Plan to Grow Food

A Spatial Planning Advice Guide for Allotments
and other Food Growing Spaces

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Introduction

Scotland wants to be a Good Food Nation and Scottish Government is endeavouring to put this into reality.

> *"A great deal of work is already happening now to make a real and positive difference to the lives of the people of Scotland: helping to improve their access to, and understanding of, the benefits of healthy local foods; ensuring sustainability of our wonderful food industry; and looking to grow Scotland's reputation as a Good Food Nation…."*
>
> Good Food Nation Proposals for Legislation, Scottish Government, 2018

Food matters, not just as an essential component to maintaining life, but recognising that it has a much wider impact on the way we choose to live. If we are serious about food we should recognise how this connects with the land. Connections are important and being a nation that prides itself on equality, Scotland recognises that people should have access to good food and nourishment for their individual and collective well-being. Scottish Government has committed itself to making good food an important national objective recognising the link between good food and good health.

Getting access to good food is not just about having good produce on supermarket shelves but also to build on the excellent tradition of growing one's own food. Much of that tradition has its roots in improving the health and welfare of people who couldn't afford to buy fresh food. However, the nutritional benefit of growing fresh food is only one of a range of benefits that include sociability and knowledge sharing of food growing that can help to strengthen communities.

Such benefits are undeniable but there are challenges to becoming a 'Good Food Nation', principally, obtaining sufficient land to form new allotments and other growing spaces as demand continues to rise. This demand comes from a diverse range of locations where people are collectively searching for a patch of ground in cities, suburbs or more remote rural places.

Having the right land in the right place is a matter for planners whose role it is to help support and manage resource allocations and assist in delivering great places to live. Planners act in the public interest and are required to understand what communities need and, by working with other public officials, create policy, facilitate local opportunities and exercise beneficial action for communities and society at large.

All this fits with the principles of The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 that provides local communities with the power and responsibilities to take greater control of decision making and actions around their own place and services. The ownership of ground is a fundamental aspect of taking greater control and decision making on how to use land for local public benefit.

Food growing is a public benefit but is surprisingly omitted by Planners as a land use within the Use Class Order. Evidence suggests that Planners regard food growing as a 'leisure' use, which according to the Oxford Dictionary is 'time when one is not working or occupied; free time'. However, those engaged in food growing, particularly those that are engaged in education, health and social prescription initiatives, know that food growing has attributes well beyond spending one's free time. Food represents an integral

aspect of any society and labelling food growing as some form of 'leisure' activity misses the essential point that food growing is an important way of allowing people to live and function well.

Community empowerment legislation recognises the importance of local food growing but this can only be transferred into reality by identifying and acquiring suitable land. Local Planning Authorities have statutory powers and ability to make policy that helps promote and assist communities in securing land to make good productive places.

An analysis of Scottish local planning authorities' local development plan policies highlight that at the moment allotments do not gain much attention in plan policy making. Some planning authorities don't refer to allotments at all in their development plans although most refer to Allotments and other food growing spaces as part of wider open space plan policies.

While there are statutory obligations to provide space for allotments where demand is demonstrated, there remains a clear shortage of allotments with Scotland's four main cities along having 4,600 people on waiting lists.

This shortage of growing spaces requires all those engaged in land management to consider how more land can be provided for food growing? It is certainly possible for allotments or other food growing spaces to be incorporated into new developments or other spaces within our existing settlements which would significantly benefit the supply of food growing sites as well as providing an essential good place community component.

This guide for planners, policy makers and practitioners argues the relevance and importance of allotments in place making and planning for people and concludes with a range of proposals that will enable more food growing land to be brought forward.

Good practice case studies and policies illustrate how successful delivery is attained and how benefits have been accrued. Planning policies form just one part of an inter-linked public policy environment that will enable communities to deliver their goals.

The provision of land for food growing should go well beyond a statutory duty which is essentially a minimum provision. Historically the perception may be that growing food is a minority activity and generally struggles to get the profile of other land use activities. For this reason planners need to be persuaded that food growing is socially important for lots of people and this should be recognised in place making and wider policy deliberations.

Food growing activity does not have to be complex. It can arise through informed practice or happenstance but more often than not success comes from inspired people who are good at embracing small modest change.

The Whole Place Approach and the Inter-Dependence of Nature and Citizens

Samuel Johnson said "deviation from nature is deviation from happiness." Connecting with nature is good for us and if we better understand nature then we and the planet will benefit.

Good connectivity with nature should be an essential test for all planners and communities when developing their ideas and policies whether it is in an urban or rural setting.

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) recognises the lack of attachment to nature with its current Green Infrastructure Fund which is in support of Scottish Government's National Outcomes on the Environment.

> *"It is crucial that people living in our towns and cities have the opportunity to love, use and value their nature, and feel happier, healthier and have a greater ownership of their own communities. We want to do all we can to help see reductions in health inequalities and at the same time increase the value and understanding of what nature can do for all of us."*
>
> Mike Cantlay, Chair Scottish Natural Heritage

As more people now live in urban conurbations than in rural places, we need more than ever to be connected with nature.

The Promoters of Connection

The founders of the planning profession were shaped by the thinking and actions of 19th century reformers and activists all of whom recognised the inter-dependence between humans and nature. They recognised how nature and cultivation can improve people's well-being and help them find their capabilities and functioning. This mutualistic approach of nature framing people and people framing nature was a foundation stone for planners.

Political and Market Impacts on Connections and Growing One's Own Food

With the need to rebuild post war Britain, priorities were inevitably focussed on industrial investment and housing all within a newly established welfare system. The consequence for good quality environments and green places, including allotments, became less important than economic growth and social welfare. In effect humans and nature became dualistic with interest in land for allotments over the last 70 years ebbing and flowing depending on political circumstance and market power.

Case Study of Inverleith Allotment, Edinburgh

Inverleith Allotments, part of Inverleith Park in Edinburgh, was established in 1918 to help with food shortages after World War 1 and was seen as a temporary proposition. After only four years the allotment was removed to create general open space and sports facilities. At the outbreak of World War 2 the allotment was re-introduced but at the end of the war the Council decided again to close the allotments in favour of other leisure activity. Significant opposition took place citing that while it was good to promote sporting activity it should also be acknowledged that other people wanted space to cultivate and take exercise from growing food.

Despite the back and forth nature of politics, Inverleith Allotments remain today. For one hundred years this allotment has brought great happiness, health, sociability and significantly much needed biodiversity within the city of Edinburgh.

At the same time as changing municipal priorities, markets shaped consumer behaviour to a culture of comfort, convenience and familiarity. All year round food access, irrespective of seasons, has led to a diminishing reliance on our local food system and eroding our understanding of the origins of food.

Political and economic pressures has demoted environment to being of secondary importance leading to the inevitable consequence of endangering the fine balance and inter-dependency between 'man and nature'.

The compartmentalisation of food growing as a spare time leisurely activity needs to be re-considered recognising the importance of a 'whole place' planning approach to sustain our ecosystem.

A Whole Place Approach

Patrick Geddes, a biologist and sociologist, promoted a 'whole place' approach to development recognising the connections and benefits of synthesising a range of matters and arguing that good planning is about examining matters from the whole.

Scottish Government's 'Asset Based Approach' argued about the important linkages between people, their health and their environment. This way of thinking that bridges science with social science is a key challenge for planners when determining what a place might look like and how well it might perform over the lifetime of development plans.

Geddes advocated that before Planners consider their plan, they should understand their place of examination, its history, its people and their cultural behaviour. This 'whole place' approach is now adopted in Scottish Government's place making initiative and referred to in its Scottish Planning Policy as a "creative, collaborative process…..[to achieve] sustainable, well designed places…..". In practice a 'whole maker' requires an understanding of people's sense of identity, belonging and behaviour known by sociologists as 'collective consciousness' which also lies at the heart of Scottish Government's policy on community empowerment.

Empowering the Community and its Essential Links to Planning

Some 200 years ago Robert Owen had his own proposition for community empowerment for Scotland calling for self-governing 'villages of co-operation'. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 is a ground breaking piece of legislation that places a greater emphasis for communities to do things for themselves although the legislation stops short of Owen's call for devolving power to a self-governing community. Pragmatically, community empowerment is intended as an inter-dependent collective and co-produced approach between the state and community.

This switch of emphasis towards locally active sharing production away from decisions and actions made on people's behalf is a fundamental shift that requires a cultural change for all participants.

How Empowerment Links to Planning

For community to be empowered, the legislation must apply across all public functions including statutory planning. New planning legislation is expected to embrace the requirements of the empowerment legislation but cross sector co-operation is essential if the purpose of local empowerment and planning is to be effectively connected.

Community empowerment action can only occur when it can be demonstrated that it is local. To acquire land as a 'community transfer body' an organisation has to be a formally constituted entity with a common purpose interest and subject to certain qualifying criteria. Therefore, to be recognised and participate in community empowerment some local food growing bodies may have to change their operational practice.

Community empowerment must link to spatial planning through collectively planning the use and management of land and property so that beneficial social and economic functionings can be properly integrated at the same time as ensuring proper place stewardship and the protection of our natural resources.

To 'collectively' plan means that Planners work with a wide range of interests, however, while we should all co-operate, there is a potential dichotomy between 'community' interests and 'society' interests. A community body is a collection of member interests which can be framed from subjective ideals and behaviour whereas society functions on a range of interests which are individual, corporate and frequently mutually exclusive. Therefore, the challenge for spatial planning is how to plan for inclusivity in a world that increasingly operates on an exclusive basis.

The task for planners is to act as a broker that connects and empowers people in the planning process by recognising and steering a course between community and society interests particularly where these are mutually exclusive.

To do all of this an effective planning system needs to return to the roots of 'Positive Planning'. By definition, Planning cannot be a 'reactive' function but needs to be upfront shaping our places and how people live their lives. However, such positive roots need to be amended from a 'top down' culture that was necessary in post war Britain to a more local democratic focussed process where the people are involved in shaping and delivering their own future.

In reforming the planning system Local Place Plans are being promoted as the mechanism for local empowerment in action. However, such plans should not become a tick box approach to plan making. Generic toolkits can help to inform the process. Toolkits are not mandates but a guide for discretion where communities assess and establish their own local cultural attributes, characteristics, conditions and circumstances that go well beyond physical elements. People, not processes, make plans.

Having Space to Grow Your Own Food

We need space to grow food. Space comes in all shapes and sizes with people applying a great deal of creativity and ingenuity in cultivation. This might be planting in pots, boxes on balconies, in raised beds in a private garden, sharing produce from collective action in a community garden, participating in a co-operative venture in a market garden or cultivating a full sized 250sqm plot on an allotment. The fundamental point is that we all need some space that fits with our requirements whether we have lots or little time on our hands.

History of Allotment Legislation

The Allotments (Scotland) Act 1892 was the first legislation to address allotment provision in Scotland. This legislation was amended by The Land Settlement (Scotland) Act 1919 and The Allotments (Scotland) Acts 1922 and 1950.

Current Allotment Legislation

The purpose of Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 is to update and simplify the allotment legislation consolidating the legislation and providing new duties on local authorities to provide allotments and limit waiting times for people wishing to have their own plot.

Part 9 defines allotments as 'land that is owned or leased by a local authority and used wholly or mainly for the cultivation of vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers, and not for profit.' However, allotments may be operated under other forms of ownership and tenure. Increasingly there are allotments that have been created by people coming together and entering into leasing or purchasing arrangements with private land owners. Given the substantial amount of people looking for allotment plots, provision will need to come from both public and private land owners. While Part 9 highlights the duty of local authorities, statutory planning should assess and respond to allotment demand by allocating land that is not necessarily in the ownership of local authorities.

The local authority has a duty to maintain a waiting list of people wanting a plot and while Part 9 defines a plot size as 250sqm, it is recognised that some people may require smaller plots particularly if they are new to cultivation. A well designed allotment should provide scope for adaptation and flexibility to meet the changing circumstances of plot holders.

Small starter plots have been introduced at Inverleith Allotment, Edinburgh to allow people to learn and experience food growing and thereafter perhaps graduate to a larger plot.

Local authorities have a duty to provide allotments and ensure that waiting lists do not become large and people do not have to wait long to gain access to a plot. Allotments should be located so that people do not have to travel far from their home, ideally by walking, cycling or by a short public transport journey to the site.

As a result of the Part 9 legislation, allotment officers will need to regularly engage with their planning colleagues and ensure that suitable land is allocated within local development plans to allow the local authority to meet their statutory obligations. With local development plans due to be extended to 10 years, sites for allotments will require some significant forward planning.

Utilising Public Asset for Growing Food

With local authority budgets under pressure and potential high costs associated with managing public assets, planners and estates officials have the potential to exercise a certain amount of ingenuity and creativity in using some assets in a different way.

Mansewood High Park in Glasgow's southside, was originally a farm and then became a park to serve the local neighbourhood. The park has now largely become a very successful allotment for local people. The success of a very active and socially well organised allotment committee has seen a significant growth in demand for plots in the last 20 years. The Council has responded to that growing community demand for more plots by providing more land from within the park. The outcome of parkland being used for allotment growing means that the local community are using open space in a different way.

Public parks are for people to enjoy but this could be through growing food and flowers and other associated activity. Such action will enable the local community to use different parts of the park in a variety of ways bringing greater opportunities for social cohesion, healthy lifestyles and a collective

approach to managing community assets. Similar experiences of allotments being part of municipal parks and gardens can be found at Inverleith Park in Edinburgh and Queens Park in Glasgow.

A creative plot entrance gateway constructed by an ingenious plot holder at Queen Park Allotment.

Planning Policy for Scottish Allotments

Positive Whole Place Planning to Make Things Happen

Scottish Spatial Planning has received some significant focus in recent years with reviews on its function, operations and how it can contribute to public interest and economy as well as acting as a steward of our heritage and environment.

For Planning to be effective it needs to return to its roots of 'Positive Planning'. By definition, Planning cannot be a 'reactive' function but needs to be upfront shaping our places and how people live their lives. Positive functioning needs to be in line with wider national and local policies embracing a 'whole approach' where spatial planning operates within a co-operative environment in line with established community empowerment principles.

Planning for Long Term Investment

Planning is more than a production process focussed on delivery, simplification and speed. Neither is it a tool for short term development. Planning is about helping to create the long term investment in our places. For this reason, Planning should avoid seeking public interest contributions by some form of late 'distributive' planning gain bargain. Planning of the public interest should be a pre-established requisite through an 'integrative' agreement at the start of plan preparation and place making stages in order to achieve the things that citizens want.

Making Things Happen at a Local Level

The Scottish Government recognises the need to embrace what people want through community empowerment initiatives and the creation of the 'Place Standard' and 'Local Place Plans' provides the opportunity to synthesize environment, social and economic elements to create better places and respond to what local people require.

For Planning to be the promoter of public interest it needs to be positive, collaborative and integrative.

Scottish Planning Policy

The Scottish Planning Policy is the overarching national planning policy on planning. Providing a broad outline of what good planning is for Scotland this strategic policy has only a small reference to allotments.

> *"Local development plans should safeguard existing and potential allotment sites to ensure that local authorities meet their statutory duty to provide allotments where there is proven demand. Plans should also encourage opportunities for a range of community growing spaces."*
>
> Scottish Planning Policy, 2014

Planning beyond the Statutory Duty of Providing Allotments

In terms of public interest, place making and community empowerment, the planning system could do more of a facilitation role than just providing assistance for other public departments to perform statutory tasks.

Despite the significant growth in demand for allotment plots, community gardens and other food growing areas and the fact that such activity is recognised by NHS Scotland as a successful 'social prescription', the SPP does not seek to promote allotments beyond the statutory requirements defined in Part 9 of the Community Empowerment legislation. However, planning for food growing should be more than a responsive approach to demonstrable demand. Food growing is known as an excellent preventative and rehabilitative health measure. Therefore public partners such as NHS and Health Social Integrated Boards are important bodies to help promote with Planners the importance of food growing for health and well-being. This state promotion is where public participants can act as useful 'top down' action makers.

Encouraging Opportunities

The SPP indicates that local development plans should encourage opportunities for community growing spaces and there is some emerging good practice on community growing spaces. However, this needs to be at a greater scale to have beneficial impact. To do this local planning authorities should consider the following:

A) Proactively identify land in LDPs and work with communities and developers to deliver growing spaces.

An example of this is:

Case Study: The Planning of the Chapelton Allotments and Community Gardens

The new master planned community at Chapelton is being developed by the land owner. The project is over 810 hectares and is currently planned for just over 4,000 dwellings within seven separate neighbourhoods, schools, public amenities, retail, open space and other facilities.

As part of the open space structure, ground has been provided for food growing purposes. Planned allotments and community gardens are distributed throughout the development. These spaces are relatively small in scale deliberately situated so they are easily accessed by residents. The provision of growing spaces is seen as a

positive and attractive use for communal spaces within the residential areas rather than being situated on the edge of the development, effectively out of sight and less convenient to access. Flexibility within the master plan allows for some allocated spaces to initially work as community gardens with the potential to be used as allotments at a later stage.

The provision of community gardens will allow newly arriving residents to quickly integrate with other new residents as well as being used by schools, as a venue for community events and a place of retreat and refuge for residents and wildlife.

Food growing areas will be subdivided into individual and communal garden areas with some 0.6 hectares being provided within 800 metres of every dwelling within the planned settlement. The growing areas will be enclosed, serviced and have storage facilities and some car parking provision. Within the whole project there will be twelve food growing areas on some 6.5 hectares.

The allotments are designed to be surrounded by public routes and housing to achieve a high level of passive surveillance. Enclosure boundaries will be by way of maintained hedges providing a suitable edge between housing and the cultivated area.

This project is an excellent example of how a landowning developer has taken an investment approach to delivering a place in addition to house building. The recognition that a good place needs places for things to grow is well demonstrated by the formation of a number of growing spaces within the planned development. The bringing together of residents to operate the allotment provides an opportunity to enhance sociability and interaction within a new settlement thereby rapidly enhancing its ability to function as a sociable and successful place.

B) Seek provision of growing spaces in major developments.

There are a growing number of local authorities that are now including a requirement for growing spaces to be included in major developments. One example is Aberdeenshire Council.

Aberdeenshire Council Planning Advice on Allotments June 2018

Aberdeenshire Council's local planning authority recognises that allotments are an important aspect of place making and sustainable communities by developing planning advice on allotments as part of its wider policy on green infrastructure. The local authority sees food growing as an activity that is not just about cultivation but also is a social activity that involves children and older people that can generate inter-generational benefits.

With a demonstrable need for plots it is clear that the Council in developing their planning policy on allotments are taking a more progressive proactive stance in helping to bring about a greater number of allotments and the guidance goes some way to promoting and, in some cases, requiring food growing spaces within a developer's development proposals.

Linked to the LDP, the Council's Parks and Open Space Strategy require that any new development over 50 homes must provide community food growing areas. This strategy also provides information on the ratio of plots to the number of people as well as distances between dwellings and food growing areas.

Aberdeenshire Council's planning authority is to be applauded for establishing a specific policy on allotments. This policy establishes a requirement for food growing spaces to be included as part of major development proposals rather than relying on a wider open space provision which invariably means opportunities for allotment spaces is lost. At a time when land for allotments and other food growing areas is in short supply, this policy should help to boost food growing provision and is of significant benefit. It is hoped that other Scottish local planning authorities will replicate Aberdeenshire Council's approach.

C) consider including space within parks which will provide a mixture of uses as well as reducing the public management burdens

The allotment within Inverleith Park in Edinburgh has been cited as an exemplar and historical precedent where food growing forms part of a municipal park. Municipal parks are tremendous place assets and are an essential part of any neighbourhood community, particularly in an urban setting, where people have the opportunity to exercise and socialise. It is now generally recognised that food growing is an appropriate use within such parks and Glasgow City Council has been instrumental in working with allotment organisations in bringing greater use of parkland for food growing purposes. Examples of this can be seen in both Queens Park and Mansewood High Park in Glasgow's southside and the regeneration sites at Tollcross Park and Crofburn. Fife Council is well recognised for its good food growing practice and has introduced a range of initiatives aimed at re-allocating leisure use assets in favour of food growing spaces. This work is both as a response to ever increasing demand as well as being an effective way of reducing management liabilities and expenditure.

D) seek to provide growing spaces in regeneration programmes on vacant and derelict land.

While Scotland's post-industrial decline took place some time ago, the dereliction and blight in some of our urban places sadly remain. A number of initiatives are currently taking place including the Scottish Land Commission and Scottish Natural Heritage's work on the Green Infrastructure Fund. While there is no national regeneration policy approach there are a number of regeneration projects taking place in Scotland which are largely housing led approaches rather than having a place focus. It is hoped that a more 'whole place' approach could be considered in future regeneration strategies that could embrace food growing as an integral and sociable part of transforming places.

Planning Advice Note - PAN 65 Planning and Open Space (2008)

Scottish planning policy for allotments is highlighted in the Planning Advice Note 65 'Planning and Open Space' which was published in 2008. In that document there are essentially two substantive references relating to the economic benefit of allotments and the need to assess current and future demand for allotments. The PAN further indicates that local authorities should consult and carry out research to establish the demand for allotment facilities. It is clear from local authority waiting lists that demand for allotments has substantially grown in the last ten years and as the PAN indicates there is a need for planning to respond to that growth which is currently being unfulfilled and generally left as a minority element of broader open space policies.

The advice note indicates that there are economic benefits that can be derived from 'produce from allotments' which has now been updated within the current guidance that sees allotment participants being able to sell allotment produce for the benefit of the maintenance and operation of the allotment. Given the introduction of the Community Empowerment legislation and the significant increase in

demand for food growing spaces it would be beneficial if PAN 65 is re-drafted to reflect such changes and generally help to promote the inclusion of food growing as an integral part of planning policy.

National Planning Framework 3

The National Planning Framework (NPF3) sets out the long term vision for development and investment for Scotland over the course of the next 20 to 30 years.

Enhancing our Eco-system and Environment is a Priority

The National Planning Framework highlights a desire to enhance ecosystem services and adapt to the growing impact of climate change. It also emphasises the importance of the environment for people, and the need to prioritise environmental enhancement in places where past activity has impacted on landscape and ecological quality.

The National Land Use Strategy advocates an ecosystems approach highlighting that all aspects of the environment, including humans, are interrelated and should not be viewed in isolation.

Scotland's national planning policies make it clear that there is a need to have a greater emphasis on sustainable environmental practice recognising the inter-relationship of the built and natural environment. Such an approach also links with Scottish Government's policy framework for 'inclusive growth' that includes aspects of social justice such as 'wellbeing' and 'environmental sustainability'. Food growing is part of the ecological national policy agenda and wholly consistent with Geddes's 'whole place approach'.

The NPF3 refers to allotments within the Central Scotland Green Network project which encompasses a range of environmental enhancement undertakings that are deemed as of being nationally important. It is hoped that this national emphasis that prioritises environmental matters can become more apparent at a local level with food growing becoming an important way of achieving such objectives.

NPF 4 a Spatial Vision for Scotland

It is proposed that Scotland's National Planning Framework (NPF4) will be revised 'to develop a spatial vision for Scotland until 2050, supported by a delivery programme which consolidates infrastructure investment, health and climate change objectives into a single plan'. With food growing now firmly established as making a contribution towards good health and sustainability, it is hoped that the revised National Planning Framework 4 will embrace a national commitment to ensuring there is sufficient land for people to grow food.

Scottish Place Making Policy

Scottish Government's Creating Places, published in 2013, recognises that space should be provided for growing food and these spaces are part of the landscape forming an integral component of place making. Creating Places was the policy driver for the Place Standard for Scotland.

Scotland's Place Standard

Urban designer, Jan Gehl, refers to the importance of recognising how people use their places and how designers should respond by creating the right environment. Gehl's proposition is that "we shape places and they shape us" which means avoiding 'top down' physical and technical approaches and involving the users and owners in place making production. Certainly the growth of community gardens highlights their social importance in shaping their communities.

The Place Standard is intended to allow communities to assess what works within their place and to identify where matters need to improve. While food growing does not feature as a Place Standard element, it is generally recognised that allotments make a significant contribution in the place making process contributing towards social interaction, well-being and good health for many citizens. Growing spaces can be found acting as a community hub of activity and sociability that are essential components of place. The task for planners and community bodies is to recognise the importance of food growing spaces and ensure that these are contained in future place making plans and policies.

An excellent example of a food growing initiative that has created rapid community cohesion with excellent neighbourly activity is at Braehead Community Garden.

Braehead Community Garden, Stirling a case study of under-utilised Council land

The Braehead Community Garden has been in operation for around 3 years and is a community facility specifically for the neighbourhoods of Braehead and Broomridge in Stirling. The community garden comprises of 100 raised bed plots of around 3 metres x 1.5 metres, 3 poly tunnels of which 2 are used for cultivation and one is for social gatherings and food growing events.

This project is an excellent example of a community working in partnership with its local Council and sourcing funds to support a food growing venture that has established substantial social community benefits.

The community garden was funded by the Big Lottery utilising green space owned by Stirling Council adjacent to the railway line. The land is subject to a 15 year lease with the Council. In addition to the raised beds and polytunnels there are separate areas for beekeeping, chickens, an orchard and market gardening activity. Communal resources also include storage sheds, meeting shed, toilets and a large social gathering space. While the Council provided the initial infrastructure the majority of the work has been undertaken to a high standard by volunteers. The skills of the volunteers have been invaluable to the initial start-up enabling and construction works.

As with many food growing spaces there is a strong commitment to ecological practices with areas set aside for biodiversity and while there is no mains water supply, rain water harvesting takes place from water butts around the polytunnels and distributed around the garden.

While a community garden is different to an allotment it serves a common community purpose and can act as an introduction to food growing allowing people to choose whether to graduate to larger allotment plots in due course.

A key purpose of the community garden is its ability to create a collective sociable interaction which has brought about a significant community bonding. Such community bonding is multi-generational with children, parents and grandparents participating in food growing activity. Schools and children's groups are particularly active having their own raised beds gaining significant educational benefits through collective play.

While all plot holders have to commit to 10 hours per annum of volunteer work the majority do much more by actively engaging and helping to organise social events and generally co-operating with each other. There is no doubt that this spirit of co-operation has established lasting friendships and engendered a stronger community as a result of this food growing venture.

Scottish Planning Use Classes

There is some uncertainty as to how food growing should be handled in terms of the Scottish Planning Use Classes Order. Where Scottish local planning authorities believe that allotments are considered an appropriate agriculture use then they should be aware of certain permitted development rights under The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 as amended where certain types of buildings and other structures may not require planning permission.

Change of Use from Agriculture to Horticulture?

Some local planning authorities may regard food growing as agriculture or horticulture while others may regard such activity as a leisure use. In some cases while the use was deemed as agriculture, associated structures maybe regarded as development and require to be assessed under a planning application.

Such a situation occurred at North Ayrshire Planning Authority with an application for an allotment in Kilwinning [2011]. It was believed that the application for the development of an allotment was for 'recreational' purposes. While this was a change of use from agriculture, the proposal was in line with the Council's policy on leisure and recreational facilities where such facilities were an improvement for local people.

In PAN 65 it is acknowledged that allotments can have an economic benefit but given the lack of clarity on whether planning consent is required for the development of an allotment or other growing spaces, it would be helpful if the planning advice note was updated with clearer guidance as to whether an allotment is regarded as a horticultural or leisure activity. It should also provide further advice on whether planning consents are required for buildings and other associated structures. In terms of the 'planning use' it should be noted that in the event that an allotment was recognised as a leisure use then, in theory, an allotment could thereafter become some other form of leisure facility without a need for a change of use.

Planning guidance could also provide a joined up and consistent linkage with the requirements of Section 115 Allotment site regulation of the Community Empowerment Act that states 'buildings or other structures that may be erected on allotments, the modifications that may be made to such structures and the materials that may or may not be used in connection with such structures.'

Evidence suggests that while there is little planning control over the change of use from agriculture to allotments, planning policy remains relevant in managing the spread of operational development such as sporadic sheds and other associated structures. However, often structures are deemed to be of a temporary nature by not necessarily being fixed to the ground and not having services. In general, the presumption is that planning consent will be required for structures and certainly this requires to be checked with the local planning authority. Such grey areas in planning policy could be clarified by having clearer guidance and policy as to what, and what does not, require planning consent. One way of dealing with this matter is for Scotland to adopt the simple solution applied in Wales where the National Assembly for Wales has made the following clear statement:

> *"Planning Permission is not required for the development of allotments, since cultivation of an allotment amounts to agricultural use for the purposes of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the use of land for the purposes of agriculture does not amount to development of the land for the purposes of that Act."*
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> Allotment Provision in Wales, 2010

Scottish Local Authority Development Plan Policy on Allotments

A survey analysis of Scottish local planning authorities' local development plan policies highlight that allotments do not gain much attention in plan policy making. While a small number of planning authorities make no mention of allotments most refer to allotments as part of a wider open space policy with associated strategies. The analysis suggests that Allotments form part of a list of various uses under open space and generally have a low level of attention. Only a few local planning authorities have detailed policies regarding allotments or other food growing spaces.

> *"The enactment of the Community Empowerment Bill means that the Council will have a statutory duty to provide allotment ground according to demand. It will be obliged to create, maintain, report on and address the needs of waiting lists and will be required to ensure that no individual will sit on a waiting list for more than 5 years without offer of a fit for purpose plot. As provision of allotment space is a statutory duty, the Council must plan for future provision…"*
>
> Extract from East Lothian Council's Local Development Plan, 2016

East Lothian Council recognises the statutory responsibility of local authorities to provide sites for allotments within its local development plan. Also the policy suggests that "developers for larger housing sites should, in consultation with the Council's Healthy Living Manager, consider providing land for allotment plots as part of the mix of open space to be provided on their sites…"

> ***East Lothian Council LDP Policy OS6: Allotment Provision***
>
> *"New housing proposals of 500 or more dwellings should, if agreed with the Council's Healthy Living Manager, make provision for land within their masterplans for the delivery of allotments as part of the mix of open space types to be provided on such sites in line with Advice Box 2 and Policy OS3. The Council may seek land to meet backlog demand or ensure sufficient scale of allotment provision for appropriate site management and maintenance reasons. Provision of such land would be part of the open space requirement"*

Both Aberdeenshire and East Lothian Council local planning authorities have recognised the importance of allotments in their local development plan and used their policies to require some provision for food growing as part of large scale development proposals. Some local plan policies regard allotments as being an option for developers to bring forward as part of their open space proposals. However, given that allotments and other growing spaces require more thought and investment than most other open space activity it is highly likely that developers will consider less complex and cheaper solutions to their open space proposals.

Planning Policies for Allotments in other parts of the UK and Continental Europe

It is useful to consider how allotments are considered by planning systems in other parts of the UK and continental Europe.

Welsh Planning Policy on Allotments

The National Assembly for Wales has an 'Allotment Provision in Wales, 2010', that makes an unequivocal statement referred to earlier that cultivation is an agricultural use for the purposes of the planning legislation. This direction makes is clear that food growing as a planning use is an agricultural activity. By having such a statement this removes any dubiety around the planning use status and will be helpful for food growing proposals.

Northern Ireland Planning Policy on Allotments

Planning Policy in Northern Ireland is similar to that in Scotland with a few references to allotments made in their Planning Policy Statement 8 on Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2004).

English Planning Policy on Allotments - National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

The national planning policy in England recognises that allotments make a contribution to promoting 'healthy and safe communities' and generally see allotments as being a place that helps to improve people's well-being. Interestingly, the policy framework suggests that allotments could be developed in green belt locations providing they are not in conflict with the aims of that green belt designation. However, structures on the allotment may need planning consent.

English Planning Use Class for Allotments

In England, the question as to whether allotments are deemed to be an agricultural use has been tested in law. In Crowborough Parish Council v Secretary of State for the Environment and Wealden District Council, [1980] it was determined that the local planning authority and the Secretary of State were incorrect in their opinion that the use of the land for allotments was a material change of use from agriculture due to the greater intensity of use, changes to the land's appearance and the increased number of people that visited the site. The court held that allotment activity was horticulture which was included in the statutory definition of agriculture. However, to complicate matters the nature of the use should be considered, for example, if the allotment was used for leisure purposes or has a significant area of pleasure garden then it would not be an agricultural use.

From the analysis of planning policy within other parts of the UK, the provision of allotments is largely a minor consideration frequently subsumed within wider policies on open space. However, planning policies on allotments can be dependent on the interpretation of whether an allotment proposal is for horticultural purposes or leisure purposes. Policies should be clear to applicants as to whether there are

any differences between a local authority proposal for a statutory allotment provision and an allotment proposal that is proposed on private land. Certainly the Welsh Planning Policy on Allotments is very clear and worthy of consideration in Scotland.

Continental European Planning Policy on Allotments

There are many European countries that feature allotments in their planning policy. These include Baltic and Eastern European states as well as Germany and France.

Where countries have national allotments and garden legislation these can be associated with spatial strategies that are politically driven by seeking to improve people's living standards. For example, Ireland promotes urban gardening as part of its spatial planning vision to contribute towards the mitigation of poverty. Also where people demand state provision then democratically it is likely to happen with Planning acting as the driver for change.

In Poland The Family Allotment Gardens Act, 2013, spells out a series of objectives that includes meeting people's recreation and leisure needs, improving the sociability of communities, assists families and individuals in hardship, helps integration of multi-generational families and provides healthy activity for older people who have physical and mental health conditions. Allotments can also assist in the regeneration and renewal of vacant and derelict land, promotion of bio diversity and generally conserve nature. In Poland such provision plays an important part in the appropriate provision of green spaces for local communities.

In Slovakia there are 'garden colonies' which historically were places for people to have vacations as a result of eastern block countries travel restrictions. Planning regulations and policy manage the use of garden colonies with different typologies for different locations.

In Denmark the Allotment Gardens Planning Act 2007 requires the majority of allotments to be permanent. The loss of an allotment has to be robustly argued on public interest grounds.

Generally Continental Europe has a similar tradition of allotments to that in the UK. However while the origins of food growing were as a result of a need for nourishment particularly for those with little money, many European countries have developed allotments into wider activity and places of retreat and leisure activity.

While allotments in Scotland can certainly be places of retreat, they are not geared to staying over for the weekend in a well specified hut. Indeed policies in Aberdeenshire suggest that a hut is a storage space rather than a place for enjoyment.

However huts have a great Nordic tradition such as the Swedish Koloni Garden where typically each plot will have a small bothy for cooking, sleeping and generally enjoying being out in the country wholly connected with nature. The Koloni Garden did start out as growing places for poorer people rather like the approach taken by philanthropic industrialists in Britain; however, over recent years allotments have shifted to wider interests with an underlying concern for growing quality local food for healthy living. Similar approaches have been taken in the Netherlands and Germany where wider social, educational and recreational benefits are recognised and encouraged.

Such growing spaces with a bothy could be argued as essentially a fusion of our own allotments and Scotland's 'Hutting' movement. By synthesising our huts and allotments, Scotland has the potential to follow a Nordic tradition.

Other examples include historic market gardening which has been transferred to plot ownership such as the Marshes of Bourges where 135 hectares of marshland are cultivated by 1,500 plot holders in an area that is within a few minutes of Bourges city centre. This utilisation of marginal land, which has national protected status, highlights how ground can be put to good productive and ecological sustainable use and at the same time allow citizens to enjoy growing food as well as being good stewards of the land.

Certainly, what European practice highlights is that many countries see allotments as making a significant contribution towards people's health, well-being and helping to generate a greater collective culture and sociability. Such matters are important aspects of creating good places to live.

Food growing at the Marshes of Bourges

The Beneficial Impact of Allotments in Scotland

This guide is not merely about the benefit of growing food but highlights the benefit of allotments as part of our changing social, economic and physical fabric. Allotments are havens for education, training and development, they are healthy places improving people's welfare and importantly they are sociable happy places.

Cultural and Knowledge Exchange

Allotments have existed for generations but like many other aspects of life they have adapted to changing circumstances, whether by way of science, technology, social behaviour or taste. If what we eat on our dinner plate is different to say the 1960s then it follows that the food that we grow will be different in our allotment plots. For example, at Hamiltonhill Allotments in north Glasgow a number of plot holders are from Eastern Europe and Asia and these cultivators have brought different ideas on approach and produce to traditional practices.

Doing things differently is all about the creation and exchange of ideas, embracing change and developing new methods through experience and experimentation. Scottish horticulture has such a tradition with Scottish plantsmen such as Douglas and Loudon in the early 19th century introducing new plants and approaches that we now recognise as an integral part of our Scottish landscape. More recently inward migration has brought different cultivation, fruit and vegetables from a wide number of continents. A vibrant and progressive society is one that embraces change and is open to new ideas. Allotments and other food growing spaces are part of that progressive movement that is constantly changing and embracing new ways of growing things.

Change from in-coming cultivators is just one part of the allotment dynamic. Growing food is a lifelong learning experience by combining knowledge development, honing growing skills and just simply getting experience from finding out what grows.

Unlike other forms of growing, an allotment is a place for connected activity where plot holders are both independently engaged with their own soil and growing things as well as participating with others in trading experience, social interaction and produce exchange.

This individual and collective action in allotments is an excellent example of self-supporting effort through consensual co-operation. Most efforts go largely unnoticed as it is the normal functioning of individuals carrying out their tasks within a collective spirit and purpose.

Benefits of Inter-Generational Exchange

A heartening fact is that allotments are great places for inter-generational exchange and experience. Invariably a mature plot holder will enthusiastically pass on the benefit of their wisdom and growing experience to all those wishing to learn their craft.

Therefore, allotments are great places of learning not just in cultivation but through social exchange and joint participation that opens up undiscovered avenues for young people witnessing their own vegetables and flowers bursting into light. In a modern fast world where digital highways transmit information at a click of a button there is little time to think and contemplate. Allotments are great places full of people valuing the benefit of thought and preparation that acts as an antidote and counterpoint to the fast action of contemporary life.

It is clear that while young people have embraced digital technology they are concerned about the welfare of our planet and the quality of food production. It may be that the stereotypical plot holder is seen as a retired person and often male, many allotment societies report a much wider spectrum of interest from all representatives of society.

Plot workshop with children's art work and prizes

A good example of young people participating in allotments can be found in Glasgow's Westthorn Allotment in Dalmarnock where a successful project was introduced for children to have their own allotment under the supervision and tutelage of some senior plot holders. This social enterprising venture was not just about growing things but undertook a range of stimulating activities that enabled children to discover their own talents in a creative learning outdoor environment. This inter-generational initiative gave local children a positive focus for their school holidays and certainly provided a great opportunity for them to find their own capabilities. Of equal importance was that the children's' enthusiasm also brought great levels of satisfaction and enjoyment to older people who were able to pass on their lifetime of skills and experience to younger people.

An example of multi-generational learning activity is the social enterprise, Global Generation which provides training and activity for younger people living in London. Global Generation is seeking to broaden the connectivity between younger people and nature including the creation of planting beds, poly-tunnels and greenhouses. This is a novel joint venture between a charity, building contractor, other businesses and younger people. While only a temporary project the initiative is a learning platform for young people to graduate to other food growing places and generally provide an awareness of nature, food growing and productive processes that will broaden their experience and understanding of our planet.

The Attributes of Growing Places

The well regarded Glasgow Allotments Forum has prepared a Manifesto for Allotments which in recognising that food growing is its fundamental purpose, sets out four key allotment values of:

- **Wellbeing**
- **Inclusion**
- **Green Practices**
- **Co-working**

In preparing this guide it is apparent that the experience of plot holders in Glasgow is repeated across Scotland.

Wellbeing – A Place to be Healthy

Growing food is the fundamental purpose for most plot holders but it is well recognised that cultivating an allotment plot provides a great sense of psychological and physical well-being. Plots provide access to a quiet, green space in which people can retreat to be creative, productive and active. Interestingly many plot holders see the value of an allotment not as a replacement for their garden but a different positive individual and collective experience. Recently there has been an increasing promotion of 'social prescribing' a term often used to describe exercise or creative activities that could help to people to recover from illness or keep them well. Typically this would take the form of walking or cycling. However, less attention is paid to the benefits of food growing as part of a social prescription although there is substantial evidence to demonstrate that being involved in food growing has had a significant benefit to those who have both physical and mental conditions.

Community garden projects such as the charity, Cyrenians in Edinburgh, West Lothian and Falkirk and the Bridgend Growing Communities in various parts of Edinburgh have been demonstrating for many years the beneficial enjoyment and health impact of people growing food. The health benefit from food growing is certainly more than the physical activity. Research and practice has demonstrated the mental stimulation from not just planting and seeing things grow but the stimulation achieved from being amongst other people interacting and learning new skills are all part of the essential experience. Consistently people come alive when they are connected with nature whether it is a sensory experience or it is simply as a result of shared involvement and companionship.

A Case Study on the use of Vacant and Derelict Land for Growing Spaces and Therapeutic Transformation

Bridgend Growing Communities

Bridgend Growing Communities (BGC) was established in 2006 as a community health and gardening project of four food growing plots within the Bridgend Farm allotment site near Cameron Toll. The project, originally known as the Bridgend Allotments Community Health Inclusion Project (BACHIP), is a partnership between the City Of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian.

Supported by funding from the Big Lottery a series of food growing programmes and activities were established which enabled other garden projects to be developed in the south-east of Edinburgh. This pioneering community gardening project has made a significant contribution towards improving health and social inclusion.

The success of this healthy food growing initiative has led to further funding from the Big Lottery and other funding sources to provide further outreach training programmes. This included the 'Getting Communities Growing Together' project. Like many community initiatives, success is built on the strong enthusiastic commitment from volunteers who work and support the partnership with the Council and public agencies. The project is a fine example of community led projects that work in various locations helping to transform vacant and derelict land into growing food and making good sociable spaces.

The Bridgend Gardens Communities staff and volunteers organise a range of events and activities supporting local community organisations to develop designs and deliver their growing ideas. Many of the vacant and derelict land sites are within areas where people are disadvantaged or discriminated against. These programmes and events have demonstrated an ability to generate confidence allowing people to find their own capabilities and transform lives all of which helps individual functioning as well as enhancing their community connections and transforming the quality of their place.

Through partnering arrangements with health and social agencies in Edinburgh, Bridgend Gardens Communities staff receives referrals from people with a range of conditions, challenging circumstances and needs. These people are from across the age spectrum who all come together to form multigenerational communal experiences. The events while centred on the benefits of local food growing also focus on onsite cooking with communal lunches using grown produce from the site. All of these activities have now been sustained over a significant period and demonstrate that the current trend for GP social prescribing can be successful if collaborative projects are well co-ordinated, connected and supported by a committed volunteer resource. All of these have been now in place for a long time at the Bridgend Gardens Communities and they should be commended for their excellent exemplar work which is clearly capable of being rolled out across Scotland.

Inclusive – An allotment is embedded in its Community

The Wellhouse Allotment supported by Connect Community Trust, highlight the purpose and importance of food growing with their following statement: "To raise the self-esteem, health and pride of all residents of Wellhouse, Provanhall and surrounding areas in the East End of Glasgow".

A well operated allotment site generates an inclusive and sociable environment. A modern allotment is well embedded within its community and comprises of a range of friends and family. Allotments create communities of a type and scale that encourages interaction similar to that of say a village or a community street of a bygone age. For those suffering from social isolation allotments provide a shared practical focus that engenders conversations and exchanges. Most sites have communal plots with schools, and a variety of self-help groups many of which provide outdoor learning opportunities for young people, enjoyable experiences for people with dementia and a safe therapeutic space for those struggling with a range of health and social issues.

Sustainable – Allotments are full of Green Practice

Plot holders in allotments and community gardens always have a strong commitment to sustainable practices. Plot holders are fully aware of the importance of improving local bio-diversity, expanding organic food production and recycling/upcycling. Wildlife areas with ponds and native plants are prevalent on many allotments and bee keeping has become increasingly popular. Food growing is adapting to different approaches and methods including community orchards, fruit planting and even forest garden allotments for foraging have become increasingly popular.

Allotments have a long history of conserving urban greenspace and have made a significant contribution towards living in low carbon places. Growing spaces can be great places of beauty that act as important natural counterpoints to urban sprawl which has increasingly brought a negative impact on our eco-system.

Co-working – Allotments are Co-operative Empowered Places

Allotments and other growing spaces are vital components of good quality places and should form an essential part of our urban greenspace. But growing spaces don't suddenly happen without assistance and it is for this reason that it is really important for local planning authorities to embrace and accommodate such elements within their policies, regulations and land allocations. But the creation of growing spaces cannot just happen by the intervention of the State apparatus and process alone but needs local community champions and supporters to benefit from community empowerment powers that can enable local allotment organisations to connect and co-operate with wider community initiatives.

Assessing squashes at Braehead Community Gardens

How much land for food growing do we have and how much do we need?

The Greenspace Survey in 2017 found that only about 25% of the population grows their own fruit and vegetables while a further 50% indicated that they would like to.

According to the Census in 2011 around 36% of the Scottish population lives in flats but this can be as high as 86% in urban parts of Glasgow. Also, an average of 31% of Scottish households do not have access to a private vehicle while in Glasgow this is 49%.

Therefore, a significant number of people in Scotland do not have a garden and access is limited to allotments and other outside space.

While there is a lack of up to date data on allotments with figures hard to come by, it is understood that there is a waiting list of over 7 years for an allotment plot in Edinburgh and some parts of Glasgow. It is clear that throughout Scotland there is a significant under supply of places for people to grow their own food.

Current Allotment Provision

The current allotment provision is estimated to be around 1 plot for every 500 people which is equivalent to 0.2% of the population or 0.4% of Scottish households.

How much land is needed?

The Greenspace Survey suggests that around 1 allotment plot is required for every 37 people which is equivalent to 2.7% of the population. Therefore, it is believed that allotment provision needs to be increased by some 10 fold.

It is estimated that one hectare of land can provide around 60-70 allotment plots of varying sizes. To provide some idea of what space is required for allotment plots around 4 to 5 plots can be formed from one tennis court.

What can be grown?

According to the Scottish Allotments and Garden's Society a standard plot of 250 sqm is capable of producing sufficient fruit and vegetables to sustain a family of four throughout the year.

Land Take Comparisons for Allotments, Parks and Vacant & Derelict Land in Glasgow

Allotments in Glasgow only take a modest amount of land compared to other open spaces such as parks. Also there is a significant amount of vacant and derelict ground within the city. Currently it is estimated that in Glasgow allotments take up 32.5 hectares of land and provide about 1,500 plots whereas by comparison there are 19 parks in Glasgow that cover about 1,500 hectares of land and some 1,000 hectares of land in Glasgow that is defined as being vacant or derelict.

While additional growing spaces such as community gardens will increase the amount of food growing space in Glasgow, it is clear from Greenspace Survey and other data that there is a significant shortfall in provision. This significant shortfall is no doubt repeated across the whole of Scotland.

Three Sources of Land for Growing Food

Everyone agrees land is a scarce and finite resource and it is the function of Planning to manage that resource for the benefit of the people, our economy and our environment. There are countless competitors for land and those with greater funds usually have the greatest chance to obtain the land. Buying land is a competitive activity and those looking to acquire land for allotments are usually local people coming together as a community organisation. They are volunteers who have little or no capital and rely on raising funds, creativity and ingenuity to help acquire land for food growing. Therefore, to secure sites for allotments the planning system is needed to help and enable all those wishing to have access to land for growing purposes.

Scottish Government recognises the importance of allotments and other food growing spaces and the benefits that accrue from such a provision. The community empowerment legislation requires local authorities to provide land for allotments where there is a demonstration of need. However, how does one demonstrate such need? At present, there is inadequate empirical information to highlight what that need is but as a result of waiting lists throughout Scotland it is clear that there is substantial need for more land. The provision of land cannot be expected to purely come from public landed assets and the efforts of those responsible for allotments within local authorities. There is a need for looking beyond those assets and officers to help promote land irrespective of ownership and encourage wider participation in the promotion of allotments and other growing spaces. That is why the Planning function has an enormously important role to play. Such a role should be acting as a proactive promoter recognising that this is not just about identifying and zoning land for growing food but also about facilitating its delivery in the knowledge that such a provision is an essential element in place making and community cohesion.

There are three sources of land for growing food and related activity where the Scottish planning system can provided assistance:

1. Growing spaces within proposed developments (particularly large scale 'master planned' developments)

2. Growing spaces within parks and other under-utilised open spaces (particularly those owned by Councils and other public bodies – example Mansewood, Glasgow).

3. Growing spaces on vacant and derelict land (St Eunan's Primary School a change of use into a community garden with allotments)

Growing spaces as part of a Master Planned Development

Scotland's population and households have significantly grown in recent years and Scottish and local planning authorities have come under increasing pressure to release more land and generally build more houses. One method of allocating housing land is for local planning authorities to allocate large scale land releases for major growth settlements. For example Councils in Aberdeenshire, Perth and Kinross, Stirling and West Lothian have seen proposals for large scale master planned development.

Such master planned projects typically are prepared by private developers and thereafter scrutinised and negotiated by local planning authority to ensure some form of public benefit is derived from the development proposals. This method of delivery is different to a more holistic public interest approach that is employed in continental Europe which generally has a greater commitment to settlements being more balanced with greater levels of infrastructure and green space. This place making approach is often discussed in Scotland but in practice place based investment approaches are extremely rare.

Therefore, under the present delivery system place making is provided by housing developers who are geared to building houses rather than places, thereby, leaving planners to try and negotiate elements of place as some form of shopping list of gains. While all local planning authorities have policies covering open spaces they tend to be formulaic rule based mandates leaving it to developers to come forward with proposals that the planners can subsequently measure. This reactive approach to place making makes it very rare to find good quality development solutions.

This guide has set out a case with historical and more current examples that to make good places requires a 'whole place' approach rather than expect a series of bits and pieces to be somehow glued together with the expectation that excellence will emerge.

As the current place maker, it is not reasonable to expect a housebuilder to be motivated about making a place. Their role is to build and sell houses not places and despite lots of national design guidance over the last 15 years there has only been marginal improvement other than a few exemplar developments. The fact is that policy, regulation and design guidance alone is insufficient to ensure that public interest developments will be delivered.

Good master plan places require investment in place making which requires to a synthesis of all the elements of place being well connected and capable of good functioning. A key element of good places is how well 'open space' is treated. An examination of Ebenezer Howard reminds us about the importance of connection between people and the environment. This requires open space to be treated with proper purpose rather than a secondary issue derived from a tick sheet rule book. Part of that open space purpose is for sufficient land to be dedicated to growing food, whether it is in the form of allotments, community gardens, orchards and so on. Food growing spaces should be permanent places and recognised as active spaces in the same way as we treat kick about pitches and play equipment. Also, food growing spaces, like active sporting leisure spaces, are recognised as good for people's health and social interaction. For this reason, planning should not be leaving it to developers to decide whether to dedicate space for food growing but should be including this as a pre-requisite particularly in larger developments.

Aberdeenshire Council recognises this with a strategy requiring all housing applications over 50 dwellings to include land for food growing purposes. East Lothian Council is also doing something similar albeit for larger housing projects. The allotment growing project at the large scale master planned development at Chapelton has already demonstrated that people moving into new housing are extremely keen on becoming involved in growing food. Importantly the experience

at Chapelton has found such activity also fast tracks a sense of community with plot holders getting to know each other much quicker than usual and building up a greater sense of community. A sustainable development is one that can quickly establish a community thereby creating a more positive place and reputation for being a good place to live.

Growing Spaces within Parks and under-utilised public spaces

Public authority budgets have been dramatically cut and local authority budgets have been on the front line for cuts. The worth of our environment has been sorely tested against the need for our public bodies to fulfil their statutory obligations in front line services. Indeed community planning in East Ayrshire Council openly accepted that its very successful 'Vibrant Communities' programme was motivated from the need for the Council to save money rather than necessarily empowering communities. It doesn't really matter what the motivations are but as a result of little public financial resources there has been a need to examine how things can be delivered in a different way. Our Scottish parks are a fundamental part of our Scottish heritage and any reduction in their maintenance puts that heritage at risk. One way of limiting that risk is to consider transferring some of the ground into food growing spaces. This has been successfully achieved at Mansewood Allotments in Mansewood High Park, in the southside of Glasgow. This well established allotment was in great demand and the Council agreed to extend the allotment by transferring part of the Park for new plots. Nearby the Queens Park Allotment is another excellent example of an allotment in a park which includes growing spaces, workshops and greenhouses. Glasgow City Council along with the support of the Glasgow Allotment Forum has demonstrated the benefits of utilising parkland ground for growing purposes. Such parks continue to provide a place of enjoyment for other activities without any compromise but at the same time more people have now got the benefit of plots to grow food.

Finally, scattered around our towns and villages there is a host of what might be described as 'incidental green spaces' some of which were devised as a result of overly enthusiastic reserved ground for road engineering purposes. These incidental grassed spaces serve little function other than dog exercise and so called 'visual amenity'. Of course such spaces are still required to be maintained and grass cutting remains a costly part of any Council's open space liability. While this incidental grassed land may not feature in vacant land registers some of it can nevertheless be put to some more purposeful use. An example of this is at Braehead in Stirling where Stirling Council owned a strip of land adjacent to the railway which was taken over by the local community and transformed into a thriving community garden. This exemplar partnership between the Council and the local community demonstrates how a relatively redundant piece of Council ground can be utilised with modest investment into a spirited thriving community activity.

Braehead Community Garden
Tool Shed

The Braehead Community Garden is an excellent example of co-operative working which allows the community to be empowered, take control over the land and bring about much higher levels of community interaction, improved health and sustainable use of the ground.

Growing Spaces on Vacant and Derelict Land

Scotland still has a significant amount of vacant and derelict land estimated by the Scottish Land Commission to be around 12,000 hectares. National organisations such as Scottish Natural Heritage and Scottish Land Commission are highly active in trying to address the blight of such land and examining how we can bring land into beneficial use.

Much of the vacant and derelict land lies in post-industrial urban areas which are frequently in deprived neighbourhoods. Such places have suffered market failure where values are so low that land is unviable for commercial development particularly where such land is contaminated from historical industrial uses.

Where land is worth little and contamination apparent, the only realistic course of action is through public intervention and the use of public funds either by way of direct action or indirectly through public grant subsidy. The Scottish Green Infrastructure Fund provided by the European Redevelopment Development Fund and managed by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and other public partners is seeking to improve urban ground by introducing green space particularly where this is within areas of multiple deprivation. SNH believe that by greening places this will make it more attractive for people to live and also persuade investment for creating employment. It is currently envisaged that there will be a minimum of 15 projects with some 140 hectares of urban green infrastructure. Some of these projects will include community food growing spaces such as at St Eunan's in West Dunbartonshire.

A Case Study of Transforming Contaminated Ground in West Dunbartonshire

The West Dunbartonshire Council's project at the former St Eunan's Primary School is an example of a derelict public asset situated within a residential area but is not viable for property development due to significant contamination. This blighted asset being a burden to the Council and local community needed a solution for bringing back the land into beneficial use. Such vacant and derelict sites are not uncommon within post-industrial Scotland and given the historic use are largely located in areas of high social deprivation where markets rarely exist or have failed. Given the costs of remedying the contamination this was not a project that could be reasonably expected to produce a financial receipt for the Council and financial subsidy would be required.

The European Regional Development Funded (ERDF) Green Infrastructure Fund that is led by Scottish Natural Heritage, provides an opportunity to access funding to support the transformation of a derelict site into a new green space. A critical issue was the involvement of the local community in helping to shape the project to meet what they believed was important for their place. The funding is certainly required to achieve social, health and environmental benefits which re-establishes connections that people can have with nature as well as offering educational benefits and greater levels of community and individual well-being. As part of the project a food growing area is to be established through the development of a raised bed allotment. The development of an

allotment is expected to bring further benefits through the establishment of a 'community allotment group' which in itself leads to greater social connections and community interaction.

The Scottish Land Commission and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) have created a 'Sustainable Growth Agreement' that seeks through partnership working to transform vacant and derelict land in Scotland. This work will include working with local authorities on regeneration proposals and seeking to increase community and economic renewal. A 'taskforce' has been established with public, private and third sector representatives to find ways of bringing land back into beneficial use.

It is inevitable that some of those uses will include green infrastructure which should include space for growing food. There has been a significant growth of successful food growing ventures that have occurred in places such as Craigmillar, Easterhouse and Hamiltonhill. Projects such as Bridgend Growing Communities in Edinburgh have been working with disadvantaged people bringing vacant ground back into use for food growing purposes and being able to increase health outcomes for many people. A similar allotment project has been in operation at Wellhouse in Easterhouse where local volunteers have achieved remarkable impact on people's lives. Such operations will inevitably need some enabling support from public agencies but there is excellent evidence that establishing food growing areas and with community support can bring about substantial transformative action.

These three relatively simple methods all require the involvement of public facilitators and some enabling investment. However, the bulk of the work for food growing spaces lies with those that dig the land and work together for their own satisfaction and wellbeing. Dr Harry Burns must be delighted that his early work in an Asset Based Approach has been shown to work and all we need now is to have the energy and commitment to roll out food growing spaces in communities throughout Scotland.

Summary and Recommendations

Planning is for the 'Common Good'

The function of Spatial Planning is that it acts in the public interest and is the public custodian of land management. Planners are instrumental in orchestrating good places by synthesizing and balancing societal interests. Good planning includes an understanding of what communities require and operates within a co-operative environment working with all stakeholders to create policy, facilitate local opportunities, and most importantly, deliver things for the common good.

Allotments and other community growing spaces are important to people and their communities representing a proven part of the common good. Planning pioneers and visionaries frequently promoted the importance of the inter-dependency between people and nature. However, we are now increasingly living in an urban world that is becoming more detached from nature thereby prejudicing our ability to live well. The planning challenge is that while we pursue our economic objectives, this has to be balanced by improving our connections and maintenance of the natural world for our own wellbeing and ecological benefit.

Exercising Community Capability by being Empowered

Part of living well for an increasing number of people is by cultivating land that brings people and nature together to make healthy and happy places. The capability of local people to shape and determine their own lives has been given a boost from Scottish Government's ground changing community empowerment legislation which has shifted some powers to a local level allowing people to become more in control of their own functioning. Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 provides new allotment undertakings which will bring a greater emphasis on allocating land for food growing.

Greater Links between Local Place Making Proposals to Statutory Planning

Planning and community empowerment are mutually inclusive. To exercise such empowerment, planners will play an important part in connecting their place making agenda with communities by engaging and helping address community and societal interests. Planners will be able to call upon community actioned Local Place Plans and merge what the community wants into their statutory Local Development Plans and implementation strategies.

Food Growing Space is a Primary Use and not a sub-ordinate of 'Open Space'

Traditionally, food growing has played a low order role in planning policy. Allotments are generally recognised as statutory obligations but invariably planning policies rank food growing as a sub-heading of open space policies. However, with empowered communities and an increasing demand for food growing space, a greater commitment is required to include such spaces as part of wider development proposals and become an integral part of place making. Food growing is not just a leisure activity but has far wider beneficial impacts on social cohesion and people's health and wellbeing.

One solution that planners could incorporate in their Local Development Plans is to require Design Statements to support development applications that demonstrate how project proposals have been designed to contribute to people's health and wellbeing. This would include providing examples of what such a contribution might include such as access to nature, food growing, meeting spaces and other place making attributes.

Planners are becoming more aware of the wider value of growing spaces and how these contribute to wellbeing such as the policies in Aberdeenshire and East Lothian Councils that require such space to be included in new 'major' developments.

Food Growing is Horticulture and much more than a Leisure Activity

Notwithstanding statutory responsibilities to provide land for allotments, the planning profession has had some difficulty in deciding whether food growing use is horticulture or a leisure activity. The technical debate around allotments as a 'use class' is a grey area in Planning that needs to be resolved. Food growing is in demand and for some is a fundamental need while others grow food for their health, wellbeing, social interaction and sustainable practice. This guide has cited a wide range of Scottish exemplar projects highlighting the health and social benefits obtained from people growing food. It is important that these functionings along with the significant wider community benefits are recognised rather than being categorised as a leisure activity. In this respect the Welsh approach of cultivation of an allotment being agricultural use is very simple and practical. Scotland could readily adopt the Welsh approach by the Chief Planner for Scotland issuing a letter or Circular saying that food growing is an agriculture use and doesn't need planning permission.

Demonstrating Demand and Bringing Forward More Food Growing Land

Evidence shows that there is an under supply of land for food growing. However, specific demand in any given area may be difficult to assess and it would be wrong for planners to avoid addressing food growing if demand in a locality cannot be demonstrated. For example, it would be difficult within a green field context to demonstrate demand but as Chapelton has demonstrated if something is promoted then demand can be stimulated and champions will do the rest.

To obtain greater clarity on the level of demand will require an investment commitment on data collection as current resources are limited. In a number of cases, temporary use of land for food growing purposes has been promoted but one has to be aware that the very nature of any temporary use inhibits proper investment in what is a very sustainable and beneficial productive use that brings people together and forms wider positive changes to community behaviour. Any food grower recognizes that the quality of the soil is essential. Good soil can only be achieved through good preparation, practice and nurturing over a number of years. This is why food growers have a strong connection with their soil. This attachment to soil makes it difficult for temporary 'pop up' mobile arrangements to work other than to be used to generate early start up interest before graduating to more sustainable solutions.

Three Specific Areas that Planners can Assist in Providing More Land

1. In major development proposals there should be land permanently provided for growing purposes. This is essentially what is happening in such places as Aberdeenshire and East Lothian and this should be embraced across all local planning authorities in Scotland. To make this effective, National Planning Policy should make it clear that food growing is more than a leisure use as it is an integral part of place making and all new developments should have a reasonable land provision for growing food.

2. While significant areas of public land have been sold, there remain large tracts of public land that could be used for growing purposes. Such land could include transferring land in public parks for community growing or allotments, it could also include incidental public open grassed areas that serve little purpose and provide little contribution to bio-diversity. Such public assets could remain within public ownership but could be operated by community food growing groups under a lease arrangement that was sufficiently long enough to allow groups to properly invest and sustain their operations and production. Some Councils are already providing land for community groups such as the Braehead Community Garden in Stirling which highlights how quickly a parcel of publicly owned ground can be transformed into not just a community garden but a vibrant hub for community integration.

3. There remain large tracts of vacant and derelict land in Scotland. National initiatives are being promoted such as the Green Infrastructure Fund managed by Scottish Natural Heritage and other proposals involving the Scottish Land Commission working with the Scottish Environmental Agency. Some proposals that are being brought forward include community food growing spaces but many of the spaces will require significant levels of public investment to resolve poor ground quality. As in the call for food growing as part of a major new developments, equally this should apply to regeneration proposals on vacant and derelict land with the assistance of financial investment from public authorities and agencies.

From our research it is clear that community food growing action is contributing towards Scottish Government's targets on health, food security and climate change. The proven social and health benefits demonstrate that food growing should be part of 'social prescribing' and attract funding sources to enable new sites to help support wider health, regeneration and social objectives. Food growing is a healthy way of life which is also good for our planet. It is a beneficial activity that goes well beyond a person's leisure time.

Inter- generational food growing at Chapelton's new development

Further Reading and Information

Following the preparation of a draft of this document, three workshops for planners, allotment officers and food growing groups were held in Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow to discuss research findings. The workshops were organised and led by PAS. Feedback from delegates highlighted good support for the recommendations and delegates welcomed the opportunity of working co-operatively to enable more food growing areas to be delivered in Scotland.

The summary version of this report is available in booklet form from SAGS.

ORGANISATIONS / ALLOTMENTS INFORMATION

- National - Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (SAGS)
  www.sags.org.uk / secretary@sags.org.uk

- Planning Aid Scotland
  www.pas.org.uk

- Edinburgh - Federation of Edinburgh and District Allotments and Gardens Association (FEDAGA)
  www.fedaga.org.uk / committee@fedaga.org.uk

- Glasgow - Glasgow Allotments Forum (GAF)
  www.glasgowallotments.org

- Dundee Federation of Allotments and Gardens Holders
  www.dundeeoutdoors.com/content/federation-allotment-and-garden-holders

- Community Land Advisory Service Scotland
  sc.communitylandadvice.org.uk

LEGISLATION and LOCAL PLANS

- Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015
- Guidance on Food Growing Strategy
- Guidance on Part 9
- Land Reform Act 2016
- Local Development Plans

LAND IDENTIFICATION

- Grow Your Own Working Group
  www.growyourownscotland.info
- Mapping for Open Space - specific local authorities such as Glasgow - www.arcgis.com
- Greenspace Scotland (www.greenspacescotland.org.uk)
- Maps - CSGN (www.centralscotlandgreennetwork.org)

DESIGN for ALLOTMENTS

- Scotland Allotment Design Guide
  www.sags.org.uk/docs

OTHER BOOKS and DOCUMENTS

- Integrating Food into Urban Planning 2018, Ed Cabannes & Marocchino
  www.ucl.ac.uk/ucl-press and www.fao.org/publications
- Urban Allotment Gardens in Europe 2016, Ed Simon Bell et al. Routledge
- 'Raising Spirits' Jenny Mollison et al. - Centre for Confidence and Well-being, 2015
- 'A Hut of One's Own', Emily Chappell - Head of Zeus, 2017

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