

Report for Scotland's National Food and Drink Policy *Recipe for Success*

Grow Your Own Working Group



February 2011



Grow Your Own Working Group

Report

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Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society
promoting and representing Scotland's Allotments



Grow Your Own Working Group

Introduction

In June 2009 Roseanna Cunningham, the Minister for Environment and Climate Change intimated a need for a Grow Your Own Working Group (GYOWG) The terms of reference of the GYOWG were to take forward that part of the Scottish Government's Food and Drink Policy relating to growing your own food.

- **Ensure that allotments and “grow your own” projects are strategically supported.**
- **Produce practical advice and best practice guidance that will appeal to public bodies, communities and individuals to help them develop local “grow your own” initiatives.**

Growing of vegetables and fruit in allotments, community gardens and orchards on public, private, school, community and other types of land are all included in 'Grow your Own'.

The first informal meeting took place in August 2009 and the first formal meeting on 11th November 2009. Membership of the GYOWG is open to any organisation interested in GYO and the first action of the GYOWG was to ensure that all those organisations had been notified of the existence of the Group and invite their presence.

Several meetings took place during 2010 under the aegis of the Scottish Government's Food and Drink Industry Division. In May 2010 the Minister chaired a Summit on Grow Your Own. During the year, members of the GYOWG discussed ways to fulfil the actions from Recipe for Success. Reports were requested from organisations to support the terms of reference. The final meeting concentrated on producing a report under the headings of planning, legal, community land, skills, guidance, and funding. This report represents the first steps in fulfilling the aspirations of the GYO communities all over Scotland and is the product of the GYOWG.

This is just the beginning. Some recommendations need the approval of the Scottish Parliament, others need positive action from local authorities and the NHS, others require further work by the GYOWG, whilst some recommendations can be progressed unilaterally. One recommendation has been completed. As always, the success and future outcome of any of the recommendations will depend on the enthusiasm of participants and the willingness of the Scottish Government to act as the catalyst.

On behalf of the Grow Your Own Working Group, we would like to thank all participants for their contributions and the officers of the Scottish Government's Food and Drink Division for their active support, advice and encouragement.

Jenny Mollison
Judy Wilkinson
Peter Wright
Members of the Grow Your Own Working Group.
February 2011.

Section 1: Recommendations from the working group

Planning

1. A Planning Conference to be staged involving senior planners from Government, Local Authorities and Health Boards jointly with the professional bodies to produce improved policies and guidance for GYO initiatives.
2. Identify best practice food growing policies and practice from local authority Open Space Strategies, and use this to encourage other local authorities to support the protection of existing and establishment of new allotments and community food growing projects.
3. The Working Group and all members to feed into consultation on Permitted Development Rights (due spring 2011).
4. Promote the benefits of Grow Your Own to planning authorities, making them aware of the need to identify locations and encourage their establishment to meet community demand for growing spaces.
5. On land scheduled for development but delayed, planning policies to dictate the “meanwhile use” of the land.
6. Local Authorities to use Section 75 Planning Agreements to support GYO projects.

Legal

7. An amendment to the Allotments Act that specifies a timescale for allotment provision and number of allotments per head of population.
8. A change to Public Finance Manual Rules that allows the Scottish Government, its agencies, and government-related organisations to lease or sell land at less than market value for local GYO initiatives.
9. GYO communities to make use of the Freedom of Information facility to ask Local Authorities how they are dealing with meeting the duties imposed on them by the Allotments (Scotland) Acts and disseminate this information.

Skills

10. Training in horticultural skills should be recognised by an awarding body where appropriate and such training should be progressive i.e. each course is certified and builds to higher qualifications.
11. Local Authorities should consider training needs as part of their Allotment/Growing Space Strategy.
12. To review commonality across education bodies to set standards and offer similar courses.
13. Bank of information and learning material to be held and managed by a central organisation linked to the web site.

Community Land

14. The establishment of a community land bank service developed to facilitate access to land for GYO initiatives and provide specialist support to landowners and food growers.
15. Government to instruct its agencies, Local Authorities, Health Boards, government related organisations and other public sector bodies, to examine their land assets and determine what surplus land will be made available for local GYO initiatives and to publicise this information.
16. Public bodies to use the Forestry Commission Community Leasing Scheme as an example of long term leasing of public land and other land for establishing GYO projects.
17. Every local authority to produce a strategy for community growing that establishes policy and planning. They will address the need to meet demand with appropriate supply and agree land and management issues.

Guidance

18. "Allotments, A Scottish Plotolders Guide" covers the basic culture of allotment gardening and allotment law. *Completed*
19. Production of a landowners' and land users' guide, including development and template leases, collating those that are available.
20. Production of a users' and providers' good practice guide on design and development of new and existing allotment sites that links to the improved planning policies.
21. Production of guidance on understanding soil contamination and how to grow on contaminated land.
22. Encourage organisations to set up a central web site or develop existing site/s to collect and disseminate information to the community GYO sector.
23. A travelling seminar to raise awareness at local authority level to identify and promote the benefits of community growing.

Funding

24. Provision of a "Soft Loan" scheme such as a Community Credit Fund for GYO initiatives.
25. Continual mapping of funding streams to be available on a central site.
26. Request that the administrators of funds are trained and briefed on the needs and limitations of those applying for funds for GYO projects.
27. Request Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) management board to consider funding needed (via the CSGN development fund and any future funds) to deliver the CSGN target of a threefold increase in the area of growing spaces in the CSGN area.

Section 2: Background to recommendations

The recommendations arose from the briefing papers submitted to the working group for information (attached in the appendix), the greenspace scotland scoping project¹, together with advice from members of the working group discussed at the five meetings and output from the May Summit².

Planning

Planning has been identified as a major barrier to the formation of new Grow Your Own sites³⁴. Scottish Government produced a briefing paper on planning policy for Allotments and Growing Spaces⁵, Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society wrote a briefing paper on the perceived problems and this was commented on by Scottish Government⁶. The meanwhile use of land is being promulgated by Glasgow City Council stalled spaces and this is recommended as an example for other authorities⁷.

Legal

The working group identified various legal constraints, obligations that are not being fulfilled under existing legislation and difficulties with access to information.

The Allotment (Scotland) Act 1892⁸ contains a well defined set of responsibilities, duties and land tenure lease agreements but no time frame for councils to fulfil these. A target of community growing spaces per head of population would enable progress to be made towards fulfilling the need of the communities and can be measured.

The Public Finance Manual restricts the ability of Scottish Government and its agencies to support GYO initiatives as the leasing or selling land has to be at market value.

The FOI recommendation is to ensure that every local authority has a named contact for allotment inquiries, a register of allotments and a list of all those resident in the authority area who have requested an allotment plot.

Skills:

There is a lot of training and educational activity taking place but this is not accessible and available to all⁹¹⁰. There is an opportunity to recognise and bring together what is being done and identify the benefits and need.

Courses, funded by public money, should be consistent across the country. Some growers and gardeners may not want qualifications but all should have a choice of professionally authenticated courses that can lead to higher levels.

A bank of authenticated information and learning materials will support knowledge transfer and development within communities.

City of Edinburgh Council is introducing training for new plot-holders¹¹ and Glasgow City Council is developing an educational facility and demonstration gardens¹²

Community land

Land is owned by local authorities, the NHS, public and private organisations and private individuals. Information on who owns land that may be suitable for GYO projects, whether public land or private is not readily available in an easily accessed manner. There are often difficulties with agreements between GYO initiatives and land owners¹³. Some land owners are not aware of the template legal agreements which are available to them. Lease agreements can be seen as off putting for farmers

¹ 'Community Growing in Scotland Scoping Report' greenspace scotland Jan 2011 commissioned by the Scottish Government to *be published*.

² Minutes GYO working group www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Business-Industry/Food-Industry/own

³ Paper 1 Planning Aid Scotland Allotment Research Project January 2011 David Wood

⁴ Paper 3 Land related barriers to community growing: Helen Pank and Heidi Proven

⁵ Appendix to Paper 2 Planning Issues affecting GYO: Jenny Mollison, Judy Wilkinson, Peter Wright

⁶ Paper 2 Planning Issues affecting GYO: Jenny Mollison, Judy Wilkinson, Peter Wright

⁷ Glasgow City Council stalled spaces [www.glasgow.gov.uk Stalled spaces Temporary Landscapes](http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/Stalled_spaces_Temporary_Landscapes)

⁸ Allotments (Scotland) Act 1892 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/55-56/54/contents

⁹ Paper 5 Skills and Qualifications Survey Wayne Roberts

¹⁰ greenspace scotland op cit

¹¹ Edinburgh Allotments training scheme www.edinburgh.gov.uk

¹² Glasgow City Council Bellahouston Park Education Facility

¹³ Paper 3 op.cit

who may be operating in a reactive business and require the land to be at their disposal at short notice, but on the other hand lease agreements for the community group or individual may not fulfil the requirements in terms of grant applications because the tenure is not long enough or terms and conditions may not suit the work that the community wants to undertake. Temporary or short term lease agreements are not always suitable for growers in terms of payback time. There are a number of stalled sites (sites in urban areas that are earmarked for development but are not being developed for various reasons such as financial short fall) that are not being best utilised in the interim. The community land bank would address these issues.

Public land is available but there needs to be willingness by the Local Authorities to identify and make this available. The Second 5 year Plan Edinburgh Allotment Strategy¹⁴ is an example of how all Scottish Local Authorities should proceed in providing land for allotments. The paper on Greening Edinburgh shows the importance of these initiatives for health and wellbeing, and the potential for the use of NHS land for community growing.¹⁵ The Forestry Commission lease provides a robust model for GYO projects¹⁶. Although local authorities are required to undertake a greenspace audit and strategy, unless there is a separate allotments strategy, planners may not look at the specific call for allotments and they are subsumed in the general greenspace targets¹⁷.

Guidance

The initial meetings of the GYOWG in 2009 identified deficiencies in available information for allotment gardeners which resulted in Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society producing the guide with the assistance of the Allotments Regeneration Initiative.¹⁸

There is a need to clarify the position for private landowners to allow them to lease land for GYO initiatives whilst maintaining control, including information on the different forms of land ownership such as trusts, companies limited by guarantee and co-operatives.¹⁹

There is a lack of knowledge about how to design and implement a good allotment site so it is well integrated into the local landscape, makes best use of land, shows opportunities for community input, and the options available in construction, materials, and utilities. Such advice would save funding bodies' money.²⁰

The responsibility of taking on new land for community growing initiatives, ensuring that the risks and liabilities are not ignored when growing on a potentially contaminated site should be disseminated.²¹

The existing gaps in the guidance that communities need should be filled with a website that is well linked, signposted, maintained and through which forums communicate.²²

A travelling seminar would reach the many local council officers who cannot travel because of spending cuts

Funding:

A soft loan that covers start up costs, assists in setting up new sites, regenerating old sites, and supports "meanwhile use" that is within the ability of associations to repay would enable them to meet their basic needs.²³

Training for fund administrators together with a Good Practice Design Guide (Guidance 20) would enable them to make informed decisions when allocating funds. Having other capital funds in place to create growing places, would be supported by having design principles to follow.

One of the key funders is CSGN²⁴ but growing spaces do not fit comfortably with the two key funding partners (Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage). If 10% of the CSGN Development fund in 2010 had been 'put to one side' for growing space and orchard projects then it would have been equivalent to about £130,000

¹⁴ Edinburgh Allotment Strategy www.edinburgh.gov.uk

¹⁵ Paper 4 Community gardening, health and NHS Lothian: Antonia Ineson

¹⁶ Forestry Commission Scotland Land for communities www.forestry.gov.uk/nfls

¹⁷ Paper 2 op.cit

¹⁸ Allotments A Scottish Plot-holders Guide www.sags.org.uk

¹⁹ Paper 3 op. cit.

²⁰ Evidence from SAGS

²¹ Paper 6 Soil Contamination and Community Growing: Eleanor Logan

²² greenspace scotland report op. cit.

²³ Paper 7 Funding for Community Growing Jenny Mollison, Judy Wilkinson, Peter Wright

²⁴ CSGN www.centuralscotlandgreennetwork.org

Grow Your Own Working Group

Membership

John Beveridge	Greenbelt Group Ltd
Peter Duncan	Fife Council
Elaine Gibb	greenspace scotland
Bill Gray	Community Food and Health (Scotland)
Stan Green	Growforth Ltd
John Hancox	Commonwealth Orchards
Antonia Ineson	NHS Lothians
David Jamieson	City of Edinburgh Council
Sarah-Jane Laing	Scottish Rural Property and Business Association
Eleanor Logan	Soil Association and NOURISH
Jenny Mollison	Scottish Allotments and Garden Society
Catriona Morrison	Scottish Natural Heritage
Helen Pank	Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens
Julie Proctor	greenspace scotland
Heidi Proven	Landshare (Keofilms)
Wayne Roberts	Elmwood College
Mike Strachan	Forestry Commission
Scott Walker	National Farmers Union Scotland
Judy Wilkinson	Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society
David Wood	Planning Aid Scotland
Peter Wright	Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society

Scottish Government Officers

Susan Gallacher	Food and Drink Industry Division
Jared Stewart	Food and Drink Industry Division
Kristen Anderson	Planning

List of Papers Submitted to the Grow Your Own Working Group

- 1 Planning Aid Scotland Allotment Research Project January 2011 - David Wood
- 2 Planning Issues affecting GYO - Jenny Mollison, Judy Wilkinson, Peter Wright
- 3 Land related barriers to community growing - Helen Pank , Heidi Proven
- 4 Community gardening, health and NHS Lothian - Antonia Ineson
- 5 Skills and Qualifications Survey - Wayne Roberts
- 6 Soil Contamination and Community Growing - Eleanor Logan
- 7 Funding for Community Growing - Jenny Mollison, Judy Wilkinson, Peter Wright



Planning Aid for Scotland Allotments Research Project – Summary Findings January 2011

Planning Aid for Scotland (PAS) (www.planningaidforScotland.org.uk) is a national charity registered in Scotland which provides services to all people seeking to engage more effectively in the planning system and related activities which affect the environments of local communities. PAS is funded by the Scottish Government, local authorities, charities, members and sponsors and provides advice and training through its 11 staff and around 300 volunteers largely from the membership of the planning profession in Scotland

Introduction

PAS decided to undertake this research after receiving enquiries relating to allotments via its planning advice service (e.g. about change of use requirements from agricultural land to horticulture/allotments; requirements for planning permission for infrastructure such as sheds at allotment sites). PAS noted that there may be a lack of clarity and consistency in how allotments are dealt with by planning authorities.

The research involved an examination of existing national and local planning policy, and sending questionnaires to selected Scottish planning authorities and other relevant stakeholders.

PAS also sought advice regarding the legal status of allotments in Scotland via The University of Strathclyde Law Clinic.

The research set out to investigate planning issues connected to community gardens as well as allotments; however, as greater response was received with regard to allotments, the summary findings below focus on this aspect.

Policy Review – national and local

Initial findings:

- No direct definition of allotments exists in Scottish planning law.
- Relevant English case law, not directly applicable to Scotland, states that allotments can come under the definition of agriculture (*Crowborough Parish Council vs Secretary for State for Environment* 1980 43 P & CR 229).
- The 1997 Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act suggests that agriculture includes horticulture (s277(i)).

- Scottish Government Planning Advice Note 65: Open Space does not provide detailed guidance on planning issues connected to allotments.
- Most planning authorities appear not have specific planning policies covering provision of allotments (an exception is a local plan policy covering provision of allotments via planning conditions).
- Most planning authorities appear not to have supplementary guidance on allotments.
- Some planning authorities have produced their own allotment strategy/guidance documents; however, these tend not to deal with planning issues, focusing more on site management issues.
- There is evidence of some planning authorities covering allotment provision in the Main Issues Reports of their Local Development Plan (LDP); it is not clear yet whether this will bring forward allotment-specific LDP policies.

Planning Authority questionnaire

Initial findings:

- There does not appear to be a completely consistent policy approach as to how planning applications for allotments are dealt with across Scotland.
- The policy and guidance used as a basis for making these decisions has developed on a local basis around general open space policy – perhaps due to lack allotment-specific policy or guidance elsewhere.
- Most planning authorities appear to use generic open space policies to cover any allotment related planning issues; often this refers to protecting existing allotments/open space rather delivering new allotment sites.
- Not all planning authorities feel that they have suitable policy in place to deal with allotments.
- Not all planners had direct experience of planning applications for allotments.
- Planning authorities encourage members of the public to participate in the local development plan process to allocate sites for allotments.

Community Experience

Initial findings:

- There is some frustration at a perceived lack of consistency in how allotments are dealt with by the planning system from some stakeholders.
- Individuals or groups seeking to develop sites for use as allotments do not always have a strong knowledge or understanding of the planning system.

Community Gardens

Several planning authority responses suggested that applications for community gardens would be considered in the same way as allotments under open space policies; some were unsure due to lack of experience; and another felt they would be treated differently in terms of visual impact.



Planning Issues Affecting Grow Your Own *A Briefing for the Grow Your Own Working Group* Jenny Mollison, Judy Wilkinson, Peter Wright Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society

This briefing paper arose from an initial document which was submitted to the Scottish Government Officers for comment. Their comments are shown in italics. The appendix from the planner was circulated and discussed at a working group meeting.

1. STRATEGIC PLANNING PROBLEMS COMMENTS ON PAN 65

- 13 Local Authorities do not have any information about allotment sites, number of plots nor people inquiring about allotments.
- Only 7 local authorities have allotment strategies or policies.
- There are no Good Practice Design guidelines for allotments
- The provision of community gardens is not a legal obligation for local authorities

Comment SG: *[No requirement for separate allotment audit or strategy but recommended that LAs prepare an open space audit and strategy and allotments are seen in PAN65 as one of several types of open space. This is similar for playing fields, amenity space etc where we do not expect separate audits and strategies – better to look at provision holistically.]*

Comment SAGS: This lack of data and information affects the interpretation and value of PAN 65 as a planning document:

1.1 Open Space Strategy:

PAN 65 section 20. 'An open space strategy provides an effective means of co-ordinating the policies of the different council departments with responsibilities for open space, and of focusing liaison and partnership working with relevant public, private and community interests. It should be a corporate document that both informs and is informed by other strategies and plans, including development plans, the Core Paths Plan and the community plan. It should also influence decisions on spending and investment.'

Comment SAGS: If the Local Authority does not have an allotment strategy or plan, the Open Space Strategy cannot be informed about allotments. If there is no information about design and costing the provision cannot influence decisions on spending and investment.

Comment SG: *[See point above – not a requirement to have a separate audit and strategy and it doesn't necessarily follow that LAs are not informed about allotments because they don't have a specific strategy on them. Indeed the open space audit is itself a means of collecting information and data, as the open space audit should look at each of the PAN65 open space typologies including 'allotments and community growing spaces'.]*

PAN 65 section 21. An open space strategy can help local authorities and their strategic partners move towards a more structured, rigorous and rounded analysis of open space supply and requirements.....

Comment SAGS How can the Local Authority include allotments in its analysis of open space requirements and supply if it does not hold any data on them nor has any contact with allotment organizations who may be partners? In fact all except 2 local authorities have private as well as Council sites.

Comment SG: *[We understand that where open space audits have been carried out, allotments or community gardens have been identified in at least some of the audits. PAN 65 and its typologies forms the basis for what is included in most of the audits local authorities have prepared. Therefore not necessarily the case that there is no data. Many authorities are still working on completing their audits which can then inform their strategies.]*

PAN 65 section 22. A strategy should comprise four elements:

- a strategic framework and vision for open space;
- an audit of existing open space provision;
- an assessment of current and future requirements; and
- a strategy statement with a clear set of priorities and actions.

Comment SAGS If it does not know how many allotments there are nor how many people would like one how can a local authority assess current and future requirements?

Comment SG: *[As 21 above]*

1.2. Strategic Framework and Vision

PAN 65 section 23. The process of strategy development and implementation must begin with a shared understanding between the local authority and its strategic partners....

Comment SAGS Only 5 local authorities have representatives from allotment organizations on their implementation group.

Comment SG: *[This may be because there is adequate allotment provision in some areas or that it is not a key issue. Authorities will presumably have to prioritise who should represent the different open space interests on working groups, the reference in the PAN is to 'strategic partners'. However local authorities may consult with other users/interests in other ways. Will depend on circumstances so while desirable, could not always be a requirement.]*

1.3 Open Space Audits

PAN 65 section 24. The essential elements of an audit are to record the type, functions, size, condition, location and maintenance requirements of the spaces and to provide some insight on levels of use. The process should also identify community views on the value of open spaces and aspirations for their future role...

Comment SAGS: If neither the Local Authority nor the local people are aware of the diversity of allotment sites and the potential for well-being and community engagement how can they give informed opinions?. [Don't understand this sentence – what does the 'diveristy of allotment sites' mean? Is it the actual existence of sites or the nature of particular sites in the area? The Local Authority audit may not include areas under 0.25ha but area could contain 12 full sized allotment plots. It is estimated that over 30% of allotment sites in Scotland are about 0.25 ha or less in size.

Comment SG: *[It is up to authorities what size of site they wish to cover in their audit. With GIS it is now much easier to record sites of all sizes. The open space audit process should involve community engagement which provides an opportunity for allotment groups and the wider community to highlight areas that they feel are valued and functional.]*

1.4 Assessing Current and Future Requirements

PAN 65 section 29. A demand-led approach is suited to those spaces for which a quantifiable demand can be identified, for example, sports facilities and functional spaces such as cemeteries and allotments. This should allow the local authority to consult with relevant user groups or carry out necessary survey work in order to establish the demand for facilities.

Comment SAGS: How do interested community groups make their interest known if there is no channel for this information? Sports facilities have many champions in Local Authority departments and through Councillors. Allotments have less kudos and little support in the higher corridors of local government although more people garden than play sport.

Comment SG: *[Approaching authorities direct with concerns and suggestions will presumably raise the profile of the issue and help understand what further action is required. Many open space strategies have recently been published or are being consulted on at the moment, so that is one opportunity to make representations and raise concerns.]*

PAN 65 section 30. Where the need for a type of space is broadly the same everywhere, or where the demand for a particular use is difficult to quantify, for example when attempting to predict future community needs in a new housing area, it may be appropriate to use a standards-based approach.

Comment SAGS: There is little research on the interest in allotments nor any standards related to opportunity to garden. Unless allotments are a required part of a planning brief no developer will include one because they may reduce the housing numbers. The agreement for upkeep and responsibility is more arduous than passing the land over to a maintenance company

Comment SG: *[Without evidence on interest in allotments or demand for allotments then it will be difficult for authorities to plan for them, comments made through the open space audit process may establish that there is a perceived deficiency in a particular type of open space within an area. One approach might be to try and find a willing developer who would integrate an allotment into a new development as an exemplar. This could then provide evidence about how popular it has been and encourage others in future. But without evidence on the demand for allotments in a particular area, then it will be difficult for authorities to plan for them in development plans or to require them in planning applications – it may be desirable but it is not essential infrastructure like roads or school places, which are a direct requirement of a development. Even these essential elements will be difficult to deliver in the current financial climate.]*

1.5 Strategy Statement

PAN 65 section 34. The open space needs and desires of the local community must be established. Attention should be paid to the aspirations of all communities and interests, including ethnic minorities and vulnerable groups, women, children, older people and those with disabilities. Community Councils can provide a useful starting point. Community planning mechanisms may also help channel wider community aspirations into the open space strategy.

Comment SAGS: Again if there are no allotments in the area, if the Local Authority is not disseminating information about them people do not know what they can have. Sites that encourage disadvantaged groups and support them show how important plots are for these people.

1.6 Development Management

PAN 65 section 44. Empowering communities to get involved in the design, management and ongoing maintenance of open spaces can help the community to take pride in the ownership of spaces, and reduce vandalism of facilities and anti-social behaviour. Organisations established to promote community capacity building might use open space provision or enhancement as the vehicle to achieve it.

Comment SAGS: If there is no information about design and good practice how can communities become involved?

Comment SG: *[Depending on who is developing a new site, there may well be opportunities to get involved in the design. If there is a planning application for a new site from a private body, there are requirements for consultation and engagement, particularly but not exclusively, with neighbours of the site, particularly in the case of major developments. If it is a Council application then widespread consultation and engagement would be expected.]*

2. LOCAL PLANS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

2.1 Greenfield sites:

Greenfield sites in particular in cities should be saved for community growing areas. However Councils often sell these for development. In Glasgow, although CITY PLAN 2 strongly prefers the use of brownfield sites for building as well as supporting a Development Strategy to "improve residents health by providing local access to facilities, including greenspaces, " the last remaining greenfield site in the north of the city is being sold for development. This in spite of protests from an active community group which is conserving the site.

GYOWG Briefing paper on Planning Jenny Mollison, Judy Wilkinson and Peter Wright Jan 2011

Comment SG: *[This will often come down to financial considerations – particularly in the current climate. But as suggested above, there may be ways to show that allotments can be a positive element of a new housing development.]*

2.2 Development sites:

Glasgow City Plan 2 recommends 0.1 ha for allotments /1000 people (1 full sized plot for 200 people) in non-flatted developments and 0.05ha (1 full sized plot for 400 people) in flatted developments. This is a positive development on the part of a local authority although it is not anywhere near the target of 1 plot per 100 people. However unless the planning authority asks for allotments as part the planning brief developers are not going to make them part of the design.

Comment SG: *[As suggested above, unless there is evidence of a need or that the development produces a requirement for a particular use then it is difficult if not impossible for authorities to require that use in a planning brief. Planning legislation allows for infrastructure needs that arise from a development to be provided through the planning permission – it would be difficult to argue that allotments are a direct infrastructure requirement in the way that transport and school places are. It is more about convincing developers to build it into their plans from an early stage, reflecting it in their financial models and seeing it as a positive addition.]*

3. SPECIFIC PLANNING PROBLEMS:

Community growing projects (gardens, farms, allotments, orchards, woodlands) often have difficulties securing land because of problems with Planning. For example:

3.1 Planning permission for huts and polytunnels :

Highland Council, does not require planning permission for huts - the position, size and suitability of huts is left to Allotment Associations to decide. However other allotment groups (eg: in Huntly and in Eyemouth) have been told that every shed and polytunnel requires individual planning permission, which will be expensive and time consuming.

Comment SG: *[The Scottish Government will be consulting on permitted development rights in Spring 2011. This may be an opportunity to raise this issue, and suggest that minor works on established allotment sites such as sheds and polytunnels should be permitted development and not require planning applications.]*

3.2. Visual amenity:

Sites have been refused planning permission because they are 'visually unattractive' (Kirkcaldy, Glasgow). However if this is an issue the local authority should work with the community to design an acceptable site. For example Deans Gallery in Edinburgh does not have any individual huts and the lay-out enhances the Gallery.

3.3. Car parking:

Several sites have been turned down because of fears of 'extra traffic' and lack of 'sufficient' car parking spaces. A site in St Monans was asked to provide one car parking space per allotment plot. There is rarely a need for extra car parking – plot-holders visit the site at different times and many walk or cycle. Moncrieffe Island in Perth (71 plots), Dunblane in Stirling (36 plots) have no vehicular access

3.4 Road access:

Several applications turned down because of access road. One in Borders advised transport would not approve because of a narrow road, another because of tight corner. However road access should be discussed and not a reason for rejection – several sites manage without direct access.

3.5 Change of use:

Community growing spaces, such as Woodend Allotments in Aberdeenshire, a garden centre and a farmer offering a field for allotments have been required to obtain planning permission for a GYOWG Briefing paper on Planning Jenny Mollison, Judy Wilkinson and Peter Wright Jan 2011

Change of Use. This is expensive and time consuming. Since in the Town and Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 'agriculture' is defined to include 'horticulture' there does not seem to be any reason why a 'Change of Use' should be required.

Comment SG: *[Scottish Government has set out in SPP that it believes that the primary responsibility for the operation of the planning system and service is with local and national park authorities. So there may justifiably be variations across the country to address different geographies and circumstances - it is right that individual authorities can approach specific planning issues in different ways, to suit their particular circumstances.]*

Generic advice on design, access etc. could be helpful but is not something that Ministers would seek to provide. Could perhaps be provided by allotments society working with COSLA. There may be an opportunity to work with COSLA to update COSLA's Guidance Notes for Scottish Councils on 'Allotments in Scotland', where there are particular issues.]

If the GYO Working Group feels there is a gap and need for new design guidance, it may also be appropriate for the Group itself to develop guidance for planning authorities. Often particular interest groups seek further planning advice to be provided for their particular area. For example the Scottish Auto Cycle Union (SACU) wanted Government to provide advice to Local Authorities and others, to set out issues for planners to consider and address perceptions of the sport being seen as anti social, either by creating noise or creating a blot on the landscape. In that case it was felt that rather than Scottish Ministers producing guidance, that SACU were better placed to provide advice (which has recently been published in draft).

If the GYO group wish to prepare some guidelines, we would be happy to offer some comments on the drafting, and could include a link to the finalised document on our website.

4. Suggested recommendations to ensure that allotments and 'grow your own' projects are strategically supported

4.1. Letter from the Minister to all Local Authorities to highlight existing Allotments Act legislation and the need to provide allotments.

Comment SG: *[This would need to be clear that it is not a requirement of the Planning Acts to provide allotments.]*

4.2. Letter/directive from Chief Planner to make inclusion of community allotments/gardens space a condition of planning permission for new developments and that small spaces (<1ha) for allotments should only be subject to minimum planning regulations.

Comment SG: *[The Courts have laid down the general criteria for the validity of planning conditions. Planning conditions must meet clear tests set out in Circular 4/1998 (The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions), one of these tests is that planning conditions should only be imposed where they are 'necessary'. Although desirable, the provision of allotments is not essential infrastructure and rarely critical to allowing a development to go ahead, and so would be difficult to tie to a condition. May be scope for allotments to be covered in review of PD arrangements if not already being considered.]*

4.3. The Government to host a Conference for all Local Authorities to highlight existing planning policy with support of Scottish Government and involvement RTPI (Royal Town Planning Institute) and ADS (Architecture and Design Scotland)

Comment SG: *[Unlikely to be a priority for Scottish Government at this stage, but perhaps Greenspace Scotland or COSLA might be willing to host? Or it could be an action for the Working Group should it wish to continue to meet post the publication of the GYO Working Group's Report]*

5. Suggested Recommendations to produce practical advice and best practice guidance that will appeal to public bodies, communities and individuals to help them develop local 'grow your own' initiatives.

5.1 . A good practice guide for the design of new sites and management of existing sites that addresses issues such as layout plots, site features (soil, drainage etc), paths, fences, structures, screening, recommendations on root stock and varieties for orchards and hedging and design of green corridors.

Comment SG: *[This sounds helpful but not for Ministers to provide. COSLA and/or allotments society could lead, or this could be a further task for the GYO Working Group should it continue in some guise with input from Planning Aid for Scotland]*

5.2 . Planning Officer Forum – building on the success of the Allotment Regeneration Initiative's Allotment Officer Forums, a Planning Officer Forum would be an opportunity for Planning Officers from all Local Authorities across Scotland to share practical experiences.

Comment SG: *[There do not tend to be forums on specific issues like this. However there are established forums that planning officers attend on Development Planning and Development Management which run a couple of times a year and cover a variety of topical issues. Allotments could be a topic for a session of the Development Plan or Development Management Forums. Or looking back to item 3 – could be a specific one-off session to cover the issue.]*

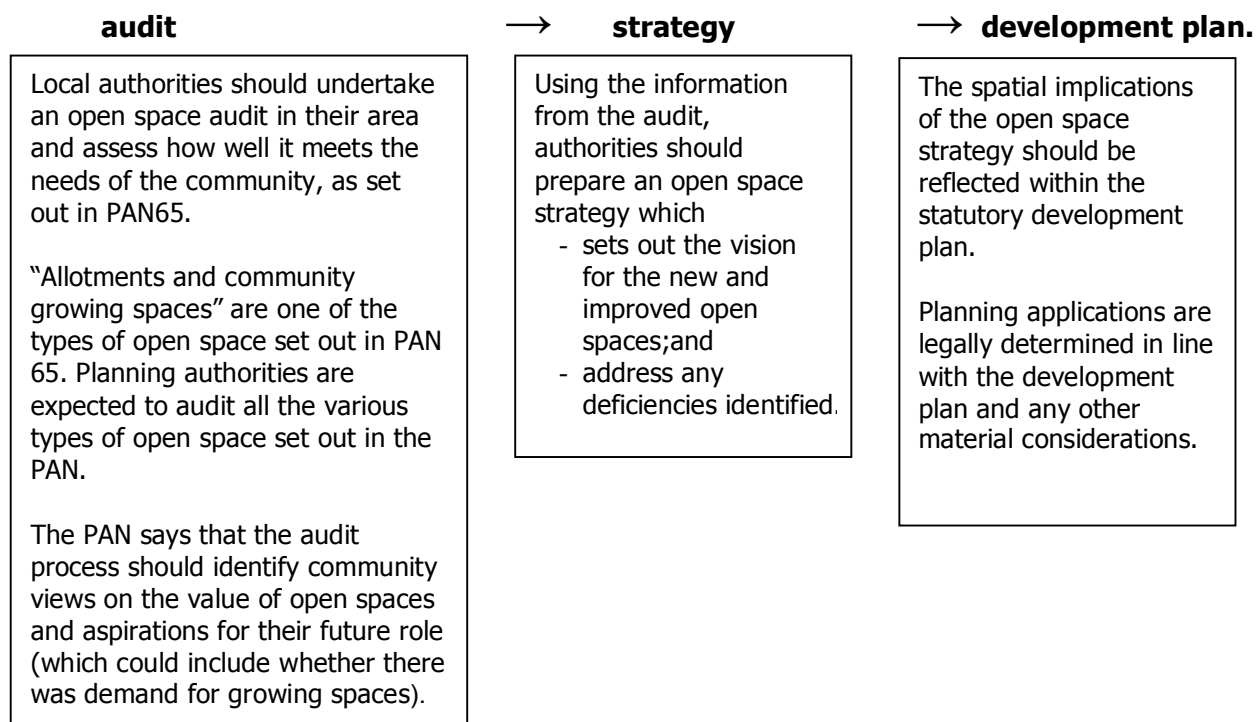
Permitted Development for minor activities on allotment sites

The Working Group may wish to consider whether its recommendations should include action to seek to extend permitted development rights to exempt minor developments (eg sheds and poly tunnels) on established allotment sites from requiring applications for planning permission. This could contribute to Delivering Planning Reform and ensuring proportionate demands are placed on applicants, and contribute to the efficiency of the planning system.

Appendix: Background from the Scottish Government: Planning Policy – Allotments and Growing Spaces

Scottish Planning Policy and Advice (PAN65)

Scottish Planning Policy protects open spaces of which there are many types, including allotments and growing spaces. Scottish Planning Policy is that local authorities should “*should take a strategic and long term approach to managing the open space in their area, assessing both current and future needs and protecting all spaces which can help to meet them*” This involves the process of audit, strategy, development plan.



Planning applications from groups looking to establish new community growing spaces would be determined in line with the development plan and any other material considerations.

Planning Reform

Delivering Planning Reform is a common statement which looks at modernising the planning system. DPR demonstrates a concerted and determined joint effort to deliver a fundamental change in the way we work. It contains a commitment from the Scottish Government to scale back the amount of its planning advice and, instead, focus future advice on key principles, allowing local solutions to be developed.

It also commits the Scottish Government to do more to effectively communicate good practice and to continue to play an active role in disseminating good practice. Case studies are one of the ways the Scottish Government is using to identify and share good practice and promote them on our website.

Land related barriers to community growing. Recommendations for GYOWG

Helen Pank (FCFCG) and Heidi Proven (Landshare)
January 2011

1. Background

For some time now, demand for land from the community sector, mostly for growing activities but also for other uses (eg: energy, sport, play), has outstripped traditional sources of supply. For example, there are currently 6,000 people on waiting lists for allotments in Scotland, with a waiting time of 7 years in some areas. This has led to a number of innovations to facilitate greater levels of access by communities both to private and public sector land on a variety of short, medium and long term leases. Landshare, with over 58,000 users in the UK, and Development Trust Association (UK) Meanwhile Project are examples of projects aimed at breathing new life into underdeveloped or derelict land and buildings and finding new ways of helping people get access to land for growing.

In 2009, Defra and the Dept for Communities and Local Government commissioned the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (FCFCG) to investigate the feasibility of expanding on these initiatives to bring more underused land into productive community use. Below are key findings of the report and experiences of projects like Landshare.

2 Main barriers to community use of land (especially for growing)

1. **Difficulty finding/negotiating use of land:** every month the FCFCG hears of community groups that are struggling to find land. For example: Dunoon Allotment Association has been asking Argyll and Bute Council for land for more than 5 years; Cromarty Allotments and Gardens Society have been trying to find land, from the council and local land owners, for over 2 years and are on the verge of disbanding as they are running out of options; and the Balmullo Community Garden Association in Fife cancelled their FCFCG membership in October 2010 because they could not find land. It can be difficult for community groups to find the right person to talk to about land access, especially with large organisations, and sometimes, groups can be afraid of approaching them. For example, the FCFCG knows of a group in a village in Fife who are wary of approaching the local private Estate owner, even though we know, from other sources that he would be happy to use his land this way.
2. **Lack of awareness amongst landowners of the options available** and the implications of offering land. While many landowners have successfully used Landshare to connect with growers in both paid and unpaid agreements, many are still unaware of the project as an option to connect with growers. There are likely many more landowners who would be happy to release their land, but have simply never thought of doing so or assume it will be too complicated or costly
3. **Landowner concerns about:**
 - a. **Losing control** and their assets becoming liabilities. Landowners fear the unknown, especially tenants who might not leave at the end of the term of the lease. For example, the Buccleuch Estate will not consider leasing land to a community group, because they had their fingers burned doing this over 40 years ago.
 - b. **Planning delays** - it is easier to secure planning permission for derelict land than

land used for growing, so there is significant financial advantage to leaving a site derelict

- c. **Project failure** – owners worry about the competence and management abilities of community groups misusing their land. NHS Lothian’s response to this was to engage an established charity to work as an intermediary to negotiate with smaller community groups on their behalf. Several GYOWG members currently offer advice to new growing groups and landowners, but these schemes could be expanded to offer more structured online and offline help
 - d. **Bad publicity** – when sites used by community groups are reclaimed for commercial development. For example, Glasgow City Council received a lot of bad press when they tried to evict the North Kelvin Meadow community group. However, landowners’ reputations suffer where sites are disused and unsightly, and bringing land into productive use reduces the chances of squatting and fly tipping.
4. **Lack of technical skills:** in many cases, community groups and landowners have never brokered land deals before. They especially need help with leases. For example, Earth Share, a community run market garden in Forres, recently had to close because they couldn’t negotiate a long term lease with the local Estate. On a more positive note, Landshare offers template agreements and has experience of landowners from farms to nursing homes using the site successfully to offer growing space, and the Forestry Commission have just re-launched the National Forest Land scheme with minimum 25 year leases. These good examples need to be promoted as model leases, with a clear outline of the options and what the implications are for landowners.
 - 5 **Site selection and design:** many community groups have little experience of selecting or designing a site for community growing. Land may be contaminated, and initially design ideas may seem expensive. However, there are examples of ways round these problems that need to be promoted (eg: Fairlie Organic Growers used raised beds to transform a brownfield site).
 - 6 **Long term use of land** – many groups are satisfied with temporary use of land, especially where the alternative is no land. However, meanwhile use of land does have problems (eg: the Royal Edinburgh Community Gardens were turned down for Climate Challenge Fund funding because they only have a one year rolling lease) and it should not be seen as an alternative for councils to provide permanent allotments.
 - 7 **Capacity of community groups** to take over management/ownership of land. Small groups may not want the responsibility of owning land – they may want simply to work the land.

3 Recommendations to overcome these barriers:

Food and Drink Policy recommendation:

Ensure that allotments and ‘grow your own’ projects are strategically supported

Recommended actions by the GYOWG:

1. **Support the establishment of a Community Land Bank Service**, developed using the Landshare portal, to provide tailored technical and legal one-to-one support for community groups trying to broker land deals, as well as the existing online support network for sharing information.

The FCFCG’s research and Landshare’s experience shows that “Land supply does not appear to be the problem...The missing link appears to be a trusted intermediary to

broker acceptable tenure terms and conditions between landowners and community gardening groups.” Many landowners are willing to offer land to community

groups for varying reasons – produce sharing, rental fees, increased links with local community - but more work needs to be done to promote this course of action direct to landowner networks. A CLB developed using existing online support networks, could actively aid negotiations between landowners and community sector groups, providing bespoke services where necessary, to secure land on affordable and flexible terms. A CLB could:

- a. Perform the role of 'trusted broker', helping to find land, reducing perceived risk on the part of landowners and demystifying the process of land acquisition for community groups
 - b. Establish good practice procedures and precedents (eg: template leases), and make use of Landshare's existing online portal to share these models which would reduce the need for bespoke services in every case.
 - c. Hold land in trust for groups who don't want the responsibility of owning/managing the land themselves
 - d. Provide technical services such as site appraisals, feasibility of proposed uses, legal and land agent services.
2. **Encourage long term leasing of public land** – building on the precedent of the Forestry Commission's minimum 25 year lease through the National Forest Land Scheme
 3. **Incentivise meanwhile use through planning permission** – make it a requirement for developers to have a 'meanwhile use plan' for sites before planning permission is granted, so that, if a development is delayed, meanwhile community use will be allowed.
 4. **Make sure public funding is available for meanwhile projects**– currently groups are unable to access public funding if they have a short lease, but a great deal can be achieved in even a short time. Funding for equipment/staffing (rather than capital) should be available.

Food and Drink Policy recommendation:

Produce practical advice and best practice guidance that will appeal to public bodies, communities and individuals to help them develop local 'grow your own' initiatives.

Recommended actions by the GYOWG:

5. **Landowners' guide** – containing model template leases (that could be tailored to meet individual situations) and case studies of successful land partnerships between community groups and a variety of land owners, private and public. There are already many examples of good practice (eg: Landshare template agreements, Forestry Commission's National Forest Land Scheme). This guide would tie them all together, and would need to be endorsed by all the GYOWG members to be effective and trusted by landowners.
6. **Mentor network to support new growing groups:** Develop links between existing training and mentor schemes (eg: Allotment Regeneration Initiative mentors) and develop existing online and on the ground networks, to make it easier for communities to access ongoing support. Seek funding to train additional mentors – working both on the ground and using online networks - enabling community growing knowledge to become more widespread with an inbuilt support network in communities. Landshare have seen how their online Q&A section supports new growers and offers land owners comfort, reducing land owner concerns about sustainability and success of growing spaces – and would welcome the use of this by existing mentor networks.



Community gardening, health and NHS Lothian.

**Antonia Ineson, Senior Health Policy Officer, Public Health,
NHS Lothian.**

These notes are intended to give an overview of the involvement of NHS Lothian in supporting community gardening work, most of which includes food growing. This has been in partnership with the voluntary sector, community groups and councils. There will be work which is not mentioned, but it is hoped this gives some idea of the scope of the work underway.

1. Background

Connections between the work of NHS Lothian and community and therapeutic gardening have existed for many years, through work linked with psychiatric hospitals, in community health projects, and in schools. In recent years, the nature of the connections have changed and developed, and the work is slowly coming to be seen as having a contribution to make to the promotion of health, and to the prevention and treatment of illness.

2. Health inequalities, food and mental health

The national strategic context has been reflected in the development of the involvement of NHS Lothian. Addressing and reducing health inequalities of all sorts has become central. The National Food and Drink Policy, and the statement by Richard Lochhead that public sector land should be made available for community food growing, has been an important stimulus. In particular the bringing together of agriculture, health and environmental sustainability in the policy has been influential. Efforts have been made to incorporate community gardening and local food production into NHS Lothian strategies where appropriate. For example, the Lothian Healthy Weight Strategic Framework, adopted by NHS Lothian in 2008, recognises the potential contribution that community growing of food, including school gardens, could make to the prevention of obesity.

3. Partnership working

This area of work is one where partnership working is particularly important, including that with councils, community health projects and other community groups, and the voluntary sector. National organisations, including the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, Trellis, the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society and the Soil Association, have provided valuable support and expertise to NHS Lothian.

4. The City of Edinburgh Council Allotment Strategy

A representative of NHS Lothian has been part of the group which has developed two Allotment Strategies for the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC). These have succeeded in planning and establishing new allotment sites, and in including a community and inequalities focus. The need to explore innovative approaches to the provision of land for gardening in response to the shortage of land for allotments, such as the use of NHS land, has been included. The new allotment site at Bridgend was the first organic site in Scotland, and it was agreed that a high percentage of plots would be allocated for

people who lived locally (in areas defined as deprived). It was also agreed that plots would be made available for a community gardening and health project, and NHS staff time was made available for the development of a bid for lottery funding, which was successful. The project is still mainly funded through the lottery, but considerable in-kind resources have been contributed by both the NHS, through the local Community Health Partnership (including management and administrative costs and office accommodation), and the CEC.

5. Greening Edinburgh for Health through Community and Therapeutic Gardening

The Health Inequalities Standing Group, a sub-group of the Edinburgh Community Health Partnership, identified the need to develop work on the natural environment and health inequalities. A group was brought together to develop an action plan and to administer some Fairer Scotland Fund, Social Justice Fund and Health Inequalities Fund resources, and considerable NHS staff time has been put into the work. Two annual conferences have been held, which involved many of the groups in the area, and a Greening Edinburgh for Health Action Plan produced.¹ The work has brought together people working from a range of perspectives, including food growing and cooking, mental and physical health, biodiversity, climate change, environmental sustainability, forests and woods, allotments, community gardens and schools. One outcome has been improved links and some joint working between these areas. The following is the vision for the Plan;

Vision for Greening Edinburgh for Health through Community and Therapeutic Gardening

Community and therapeutic gardening will take place all over Edinburgh, involving people of all ages, ethnicities and abilities, and in particular those living in deprived areas and with health needs. The value of gardening to physical and mental health, and to social development and cohesion, will be recognised in local strategies and planning processes, and by all public sector staff including those those working with vulnerable groups in the health and social care sectors. The fruit and vegetables grown will contribute to a healthy diet, as part of a local and sustainable food system. Organic growing methods will be the norm, and supporting environmental sustainability and biodiversity through composting, recycling and active travel will be part of all gardens. Publicly owned land, such as council and NHS land, will be considered for gardening wherever possible. Children will become involved in gardening and food growing through Eco Schools, and there will be strong links between schools, allotments and community gardens. Community and therapeutic gardening will involve people of all ages, ethnicities, and abilities, working together for a greener and healthier Edinburgh.

¹ The Greening Edinburgh for Health Action Plan is available through the Health Inequalities Standing Group of the Edinburgh Community Health Partnership.

5. Work in Midlothian

The NHS Lothian Health Promotion Service has been involved in a review of the value of community gardening to health², and has been supporting developments with Midlothian Council, particularly linked to food and physical activity.

6. Work in East Lothian

A project involving the use of NHS grounds has been running for several years at Edenhall Hospital in East Lothian. The Dad's Work project has food growing plots which are used by fathers and children together. Establishing the project involved the local NHS Public Health Practitioner and the NHS Estates department.

7. Royal Edinburgh Hospital Community Gardens

An initiative lead by the Chairman of NHS Lothian Board has started to use part of the grounds of the Royal Edinburgh Hospital for community gardening. This builds on existing use of the land by Artlink, the hospital horticultural therapy service and other community and voluntary sector organisations. A proposal was put out to tender in late 2009, and the Cyrenians was appointed to manage the project and investigate ways of making such work financially sustainable. The NHS contributed some seed-corn funding, and some staff time, as well as the land and other services. The Cyrenians are now exploring the possibility of establishing similar projects on other NHS Lothian land. It is planned that community gardening and food growing will be incorporated into the redesign process for the hospital, for the benefit of communities, patients and staff.³

8. Craigie Farm Project

A project is being developed at Craigie Farm following the offer of the use of a polytunnel and some land by the farmer. The aim is to involve people going through Criminal Justice processes, on Community Service Orders, and others, and to explore the possibility of a social enterprise based on food growing and providing funded places for people in need of work experience or training. The initial development was carried out by an NHS Public Health Practitioner working on the NHS Offender Health Project.

9. Community health projects

Many community health projects in Lothian have or are planning to include food growing in their work, and NHS Lothian has been closely involved in the funding for the projects, together with councils and others. The potential for linking work on the promotion of a healthy diet and healthy weight with food growing is increasingly recognised. The Greening Edinburgh for Health Action Plan includes a list of projects in Edinburgh.

² Growing Projects: Harnessing the Opportunities for Midlothian in line with Midlothian Single Outcome Agreement 2010/13, Ailish O'Neill, Health Promotion Specialist, NHS Lothian, 2010

³ <http://royaledinburghcommunitygardens.wordpress.com>



Skills and Qualification Survey

A Briefing for the Grow Your Own Working Group

Wayne Roberts

Elmwood College

The purpose of this report is to carry out an initial base survey and provide support for **Objective 1, activity n**; *'Make recommendations for the next steps about the role of education and training, particularly highlighting skills gaps and potential routes for solutions'*.

The report has been carried out through the collection of information from a desktop survey carried out amongst current providers and trainers and through information provided by the Landbased Sector skills providers, school groups, local communities and local authorities.

Throughout the report, the Grow your own (GYO) arena is referred to as 'The sector'

Primary Conclusion

There is a lot of training and education activity being carried out in the sector by training organisations, FE colleges and private individuals that is provided often at the response to individual and fragmented requests. This results in pockets of activity that meets local demand but has little impact in providing a cross country solution that supports a framework of activity that is accessible and available to all. The findings of this survey have identified that there is a lot of support for the development of skills and qualification within the sector to help reduce skills gaps within communities and enhance the development of skills set available but this needs to be coordinated in the way that it is delivered, content of courses, accessibility and funding available identified.

Skills vs Qualification

There is often a misunderstanding in what is training and what is education. *Training* is determined to provide a particular skills set or define a particular activity required by individuals, groups or organisations to meet a particular objective. Training is often carried out over a short timeframe, namely 1 – 5 days.

Examples of *training* being provided include: An allotment strategy in Fife supporting the inclusion of a training course for all new and existing plot holders on new and existing sites throughout the county. Training courses by ARI, SAGS and TRELIS meeting the needs of specific areas of the GYO sector.

Education is determined as activities that develop both theoretical and practical skills that are identified in a set of pre-determined criteria and often to enhance growth of particular industry areas.

Examples of *education* include the development of the Skills for Work programme (SfW) within schools that supports the national curriculum and develops new skills sets with formative education providers. The development of a therapeutic Horticulture (HT) degree programme with Aberdeen University that supports growing your own and sensory gardening.

Key Findings:

1: There is a significant amount of training being carried out that is ad hoc and devised by the individual trainers responsible to meet specific or short term needs. This provision includes short courses such as pruning, general horticulture, setting up an allotment etc. Whilst these are excellent initiatives, there could be potential to support the development of knowledge banking that is managed and developed to set criteria.

2: There is a lot of repetition amongst providers, without any co-ordinated approach. A lot of public money is used to devise short courses that meet the demands of individual areas of the sector that does not provide transferrable or recognisable skills set into other areas. One pruning course can be different in content to another pruning course but still be advertised as the same thing.

3: There are excellent initiatives being carried out that enhance and further the GYO initiative in key areas. These include the Carse of Gowrie Orchard Groups, Newburgh Orchard Group. SAGS, ARI, TRELIS and others. These all have specific training needs within the sector and meet local and specific demand.

4: There is a strong provision into schools to meet the needs of the Curriculum for Excellence agenda and provide support for the national curriculum. This *demands* to be co-ordinated as schools budgets and sector funding is becoming increasingly tight. There is opportunity to provide a schools liaison for primary and secondary development that co-ordinates the provision available and identifies and maximises funding opportunities.

5: There is a strong demand for horticulture based training and qualification within the GYO sector and within Scotland. This helps to support the development and growth of the professional industry in Scotland by identifying and supporting horticulture and landbased industries as a primary career choice. This in turns helps to improve the skills set within society and continually replace skills that are lost through natural wastage and economic downturns whilst enhancing future employability. There is evidence to suggest that there will be a high proportion of the (landbased) sector (all industries) retiring within the next 10 years. The sector will need to attract and develop new blood to replace their skills (Lantra, 2009)

Skills Challenges

The GYO sector, whilst covering both professional and leisure activity, does have particular skills gaps that are identified at the lower end of the skills framework (level 1); 'An understanding and/or knowledge of activities to carry out basic skills and procedures'.

Whilst there is a shortage of sector specific recognised skills, there is often a lot of supporting and allied skills that individuals utilised to help develop their community groups or sector initiative.

Skills challenges also included areas of the sector where there is also a concerted need to support sector skills with the provision of softer core skills such as numeracy/ problem solving, team working and communication. These were often cited in discussions with the 'research groups'

Given also that there are a high proportion of community initiatives that are led by and involve individuals in the development and management of the activity, business skills development such as finance and management skills were also seen as increasingly important.

The challenge arises when trying to identify the sector specific skills and the key core skills required at the same time to support the training initiative.

Drivers for change

The GYO agenda has benefited from a lot of media attention that is supporting many communities into making the first steps into many GYO initiatives. This provides many with the initial support to take on a GYO project and also consider skills development.

There are a range of other drivers that exist that include; reducing food miles, identifying food sources. food security and financial and economic issues.

The downturn in the economy and its impact on all areas of society will continue to dominate and generate interest in sector initiatives. There is strong evidence that GYO initiatives both for local food production and amenity reasons will develop further.

Many people are confused as to the right course to access or the right approach to the training required. Importantly people have a real concern over the cost and the value of training. People want value for money and added value in the course that is being provided.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: There is a need to identify and manage quality qualification and training provision. Qualification levels and demand within the sector are low, (with individual skills needs high) but as communities increase their participation, and growing opportunities form the basis of a lot of community funded provision, there is an increasing demand for individuals to enhance both their skills set and their qualifications to support their community.

Recommendation 2: There should be a complete analysis and report on the full extent of the training and qualification provision available in the sector with emphasis placed on a development solution for the way forward.

Recommendation 3: There should be a bank of information and learning materials that meet qualification, industry and skills sector criteria that helps to support knowledge transfer and development within communities, schools and organisations that helps to coordinate learning activities and set national standards. Communities can then access and use the information to ensure that they are benchmarking targets in training that in turn will empower the community. This will also help public funding bodies to identify levels and standards for communities to meet. This can be managed by a third party organisation that supports the needs of the sector and also manages the process on behalf of the sector.

Soil Contamination and Community Growing A Briefing for Grow Your Own Working Group

Dr Eleanor Logan

January 2011

1. Purpose of Paper

The Grow Your Own Working Group has asked for insight into the issues posed by soil contamination for community growing projects. This paper was compiled following a short piece of desk research and some dialogue with growing projects that have had to deal with soil contamination. It is designed to not give chapter and verse on what soil contaminants there might be and how to deal with these, but give some insight into how community growing projects be better supported in understanding soil contamination and responding to it when it does impact on their work.

In preparing this paper short discussions were held with a small section of growing projects who had already had to tackle soil contamination. The responses gained were insightful and did give clear recommendations in going forward . Only a small group were able to be consulted and all mentioned other sites which had faced struggles. Time did not permit following up these projects but they did hint at soil across central Scotland and in other areas affected by industry – be it urban or rural based industries. There was also an overwhelming lack of understanding of the legal aspects of dealing with contaminated land, and a complete lack of awareness and information around how to access support in dealing with the issue. All of this before any group has even considered testing their soil.

This paper is more lengthy than desired but it does need to reflect the legislation surrounding contaminated land, the role of enforcing authorities, why information and guidance is needed and the experience of those actively setting up community growing spaces.

The recommendations in section 7 clearly help deliver the following Government objectives:

Food and Drink Policy:

- Ensure that allotments and 'grow your own' projects are strategically supported
- Produce practical advice and best practice guidance that will appeal to public bodies, communities and individuals to help them develop local 'grow your own' initiatives.

Contaminated Land Policy:

To enable the 'suitable use' of contaminated land through the following objectives

- (a) to identify and remove unacceptable risks to human health and the environment;
- (b) to seek to bring damaged land back into beneficial use; and/
- (c) to seek to ensure that the cost burdens faced by individuals, companies and society as a whole are proportionate, manageable and economically sustainable.

2. The Legislative Frameworks and Regulatory Environment

Contaminated land is defined as land which appears to be in such a condition, by reason of substances in, on or under which could cause any one or all of the following:

- Significant harm is being caused
- There is a significant possibility of such harm being caused
- Significant pollution of the water environment is being caused
- There a significant possibility of pollution of the water environment being caused.

It is not known, in detail, how much land is contaminated. The Environment Agency has estimated that that there may be some 300,000 hectares of land in the UK affected to some extent by industrial or natural contamination.

The Scottish Government undertakes statistical surveys of Scotland's vacant and derelict land, a proportion of which will also be affected by contamination. The latest annual Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (SVDLS) found that the total amount of derelict and urban vacant land in Scotland increased slightly from 10,696 hectares in 2002 to 10,832 hectares in 2008 – a net increase of 136 hectares.⁴ Six local authorities – North Lanarkshire, Glasgow City, North Ayrshire, Highland, Renfrewshire and Fife – together contain 63% of all recorded derelict and urban vacant land.

The SVDLS provides useful information on vacant and derelict land but has limitations with regards to estimations of the amount of potentially contaminated land. The 2005 survey was the last to try to collate information in general terms on whether the land was either known or suspected to be affected by contamination. It recorded that 171 derelict sites covering 1,186 hectares were known to have contamination. The contamination status of 9,383 hectares of urban vacant and derelict land (89% of the total) was unknown.

The Scottish Governments objectives with respect to contaminated land are:

- to identify and remove unacceptable risks to human health and the environment;
- to seek to bring damaged land back into beneficial use; and
- to seek to ensure that the cost burdens faced by individuals, companies and society as a whole are proportionate, manageable and economically sustainable.

These objectives underlie the "suitable for use" approach to the remediation of contaminated land, which the Scottish Government considers is the most appropriate approach to achieving sustainable development as well as economic development.

Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990¹ provides a legal framework for the identification and remediation of contaminated land in circumstances where there has not been any identifiable breach of a pollution prevention regime.

Local authorities have long-standing duties to identify particular environmental problems, including those resulting from land contamination, and to require their abatement. The primary regulatory role under Part IIA rests with **Scottish local authorities**. SEPA has a role to play as an enforcing and regulatory authority in some cases and this is covered below. However, for most community growing spaces the organisation will need to engage with the local authorities as the enforcing agency.

This reflects their existing functions under the statutory nuisance regime, and will also complement their roles as planning authorities. In outline, the role of these authorities under Part IIA are:

- to cause their areas to be inspected to identify contaminated land;
- to determine whether any particular site is contaminated land;
- to act as enforcing authority for all contaminated land which is not designated as a "special site" (Note: SEPA will be the enforcing authority for special sites).

Where land has been identified as being contaminated land, and consequent action taken, the local authority has to include specified details about the condition of the land, and the remediation actions carried out on it, in a Register of Contaminated land in their area. The public register is intended to act as a full and permanent record, open for public inspection, of all regulatory action taken by the enforcing authority in respect of the remediation of contaminated land, and will include information about the condition of land.

But the local authority may also be asked, for example as part of a "local search" for a property purchase, to provide information about other areas of land which have not been identified as contaminated land. This might include, for example, information on whether the authority had inspected the land and, if so, details of any site investigation reports prepared.

In deciding whether land is contaminated land, the local authority should ensure that it adopts an approach consistent with that adopted by other regulatory bodies and that it benefits from the experience and expertise available in those bodies. There are specific requirements for local authorities to consult with:

- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) where an ecological system effect is indicated;
- SEPA in the case where pollution of the water environment is being considered.

¹ Environmental Protection Act 1990: Part IIA Contaminated land Statutory Guidance: Edition 2 May 2006: Paper SE/2006/44

Local authorities may also choose to consult with other organisations where their expertise may be of assistance in the decision making process.

For any piece of land identified as being contaminated land, the local authority needs to establish:

- who is the owner of the land
- who appears to be in occupation of all or part of the land; and
- who appears to be an appropriate person to bear responsibility for any remediation action which might be necessary
- who caused the contamination

Where any land has been identified as being contaminated, the enforcing authority has a duty to require appropriate remediation. Responsibility for paying for remediation will, where feasible, follow the "polluter pays" principle. In the first instance, any persons who caused or knowingly permitted the contaminating substances to be in, on or under the land will be the appropriate person(s) to undertake the remediation and meet its costs. However, if it is not possible to find any such person, responsibility will pass to the current owner or occupier of the land.

SEPA (Scottish Environmental Protection Agency) has four principal roles with respect to contaminated land under Part IIA and the 2000 Regulations:

- it will provide advice on request in relation to the identification and designation of "special" sites- these include sites which contain radioactivity, explosives or are particularly polluted;
- it will act as the "enforcing authority" for any land designated as a "special site" (the descriptions of land which are required to be designated in this way are prescribed in the 2000 Regulations);
- it may issue site-specific advice to local authorities on contaminated land;
- it will publish periodic reports on contaminated land.

Section 27 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 gives SEPA the power to take action to remedy harm caused by a breach of Integrated Pollution Controls under section 23(1)(a) or (c) of the Act.

Land contamination is also addressed by the planning system in terms of planning policy and planning decisions. Guidance to planning authorities is set out in Planning Advice Note (PAN) 33 – Development of Contaminated Land (Revised October 2000), and PAN 51 – Planning and Environmental Protection.

Local Authorities are guided into taking a proportionate approach to enforcement of remediation actions within the Act. Aside from this there is recognition of the particular burden this may place on charities:

"Since charities are intended to operate for the benefit of the community, the enforcing authority should consider the extent to which any recovery of costs from a charity would jeopardize that charity's ability to continue to provide a benefit or amenity which is in the public interest. Where this is the case, the authority should consider waiving or reducing its costs recovery to the extent needed to avoid such a consequence. This approach applies equally to charitable trusts and to charitable companies."

3. Contaminants relevant to Community Growing Sites

Contamination can take several forms (i.e. chemical, biological, radioactive, gaseous), and can be brought about in a number of different ways. This means that land or soil contamination can occur in a variety of places from inner cities to rural locations. Post industrial sites in urban areas across Central Scotland face significant contamination due to the legacy of past industry. Whilst current legislation firmly enforced the polluter pays, this legislation was not in place when our industries were most active and most polluting.

However, hazardous substances or properties may also occur naturally due to the geology of the area or natural processes (e.g. biodegradation of organic matter producing methane and carbon dioxide).

Table 1 summarises the sources and types of contamination present in soils and the kinds of issues these might present for community growing projects. This table is adapted from a resource produced by the Federation of Farms and Community Gardens in England². Some additional insight has been provided by the author of this paper to assist the reader in appreciating the issues for community growing projects. This is a summary of the issues posed by the types of contaminant. More detailed information can be sought on each potential contaminant.

² **GROWING FOOD - HOW SAFE IS YOUR LAND?** How to Assess and Deal with Potential Land Contamination <http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/publications/135-contaminated-land-guidelines>

Table 1: Summary of potential contaminants in soils & the issues they can cause if present in significant concentrations

Previous industrial land use	Examples of contaminants present	Potential Issues
Metal mining, treating and refining; engineering works; manufacturing of many kinds; scrap yards and ship building & ship breaking etc.	<p>Metals e.g. cadmium, arsenic, lead, mercury, copper, nickel, zinc, chromium</p> <p><i>NB: Glasgow and the west of Scotland hugely impacted from such contamination</i></p>	<p>Inhalation of contaminated dusts Skin irritation and ingestion via skin Ingestion of contaminated crops Plant growth may be restricted if the roots take up metals Pollution of water supplies, streams and groundwater</p>
Chemical works and refineries, tar distilleries	Oily and tarry substances e.g. benzene derivatives, phenols Also heavy metals as above	<p>Chemicals are highly toxic and known carcinogens. Skin irritation may be caused by contact Organic vapours may cause respiratory complaints Seed and plant growth will be inhibited and soils would look and smell 'tarry' Pollution of water supplies, streams and groundwater</p>
Blast furnace slags	Sulphates, chlorides, acids	<p>Building materials, e.g. concrete foundations, weakened by chemical attack Skin irritation may be caused by contact Plant growth can be restricted</p>
Gasworks, power stations, railway land	Coal and coke dust – contains heavy metals e.g. arsenic and also oily & tarry benzene/phenols	<p>As above for metals and chemical works also/ Ignition in the ground</p>
Construction & waste disposal sites	Asbestos	Release of airborne fibres which are highly carcinogenic
Old waste tips and in-filled dock basins	Landfill gases, e.g. methane and carbon dioxide	<p>Plant dieback Accumulation to hazardous concentrations in confined spaces</p>
Agriculture	Pesticides and insecticides, methyl bromide from soil sterilization, slurry, sewage sludge (heavy metals)	<p>Restricted plant growth Some human impacts if pesticides present in large enough concentrations Pollution of water supplies, streams and groundwater</p>

4. Levels of contaminants and risk to health

The contaminated land regime is centred on a risk based framework for dealing with land affected by contamination. This framework recognises that, while contamination can be present, it has to be present at such concentrations and in such circumstances that it has the potential to cause significant harm or pollution to people or the wider environment, based on the current and anticipated use of the land.³

There are three elements to any risk:

Source – a substance which is in, on or under the land and has the potential to cause harm and/or cause pollution of the water environment;

Receptor – in general terms, something that could be adversely affected by a contaminant, eg a person, an ecological system or a water body as defined in the statutory guidance;

Pathway – a means by which a receptor can be exposed to, or affected by, a contaminant. In the case of community growing projects this could be inhalation of dust, exposure through the skin due to handling of the soil, burning of the skin from handling of the soil and ingestion of material through produce grown in the soil (and through insufficient washing of produce).

When dealing with potentially contaminated sites, the key question is: does the concentrations of contaminant X pose a significant risk to human health or the environment through the anticipated use of that site i.e. in this case through the disturbance and handling of soil through growing and through the eating of produce grown in that soil.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Environment Agency has published a series of reports that, for the first time, provide a scientifically based framework for the assessment of risks to human health from land contamination. These appear to have been adopted by the Scottish Government and SEPA.

Integral to these has been the establishment of Soil Guideline Values⁴. They are a tool that can be used to assess the risks posed to human health from exposure to soil contamination resulting from land use. They represent 'intervention values', which indicate to an assessor that soil concentrations above this level could pose an unacceptable risk to the health of site users and that further investigation and/or remediation is required. Soil Guideline Values combine both authoritative science and policy judgments.

³ [Dealing with land contamination in Scotland: A review of progress 2000-2008: SEPA](#)

⁴ <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/33734.aspx>

Soil guideline values have been derived for a range of contaminants for three typical land uses:

- Residential (with and without vegetable growing)
- Allotments
- Industrial/commercial.

Where the soil guideline value is exceeded, this suggests the need for either further investigation or remediation.

However, there are no fixed numbers assigned to Soil Guideline Values. They are site specific and are established for each site and combine an analysis of the soil with an analysis of how the site will be used, who will be using it, what other environmental factors might influence the uptake of the contaminant by plants or users of the site etc.

As such Soil Guideline Values rely on the use of computer modeling and expert interpretation of the results.

Soil Guideline Values will help local authorities decide whether land should be classed as contaminated on the grounds that there is a 'significant possibility of significant harm'. They are also expected to be useful in planning applications when judging the need for action to ensure that a new use of land does not pose unacceptable risk to health.

They are potentially very relevant to Community Growing Spaces but it is unclear how they are being used in the testing of such sites at the moment in Scotland.

5. Community Growing Spaces in Scotland and Soil Contamination

If a new or indeed established community growing project thinks that their site might contain some contamination there are some clear steps which should be taken.

Visual Assessment: Sometimes this alerts growers that the site might be contaminated e.g. there may be rubble, obvious signs of tarry substance, patches of bare soil where little growth is being sustained, etc.

Establish the History of site: Desk based research can identify what used kind of industry there used to be in the area and what the land has previously been used for. This can indicate what types of contaminant groups might want to test for. In many communities there is good local understanding of the history of the area e.g. in one site in Glasgow the community recalled playing on the 'sugarolly' mountains. These were the spoil heaps of the local bleach works (St Rollox) and were no doubt a contributor to the high levels of contaminants such as chromium on the land in such communities. People talked about the puddles being green.

Contact Local Authority to see if site is on register of contaminated land: This is an obvious starting point, but as can be seen in the following section many community groups are not aware of the duties of local authorities to maintain a register and whom they need to contact.

Undertake Soil Testing: Local authorities appear to be able to organise soil testing and there are external agencies such as the MacAulay Land Use Research Institute. What is not available is a guide for where to get soil testing carried out and what contaminants the laboratories will test for. This is explored further in the next section. If a Community Growing project is getting their soil tested for contaminants they should also test the soil for N,P and K so they know what fertility they have (or not). Knowing the pH is also very important for general growing but also understanding the impact of any contamination. For example cadmium and copper are more available in acid or sandy soils and their uptake by plants can be reduced by liming.⁵

Interpret the results and decide what to do next: Community Growing projects then need to understand what the results mean for them and decide from this if they are able to grow in situ in the soil they have on their site or if they require to remediate. This may involve removing the soil which is there and replacing it with new soil, or securing/sealing the contaminated soil and growing in raised beds with imported soil and compost. It may be that the levels are not significant and there is no risk in using the soil for growing.

⁵ Contamination of soils in domestic gardens and allotments: a brief overview: B.J. Alloway, *Land Contamination & Reclamation*, 12 (3), 2004

6. Real Issues Faced by Community Growing Projects in Responding to Soil Contamination

Lack of Awareness and Understanding of Why it Matters for Community Growing Projects

Community Growing projects do feel left alone to deal with this quite important responsibility. Projects in any post industrial area of Scotland cannot be complacent. The land is liable to contain some legacy of previous industry. If a community group is taking on responsibility for a piece of land or indeed ownership of it, then they have a responsibility for the safety of those who will be using it and if they are the owners of the site they have a responsibility for the remediation of any contamination going forward. They should establish what contamination is on site before signing up any kind of lease agreement as the cost of remediation so they can ultimately grow may preclude the site being appropriate.

In general there is an over-riding issue with lack of awareness of the issue of soil contamination and its implications for community growing (time, cost and need to potentially remediate).

"Interestingly we have found every site we have had tested recently to be contaminated to an extent that in ground growing was not advisable. This is in many cases where the site was thought to be a 'green' site and not to have associated issues. It is perhaps not surprising when the industrial history of west central Scotland is considered – but in each case we had to push for tests to be taken as those involved with the project had not considered that contamination would be an issue"

Lack of Accessible Information and Guidance

In Scotland there is no definitive or indeed guiding resource for community growing projects (or gardeners) which provides insight into why soil contamination might be an issue worth considering and how to get the soil tested. This paper has already cited the Guide to Soil Contamination from the Federation of Farms and Community Gardens in England. This is a good starting point, but lacks information and crucially for growing projects in Scotland refers to the environment agencies and local authorities in England. The legislative framework is similar in Scotland, but who to contact for advice in local authorities is quite distinct as is where to access soil testing and advice on soil contamination.

And most of the groups consulted had no contact with the local authority and did not seem aware of whom to contact within the local authority. They did not know there was a register of contaminated land held by the local authority and that they could access this to find out what testing had already been carried out.

One group had been supported and guided by their local authority officer and had received considerable support in undertaking soil testing and interpreting the results of soil tests. But they had had to work hard to find out that this was available and it had taken much time for them to get from the first stage of knowing that the soil was likely to be contaminated to actually having the results and understanding what they needed to do.

"Community groups are often either completely unaware of, or very confused by, the problem. Although there is a growing number of websites offering basic information, it is often difficult for unsupported groups to find 'definitive' answers."

Lack of Technical Support and Cost of Soil Testing

There are two key issues here – first of all getting appropriate technical support in sampling the site and getting the right tests done- and then regrettably the costs involved in doing so.

Community Growing Projects are not awash with cash. Getting soil tested in a commercial lab is an expensive process. It also relies of good and relevant soil sampling. One group mentioned that they had had to get soil boreholes taken and take quite a lot of advice around what to test for. They also had to take advice on the results. But they had fortunately had funding which helped them to do so and this was also the one group which had developed a relationship with the local authority officer.

Some groups mentioned the use of the services of the Macaulay Institute⁶ which although cheaper than some commercial labs is still expensive for a community project and the group is then left with the responsibility of having to interpret the findings. One respondent found the service useful but slow in coming back with the results. This may indicate a high demand for their service.

Understanding the results can be a challenge. Few groups have a soil chemist or an ecotoxicologist, nor any kind of links to any professional advisor. Nor is there an easy to access website which would help a community group interpret their results. Community growing projects do feel vulnerable in understanding the soil results and taking decisions on going forward.

"Initially, it can be unclear if tests should be undertaken and where responsibility lies if groups do decide to encourage people to grow straight from the ground. Testing can be daunting process and the results can be almost unintelligible - the go-ahead for growing can depend on the context as much as the results."

⁶ <http://www.macaulay.ac.uk/analytical/>

The Implications of Remediation

Community Growing Spaces which wish to do in situ growing – the old fashioned way involving the ground - may not be able to do so following soil testing and may have to look at alternatives such as raised beds.

Whilst many projects naturally favour growing in raised beds, one project who got in touch had wanted to have a forest garden as they had already established a raised bed site. The levels of contamination precluded this.

Raised beds with imported soil are a lot more expensive to set up than the old fashioned route of growing in the soil. Due to the types of contamination on some sites there may also be a cost of sealing the soil surface to prevent any potential dust or ingestion before the community can access it.

The experts recommendation may also be to remove some of the areas which are most contaminated and replace the soil.

"One grower faced a bill of over £30K to remove and replace soil contaminated with methyl bromide (old soil sterilizer) and this put an end to potential for growing at that site. So can be costly, and also very time consuming"

Projects do need to have this knowledge before they commit to leases or ownership of land and before they engage the community in planning for growing on a site.

7. Recommendations to Grow Your Own Working Group

It is quite surprising that these issues have not been raised before and that there is not any kind of infrastructure body ensuring that groups are better supported in this area. Community Growing Projects are clearly taking on unknown liabilities for the land they inhabit. Even if they appreciate the need to undertake soil testing and get the right information on the contamination on their site, it is hardly a straightforward process and one which is potentially costly, financially and in relation to time.

Aside from the liability and health risks, this issue could be a significant barrier to communities accessing post industrial land (most of central Scotland). In many cases these communities are often those most 'hard to reach' and most likely to benefit from the social, health, educational and environmental benefits of community growing. As such three clear recommendations emerge from this initial scoping:

1. There is room for the Scottish Government to take a lead and ensure advice, guidance and support be made available to community growing projects around soil contamination and how to respond to it. This is in line with the responsibility of Government to ensure 'suitability of use' of contaminated land and appropriate enforcement of Part IIA of the Environment Act.

An appropriate response from the Scottish Government would be to fund the production and publishing of **Guidance on Understanding Soil Contamination & How to Grow on Contaminated Land**. This should also emphasise the responsibility of taking on a new site for community growing and ensure that community projects do not ignore the risks and liabilities of growing on a potentially contaminated site.

The Guidance should also signpost groups to sources of support in understanding their soil. This should include local authorities and their contaminated land officer (or equivalent) and companies and labs where soil testing can be carried out.

2. **Local authorities clearly have a role to play.** They need to make the information they currently hold more accessible and their officers more accessible in advising and supporting community growing projects at an early stage. If a group does find contamination which is not currently logged on the register then it is in the best interest of the local authority to know about this. **The Scottish Government needs to "encourage" local authorities to undertake this role more rigorously and openly.**
3. All the groups spoken too mentioned the cost involved – from the cost of testing, sourcing advice and then remediation. Most had not factored this into their original budget. It may be small sums of funding but some Community Growing Projects work on very small budgets and find the costs prohibitive. **A quick win for the Scottish Government would be a grants fund dedicated to tackling soil contamination.** Not all funders would think to support this and other funds cannot be relied on to support this. Even a time limited fund aligned to promotion and guidance/information would have the combined effect of moving some projects forward, enabling others to operate safely and also raise awareness of the issues and ensure an appropriate response across Scotland to soil contamination. Where the Government is not able to take this forward, they should at the very least raise the issue with other funding streams such as Climate Challenge Fund to ensure their grants officers encourage community groups to consider the need for soil testing and ensure funds are allocated to this and remediation in their budgets.

Dr Eleanor Logan

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Attending GYOWG on behalf of Nourish: A Sustainable Food Network for Scotland and Soil Association Scotland.

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Funding for allotments

A Briefing for the Grow Your Own Working Group

Jenny Mollison, Judy Wilkinson, Peter Wright

Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society

Interest in allotments is growing rapidly in Scotland. Since SAGS published the audit 'Finding Scotland's Allotments' in 2007, over one hundred and twenty new allotment associations have formed and are seeking land throughout Scotland, fifteen new sites are up and running, five Councils have allotment strategies and many more are consulting with local people. Community groups, third sector agencies and politicians are increasingly aware that community cultivation bring benefits to the health, well being, adaptation to climate change, education and biodiversity agenda. Allotments are vehicles for fighting inequality and tackling deprivation.

Since the publication of the Scottish Government's Food Policy - "Recipe for Success", more land - owners in the public and private sector have shown an interest in the provision of land for allotments. SAGS is seeing an interest from Housing Associations, Health Boards, Forestry Commission and the private sector as well as local authorities.

1. Level of Funding needed

A new allotment site needs an infrastructure: provision of water, paths and some form of enclosure, which will require some initial capital. At the moment, since resources and funding are limited particularly from local authorities, it is sensible to encourage the nascent plot-holders to play a larger role in the construction of their new site and this adds to their commitment. Often they possess the skills to lay paths, build huts (if any), plant surrounding hedges and set up boundary fences if required.

The philosophy of the allotment movement is naturally towards the re-use of materials and self-construction, but inevitably there is a need for some capital. While £0.3M for a 100 plot site will give you an all singing, all dancing architect designed space, with ingenuity and self help many will find that £10K - £30K will probably suffice as starting capital. It looks as if this kind of money will be available from the sources listed below but in order to access it, the nascent allotment associations and community groups need to be aware of the funding and the funders should be aware of the limitations and support needed by such groups.

2. Possible Funding Sources:

1. JESSICA (Scotland) Trust www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/jessica_guidance.pdf

This is a new £15 million investment in Scotland to help disadvantaged urban communities to become stronger through their own efforts. It will be run by an Independent Trust that can give grants or loans, provide resources, or tender for services. Thirteen local authority areas have been identified as being eligible for support – Clackmannanshire, Dundee, East Ayrshire, Edinburgh, Fife, Glasgow, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire, West Lothian.

The aims of the Trust include:

- providing a focus and stimulus for garnering community interest and engagement in significant regeneration plans and interventions in marginalized communities.

Also

- an increase in quality green space accessible by local people.
- an increase in the number of local people connected to regeneration activity and an increase in the depth and quality of that contribution.

Applications for setting up the Trust close January 31st so the funding should be available by the summer.

2. Proposed BIG Lottery Community Spaces Programme

The BIG Lottery is consulting on the aims and implementation of a Community Spaces programmes which will ' support communities to become more involved in, and to take responsibility for, their local environment, communal spaces and places.'

Funding should be available in 2011.

3. Climate Challenge Fund

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/climatechange/ClimateChallengeFund

The Scottish Government has extended the Climate Challenge Fund with £10.3 million for 2011-12. They are establishing a new application process (by January 2011) to ensure Scottish communities have an early opportunity to bid for those funds to make a real difference by reducing carbon emission. In the last round over forty Grow Your Own schemes were funded either independently or as part of a community package.

4. Council bonds and Scottish Futures Trust: www.scottishfuturestrust.org.uk

This seems a way that projects could be funded more information is needed.

5. Individual Allotment Sites

The private sites are self managed and self financing. Many sites including Council sites hold open days and attend local events when they sell produce for their associations, this often raises over £1K pa which contributes to the maintenance and running of the sites.

Local area committees will also support allotments with grants for fencing or raised beds where the contribution of the plot-holders is often in kind.

3. Recommendations:

1. Briefing from the Minister on the available funding, where to access help with applications and information exchange among interested partners. This will be circulated to local authorities, community groups, and organizations concerned with community growing.
2. Briefing and training for the Trustees of Jessica, the panels awarding grants in the relevant Big Lottery initiatives and the Climate Challenge Fund so they are aware of the needs and responsibilities of community growing groups. Money can be channelled most effectively if members of the awarding bodies understand the costs, requirements and contributions that people at the grass roots can make.
3. Encourage the regional federations of allotment associations (such as GAF, FEDAGA), colleges with horticultural courses (such as Elmwood College), organizations with local members (such as FCFCG and the Soil Association) and local authorities to bring together local community growing groups to share experiences, knowledge and opportunities for funding. The GYOWG could monitor the success of 'Grow Your Own', by receiving reports from the regions, identify bottlenecks and opportunities and transmit them to the Scottish Government.