

## **DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Leisure, Arts and Communities Committee - 28June 2010

**REPORT ON:** Dundee City Council Allotment Strategy

**REPORT BY:** Director of Leisure and Communities

**REPORT NO:** 366-2010

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the outcome of consultation on the Dundee City Council Allotment Strategy.
- 1.2 To seek approval from the Committee for the adoption of the Strategy.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approve the attached Allotment Strategy for the period 2010-2015 and instruct the Director of Leisure and Communities to take forward the implementation of the strategy.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 None

### **4.0 MAIN TEXT**

- 4.1 Reference is made to Leisure, Arts and Communities Committee, 1 July 2009, Report Number 357-2009, when the Committee granted approval for the Director of Leisure and Communities to undertake consultation with allotment societies, plot holders and interested parties, with the objective of producing a Dundee Allotment Strategy.
- 4.2 This process has now been completed and a copy of the strategy is attached.
- 4.3 The consultation process resulted in responses from 8 organisations and individuals and, where appropriate, suggestions resulting from the consultation have been included in the strategy.
- 4.4 The Dundee Allotment Strategy sets out a vision for Dundee Allotments, explains the background to the strategy, identifies the benefits of allotments, discussing issues raised and sets out a number of actions to take forward proposals resulting from these discussions.

### **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management
- 5.2 By providing improved nutrition through the provision of fresh fruit and vegetables, allotments help Dundee meet Outcome 4 - our people will have fewer health inequalities.

- 5.3 Improved allotment provision will assist the Council in meeting Outcome 5 of its local outcome agreement - our people will have improved physical and mental wellbeing, a greater number of allotments will increase the opportunities and access to physical activity, recent research also shows that increased physical activity leads to improved mental health and wellbeing.
- 5.4 The provision of allotments, particularly in regeneration areas, will assist the council meet Dundee Outcome 8 - our people will experience fewer social inequalities, improved access to allotments will allow more householders the opportunity to grow and eat their own low cost local fruit and vegetables.
- 5.5 Allotments play an important role in meeting the Dundee Outcome 11 - Dundee will have a sustainable environment. Allotments can improve the quality and diversity of the City's open space, improved growing requirements will help enhance the biodiversity value of Dundee. Increase awareness and encourage community and individual action to protect and enhance open spaces and biodiversity.

## **6.0 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Assistant Chief Executive and Director of Finance have been consulted on this report.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 None

**STEWART MURDOCH**  
**DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND COMMUNITIES**  
21 June 2010

# ALLOTMENT STRATEGY 2010 - 2015



*Old Craigie Road Allotments*

# **CONTENTS**

## **A Commitment to Allotment Gardening in Dundee**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Purpose of the Strategy
- 1.2 Background

### **2. Benefits of Allotments**

- 2.1 Benefits / Value of Allotments
- 2.2 Biodiversity
- 2.3 Sustainability
- 2.4 Healthy Living

### **3. Legislation / National Local Policy Guidelines**

- 3.1 National Legislation
- 3.2 Cosla Guidelines
- 3.3 Local and National Policies
- 3.4 Open Space Strategy

### **4. Management of Allotments in Dundee**

- 4.1 Management
- 4.2 Devolved Management of Allotments in Dundee by Societies
- 4.3 Direct managed by Dundee City Council
- 4.4 Private Allotments

### **5. Security on Allotments**

### **6. Demand for Allotments**

### **7. Funding and Future Developments**

### **8. Summary of Objectives and Actions**

### **9. Sources of Reference**

### **10. Consultations**

### **11. Appendix List of Allotments**

## **A COMMITMENT TO ALLOTMENT GARDENING IN DUNDEE**

Dundee City Council recognises the increasing demand for allotments in Dundee and the important role allotments play in encouraging a revival in "Growing Your Own". This reflects a general demand for fresh, low cost produce which, in part, can be met by improved allotment provision in the City.

Dundee City Council also recognises the valuable role that allotments play through regular exercise and a healthy diet in improving an individual's physical and mental wellbeing, which is one of the Dundee Outcomes Strategic Priorities, and the Dundee Partnerships Outcomes 2009-2012, state that:

- Our people will have fewer health inequalities;
- Our people will have improved physical and mental wellbeing;
- Our people will experience fewer social inequalities;
- Our people will have a sustainable environment.

Dundee City Council acknowledges the importance that the Scottish Government puts on "Growing Your Own". The Scottish Government National Food and Drink Policy publication 2009 commits the Government to:

- 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 locally grow your own initiatives.

The Council looks forward to working in partnership with the Scottish Government to help improve allotment provision within Dundee.

Dundee City Council is committed to working with allotment societies and other groups to develop a five year development plan for allotments across the City and to ensure that capital and external funding sources are explored to help develop and implement the plan. The Council is also committed to improving the security of allotments and will work with allotment associations to ensure that this objective is met.

Where a community or group identifies a local need for allotments, officers of the Leisure and Communities Department will work with that group to identify potential allotment sites within a local park or open space. An example of this is the development of the disused South Road Allotment site. In partnership with the community and with funding from the Fairer Scotland Fund, a local group, South Road Allotment Association, brought back into use the allotments, providing 20 plots for use by local residents.

This Strategy sets out Dundee City Council's continued commitment to the improvement of allotments and ensure the future of allotment gardening in Dundee.

Director of Leisure and Communities  
June 2010

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Purpose of the Strategy

This Strategy will build on the discussions with allotment societies and organisations that have taken place following the publication and approval of the Allotment Consultation Document in July 2009 by Dundee City Council's Leisure, Arts and Communities Committee.

The Strategy:

- Commits Dundee City Council to improving the provision of allotment gardening in Dundee;
- Outlines the current position of allotment management and provision in Dundee;
- Makes recommendations for best practice for allotments in Dundee;
- Takes forward recommendations in the COSLA 'Allotments in Scotland Guidance Notes for Scottish Councils', issued June 2007;
- Develops an ongoing partnership between the Council, Plot Holders, Allotment Association and the Dundee Federation for Allotments;
- Develops a plan for taking forward allotment improvements in the City through a partnership between Dundee City Council, the Allotment Association, Plot Holders, External Funders and Agencies;
- Commits Dundee City Council to work with communities / groups where there is a need to identify potential allotment sites in a local park or open space.

## 1.2 Background

Allotments originated in the 19th Century as a means of self improvement for working people to cultivate land and grow their own food. Allotments have evolved through a varied history of social and economic change.

The status of allotments was recognised and finalised by the Allotments (Scotland) Act 1892, which placed a duty upon a Council to make provision in response to local demand.

During the First World War, Local Authorities created new allotments in urban areas to counter food shortages and during the Second World War 'Dig for Victory Campaign' this was further expanded.

Nationally, the popularity of allotments decreased in the 1950s and 60s, and although new allotments were created in Dundee in the 1970s and 80s, e.g. South Road, these were closed in the 1990s because they were unpopular and underutilised. Other sites to close included part of Stirling Park Allotments and Arklay Terrace Allotments.

Due to a desire from people to know the origin of their food, and because of the recent rise in cost of food, there has been a resurgence in demand for allotments in Dundee and Scotland-wide. This has led to increased waiting lists on the developed, managed and Council managed allotment sites. To meet this demand, the Council will need to investigate the possibility of providing new or alternative sites. Recent changes in Scottish Planning Policy SPP11, and the introduction of the COSLA Guidelines for allotments will have an influence on the future management of allotments.

## **2. BENEFITS OF ALLOTMENTS**

### **2.1 Benefits / Value of Allotments**

Allotments were originally created to allow families to grow their own food. However, the benefits of allotments are not confined to individual plot holders and there are a number of environmental and social benefits that cover wider areas of the community, and benefits that could potentially support Dundee City Council's efforts towards sustainable development.

### **2.2 Biodiversity**

Allotments have a major role to play in the protection and promotion of biodiversity. Many plants grown in allotments, such as fruit trees and bushes, depend on insects to pollinate them in order for there to be good crops. This is highlighted in the Tayside Biodiversity Publication 'Biodiversity in Community Gardens, Orchards and Allotments', which is an output of the organisation's habitat action plan. The document identifies allotments as especially important habitats for wildlife as they provide food, shelter and breeding sites.

### **2.3 Sustainability**

Allotments have the potential to make a contribution to the sustainability of the City by promoting and facilitating composting and demonstrating sustainable practises e.g. rainwater collection, recycling and reduced use of pesticides. Allotments also contribute to sustainability by reduced transport costs, a reduction of emissions and the lowering of food miles and the carbon footprint of the City through the production of local fruit and vegetables.

Through the facilitation of composting and the increase in recycling, this should result in a reduction in waste. The Allotment Regeneration Initiative indicates that most councils only allow one skip per year and this is monitored to ensure no non bio-degradable materials are placed on the skip.

### **2.4 Healthy Living**

The NHS 'Best Value Review of Nutrition in Tayside 2008' identified that in Tayside only 22% of woman and 15% of men consumed 5 portions of fruit or vegetables a day, and that the average male consumption in Tayside was 2.7 portions of fruit or vegetables a day. Allotment gardening provides the opportunity of a year round healthy lifestyle. Unlike other activities, it not only provides exercise, mental relaxation and lifelong learning opportunities, but also the fresh fruit and vegetables that benefit healthier lifestyle.

Although allotments are appealing to a wide section of the population, they have traditionally been associated with older people, although allotment gardening can provide key exercise to all potentially vulnerable individuals. Allotment Gardens also have an important role to play in providing social interaction between older people, the unemployed and increasingly those with mental health problems. Gardening is highly therapeutic. The NHS recognises its contribution to the promotion of wellbeing. Allotments are also a useful tool in providing lifelong learning skills. At Kinnaird Allotments in Dundee, two plots are used by trainees aged between 15 and 18 who are not in full-time education or employment to help develop vocational and personal skills for healthy living.

**Objective: Biodiversity**

Improve and encourage biodiversity and conservation.

**Action:**

Encourage Allotment Societies and plot holders to develop biodiversity plans appropriate for allotment sites.

**Objective: Sustainability**

Promote effective recycling and composting initiatives for each allotment site.

**Actions:**

Ensure that all interested parties work together with Dundee City Council Waste Management Department to produce plans for each site.

Green Waste should not go to landfill, funding should be sought to fund compost workshops, which will assist in taking forward the culture change from using skips to composting.

The Council and Allotment Associations should:

- quantify and monitor volume and cost of materials sent to landfill;
- explore links with Dundee College to provide courses on allotment gardening, including organic growing and soil and compost making;
- develop stronger links between Eco Schools and Allotments.

**Objective: Healthy Living**

Work closely with NHS Tayside and other organisations e.g, Trellis, in the promotion of allotment gardening as part of a healthy lifestyle to all sectors of society, including excluded people and minority ethnic groups.

**Action:**

Provide and promote allotment plots to organisations that work with the vulnerable or disadvantaged individuals to develop vocational, inter personal skills, healthier lifestyles and wellbeing.



*Looking up the Law from Stirling Park*



## **3. LEGISLATION / NATIONAL LOCAL POLICY GUIDELINES**

### **3.1 National Legislation**

The principal statute governing allotments is the Allotments (Scotland) Act 1892, which was amended by the Land Settlement (Scotland) Act 1919 and the Allotments (Scotland) Acts of 1922 and 1950.

The provision of allotments is a matter for Local Authorities, whose powers are defined in the Allotments Acts. Local Authorities are obliged to provide allotments, if there is a proven need, through land they own. A Local Authority may also acquire land for the purposes of the Allotments Acts by purchase agreement or compulsory purchase, lease, temporary use and adaptation of land. In addition a Local Authority may appoint an allotments committee to carry out its functions under the 1922 Act.

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to make provision, where necessary, for access to allotments and allotment gardens by suitable paths or roads.

They are also required to keep a register of all tenancies and to make up accounts of receipts and expenditure which are available for inspection by rate payers.

### **3.2 COSLA Guidelines**

The COSLA Guidance for Allotments has been drafted following a recommendation by the Scottish Parliament Local Government Committee in its report on its enquiry into Allotments. The Guidance sets out the benefits of allotments and places these within the wider council targets such as sustainability and healthy living. It is intended to demonstrate the value of allotments, and through doing so, encourage councils to take steps to promote their use. The guidance makes a number of recommendations to Local Authorities in respect of managing allotments. These include ensuring an 'Early Warning System' is in place to alert officers with responsibility for allotments to any planning application that might impact on allotment sites.

### **3.3 Local and National Policies**

In addition to any statutory legislation that is specific to allotments, there are a number of National / Local Strategies, Policies and Guidelines that relate to allotments.

In the recently published Scottish Planning Policy, Open Space and Physical Activity, Local Authorities should assess how well the needs of the communities are being met and identify any changes needed to improve access to quality open space. To assist in this policy, Local Authorities must undertake a comprehensive open space audit. Using the information from the audit, each Local Authority must prepare an Open Space Strategy. The purpose of the Strategy is to set out a vision for new and improved open space which is appropriate to local circumstances. The completed Strategy should safeguard valued open space and guide the allocation of resources.

Planning Advice Note 65, Planning and Open Space, advises Local Authorities on Open Space Strategies. It states that when assessing current and future requirements, 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 relevant user groups on carrying out the necessary servicing work to establish demand for facilities.

The Scottish Allotment Garden Association advises their desire that the 'Opportunity to Garden' should be a part of the remit for all planning briefs for new developments and regeneration schemes, ensuring land is available for those who wish to grow their own fruit and vegetables.

The Local Government Association's "Growing in the Community - A Good Practice Guide for the Management of Allotments" (2nd Edition 2008) is applicable to England and Wales only, but it is worth noting as it provides a variety of exemplars of good practice.

### 3.4 Open Space Strategy

The Dundee Open Space Strategy 2008/2011, Report No. 348-2008, 25 August 2008, reviewed and updated Dundee Open Space Strategy identifies, as an objective, the need to develop and promote the role and use of allotment gardens and remits the Council Officers to produce Allotment Policies to tackle, as a priority, unpopular sites and assess where there is a demand for new allotments.

The Scottish Government National Food and Drink Policy publication 2009 commits the Government to:

- 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 locally grow your own initiatives.

#### Objective: Policy Compliance

Ensure inclusion of the COSLA guidelines into the Council's policies for implementation of this Strategy.

#### Actions:

- Ensure the provision of a transparent and efficient service to allotment holders;
- Ensure that in the formation of future local plans, allotments are considered separately from other forms of green space;
- Adopt an early warning system to alert officers with responsibility for allotments to any planning application that might impact on allotment sites;
- Dundee City Council should work with the Dundee Federation of Allotment Garden Associations to put in place a mechanism for resolving disputes that take place within allotment associations.



*Clepington Garden Allotment*

## **4. MANAGEMENT OF ALLOTMENTS IN DUNDEE**

### **4.1 Management**

The role of each Local Authority as a provider of allotments may vary considerably. In Dundee, allotments are provided in three different ways: directly by the City Council; Devolved Management by Allotment Associations; Independent and Privately Owned, and Managed Allotments. Each management method has its own advantages and disadvantages.

Direct Management helps to maintain allotments as a priority within a Local Authority and may help in securing capital and revenue budgets for investment and repairs. It also ensures that plot holders can be assured of fair and equitable treatment.

Devolved management of allotments tends to encourage plot holders to be more self-sufficient and increases their sense of ownership. Devolved management associations may also have better access and be more creative when seeking external funds for improvements etc.

### **4.2 Devolved Management of Allotments in Dundee by Societies**

There are six allotment sites in Dundee with responsibility for a total of 422 plots. Each Association has an individual lease, normally of ten years, which is negotiated through the Council's City Development Department. The Allotment Regeneration Initiative (ARI) advice is that leases should not be less than 20 years for each site.

In the early 1990s, finances were made available to improve the interior paths and fencing through 'non recurring budgets' by the previous Parks Department. However, since that period there has been very little investment and an increasing number of issues and concerns have emerged in recent years.

In most of the allotment leases there is a responsibility on the City Council for the maintenance of fences and internal paths, this has put pressure on Department resources to deliver these repairs, particularly in relation to fence repairs.

In addition, there have been a number of issues brought to the attention of Councillors and Council Officers where plot holders on association sites feel that they have not been treated fairly in respect of allocation and termination of plots.

In some cases, there have been suggestions that the Associations do not encourage the active engagement of plot holders and that their affairs are not sufficiently open to the community they serve.

### **4.3 Direct Managed by Dundee City Council**

There are currently four sites with a total number of 54 plots centrally managed by Dundee City Council, Leisure and Communities Department.

These allotments are administered by the Leisure and Communities Department's Booking Section, with the monitoring of the condition of the allotments and dealing with complaints and issues undertaken by the Parks Operations Section. Allotments are inspected, at the minimum, on an annual basis.

Payments for allotments is on an annual basis, but generates only a modest income. Repairs and Maintenance in the last 5 years have been relatively small as the allotment sites are expected to be self sustaining.

The maintenance and retention of plots on Council Managed Sites has been an increasing problem in recent years. Some sites e.g. Ancrum Road Allotments have a number of plots that are not maintained to a satisfactory standard. Whilst the plots are inspected on a regular basis, the timing of

the renewal and the issuing of missives of let (March) does not always allow adequate time for a change of plot ownership prior to the new growing season.

To encourage plot holders to maintain and retain their plots, good practice guidelines should be produced and made available to all plot holders. Consideration should be given to the distribution of good practice guidelines for plot holders (also known as starter packs). It is also worth noting that the ARI is currently working to produce a Scottish equivalent "Allotments A Plot Holder's Guide".

#### **4.4 Private Allotments**

There are three privately owned and managed sites within Dundee with a total number of 126 plots. The Council has no responsibility for these sites. However, occasionally advice on funding issues, etc. is provided and these allotments will be taken into account within any policy and policy decisions made by the Council.

##### **Objective: Management of allotment site**

##### **Actions**

- Use existing benchmarking data as a guide to the level of fees charged in Dundee (source Cardiff City Council Scrutiny Committee);
- Ensure the Council's Missives of Let are adequate for managing the Council's allotments and that consideration is given to the movement of the renewal date to November. This ensures that changes in plot holders can take place prior to a new growing season;
- Ensure that leases with allotment holders should under normal circumstances be no less than 20 years;
- Work towards the creation of associations for all allotment sites ensuring consistency across the City;
- Encourage improved management of individual plots. It is suggested that, in partnership with the Allotment Regeneration Initiative, a Scottish Version of 'A Good Practice for Allotment Holders' is distributed when published, which will include the following:
  - Safety on site;
  - A guide to good practise in terms of plot cultivation and site management;
  - References for further information;
  - Contacts for associations, council departments, etc.;
  - Terms of Leases, etc.

##### **Objective: Provide efficient allotment administration**

To ensure that there is a single point of contact for initial allotment enquiries.

##### **Action:**

- The Leisure and Communities Booking Section will be the initial point of contact
  - They will deal directly with booking requests and related issues;
  - Policy and strategy queries will be directed to the Leisure and Communities Environment Development Section;
  - Operational issues and complaints relating to Council managed allotments will be referred to the Leisure and Communities Parks Operation side;
  - Enquiries relating to devolved managed sites and leases will be referred to the Head of Business Development and Support Services.

## 5. SECURITY ON ALLOTMENTS

Allotment Security has been identified as a major problem in many areas of the UK, with many sites suffering from incidents, vandalism and theft. Often the thefts are of items of relatively low monetary value, but the plot holder may feel just as violated as if his house had been vandalised or burgled.

Currently in Dundee the perimeter fencing to Council leased allotment sites are the responsibility of the Council as landlord. The finance available to the Council for allotment repairs has reduced radically. This has led to a number of perimeter fences falling into a state of poor repair leading to plot holders being of the view that plot security has reduced and that the Council has not done enough to resolve the problem.

The Allotment Regeneration Initiative Project advises that "The Council has a duty of care to maintain as safe fences, gates and other infrastructure and to protect the public and plot holders on its premises and within its green spaces".

It is their view that it is unfair to expect to transfer poorly maintained infrastructures and the associated duty of care to volunteers managing publicly owned green assets, and that to suggest that associations should now take over this responsibility is "totally unreasonable, inequitable and unrealistic". It is their view that the Council should retain this responsibility and seek internal or external funding to fully meet the requirements for ongoing maintenance and upgrading.

From the consultation, there appears a general reluctance for allotment associations to apply for external funding, and there is a general feeling that the Council has an obligation to improve and maintain the perimeter fencing.

Three allotment associations responded. Their major concern was the responsibility for the fencing. City Road's view is seen as representative of the general view, that it is disappointing that the Council has not, in their view, adequately maintained the fences over the many years that the leases have been in existence.

Improved perimeter fence security is one means of improving site security, although often very expensive and needing regular maintenance. Dundee City Council is currently investigating the best method to ensure that the perimeter fencing is adequate and this may include:

- 5.1** Increased capital expenditure by the Council, but this expenditure would need to be borrowed through the Prudential lending scheme and would result in higher lease costs to allotment societies and plot holders.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Costs per 100m</b>
Chain link fence, plastic coated, 51mm x 1800mm high	£1,900
Timber Palisade fence 22 x 75m soft wood vertical paling with flat top 1800mm high	£3,000
"Barbican" galvanised steel paling, 2000mm high	£7,400
CLD 'Ultimate' profited panel system, polyester powder coated green 1.85m high, supply only quoted for	£3,600

These costs are indicative only and are taken from Spon's external works and landscape price book, 26th edition, 2007. They provide comparative information only and any allotment site fence would require to be individually designed and costed.

- 5.2** The removal of the responsibility for perimeter fences from the Council as landlord placing it with the allotment societies, funding for fencing may be achieved by allotment societies through external funding or through an increase in plot rental fees.

In the Allotments Regeneration Initiative's Fact Sheet 'A Guide to Devolved Management for Allotment Associations', advice is given that associations need to have the capacity to deal with the tasks and issues that arise when managing a site.

The results of a scoping exercise will show whether a society can accept full responsibility for all of the sites infrastructures, or if there is a need to negotiate some exemptions with the Local Authority.

The advice goes on to indicate that some associations have negotiated a 'peppercorn lease' whereby they do not pay any rent to the allotment authority in exchange for taking on complete responsibility for the site.

Other methods of reducing vandalism and theft have been identified by various allotment associations throughout the UK, these include:

- 5.3 Security lights / Cameras - where mains power is available infra red activated security lights may deter night time raiders. Security Cameras may offer a solution, but allotment sites in Dundee are often large and coverage could be difficult.
- 5.4 Increased Occupancy - Sites that have full occupancy will result in more people out and about and will help deter culprits from coming, but as a lot of vandalism and theft take place at night it will only be an assistance to the overall problems.
- 5.5 Post Code Tools / Tool and Shed Security - A number of allotment sites in the UK work within local community safety partnerships in schemes to post code tools, the chaining of tools together and ensuring that sheds are securely locked.
- 5.6 Stronger action against those who use allotments for purposes other than those for which they were established - i.e. illegal drinking, BBQ's, storage of goods, etc.
- 5.7 A number of allotment sites throughout the UK have also introduced community allotment watch schemes. These vary across the country, but one example in York involves:
  - The production and distribution of 1,000 wallet sized cards containing emergency telephone numbers issued to users;
  - Colour post coding of tools and equipment to discourage thieves and help identification;
  - Sale of shed alarms and personal attack alarms;
  - Increased police patrols and community watch signs.

**Objective: Site Security**

Provide safe and secure allotments.

**Actions:**

- The Leisure and Communities Department and Allotment Societies work together with the Community Safety Partnership to ensure the most effective means of securing allotment sites is established.
- A costed solution for each site should be developed in partnership with Associations or by the Council.
- With the support of the Finance Department, the Prudential borrowing implications should be calculated and the cost and plot holder assessed.
- The availability of external funding shall continue to be researched.



*City Road Allotment*

## 6. DEMAND FOR ALLOTMENTS

In December 2000, the Scottish Parliament Local Government Committee decided to hold an inquiry into allotments. Dundee City Council was asked to provide a submission. At that time the Dundee City Council Allotment sites had 23 vacancies and the devolved management associations had only 2 names on the waiting list. Subsequent to the inquiry, a directly managed site at South Road with 19 plots was closed due to difficulties in letting these plots, and a reduction in the number of plots at Arklay Terrace was also undertaken for similar reasons.

In 2007 when the Department undertook a survey of its own sites and association sites, it identified a waiting list of 82. (A similar survey undertaken by the Scottish Allotment Gardening Society indicated a waiting list of 150).

In May 2010, Dundee City Council managed sites had a waiting list of 211 (note this list is liable to constant change).

Association managed allotments and private allotments maintain their own waiting list and vacancy list.

When demand for allotments reduced in the early 2000s, the lower part of the Stirling Park Allotment, which was underused, was leased to a group called the Old Piggeries Garden Club with the intention of a Community Garden being established on the site. Despite two different committees being formed, funding being received from the Big Lottery, and support being given from the Leisure and Communities Department, the garden is yet to be established. It is understood that the Old Piggeries Garden Club still have a substantial part of a twenty year lease with Dundee City Council.

The disused allotments at South Road have recently been brought back into use. In partnership with the community and with funding from the Fairer Scotland Fund, a local group, South Road Allotment Association, brought back into use the allotments providing 20 plots for use by local residents.

### Objective: Meeting the demand for allotments

To ensure that there is an even distribution of waiting lists throughout allotment sites in Dundee and that waiting lists are actively managed.

### Actions:

- Regularly assess the number of plots within the City and monitor regularly the demand and waiting lists for them.
- Ensure underused sites are promoted to other allotment associations.
- Where a community or group identifies a local need for allotments, Leisure and Communities Officers are remitted to work with that group to identify potential allotment sites in parks and open spaces across the City.
- Identify a suitable tenant to take forward a community garden project on the Old Piggeries Community Garden Site.



*Bean poles, late spring,  
Stirling Park*

## 7. FUNDING AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Over recent years there have been a number of national initiatives that relate to allotments. The Allotment Regeneration Initiative has been formed. This was initially a partnership between John Prescott's Department of Transport and the Environment, the Esmee Fairbairn Trust and City Farms and Community Gardens Association. Money was provided for regeneration projects. Dundee did apply for funding, but was not successful.

The Allotments Regeneration Initiative now provide information and support for Allotment Associations and also provide an ARI Mentor Network in Scotland, funded by the Big Lottery.

Locally, City Road Allotment received a grant of £3,000 a few years ago, and the Clepington Working Men's Allotment Association have been working with City Development Department with a view to obtaining funding for sustainable heating initiative for their club rooms.

Despite this money, the City Allotments have lacked investment over the years, with poor security fencing, lack of good access, meeting and storage facilities and lack of adequate toilets being a problem.

To implement the action plan it will be necessary to identify new ways of working, new methods of funding, and to establish partnerships with external agencies. It is clear that due to the financial restraints, the Council alone will not be able to undertake the improvements required.

Although Dundee City Council advertises its allotments in places like the Dundee Flower and Food Festival Schedule, there is not an organised promotion of allotments and there is no reason why they should not take place.

### Objective: Funding and Future Developments

To develop and improve allotment provision in Dundee.

### Actions:

- Form a steering group to take forward implementation of the strategy, its actions and the production of a development plan;
- Provide an accurate update on the provision and condition of allotments across the City, in partnership with allotment associations. This should include looking at the financial delivery and administration of allotments and the infrastructure of allotment sites;
- Prepare a five year development plan for allotments across the City
- Ensure that capital and external funding sources are explored to help develop and implement the plan;
- Monitor the development plan on an annual basis and fully review the plan every 5 years;
- Source future external funding for the improvements of allotments and, where required, improved provision in partnership with the Dundee Federation of Allotment Garden Association;
- Encourage allotment sites to undertake individual fundraising initiatives;
- Prepare a plan for the promotion of allotments.



## SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

1. **Biodiversity:** Improve and encourage biodiversity and conservation.

Action:

Encourage Allotment Societies and plot holders to work with the Tayside Biodiversity Co-ordinator to develop biodiversity plans appropriate for allotment sites.

2. **Sustainability:** To promote effective recycling and composting initiatives for each allotment site.

Actions:

- Ensure that all interested parties work together with Dundee City Council Waste Management Department to produce specific plans for each site;
- Green Waste should not go to landfill. Funding should be sought to fund compost workshops, which will assist in taking forward the culture change from using skips to composting;
- The Council and Allotment Associations should.
  - quantify and monitor volume and cost of materials sent to landfill;
  - explore links with Dundee College to provide courses on allotment gardening, including organic growing and soil and compost making;
  - develop stronger links between Eco Schools and Allotments.

3. **Healthy Living:** Work closely with NHS Tayside and other organisations e.g. Trellis, in the promotion of allotment gardening as part of a healthy lifestyle to all sectors of society, including excluded people, black and minority ethnic groups.

Action:

Provide and promote allotment plots to organisations that work with the vulnerable or disadvantaged individuals to develop vocational, inter personal skills, healthier lifestyles and wellbeing.

4. **Policy Compliance**

Ensure inclusion of COSLA guidelines into the Council's policies for implementation of this Strategy.

Actions:

- Ensure the provision of a transparent and efficient service to allotment / plot holders;
- Ensure that in the formation of future local plans, allotments are considered separately from other forms of green space;
- Adopt an early warning system to alert officers with responsibility for allotments to any planning application that might impact on allotment sites;
- Dundee City Council should work with the Dundee Federation of Allotment Garden Associations to put in place a mechanism for resolving disputes that take place within allotment associations.

5. **Management of Allotment Sites**

Actions

- Use existing benchmarking data as a guide to the level of fees charged in Dundee (source Cardiff City Council Scrutiny Committee);
- Ensure the Council's Missives of Let are adequate for managing the Council's allotments and that consideration is given to the movement of the renewal date to November. This ensures that changes in plot holders can take place prior to a new growing season;
- Work towards the creation of associations for all allotment sites, ensuring consistency across the City;
- Encourage improved management of individual plots. It is suggested that in partnership with the Allotment Regeneration Initiative, a Scottish Version of 'A Good Practice for Allotment Holders' is distributed when published, which will include the following:

- Safety on site;
- A guide to good practice in terms of plot cultivation and site management;
- Relevant references for further information;
- Contacts for associations, council departments, etc.;
- Terms of Leases, etc.

6. **Provide efficient allotment administration:** Ensure that there is a single point of contact for initial allotment enquiries.

Action:

The Leisure and Communities Booking Section will be the initial point of contact:

- They will deal directly with booking requests and related issues;
- Policy and strategy queries will be directed to the Leisure and Communities Environment Development Section;
- Operational issues and complaints relating to Council managed allotments will be referred to the Leisure and Communities Parks Operation side;
- Enquiries relating to devolved managed sites and leases will be referred to the Head of Business Development and Support Services.

7. **Site Security:** Provide safe and secure allotments.

Actions:

- The Leisure and Communities Department and Allotment Associations should work together with the Community Safety Partnership to ensure the most effective means of securing allotment sites is established;
- A costed solution for each site should be developed in partnership with Associations or by the Council;
- With the support of the Finance Department, the Prudential borrowing implications should be calculated and the cost and plot holder assessed;
- The availability of external funding shall continue to be researched.

8. **Demand for allotments:** Ensure that there is an even distribution of waiting lists throughout allotment sites in Dundee and that waiting lists are actively managed.

Actions:

- Regularly assess the number of plots within the City and monitor regularly the demand and waiting lists for them;
- Ensure underused sites are promoted to other allotment associations;
- Bring back into general use the allotments at South Road, with half plots being provided as a starter into allotment gardening;
- Leisure and Communities Officers are remitted to identify potential allotment sites in Parks and Open Spaces across the City;
- Identify a suitable tenant to take forward a community garden project on the Old Piggeries Community Garden Site.

9. **Funding and Future Developments:** Develop and improve allotment provision in Dundee.

Actions:

- Form a steering group to take forward implementation of the strategy, its actions and the production of a development plan;
- Provide an accurate update on the provision and condition of allotments across the City, in partnership with allotment associations. This should include looking at the financial delivery and administration of allotments and the infrastructure of allotment sites;
- Prepare a five year development plan for allotments across the City;
- Ensure that capital and external funding sources are explored to help develop and implement the plan;
- Monitor the development plan on an annual basis and fully review the plan every 5 years;

- In partnership with the Dundee Federation of Allotment Garden Association, source future external funding for the improvements of allotments and, where required, improved provision;
- Encourage allotment sites to undertake individual fundraising initiatives;
- Prepare a plan for the promotion of allotments.

## REFERENCES

COSLA Allotments in Scotland : Guidance notes for Scottish Councils, published September 2007

Local Government Committee Inquiry into Allotments : published 2003

Cultivating Communities - Edinburgh City Council's Allotment Strategy : approved by Edinburgh City Council in November 2002

Best Value Review of Nutrition in Tayside : 2006-2007, published June 2007

Biodiversity in Community Gardens and Allotments : a guide by the Tayside Biodiversity, published 2008

Dundee's Public Open Space Strategy : 2008-2011, approved by Dundee City Council, August 2008

Scottish Government Planning Policy SPP11 : Open Space and Physical Activity, published November 2007

Planning Advice Note : Pan 65 Planning and Open Space, published June 2008

Consultation Responses

## **CONSULTATION**

To develop this Strategy, consultation was undertaken and comments received from the following organisations and individuals:

City Road Allotment Association

West Law Allotment Association

Stirling Park Allotment Association

Plot Holder, Julia Mudd

Scottish Allotment Garden Society

Allotments Regeneration Initiative

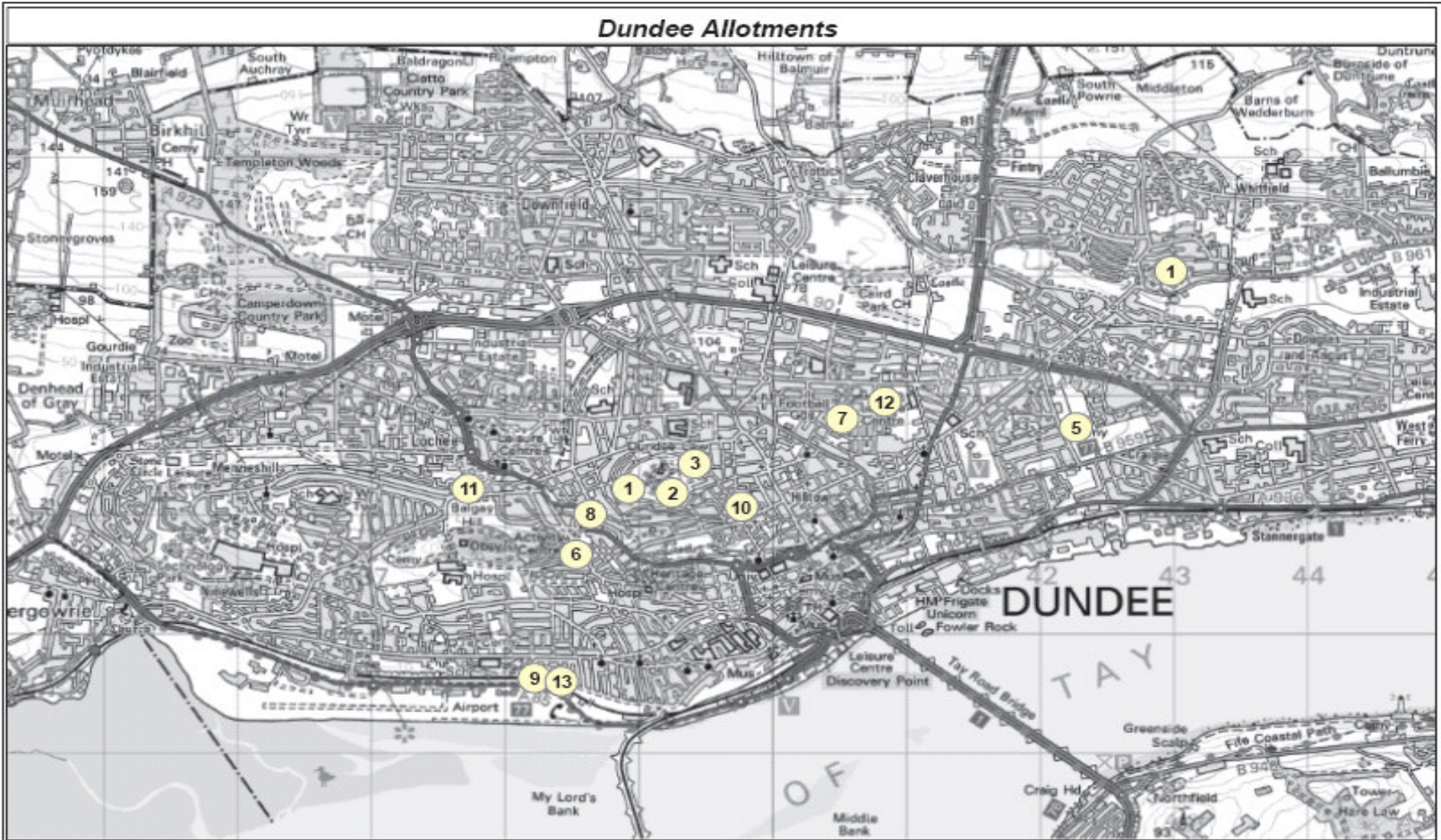
Scottish Government Food and Drink Policy

Tayside Biodiversity Partnership

## DUNDEE ALLOTMENT PLOTS

	<b>Association Managed Allotments</b>	<b>Total Number of Plots</b>	
1.	West Law	87	Association Managed Allotments maintain their own waiting list and vacancy list.
2.	Kinnaird	104	
3.	Stirling Park	49	
4.	Murrayfield	40	
5.	Old Craigie Road	79	
6.	City Road	63	
	<b>Private Allotment</b>		
7.	Cleington Working Mens	82	Private Allotments maintain their own waiting list and vacancy list.
8.	Gardner Street	31	
9.	Magdalen Green	13	
	<b>Dundee City Council Managed Allotments</b>		
10.	Macaulay Street	14	The current waiting list as at 26 May 2010 is 211 people
11.	Ancrum Road	17	
12.	Arklay Terrace	13	
13.	Magdalen Green	20	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>612</b>	

See attached City Allotments Location Map



This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. 100023371 2008



Department: Leisure and Communities  
Printed by: Dayl Smith  
Print date: 31/10/08

Scale - 1:40,000