

Sustainability Committee

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Inquiry into the Provision of Allotments in Wales: Evidence from the Welsh Local Government Association

Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Allotment provision

10th March 2010



WLGA • CLILC

INTRODUCTION

1. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) represents the 22 local authorities in Wales, and the three national park authorities, the three fire and rescue authorities, and four police authorities are associate members.
2. It seeks to provide representation to local authorities within an emerging policy framework that satisfies the key priorities of our members and delivers a broad range of services that add value to Welsh Local Government and the communities they serve.

Scope of the Inquiry

3. The WLGA have encouraged all local authorities to respond to the key questions set out in the committee's scope. Where authorities have copied their responses to the WLGA they are included in Appendices two, three, four and five.
4. In broad terms it is clear that demand for allotments has increased nationally and waiting lists only give a partial indication of likely demand. There is liable to be a degree of latent demand in areas where the likelihood of obtaining an allotment is limited. It is often difficult to quantify what the real demand therefore is.
5. Conversely it has also been highlighted that in some cases where there has been a high demand which has been satisfied, that there can be a high turnover of new allotment holders when the degree of time and hard work become apparent in running an allotment. There are strategies to deal with this issue in the guide discussed below.
6. Work undertaken by the LGA has stated that 76,300 are on the waiting list in England (page 15 *a place to grow*).

Role of Allotments

7. The WLGA in conjunction with the LGA have undertaken a range of activities to promote the creation of more allotment provision across the UK. Key in this was the publication of a revision of [Growing in the Community](#) – a good practice guide for the management of allotments.

8. The guide provides councils with a recommended set of guidance for the good management of allotments. This aims to support allotment managers in the face of an upturn in the popularity and uptake of allotment gardens. It provides a clear picture of the current issues for allotment officers, the links to wider local authority strategies and the opportunities that allotments provide for authorities and local communities. The revision sets out recent developments in policy and current agendas on greener issues, sustainable lifestyles, well being and community cohesion, by providing:
 - A comprehensive overview of the current legislative and policy framework
 - An updating of the context within which allotments are now managed, taking account of recent issues, developments and practice
 - Recent good practice examples
9. The revision of this best selling guide was undertaken by the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens and Dr Richard Wiltshire of Kings College, London. An advisory group of experts from the environmental sector, local and central government provided additional input. The revised guide was published in March 2008 and a summary is available on the publications page of the LGA's website, under Growing in the Community.
10. Appendix One details a recent media event to publicise the guide amongst other initiatives.
11. A supplement document called A Place to Grow has been published recently and is attached to this submission as an electronic document. The document outlines more flexible approaches through concepts such as 'meanwhile' gardening which may allow a more responsive approach to meeting changing demand for allotments.
12. The document sets out the key issues for authorities and makes clear the broader context around health and well being that allotments help deliver. The WLGA has promoted these documents in Wales.
13. The WLGA also promotes the Sustainable Development Framework for local government <http://www.wlga.gov.uk/english/sustainable-development-framework/> which again sets out how local government should view SD as the 'central organising principle' for their everyday work. The Sustainable Food module is attached as an electronic file and whilst this looks at food in its broadest sense it does

emphasise why allotments play a key role in this. Training for Members will be undertaken around some of these issues in the coming year.

14. The recent publication of Planning Technical Advisory Note 16, Sport Recreation and Open Space sets out the process that Local Planning Authorities (LPA's) must undertake through Open Space Assessments to build this issue into Local Development Plans (LDP's). The TAN makes clear the role that allotments play in this provision (page 20). Most LPA's are currently developing their LDP's and must have policies to address these issues. However these policies cannot be acted upon in planning terms until each LPA's plan is found to be 'sound' as part of a formal examination process and then formally adopted.

Practical Examples

15. The WLGA has encouraged Local authorities to submit case studies to the committee to explore how progress can be made. The WLGA have sought a submission from an allotment society in the Brecon Beacons National Park which seemed an interesting example where biodiversity was built in from the beginning of the project. Also Bridgend County Borough Council has been actively seeking to provide provision. Details are included in appendix two. A press release from Flintshire highlights an example where progress was made there with the intervention of the Community Council (appendix four).

Conclusions

16. It is clear that there has been a significant upswing in demand for allotments in recent years. During the period of significant economic growth and demand for development it proved difficult to determine land for formal allotment adoption given the level of protection that this affords. In England a number of authorities have come forward with proposals under the Sustainable Communities Act to find other ways to allow land to be used for allotments, albeit temporarily (appendix Six).
17. The WLGA are actively participating in the Community Grown Food WAG task and finish group. As the committee will know this breaks the issue into three work streams; allotments, community grown food and community supported agriculture. This project is also looking at the role that the Rural Development Plan could play and intends to report to the Minister by April 2010. The group will also look at the

potential to work with other key strategies such as the strategic renewal areas. This will make the committees recommendations even timelier.

18. There may be an increase in potential for allotment provision as Local Development Plans are adopted, partly through the recent guidance provided by TAN 16. However in the meantime the WLGA will continue to encourage local authorities to look at the 'Growing in the Community' guidance and the 'A Place to Grow' supplement to see how innovative approaches may help satisfy local demand; especially in the creation of 'meanwhile' gardening approaches in the interim.

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“GROW YOUR OWN” MEDIA EVENT, 8.30-9.30 am WEDNESDAY 3 MARCH, at King’s Cross skip garden

We are writing to inform you about an event that you might be interested in supporting.

On Wednesday 3 March, Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and John Denham, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, will be holding a media launch of initiatives that will support you and others in future “Grow your own” work. We hope that the media coverage will be a useful boost to “grow your own” activity and a timely reminder to people that the growing season is almost upon us.

The initiatives being taken forward are:

- Piloting of **landbanks** that would act as brokers between landholders and community groups and offer objective advice and support to landowners and tenants over the purchase / sale or leasing of land. This is being taken forward by the Federation for City Farms and Community (FCFCG).
- Development of a **meanwhile license** for land which will help provide access to land on a temporary basis for community groups and individuals wanting to grow. The Development Trust Association (DTA) will be producing the model meanwhile licenses.
- Defra’s new support of DCSF’s **Growing Schools** (announced in Food 2030);
- The CLG sponsored LGA **publication A Place to Grow**, a supplementary guide to Growing in the Community the good practice guide for local authority allotment officers.

We know it is very short notice, as these things often have to be, but we hope that you might be able to join us in person and talk to Hilary Benn about these initiatives and your own activities to encourage “grow your own”.

Appendix Two

Bridgend CBC

Allotments and regeneration of communities

A consequence of the economic downturn is resurgence in the demand for allotments across the UK. Allotments are a source of cheap food and keeping allotments is also seen as a healthy and sociable pursuit. Unfortunately the current supply of allotments does not meet the need.

From a peak of 1.4m allotments in late 1940s the total number of allotments in Britain has decreased steadily since WWII as they fell out of favour due to cheap food from supermarkets and the advance in refrigeration. By the late 1970s there were around 500,000. Since then approximately 200,000 plots were sold off by councils around the country unable to find takers for them and today about 300,000 plots remain.

Though the Council owns land and is responsible for maintenance, it generally delegates management and allocation of allotments to Bridgend County Allotments Association. The recent demand has been difficult to meet in Bridgend town centre and people are looking at sites further away from the town centre. People are therefore looking at sites in the Llynfi valley.

Sites in the Upper Llynfi

The Communities First area of Caerau has 5 allotment sites - all of which are in private ownership (and therefore threatened should the owner want to sell). One site belongs to V2C and is being developed as a market garden social enterprise. More details later on.

Nantffyllon has 1 statutory allotment and 1 BCBC-owned site not covered by statute. Maesteg itself has one large statutory allotment at Heol-Y-Faen holding 30 plots and which is being improved to cater for visually-impaired people. There are other privately-owned sites.

Practical considerations for BCBC

- The Property Section has the responsibility and (small) budget for maintaining allotments
- Voluntary agencies, such as Bridgend County Allotments Association, can help to bring in funds for repairs and improvements to BCBC-owned allotments
- There is demand from people in the Upper Llynfi and for people travelling from further
- Site security is paramount; people will not take plots on sites where they feel insecure
- Some of the growing plots are not owned by the local authority and
- Many plots (in the Upper Llynfi at least) are outside the control of the local authority and this gives no reassurance to tenants

A Market Garden at Caerau Market Garden

Caerau Development Trust and Groundwork Bridgend Neath Port Talbot are working with local residents in Caerau to bring 1.5HA of land to develop a community-based market garden capable of producing high quality low price food. The project will be developed with the aim of becoming a financially sustainable social enterprise with a focus on creating employment and training opportunities within the horticultural sector.

The land belongs to Valleys to Coast and the project is supported by BCBC, Communities First and the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens and the Western Valleys Strategic Regeneration Area. Caerau Development Trust has commissioned Hyder Consulting to develop detailed plans for the market garden site. The study is based on the principles of permaculture.

Once the detailed plans are complete Caerau Development Trust will work with Bridgend CBC and Groundwork will coordinate the overall employment strategy. Groundwork should be providing the work force to develop the site and will provide the hands-on support to develop a business that supports local employment. In time the project could produce food for tourism businesses in the Afan Forest and also become a training business.

Policy links associated with for supporting allotments

> Environmental

New allotments can support the regeneration of brownfield sites that may not be reused otherwise. The project will help to promote biodiversity and also open it up to the community. One site in Caerau is immediately adjacent to the proposed Llynfi to Afan cycle route. Tidying the land up will make the approach to Caerau more attractive to visitors.

> Economic

Caerau in particular is a hot spot for youth unemployment (35% of 18-24 year-olds on Job Seeker's Allowance) and non-working benefits (42.7% in Caerau compared to a Great Britain average of 15.7%). Key project partner Groundwork has a Future Jobs Fund contract with the Department for Work & Pensions which means that they can support the cost of 6 month placements for 18-24 year olds.

Groundwork is in a position to provide a work force for the development of allotments or market gardens. The food produced will fit into known gaps in the local food market highlighted by research carried out by the Bridgend Rural Development Programme.

> Employment & Skills

On a wider scale Groundwork has proposed the 'Naked Food Project' as a move towards producing local food. As such, the Caerau Market Garden project will be the first site for the 'Naked Food Project' in Wales. The project has support from Welsh Assembly Government Department for Economy & Transport.

> Social

Calling for the reuse of some land off Pleasant View in Newtown (Caerau) was the main issue that led to the creation of a Newtown Residents' Association early in 2009. They hope to recover some former allotment sites. Should this happen, different generations of local people will be helping to take care of the land when it comes into community ownership.

Developing space for local people to grow food will generally benefit people on low incomes and also help to promote healthy activities and healthy diets. The educational benefits will spread as the Newtown site is situated immediately adjacent to the new Caerau Primary School.

> Health and Well-Being

Growing food is beneficial to health lifestyles in terms of the activity involved in growing and the consumptions of food itself. There are clear benefits through physical exercise in the outdoors and the resulting effect on mental health and well-being.

Strategy links include 'Climbing Higher: Creating an active Wales', 'Health Challenge Wales', 'Food & Fitness'. The benefits of eating healthy food are supported within 'Quality of Food' with its vision to enable everybody in Wales to access healthy and sustainable food by raising the quality of food from farm to fork.

NB: youth employment figures (Feb 2009) and benefits figures (July 2009) from Department for Work & Pensions www.nomisweb.co.uk

Appendix three

Re: Allotment Provisions in Wales

I have the following comments to make on the provision of Allotments in Wrexham in response to the Sustainability Committee at the National Assembly for Wales:-

1. The demand for Allotment sites in Wales and availability of sites (public and private)

Wrexham County Borough Council provides statutory Allotment sites at 3 sites in the urban centre of Wrexham and one site around 10 miles outside the centre. Wrexham County Borough Council adopted an Allotment Strategy in 2007, just before the huge demand for Allotments really began. Part of the strategy focus was initially to make better use of the existing Allotment sites, by making smaller Allotment sites available, to encourage more people to take up Allotments and provide easily manageable plots. We also worked to more effectively manage the sites by making sure everyone who took up an Allotment cultivated them. If they didn't, as part of the tenancy agreement, they were then asked to leave and the plot which would be taken over by someone who would utilise this. We ensured we made effective use of all the Allotments and brought into cultivation all areas possible.

- 1.1 This approach unfortunately, though it expanded the number of Allotment plots available and made sure everyone given a plot would work them, has not kept pace with the huge demand for Allotments and 'grow your own' type activity. This demand has developed over the last 3 years. We currently have 354 tenants on the Allotment sites and a waiting list of 166 people. This compares with 278 tenants in 2007, with a waiting list of 15 people.
- 1.2 To try and cope with the demand, we have worked with local community groups across Wrexham to try and help them identify potential sites for Allotments or community garden activity. We have worked with the groups to guide them through the planning process and explained what they need to do in terms of checking whether the land is contaminated and if it is suitable in terms of access and ownership. We have helped them by providing advice and a guidance pack about how to set up their own group properly and what they need to do.
- 1.3 We helped set up an Allotment site on the edge of Caia Park last year, on land not owned by the Authority. This Allotment site is now a community run facility with 54 plots created and managed by the group. To date we have 5 different community groups working towards setting up their own community gardens across Wrexham.
- 1.4 It is our intention, as set out in the Allotment Strategy, to continue to work with community groups to set up community gardens or Allotments where there is demand, but continue to place the emphasis on the community groups to set themselves up to manage any new facility and generate the income required to run the facility. If Council owned land is available and suitable we will provide this to

help the process along, to help fulfil our statutory duty. We do not have the resources, however, to provide and run new facilities.

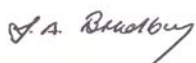
**2. The barriers/constraints (for users and providers);
Innovative approaches to the provision of land for all Allotments**

Working with local communities to help them set up their own Allotments or community gardens is one way of providing Allotments. What hasn't been tried in Wrexham is to provide Allotments as part of Section 106 payments or planning gain. This may be the way to help fulfil demand in the future, particularly when building new flats and apartments in urban areas, where large amounts of green space are not available but community gardens could be provided.

3. The need for and suggested areas of intervention from the Welsh Government

Allotments have for many years been considered as slightly old fashioned and have suffered from lack of investment and a suggestion that they are just for keen gardeners. The number of younger people becoming interested in Allotments is changing this attitude, but investment in this small service remains low and the awareness of what Allotments can provide for local people, ie food, exercise, healthy living, is slowly starting to develop. There maybe a role for the Welsh Government to encourage the provision of allotment space or community gardens as part of the planning process and in encouraging a healthier lifestyle through allotment gardening.

Yours sincerely



J A Bradbury
Chief Environment Officer

cc Councillor David A Bithell,
Lead Member, Environment and Transport

ALLOTMENTS PRESS RELEASE - Flintshire

Green-fingered gardeners are celebrating after winning a campaign for new allotments in their village. Now the people of Leeswood near Mold will be able to grow their own fruit and veg on farmland, a short walk from their homes. The allotment campaign was started by villager Joseph Caruana and has been supported by rural regeneration agency Cadwyn Clwyd who will pay for parking, water and storage facilities at the site. "I only have a very small garden and I wanted local people to have the opportunity to grow their own food here in the village," said Mr Caruana.

"Last year I went out with a petition and after three hours was soaked and only had two signatures but then people quickly became involved."

That seed of an idea took root as neighbours began to write to Leeswood Community Council in support of the allotment idea.

With 21 people interested, local farmer Bryn Williams was approached and agreed to lease one and a half acres of his land for the gardens. Planning permission was then granted by Flintshire County Council for parking and a fence around the site.

"People want to grow their own for the sense of satisfaction and it's good exercise," said County Councillor Ray Hughes who lives in the village and took up the cause. "They also want to know what they are eating."

"We were delighted when Bryn Williams agreed to lease the land. His is the closest farm to the village and it means people can walk there."

"I'm really pleased Flintshire county council are encouraging this sort of thing. It seems we've come full circle from a time when people concreted over their gardens to now wanting somewhere to grow their own food."

Planting will start in the New Year after the land has been fenced and a water source and container to store gardening tools have been installed at the site. Bryn has also agreed to plough the land to save the gardeners the backbreaking job.

"There's real satisfaction in growing your own, the taste is quite different," said Mr Caruana, a lab technician. "You know 100 per cent what it is you're eating and we want to do it properly, growing as organically as possible."

Working on the allotment will be a family affair for Laura Jackson, 27, a countryside warden for the National Trust who has enlisted her mum Anne and dad Rob to help.

"It's great to know where your food's actually coming from, rather than just buying it from a supermarket," said Laura.

"My job involves hard, physical work so I'm not worried about the digging and my mum and dad are going to help too."

"I want to grow potatoes, carrots and parsnips and a whole range of things. I've only got a very small garden and can only grow a few things in pots at the moment."

Growing crops is something farmer Bryn Williams knows plenty about with 20 acres of barley on the farm.

"I was approached and thought this was a really good idea," he said. "The land is good, it's a light loam, quite dry and a reasonably level field. It's been used only for cattle and sheep and hasn't been ploughed for a long time."

"I won't miss an acre and a half and it will be nice to see the villagers on it."

**Welsh Assembly Government
Sustainability Committee
Inquiry into Allotment Provision in Wales
Evidence from Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
February 2010**

Terms of Reference for the Inquiry:

To explore the ways the Welsh Assembly Government can support and provide opportunities for the increasing interest in allotment and community gardening, and to examine ways these activities can provide wider benefits.

Issue 1: The demand for allotment sites in Wales and availability of sites (public and private)

Evidence of Demand

Response to the Authority's public consultation on the Deposit Local Development Plan (Spring 2009) included 16 representors requesting land to be allocated in the Plan for allotments. Of these 9 were in Dinas Cross (North Pembrokeshire); 1 in Marloes (western Pembrokeshire); 1 in Newport (North Pembrokeshire); and 5 requested a general policy to allow for provision. One of the respondents was a County Councillor (Pembrokeshire County Council) who had held a meeting with community of Dinas Cross. He advised that at the meeting 106 people supported provision of allotments in the area.

Staff at Pembrokeshire County Council have advised that they have received a considerable number of enquiries about provision at Newport and some at Solva.

Availability

Within the National Park allotments are known to be provided at:

Maesyffynnon, Dinas Cross 4 plots (waiting list = 2)

Bro Dawel, Solva 1 plot (no waiting list)

St Johns Hill, Tenby 10 plots (increase of 4 plots since 2007; waiting list 21)

Issue 2: The barriers/constraints (for users and providers)

The National Park Authority has considered all land in its ownership to establish if any is suitable for leasing to community groups for allotment use. The conclusion reached was that none was suitable. The reasons were:

- a) the land is removed from settlements and access is an issue.
- b) The provision of a water supply would not be possible.

Sustainable Communities Act

Proposal Theme: Environmental sustainability

All proposals received supporting environmental sustainability are listed here alphabetically with a short summary; the proposal itself can be accessed by clicking on the authority name either below or in the left hand navigation.

The LGA received 62 applications from 32 local authorities proposing action to support environmental sustainability. Amongst the proposals a number of common themes emerged which are as follows. Please note these do not cover all proposals received which are listed below alphabetically.

Excess packaging and plastic bags; Brighton and Hove, Bristol, Cambridge, York, and Southwark.

Waste and recycling; York, Bristol, Islington, Southampton, Wiltshire, Essex, Lewes, Warwick and West Lancashire.

Local food production and allotments; Brighton and Hove, Birmingham and Rother.

Energy Efficiency and renewable energy; Brighton and Hove, Cambridge, York, Doncaster, Lewes, Lewisham, Liverpool, North Yorkshire, Rother, South Somerset, South Tyneside, Southampton, Wiltshire and Teignbridge.

Protection against flooding; Oxford City, South Gloucestershire, Norfolk and West Oxfordshire.

Lead Authority: Sheffield City Council

Proposal theme: Planning

That the government introduces statutory legislation giving Sheffield City Council a rebuttable right to enter into temporary leases compulsorily with owners of vacant brownfield land, which they can then sublease to community groups.

In Sheffield, and across the UK more generally, there are vast quantities of previously-developed land which is left vacant for long periods of time, particularly in cities where green space and land available for growing food is at a premium. This land is both unproductive and, in many cases, problematic: vacant land can give a negative image of an area, and can be a focus for anti-social behaviour, as well as being potentially hazardous if not managed.

At the same time a number of factors, including the current economic climate and a focus on sustainable food production on popular television by celebrity chefs such as Jamie Oliver and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, have led to a massive increase in demand for land for food production by individuals and groups both in Sheffield and elsewhere. Sheffield has 76 allotment sites across the city with 3280 allotments, and all but one site are full (this site is currently undergoing improvements and interest is high). Waiting lists are long and increasing, with 2414 people waiting, some of these for up to nine years.

In addition to this, the nature of the allotment legislation is such that growers are restricted in how allotments can be used. Legislation intended to protect allotments for the use of individual families has served its purpose well, allotments have largely remained intact and survived development, but they do not necessarily meet the ambitions of some groups in the twenty-first century. In particular, the primary purpose of allotments should be for family consumption which makes it difficult for groups interested in producing and distributing produce on a non-profit basis.

Sheffield City Council does not believe that removing the protection currently in place for allotments is the answer when there is clearly such strong demand for allotments from individual families, but it is clear that there is a demand for more land to be made available for sustainable food production both by individuals and by groups.

Proposal

The Sheffield Sustainable Communities Panel proposes that the government introduces statutory legislation giving Sheffield City Council a rebuttable right to enter into temporary leases compulsorily with owners of vacant brownfield land, which they can then sublease to community groups. It is proposed that this would enable the Council, after making reasonable attempts to work with landowners voluntarily, to take control of management of the land and to either put it into use itself or to grant a licence or sub-lease to community groups. This would require government to develop the mechanisms for doing this through primary legislation.

Sheffield City Council also proposes that national lottery funding be made available to groups seeking to garden community gardens without security of tenure to enable funding for projects resulting from this proposal.

It is proposed that this should be applied nationally, with all councils entitled (but not obliged) to make use of the orders. This provides better value for money than changing legislation for Sheffield alone, and also prevents Sheffield from being in a position which differs from other parts of the country as restricting this type of legislation to one city may impact on the desirability of that city as a place to invest in.

There are no proposals for the transfer of powers between public bodies, although powers would be conferred on the Lands Tribunal related to the issuing of the orders.

It is anticipated that this proposal would have a range of benefits for sustainability, in particular increasing the availability of locally produced food and reducing food miles, but there would also be health and welfare benefits for those involved in any resulting projects. The environmental sustainability of areas where vacant land was put into productive use would also be increased, making them more attractive places to live and work and having positive impacts on anti-social behaviour.

Benefits would extend initially to those involved in any resulting projects, but also to those living and working in the surrounding area who would benefit from a more attractive and safer environment. This latter benefit would be particularly positive during a recession when development has dramatically reduced.

Aug 2009

Lead Authority: Birmingham City Council

Proposal theme: Environmental sustainability: Increase local food production by:

- Revising allotment legislation to encourage and facilitate Local Authorities to provide more allotments, community gardens, community orchards or market gardens, and;

- Introducing automatic Statutory Allotment Status for appropriate sites after an agreed period
- The latter should apply to local authority or privately owned sites and should compel the landowner to develop the land for allotment use

Increase local food production by:

- Revising allotment legislation to encourage and facilitate Local Authorities to provide more allotments, community gardens, community orchards or market gardens, and;
- Introducing automatic Statutory Allotment Status for appropriate sites after an agreed period
- The latter should apply to local authority or privately owned sites and should compel the landowner to develop the land for allotment use

What issues your proposal is addressing and how it will promote the sustainability of the local community?

There is a growing desire for organic food and locally grown food. This is evidenced by the increasing popularity of farmers markets and allotment gardening and rising sales of vegetable seeds. There is a concurrent need to clarify, simplify and update the legislation covering allotment provision and protection and thus facilitate local food production.

The proposal will promote sustainability of local communities by improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of citizens. Specifically:

- Reducing the cost of food. Growing food locally for local consumption will reduce the costs associated with producing, processing, packaging and distributing non-locally produced food. This issue is particularly pertinent as rising input prices, such as fuel and fertiliser, coupled with the impact of climate change on crops has recently led to increasing food prices. Reducing the cost of food would ease the financial burden on households suffering as a result of the recession.
 - Supporting the local economy by renting local authority owned land to small businesses so that they can establish market gardens, thereby generating revenue and creating jobs.
 - Increasing communities' sense of ownership of their neighbourhood through community gardens, orchards and allotments.
 - Helping to tackle climate change by: reducing the energy and materials used to process, package and distribute non-locally produced food which accounts for 12% of the nation's fuel consumption ; providing good examples of sustainable waste management (e.g. re-use, recycling and composting); increasing the number of sites absorbing carbon dioxide; increasing the number of sites absorbing excess rainfall which will help to minimise flooding, an increasing problem caused by climate change. These factors will contribute to Birmingham's ambitious greenhouse gas reduction commitment and help to engage communities in the shared global challenge of tackling climate change.
 - Improving the environment by enhancing bio-diversity and encouraging wildlife
 - Improving health by promoting physical activity, mental health and providing a source of fresh food
 - Providing allotment gardeners with confidence that the future of their allotments is secure

Who is affected by this proposal and how?

Allotment gardeners will be immediately affected by any changes in legislation however the promotion of local food production is likely to have wide reaching positive affects for a potentially vast number of consumers.

Which public bodies might be affected?

N/A

What are the main actions needed from Government?

Revision of allotment legislation to encourage and facilitate local food production including protecting temporary allotment sites.

Lead Authority: Brighton & Hove City Council

Proposal theme: Environmental sustainability: To allow allotment holders to sell their surplus product to local shops.

The main element of the proposal is to allow allotment holders to sell their surplus product to local shops.

This proposal addresses the current, iniquitous situation whereby allotment holders are only able to sell surplus produce for charitable purposes.

It will promote the sustainability of the local community by enabling local people to purchase locally grown food at reasonable prices. This will offer the community an opportunity to support their neighbourhood and encourage healthier lifestyles. It will provide an opportunity to develop and enhance local macro-business initiatives. It will support the positive use of excess food.

It supports the Government's national imperative to reduce food waste (currently 35% of Brighton & Hove's residual household waste stream is made up of food waste.)

Persons affected by the proposal would be the allotment holder (and their representative association, if any) and the immediate local community. In the broader context, should the initiative prove popular, there would be a positive impact on local food wholesalers and local shops and cafes seeking to buy locally.

Affected public bodies might include the Local Authority representatives from Trading Standards, Health & Safety and, potentially Community Development.

The main actions required from Government would be a minor change to legalisation enabling the sale of grown produce. (cf. Allotment Act 1950).

This proposal should encourage local communities to broaden their choice of food suppliers. It might encourage communities to 'think global and buy local', it could positively challenge consumers perceptions of food availability. The proposal may have secondary benefits in increasing the popularity of home-grown produce and associated interest in self-sufficiency and sustainability.

This proposal promotes local food providers and businesses throughout the food chain. The adoption of the proposal would increase the availability of locally grown and sold food. Surplus food from allotment holders could be sold locally, thereby increasing opportunities to buy and offering additional choice to local consumers.

An increase in the growth and marketing of organic forms of food production and the local economy would be dependent on individual growers (whether they choose to grow organically or not). However it would offer an opportunity for the council to promote alternative food production and a more diverse local economy.

There would be a positive impact on opportunities for volunteering and, should the proposal be sustainable in the longer term, beneficial impact on job creation locally.

Locally grown and traded food requires less transportation, supporting measures to conserve energy and increase the quantity of energy supplies which are produced

from sustainable sources within a 30 mile radius of the region in which they are consumed. It would also help contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The proposal, should it prove popular, might have an additional benefit in encouraging the formation of local growing clubs or allotment societies. Small civic societies play an important part in bolstering and encouraging participation in local democracy and increasing social inclusion.

A proliferation of gardening / community or allotment clubs, or even just an increase in the awareness of allotment ownership and its benefits would support measures to increase mutual aid and other community projects. Local growers selling surplus food to local consumers is a mutually beneficial operation.