physical activity. However, as important are community, economic, cultural and environmental factors.

The Scottish Government is endeavouring to find ways of reducing those inequalities, not only in health, but in all the other factors that lead to some people in Scotland being more disadvantaged than the majority.

### 1.1.12 Sustainable Development

Sustainable Edinburgh 2020 (SE2020) is the Council's Framework for the sustainable development of the city until 2020. Its vision is that "Edinburgh in 2020 will be a low carbon, resource efficient city, delivering a resilient local economy and vibrant flourishing communities in a rich natural setting." The Framework is based on the ten Aalborg Commitments.

### 1.1.13 The Edinburgh Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2016 -2018

The Edinburgh Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2018 (ELBAP) outlines a partnership approach to biodiversity across the city and includes gardening allotments and food growing which is reflected in the “Action Plan for Green Networks”.

Action Number	Site type	Action/Activity	Timescale
G20	Gardening allotments and food growing	Identify sites or projects for the creation of new allotments	Ongoing
G21	Gardening allotments and food growing	Identify and create community gardens in areas of deprivation	Ongoing
G22	Gardening	Increase the number of people growing their own food and/or	2018

	allotments and food growing	the number of food growing areas, targeting areas of deprivation	
G23	Gardening allotments and food growing	Increase the number of allotment sites/plots in the city and encourage the lease of appropriate sites to engaged communities e.g. Pilton Gardeners, Duddingston Field	2018
G24	Gardening allotments and food growing	Increase the number of people growing their own food in Saughton Park through working with RCHS and SRUC who will provide learning and teaching resources and courses	Annual

## 1.2 The Value of Allotments and Gardening

Allotments provide many benefits for plot holders and their families, but also to the local environment and community. In terms of individual and social wellbeing, they offer physically active outdoor exercise, mental refreshment and stimulus, as well as the production of good value, nutritional fruit and vegetables. Less obvious are the wider benefits. Allotments form part of the open space resource of the city, and can be a focus for education and public enlightenment, neighbourliness and social solidarity. Allotment sites also encourage interaction with nature and make a significant contribution to biodiversity and sustainability.

Allotments and gardening contribute to all of the five Strategic Objectives established by the Scottish Government in the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, which gives a local authority the power to do anything which it considers is *“likely to promote or improve the well-being of its area and the persons within that area”*.

### 1.2.1 Wealthier & Fairer

Allotments are available to all and are particularly attractive for those who do not have their own garden space. Edinburgh offers allotments on a first come basis and rental discounts are available to those citizens who are unemployed, students or over state retirement age.

### 1.2.2 Healthier

Gardening is an excellent way to keep physically fit and is an important activity for mental well-being. Current recommendations are that adults should participate in 30 minutes of moderate physical activity at least five days a week. Evidence suggests that physical access to nature helps people recover from illness more quickly, reduces stress and lowers blood pressure.

While the demographic of allotment gardens will undoubtedly change with the influx of younger people, allotment gardening continues to attract older people. This is a section of society for whom it is key that they take part in physical activity on a regular basis, and the exercise that allotment gardening provides can help keep older people active for longer. This reduces the chances that they will need to be cared for long term by local authorities and other public agencies. Children also benefit from becoming involved in gardening and food production through gardening, and allotments can provide a safe and welcoming space where parents and children spend time together, supporting family learning and intergenerational good practice.

### 1.2.3 Greener

Allotments contribute significantly to the biodiversity of the urban environment, providing food and shelter to many plant and animal species, as well as functioning as an important link in the greenspace network. In Edinburgh allotment holders follow organic growing principles and compost their green waste. New allotment sites developed within the last five years are fully organic and include those at Albert Street, Dumbryden, Baronscourt, Kirkliston, India Place, Inchkeith, Hawkhill & Nisbet, Northfield Drive, Drumbrae and Victoria Park.

Allotment gardening develops and demonstrates practices that will mitigate the adverse effects of climate change, including personal behavioural change. They help promote composting, and can be managed in ways that demonstrate sustainable practices like rainwater collection. They also promote local food production, so that “food miles” (transport costs and carbon emissions) are reduced, thus contributing towards the commitments made by City of Edinburgh Council under Scotland's Climate Change Declaration and towards emissions reduction targets set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

#### **1.2.4 Safer & Stronger**

Allotments are often at the heart of the community and allotment/gardening associations are important contributors to local advocacy and democracy. Volunteering is a central element of allotment management and for many people a starting point for a lifetime of social interaction and active citizenship.

Allotments provide an interactive community of people. While this benefits everyone on a site, it can also be particularly important for individuals who might otherwise be isolated, such as older people, the unemployed, or those with health issues. Several Edinburgh allotments have links with environmental and care charities, schools and other bodies, further increasing interaction opportunities.

#### **1.2.5 Smarter**

Gardening involves many practical and academic skills, and has been shown to have immense benefits as part of neurological and social rehabilitation projects. Many allotments are used to develop learning and engagement in sustainable development, including horticultural therapy for those with learning difficulties and/or seeking better life opportunities. For many, they also act as a catalyst for lifelong learning and formal education.

### **1.3 Allotments in Edinburgh**

### 1.3.1 Allotment provision

In 2010 Edinburgh had 34 allotment sites. Between 2011 and 2015 a further 11 sites were developed at Kirkliston, Albert Street, Inchkeith, India Place, Hawkhill / Nisbet, Drumbrae, Baronscourt, Prestonfield, Northfield Drive, Dumbryden and Victoria Park, as well as extending the Stenhouse allotments. One small site at Morningside Station was removed from the account. There are now a total of 44 sites, all with varying size plots. A Council Allotment Officer is responsible for the majority of these sites. Management duties include the letting of plots, invoicing rents, operation of waiting lists, the maintenance functions of each site and the development of new sites. In total there are now 1,724 allotment plots (Table 1) of which, The Council directly manages 1,488. Many allotments have local associations that provide help with the management of their site. There are also privately owned as well as “Common Good” sites which are managed and maintained exclusively by a site committee.

Allotment plots are allocated to those furthest up the allotment waiting list wishing to rent a vacant plot at the relevant site. Where new sites are created, 50% of plots are let in this way, the remaining 50% being offered to residents adjacent to the new site. At the time of writing, there are 2,510 people on the Council’s allotment plot waiting list. The turnover for allotments is currently 8% per year, consequently the waiting list is continually growing and the average waiting time is currently between five and nine years. The waiting list is regularly reviewed to ensure those nearing the top of the list are still interested in renting an allotment plot. Details of those on the waiting list are not handed to third parties without prior permission.

60% of allotment plot holders live within 2 miles of their plot. The demand for an allotment plot is greatest in the traditional tenement flat areas of the city (Table 2). It would therefore be reasonable to assume that demand is highest in areas where there is little access to garden space.

Allotment plot sizes across Edinburgh vary significantly, smaller plots proving to be increasingly popular in recent years. The Community Empowerment Act recognises the need for a customer-led service, making it a requirement that those wanting a plot less than 250m<sup>2</sup> in size specify the size of plot sought.

A survey carried out in March 2016 (see Table 3 ) shows that a high proportion of customers would prefer a half plot as their first choice, second preference would be a full plot and third a smaller plot. The Council will ensure that when a new site is built, all three options are made available to potential plot holders.

Information on the demographic of allotment holders has been gathered over the past 13 years, Table 4 indicates the profile and demonstrates both the changes over time and the current position.

Table 5 provides information regarding the turnover of allotments and impact of new allotment developments.

**Table 1: Allotments in Edinburgh**

Site	Ownership	Operated by	Plots May '16
Dean Gallery	City of Edinburgh Council	Devolved	12
East Scotland St Lane Nth	City of Edinburgh Council	Devolved	7
East Scotland St Lane Sth	City of Edinburgh Council	Devolved	1
Green dykes	City of Edinburgh Council	Devolved	26
Westerhailes	City of Edinburgh Council	Devolved	80
Albert Street	City of Edinburgh Council	Housing	4
Hawkhill and Nisbet	City of Edinburgh Council	Housing	12
Prestonfield	City of Edinburgh Council	Housing	13
Baronscourt	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	20
Bridgend Farm	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	54
Cambridge Avenue	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	10
Carricknowe	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	43
Chesser Crescent	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	13
Claremont Park	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	62
Craigentenny	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	47
Drumbrae	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	20
Dumbryden	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	33
Ferry Road	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	77
Findlay Avenue	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	7
Hutchinson Loan	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	7
Inchkeith	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	10
India Place	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	27
Inverleith Park	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	173
Kirkliston	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	7
Lady Road	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	37
Leith Links	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	39
Northfield	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	16
Pilrig Park	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	38
Prospect Bank	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	11
Redhall	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	48
Restalrig	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	28
Saughton Mains	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	174
Stenhouse Drive	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	70
Victoria Park	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	16
Warriston	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	120
West Mains	City of Edinburgh Council	Parks and Greenspace	89
Midmar 1 & 2	Leased to Council	Parks and Greenspace	163
Craigentenny Telferton	Private	Private	62
Portobello East Junction	Private	Private	25
Relugas Place	Private	Private	4
Roseburn Cliff	Private	Private	4
Slateford Green	Private	Private	12
Succoth Gardens	Private	Private	3
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>1,724</b>

**Table 2: Allotment Waiting List by Postcode Area 2015**

Post code	Area	No	%age
EH6	Leith	547	19%
EH3	Inverleith	314	11%
EH4	Stockbridge/Barton	288	10%
EH7	Restalrig / Craigentenny	258	9%
EH10	Morningside / Fairmilehead	256	9%
EH9	Marchmont / Grange	191	7%
EH8	Newington / Mountcastle	158	6%
EH5	Granton	129	5%
EH11	Saughton / Sighthill	147	5%
Other	City wide	557	20%

**Table 3: Preferred Size of Allotment Plot**

Answer Options	Most Preferred	Second Preferred	Least Preferred	Rating Average	Response Count
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>		
Full Plot - approx 250 - 185 sq metres (approx double row of 8 parked cars)	253	192	225	1.96	670
Half Plot - approx 125 - 92 sq metres (approx double row of 4 parked cars)	370	314	1	1.46	685
A smaller plot - approx 20-25 sq metres (approx single row of 2 parked cars and built off the ground with options for easy access)	82	149	417	2.52	648
Answered Question 707					
Skipped Question 45					

**Table 4: Profile of Allotment Holders**

<b>Age</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2015</b>
<24	0%	0%	0%
25 – 34	5%	3%	2%
35 – 54	39%	38%	40%
55+	53%	58%	53%
No response	3%	1%	5%

<b>Gender</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2015</b>
Male	40%	47%	47%
Female	58%	50%	53%
No response	2%	2%	0%

<b>Health condition</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2015</b>
Health condition	13%	9%	22%
No health condition	80%	84%	78%
No response	7%	7%	0%

**Table 5: Turnover of Allotments**

<b>Allotment Turnover</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Percentage	7%	7%	8%	9%	8%
Number	93	92	113	120	114

### 1.3.3 Allotment Strategy Steering Group

The Steering group is made up of representatives from the City of Edinburgh Council, the Federation of Edinburgh and District Allotments and Gardens Associations (FEDAGA) and the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (SAGS). It was formed to oversee the implementation of the first and second Allotment Strategies, as well as other issues relating to allotments in Edinburgh. The group calls upon experts to provide advice on particular issues as they arise. The group has advised the Council on the production of this third strategy.

### 1.3.4 Funding & Rents

The Council currently commits £99,851 a year on managing and upkeep of its allotments, £17,261 of which is an overhead apportionment. Of this, approximately £80,000 is recovered from annual rents (Table 3). Since the launch of Cultivating Communities in 2002 a total of £306,174 has been spent on improving allotments in the capital. A further £250,000 was spent on the construction of Bridgend Allotment site, with funding coming from the Council, the Big Lottery Fund and support in kind from NHS Lothian for the Bridgend Allotment Community Health Inclusion Project.

Plot rents have risen in line with rates agreed in the 2010-2015 Allotment Strategy. In 2016 allotment rents were reviewed as part of the wider Council’s budget consultation process and subsequently increased by four percent. Current rental rates are:

**Table 6: Allotment Rental Rates**

Full Plot	£104/pa	with concession(*)	£52/pa
Half Plot	£52/pa	with concession(*)	£26/pa
Raised Bed	£26	no concession	

\* concession available to students, unemployed or over state retirement age

### 1.3.5 Communication and Promotion

Most Council managed sites have notice boards used by the site association or representative, FEDAGA and the Council to post information. Monthly digital newsletters are published by FEDAGA and sent to those plot holders who have provided their email address. The Council’s website provides information on allotment sites, waiting times, management rules and inspection, termination and appeals procedure. FEDAGA also operates a website containing additional information. Some allotment site associations hold open days to allow the general public access to the site and showcase the work and produce of the allotment holders. Other site associations welcome schools to visit their sites.

FEDAGA consists of affiliated Allotment Garden Associations drawn together with the mutual interest of promoting best practices; improvement of conditions; education; training; protection and co-operative trading. All Council owned and managed sites and some independent sites are affiliated to FEDAGA which represents the tenants of these sites. The Federation operates through an elected Management Committee which meets on a monthly basis.

It has been in existence for over 100 years dating back to the rise in interest in allotments which is widely linked to the return of men from World War 1 and the high level of unemployment experienced at that time.

In the 1960s and 70s, improved employment, an expanding population, the opportunities of foreign travel and the introduction of large supermarkets changed the way that people looked at food and local produce was deemed passé. Many public and private allotment sites fell to housing development and cheap imported vegetable products, blemish free and uniform contributed to the demise of the home grown product.

In the 1990s, with the rise of a younger and fitter retired population, the recognition of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and a re-discovered taste for local produce the demand for allotment plots has outstripped supply. Although 11 new allotment sites have been constructed since 2011, today Edinburgh has a significant waiting list and insufficient resource to create allotments at the rate required.

Information regarding the number of allotments and whether they are full, half or raised beds is contained within Table 7. This indicates that Edinburgh has over 20 hectares of land used for allotments and that the average full plot size is 194 m<sup>2</sup>

**Table 7: Profile of Allotment Plot Area by Category**

Site	Number of full plots	Number of half plots	Number of raised beds	Total plots	Site Area m2	Average full plot m2	Average half plot m2
Albert Street	0	0	4	4	120		
Barnscourt	0	20	0	20	1,620		81
Bridgend	45	9	0	54	9,951	201	101
Cambridge	2	8	0	10	1,572	262	131
Carrick Knowe	27	16	0	43	9,460	270	135
Chesser	8	5	0	13	1,995	190	95
Claremont	20	42	0	62	7,592	185	93
Craigentenny	41	6	0	47	6,134	139	70
Drumbrae 1 & 2	0	0	20	20	961		
Dumbryden	7	26	0	33	3,994	200	100
Ferry Rd	26	51	0	77	9,156	178	89
Findlay Av	6	1	0	7	1,570	242	121
Hawkhill & Nisbet	0	0	12	12	366		
Hutchinson Loan	0	7	0	7	692	198	99
Inchkeith	0	0	10	10	382		
India Place	0	0	27	27	498		
Inverleith	83	90	0	173	23,806	186	93
Kirkliston	0	7	0	7	430	123	61
Lady Road	13	24	0	37	5,676	227	114
Leith Links	11	28	0	39	4,814	193	96
Midmar	53	110	0	163	16,364	152	76
Northfield Drive	0	16	0	16	1,307	163	82
Pilrig	9	29	0	38	4,241	180	90
Prestonfield	0	13	0	13	1,040		80
Propect Bank	4	7	0	11	1,416	189	94
Redhall	35	13	0	48	7,795	188	94
Restalrig	20	8	0	28	4,712	196	98
Saughton	144	30	0	174	31,460	198	99
Stenhouse	33	3	0	36	6,633	192	96
Victoria Park	0	16	0	16	1,296	162	81
Warriston	78	42	0	120	21,528	217	109
West Mains	61	28	0	89	15,358	205	102
Total	726	655	73	1,454	203,939	194	97

## 2. Purpose of Strategy

The first Allotments Strategy for the City of Edinburgh “Cultivating Communities” was widely acclaimed for improving the standard of allotments in Edinburgh. However, the waiting list continued to grow. The second strategy “Cultivating Communities - A Growing Challenge” has gone some way to tackle this by providing an additional 344 plots of all sizes for rent. However, the number of people on the plot waiting list has also increased, and now stands at 2,510.

Appendix 2 lists the achievements of the Cultivating Communities – A Growing Challenge strategy, and sets out the reasons why some of its recommendations have not been implemented.

The overall objective of this third strategy is to meet the ever increasing demand for allotments by increasing allotment provision in Edinburgh and promoting alternative ways to grow your own food.

Objective 1: Ensure adequate provision of allotments

Objective 2: Develop a robust management system for allotments

Objective 3: Improve customer experience

Objective 4: Adoption of the revised Allotment Regulations

### 3. Objectives for 2015 - 2025

#### Objective 1: Ensure Adequate Provision of Allotments

##### Action 1.1: Create New Community Led Allotments

Currently there are 44 allotment sites across Edinburgh. Of these:

- 28 are owned by the City of Edinburgh Council and managed by Parks and Greenspace
- 3 are owned by the City of Edinburgh Council and managed by Housing
- 5 are owned by the City of Edinburgh Council but have a devolved management system
- 6 are privately owned and managed
- 2 is leased by the City of Edinburgh Council and managed by Parks and Greenspace

Included within these are 11 new sites that have been built and opened during the lifetime of the previous strategies. Work has now been undertaken to investigate and review a further list of sites with a view to constructing more allotments. The list of sites was drafted using information gathered from the 2015 Allotment Survey and subsequently suggestions will be subject to a detailed analysis and appraisal system. Each site will be reviewed and appraised using the following methodology:

- Ownership
- Usage
- Soil Type
- Services
- Plot number per site
- Waiting list demand
- Public Transport
- Housing Area
- Security
- Parking

However, this list is not exhaustive and other appraisal factors are likely to come forward.

Sites identified will be handled sensitively and in full consultation with all stakeholders. The support and collaboration of users and local communities will be crucial to the success of new sites and effective communication will be required to promote the benefits to the wider community. Therefore, thorough community consultation will be undertaken with both external in internal stakeholders for all potential new sites.

Findings from consultation will shape the design of new allotment sites as will the Site Design Guide document published by SAGS.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act encourages people who are on the waiting list in a given area to come together and “take on” a piece of local Council ground (assuming that such ground exists). They will fundraise to transform the ground into an allotment site and thereafter manage the site independent of the Council but abiding by Council’s set allotment regulations.

Tables 8 outline sites that will be considered for allotments, including the evaluation previously undertaken. Table 9 shows an additional list identified by the public, through the 2015 allotment consultation process, which will be subject to evaluation. These sites may be become available for groups to “take on” for the development of allotments.

**Table 8: Sites Previously Identified As Potential Allotments**

**SITES IDENTIFIED WITHIN 2010-2015 ALLOTMENT STRATEGY WITH PRIORITY EVALUATION**

SITE	LOCATION AREA M2	POTENTIAL ALLOTMENTS	Owership	Usage	Soil	Service	Plot No	Waiting	Transport	Housing	Security	Parking	TOTAL POINTS
BLINKBONNY PARK	22,021	110	10	2	5	2	20	5	5	5	5	2	61
GYPSY BRAE	69,162	345	10	2	5	2	20	5	5	5	5	5	64
INCH PARK	12,622	66	10	5	10	5	15	10	10	10	5	5	85
LAURISTON CASTLE	12,716	63	5	5	10	2	15	15	5	5	5	5	72
MIDMAR FIELD 3	7,750	40	5	5	10	5	10	15	5	5	5	5	70
SILVERKNOWES FARMHOUSE	16,029	843	5	5	10	2	20	10	10	5	5	2	74
GILMERTON FARM SOUTH	12,904	67	5	2	5	2	10	10	5	5	5	2	51
CLERMISTON ROAD NORTH	42,814	214	10	5	10	5	20	15	10	5	5	2	87
SAUGHTONHALL TERRACE	3,000	20											

## Table 9: Additional Sites Identified For Potential Allotments

### FURTHER SITES IDENTIFIED DURING 2015 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Adams Well and Tesco in Colinton Mains Drive - unused area	Granton Harbour - unused land near apartment blocks
Dumbiedykes - adjacent to housing area	Granton Way - disused ground
Anderson Place - unused waste ground	Greenykes area - derelict land former Council Flats
Astley Ainslie - gap sites	Hailesland Park
Baronscourt Park - extend current allotment	Harrison Park - Watson Crescent
Bothwell Street - old railway tracks	Howdenhall Road - wasteland adjacent to lab
Braid Hills Road - land next to children's mini golf course	Hunter's Tryst Primary School Grounds
Buckstone Primary School - field area	Leith Links allotment extension
Burdiehouse Valley Park	Little France - new road area
Buttercup Farm - lower field on Corstorphine Hill	Lower Granton Road
Cammo Estate - recycling site	Mounthooly Road - east field
Colinton Mains Park	Newhaven – wasteland
Craigcrook Road - empty site	Ocean Terminal - land near here NW Victoria Dock
Curriemuirend Park	Oxgangs Avenue - grass beside Cockmylane
Double Hedges Field - lower field Liberton Dams	Parsons Green School Grounds - top gate
East Suffolk Road - playing field site at Royal Blind School	Portobello Figgate Park
Easter Drylaw - near cycle path and school	Powderhall Bowling Green
Letham Park	Rankin Drive - Rankin Triangle
Fettes Police College - grounds	Seafield area - brownfield sites
Lismore Playing Fields	Sighthill Public Park
North Fort Street area	Wardie fields - lots of unused space around the edges
Forthquarter Park	Warriston Playing Fields
Gilmerton Dykes Road - off Newtoft Street	Woodhall Road - past the bypass, opposite the stable

In spring 2016 a development opportunity was identified at the old playing field at the former Lismore Primary School on Duddingston Row. The site was transferred to the Parks Greenspace and Cemeteries account and may be available for the creation of new allotments. The area is viewed as a contender for a community led allotment site.

### **Action 1.2: Create New Allotments Through Planning Development Proposals**

The City of Edinburgh Council will seek to create new allotments through the planning development process. The Council's Open Space Strategy is to be reviewed and updated during 2016/17. This Open Space statutory document will include reference to allotments, the Allotment Strategy, and the Council's obligations to support food growing under the provisions of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act.

### **Action 1.3: Support Communities to Resource New Allotments**

The City of Edinburgh Council will support groups who wish to develop their own allotment sites on appropriate Council owned land. Due to budgetary constraints the Council is not in a position to fund these projects however; it will provide support with allotment design and fundraising opportunities. A full list of available funding can be found in Appendix 2.

### **Action 1.4: New Allotments**

The Council will whenever possible ensure that the allotments it manages are designed to accommodate all potential ploholders, will be accessible and manageable regardless of ability. This will be achieved through a range of designs and appropriate sizes depending on a site's characteristics.

### **Action 1.5: Allocation of New Plots**

When a potential area for a new allotment site is identified, a local consultation exercise will be carried out. It is anticipated that a percentage of the new plots will be offered to the local community who will be encouraged to register. The basis for plot allocation, unless otherwise agreed will be as follows:

- 50% from those closest to the site (starting within 500 metres and graduating out until 50% is reached)
- 50% from the City wide waiting list and based on the length of time on waiting list.

### **Action 1.6: Promote Biodiversity for New Sites**

At new sites biodiversity will be encouraged as a fundamental objective.

The City of Edinburgh Council has a legal obligation to help fulfil the Council's duty under the Natural Heritage Act 1991 and to this end we will encourage and promote biodiversity to allotment holders and site managers using information such as the 'Gardening in harmony with nature' booklet.

## **OBJECTIVE 2: Develop a Robust Management System for Allotments**

### **Action 2.1: Proactive Management of the Allotment Waiting List**

The waiting list requires development to ensure that those on this list still wish to rent an allotment. The Council will regularly contact waiting list customers to confirm continued interest.

### **Action 2.2: Raising and Maintaining the Quality of Allotment Plots**

#### **Plot Inspections**

When a plot does not comply with the standards set out in the Allotment Regulations it is important to identify and address the problem as soon as possible before it impacts on neighbouring plots. The Allotment Officer will carry out visual plot inspections on a regular basis between February and November each year. At the discretion of the Allotment Officer, assistance may be sought in particular cases in order to resolve matters in a timely manner.

#### **Assessment Criteria**

- **Condition of Plot**
- **Good Management**
- **Quality of Crops, Fruit, Flowers and Plants**
- **Aesthetic Aspect of the Plot**
- **Conditions of Garden Sheds/Other Structures**
- **Level of cultivation**

The Allotment Officer may make allowances for individuals who are ill, disabled, elderly or for extenuating reasons temporarily unable to cultivate their plot. Actions taken will be at the Allotment Officer and Senior Management discretion.

### **Action 2.3: Process Following an Allotment Plot Failure**

When an allotment plot has failed a visual inspection the plot holder will be notified and requested to rectify the situation within 21 days. Insufficient improvement within this time will result in a final warning. In the event that there is still insufficient improvement a letter will be sent informing the plot holder of the termination of their lease of let.

Consideration will be given to any mitigating circumstances, which should be communicated to the allotment officer in writing by the plot holder or an individual nominated by the plot holder.

The Allotment Officer should be aware of any special circumstances relating to a plot holder whose plot is unacceptable, i.e. illness. Any information gathered will be dealt with confidentially and each instance will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

Following an inspection that identifies an unacceptable plot, an improvement letter will be sent to the plot holder. This letter will detail the unacceptable criteria. The plot holder is given 21 days to rectify the situation and/or explain satisfactorily the reasons for the plot's unacceptable state.

After the rectification period and in absence of any improvement or explanatory letter, a final warning letter will be issued, reaffirming the statements in the improvement letter. This letter will require an immediate improvement with 21 days of the date of issue of this letter, or an explanation as to why the improvement letter was ignored, failing which the lease will be terminated. Any further unacceptable plot standard identified within 12 months period of a final warning letter may result in an immediate termination of allotment tenancy.

### **Action 2.4: Appeals Process**

A plot holder may appeal against the termination within 21 days of the receipt of the termination letter, and will require written support from three of the immediate adjacent plot holders. The appeal should detail the reasons for the lack of improvement and the reasons why the termination letter should be withdrawn.

The Allotment Officer must consider the appeal and reply to the plot holder within 21 days of receipt of the appeal.

### **Action 2.5: Introduction and Development of Water Harvesting**

Water harvesting is the collection of runoff for productive purposes. Instead of runoff being left drain into the soil it is harvested and utilised. Water harvesting is a productive form of soil and water conservation. Allotment site committees and allotment tenants will be encouraged to water harvest where appropriate, in a safe and sustainable manner ensuring that collection vessels comply with safe practise and present no risk to allotment. A water harvesting trial will be developed at the Northfield Drive site to assess the viability and effectiveness of the approach.

### **Action 2.6: Devolved Management**

There are a small number of sites that are managed using a devolved model and feedback from the 2015 survey suggested limited appetite for further devolvement. However, if an allotment association expressed a desire to manage their site independent of the Council the Council would support this under the provision of the Community Empowerment Act.

## **OBJECTIVE 3: Improve Customer Experience**

### **Action 3.1: Development of Website/Social Media**

Create new email contact list

Facilitate on-line applications

Information video/soundbites eg:     What to expect when first allocated a plot  
                                                           How much time does it take to manage a plot?  
                                                           Task of the month

### **Action 3.2: Initiate and Develop a Plotholder Mentoring Programme**

Allotment Committees will be encouraged to organise mentoring programme and offer support for those struggling to maintain their plot. This will focus on good allotment management and the importance of the community aspect of renting an allotment.

### **Action 3.3: Initiate and Develop a Training Programme for New Plot Holders**

The Council in partnership with the Royal Caledonian Society, The Orchard Project and Scottish Rural University College will incorporate provision for a range of different training within the Saughton Park Restoration Project.

New plotholders will be offered the opportunity to meet with site representatives in order to gain an understanding of the site and the standards required.

**OBJECTIVE 4: Adoption of Revised Allotment Regulations**

**Action 4.1: Formal Adoption of New Regulations by The City of Edinburgh Council and Scottish Government**

New regulations must be ratified by the Council and Scottish Government. The timetable for this is linked to the enactment of secondary legislation affecting Part 9: Allotments Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. The current timetable for adoption of regulations is outlined below; however this may be subject to a future revision.

Date	Process	Responsibility
19 May – 30 September 2016	Tripartite subgroup to develop consultation material	Scottish Government
4 August 2016	Second Tripartite Group Meeting	
31 August 2016	1 <sup>st</sup> draft contributions	Scottish Councils and SAGS
3 October – 31 October 2016	Legal Analysis	Scottish Government
10 November 2016	Third Tripartite Group Meeting	Scottish Government
14 November 2016 – 6 January 2017	Public consultation	Scottish Government
7 January – 10 February 2017	Analysis of consultation	Scottish Government
April 2017	Guidance Document Published	Scottish Government
May 2017 – November 2017	1 <sup>st</sup> revision of regulations	CEC
November 2017 – January 2018	Public consultation	CEC
February 2018 – March 2018	Analysis of consultation	CEC
April 2018 – May 2018	2 <sup>nd</sup> revision of regulations	CEC
June 2018 – December 2018	Ratification and adoption of regulations	CEC & Scottish Government

## Five Year Implementation Plan 2016 - 2021

<b>Objective 1: Ensure adequate provision of allotments</b>			
<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>When</b>
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Create new community led allotments</b>		
1.1.1	Undertake full review of potential allotment sites and evaluation against priority evaluation criteria	CEC	DEC 2017
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Create new allotments through planning and development proposals</b>		
1.2.1	Support development of the revised Open Space Strategy recognising the Council's obligation to support food growing	CEC	MARCH 2017
1.2.2	Consider options for creating and funding new sites through the planning development process	CEC	ONGOING
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Support Communities to resource new allotments</b>		
1.3.1	Support community led initiatives to identify funding opportunities to develop new allotments	CEC/COMMUNITY GROUPS	ONGOING
1.3.2	Provide an allotment design function in accordance with the results of any community consultation and in line with local demands	CEC	ONGOING
<b>1.4</b>	<b>New Allotments</b>		
1.4.1	Ensure that new allotments are designed to accommodate all potential ploholders regardless of their circumstances	CEC	ONGOING
<b>1.5</b>	<b>Allocation of new plots</b>		
1.5.1	Encourage local residents to register for a plot	CEC	ONGOING
1.5.2	Apply the plot allocation process	CEC	ONGOING
<b>1.6</b>	<b>Promote biodiversity for new sites</b>		
1.6.1	Encourage biodiversity within allotment sites	FEDAGA/SITE COMMITTEE/CEC	ONGOING
1.6.2	Promote the "Gardening in Harmony with Nature" booklet	ALL	ONGOING

<b>Objective 2: Develop a robust management system for allotments</b>			
<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>When</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Proactive management of the allotment waiting list</b>		
2.1.1	Contact all customers on the current waiting list to ensure continued interest.	CEC	DEC 2017
2.1.2	Regularly review customers nearing the top of the waiting list to ensure continued interest	CEC	ANNUALLY

<b>2.2</b>	<b>Raising and maintaining the quality of allotment plots</b>		
2.2.1	Undertake a programme of visual inspections between February and November	CEC	MONTHLY
2.2.2	Support the allotment officer by reporting areas of concern	SITE COMMITTEES /ALLOTMENT PLOT HOLDERS	ONGOING
2.2.3	Develop a mentoring/support system for those struggling to maintain their plots	SITE COMMITTEES/ALLOTMENT PLOT HOLDERS/CEC	ONGOING
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Process following an allotment plot failure</b>		
2.3.1	Issue warning letters to ploholders whose plots are deemed unacceptable following inspection	CEC	ONGOING
2.3.2	Re-assess plot condition following communication	CEC	ONGOING
2.3.3	Record instances and action appropriately on repetition	CEC	ONGOING
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Appeals process</b>		
2.4.1	Consider appeals following termination notice	CEC	ONGOING
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Introduction and development of water harvesting</b>		
2.5.1	Design and implement a water harvesting system at Northfield Drive site	SITE COMMITTEE/CEC	DECEMBER 2017
2.5.2	Evaluate success of Northfield Drive pilot	FEDAGA/CEC	DECEMBER 2018
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Devolved management</b>		
2.6.1	Provide advice and support to allotment groups wishing to explore devolved management/independence from the Council	CEC	ONGOING

### Objective 3: Improve Customer Experience

No.	Action	By whom	When
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Development of website/social media</b>		
3.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compile new email allotment contact list</li> <li>• Further Develop the City of Edinburgh Council website to facilitate on-line applications</li> <li>• Add and regularly update</li> <li>• videos/soundbites/training information</li> <li>• advertise waiting list times</li> </ul>	CEC/FEDAGA	ONGOING
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Initiate and develop a Mentoring Programme</b>		
3.2.1	Generic mentoring programme for existing plot holders	SITE COMMITTEE/PLOT HOLDERS	ONGOING
3.2.2	Roll out a training program in partnership with the Saughton Park Restoration Team, to be based at the new Saughton demonstration garden	CEC	DECEMBER 2018

<b>Objective 4: Adoption of New Allotment Regulations</b>			
<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>When</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Adoption of new allotment regulations by the City of Edinburgh Council</b>		
4.1.1	Update new regulations to reflect changes within the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act	CEC	DECEMBER 2018
4.1.2	Consult with stakeholder on proposed amendments	CEC	JANUARY 2018
4.1.3	Committee approval of new regulations	CEC	DECEMBER 2018