

Item 6

3rd February 2016



Glasgow City Council

**Sustainability and Environment Policy Development Committee
3 February 2016**

Report by Executive Director of Land and Environmental Services

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ALLOTMENTS STRATEGY

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to update Committee on:

- progress in relation to the Allotments Strategy 2009-13 and its Action Plan;
- the proposed Allotments Strategy for 2017-21;
- the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 Part 9.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Committee note:

- the progress made in relation to the Allotments Strategy 2009-13;
- work currently underway with the draft Allotments Strategy for 2017-21; and
- the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 Part 9.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes No ✓

consulted: Yes No ✓

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Awareness is increasing of the need for a more sustainable social and environmental future. As a result, interest in local food production, reducing food miles and packaging, healthy eating, improving physical activity in young and old and improving the environment in which we live, is growing. Allotments within Glasgow have a vital role to play in the development of all of the above.
- 1.2 More importantly, there is a large and growing community of charities and organisations within Glasgow that are committed to improving the physical, mental and environmental health of Glasgow's citizens. The provision and expansion of allotment services is an essential contribution to this community.
- 1.3 A report was submitted to this committee on 19 March 2014 setting out proposals to bring forward an updated Allotments Strategy for Glasgow, which noted the benefits of aligning timescales for this process to those of the proposed Community Empowerment Bill.
- 1.4 Arrangements for the updating of the Allotments Strategy for Glasgow have now been amended to align them to those of the now Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 Part 9.

2. The current Allotments Strategy

- 2.1 The current Allotments Strategy 2009-2013 was approved by the Council's Executive Committee on 28 April 2009.
- 2.2 The 2009-2013 Allotments Strategy set out a clear statement 'Our vision is for an inclusive, vibrant community of Allotments in Glasgow, contributing to the well-being of our citizens and a greener future for our city'.
- 2.3 The existing Allotments Strategy 2009-2013 set out six key commitments (below) and detailed what we would do to support each one. A copy of the Allotments Strategy can be viewed by accessing the following link to the Council's website - <http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=5413>
 - Improve our allotments sites.
 - Source sustainable funding for allotments.
 - Form partnerships to benefit allotments.
 - Increase the availability of allotments.
 - Develop our allotments sites to their full potential.
 - Prioritise biodiversity, environmental sustainability and recycling on allotment sites.

3. Monitoring and Progress of the Action Plan

- 3.1 As noted previously in the report to this committee on 19 March 2014, to monitor the six key commitments, an action plan was developed which contained specific actions directly related to the Strategy document. These are a mixture of short and long term actions, many of which will continue to have an impact beyond the life of the current action plan.
- 3.2 Of the 166 actions contained within the action plan, 142 are now complete and 18 form part of our current programme. It should be noted that 6 of the original action points have been identified by allotments stakeholders as no longer requiring action by this service as it was deemed more suitable for the individual allotment associations to take them forward.
- 3.3 Progress on actions are monitored by Land & Environmental Services (LES). In addition, an Allotments Strategy Mentoring Group was established in 2011 as a group of people with knowledge, contacts and influence in the area of Allotments. Whilst LES hosts, supports and chairs the Allotments Strategy Mentoring Group, it should be noted that it is intended as a Strategy for Glasgow and that actions will have been delivered by a range of organisations including the members of the Allotments Strategy Mentoring Group. This group was tasked with monitoring progress of the Strategy, and will also have input to the review and development of the future Strategy.
- 3.4 Members of the Allotments Strategy Mentoring Group included:
- Glasgow Allotments Forum (GAF)
 - Scottish Allotments and Garden Society
 - NHS
 - DRS
 - Community Safety Glasgow
 - Community Food & Health (Scotland)
 - Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership
 - Scottish Natural Heritage
 - Educational Establishments
- 3.5 As noted in a previous report to this committee dated 19 March 2014 this service has worked closely with Glasgow Allotments Forum, individual allotments associations, external funders and the Allotments Strategy Mentoring Group to deliver 250 new plots across the city during the life of the current Strategy. This represents an increase of 30.9% as compared to the number of plots available in the city prior to the Strategy. This has been achieved both by converting existing open spaces to allotments use and also by reinstating historic former allotment sites, where local demand for allotments can be demonstrated and where community consultation supports such provision.

4. A New Strategy - the Start of the Journey

- 4.1 In order to inform the drafting of an updated Strategy, this service sought feedback from the allotment community in relation to the current service offered and the outcomes of the 2009-2013 Strategy. In order to establish an open dialogue, an independent facilitator was appointed to lead this process.
- 4.2 An initial event was held on the 23 April 2015 to which representatives from each GCC-managed Allotment Association and Glasgow Allotment Forum were invited. A request was issued to Allotment Association Secretaries for contact details for individuals on their waiting lists to be provided to this service, so that we could post questionnaires directly or alternatively for Allotment Association Secretaries to accept pre-paid, enveloped questionnaires from this service, which they could then address and post out.
- 4.3 A total of 1095 questionnaires were then issued to all ploholders at GCC-managed Allotment Associations. Where a positive response was received from Allotment Association Secretaries to the request outlined in 4.2, 400 questionnaires were then posted to individuals on Association waiting lists either by ourselves or by the Association.
- 4.4 A total of 355 questionnaire responses were received by 3 December 2015, of which 292 came from ploholders and 63 came from individuals on Association waiting lists. Themes for further examination within the updated Strategy, as suggested by the questionnaire responses, are:
- Sustainability.
 - Facilities and Access for all.
 - Greater Availability of Allotments.
 - Communication, Networks and Training.
 - Representation.
- 4.5 An event was then held on 29 August 2015, to which all ploholders at GCC-managed Allotment Associations and waiting list members were invited to attend. The purpose of this event was to feed back the results of the questionnaire to participants and to generate discussion in relation to the themes listed in 4.4, and how these might inform the drafting of the updated Strategy.
- 4.6 Land & Environmental Services has taken further opportunities to engage with Glasgow City Council Allotment Associations by offering attendance at their AGM's, with 16 associations being visited (out of a total of 21) and additional questionnaires being distributed in late Autumn 2015.

5. Preparing the updated Allotments Strategy

- 5.1 It was reported to this committee on 19 March 2014 that work had already commenced in drafting the updated Allotments Strategy, with LES officers working with other members of the Glasgow Family, Glasgow Allotments Forum and the Allotments Strategy Mentoring Group. It had at that time been anticipated that a draft Allotments Strategy would be ready following the enactment of the then Community Empowerment Bill which had been anticipated in October 2014.
- 5.2 It is noted that Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill received Royal Assent on the 24 July 2015 and can now be referred to as the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. Part 9 of The Act, which relates to Allotments, comes in to force all the necessary secondary legislation and statutory guidance needs to be set out by the Scottish Government. This is anticipated as likely to take place in 2017 following further consultation and engagement with stakeholders by the Scottish Government.
- 5.3 It is considered that there are clear advantages in aligning the publication of our Allotment Strategy to the timescales set out for Community Empowerment Act 2015 Part 9, since this removes any confusion which might be caused by our Strategy making reference to an Act not yet in force, provides a clear and unambiguous start date for the updated Allotment Rules and Regulations and since this legislation will change Local Authority powers and duties in respect to allotment provision.
- 5.4 It is now anticipated that that the public consultation with regard to the Allotment Strategy will commence in Autumn/Winter 2016. Allowing for collation of responses, reference back to this committee is anticipated in 2017 thereafter seeking a referral to the Executive Committee for approval.
- 5.5 The draft Allotment Strategy will set out proposals by this service to amend allotment service provision in order to meet the new powers and duties contained within the Act.
- 5.6 A number of other themes will also inform the draft Allotment Strategy, including other Glasgow City Council plans and strategies such as the emerging Local Development Plan, and the Open Space Strategy currently being led by DRS.
- 5.7 Land & Environmental Services will continue to bring forward proposals to make the allotments service offered by Glasgow City Council more environmentally and financially sustainable. Officers will consult with plot holders in relation to specific proposals for making the allotments service more environmentally and financially sustainable.

6. Legislation

- 6.1 The updated Allotments Strategy for 2017-2021 will respond to the powers and duties arising from Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (hereafter referred to as The Act), which will come into force following secondary legislation planned for 2017.
- 6.2 The Act brings together and updates various historic pieces of legislation, and can be read in full at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/contents/enacted>.
- 6.3 It should be noted that a number of the provisions within the Act have the potential to increase the cost of service delivery, and to impose changes on the nature of the service offered to Associations and to ploholders. It is also noted that a provisions within the Act will require Local Authorities to manage waiting lists within specified targets and take the necessary actions to achieve this. Further consideration of these matters will be given during the drafting of the Allotment and Food Growing Strategy and the public consultation.

7. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

- Financial:** The Allotments Strategy will continue to be delivered from within existing resources, with match funding sought from external organisations as appropriate. It is noted that the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out new duties and powers for Local Authorities, and that these may have an impact on the cost of service provision.
- Legal:** Current legislation requires any changes to Local Authority Allotments Rules and Regulations require to be passed to the Scottish Ministers for approval. It is noted that the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out new duties and powers for Local Authorities.
- Personnel:** It is noted that the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out new duties and powers for Local Authorities.
- Procurement:** Specific projects brought forward will utilise existing procurement frameworks.

Council Strategic Plan: Allotments contribute to the sustainable development of the city by contributing to:

- A sustainable city

Equality Impacts:

EQIA carried out: An EQIA screening will be carried out for the new Strategy.

Outcome: N/A

Sustainability Impacts:

Environmental: Allotments can contribute to reduced waste, increased levels of recycling, reduced food miles and increased biodiversity.

Social: Allotments represent opportunities for environmental education and community involvement in open spaces. Allotments can deliver positive outcomes for health and wellbeing, in terms of both physical and mental health.

Economic: Allotments and Growing Spaces represent an opportunity for Glaswegians to grow their own food at low cost.

8. Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that Committee notes:

- the progress made in relation to the Allotments Strategy 2009-13;
- the work currently underway with the draft Allotments Strategy for 2017-21;
- the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 Part 9.