

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

ALLOTMENTS REPORT 2023

REPORT BY HEAD OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to make the Panel aware of the information contained within the Allotments Report 2023 and its intended publication on the Council's website.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the content of the Allotments Report; and
2. Supports the publication of the report on the Council's website.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Requirement under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, Part 9 Section 121 - Annual Allotments Report.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Outcome 4 - We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities. Outcome 7 - We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities. Outcome 8 - We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Resources/funding will be required to support the community groups to plan, construct, and

administer allotments.

VII Consideration at PDSP N/A

VIII Other consultations None.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D1 Background

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (“the Act”) encourages local authorities to support the development of community food growing spaces including allotments. The Council approved the West Lothian Food Growing Strategy 2020-25 in 2021.

The Act Part 9 Subsection 121 states that “each local authority must prepare and publish an annual allotments report for its area”. The Act identifies specific information to be included.

This report provides that information and a summary of recent activity relating to those allotment sites leased by the Council. The Council does not operate any allotment sites itself.

West Lothian Council leases land to two independent allotment groups: Killandean Community Allotment Association and Deans Meadow Allotment Association.

Both groups are self-managing with no direct involvement by the Council in the operation of the allotments, or the administration of waiting lists. The Council does not have a direct role in the development or construction of any allotments. Where resources allow, the Council’s Open Space Officer will support community groups with the development of new allotments through advice and guidance, and will produce an annual report as required by the Act. The Council does not have a dedicated Allotment/Food Growing Officer.

There are a number of privately-owned allotment sites located in West Lothian. The Act relates only to those owned or leased by a local authority. The Council has no responsibility in relation to private allotments.

D.2 Allotment Sites Information

The following table provides the information required by the Act.

		Killandean Allotment – managed by Killandean Community Allotment Association	Deans Meadow Allotment – managed by Deans Meadow Allotment Association
1	Location and size of allotment site	Off Simpson Parkway, Kirkton, Livingston. what3words: needed.moment.vibes 1.02ha	Off Hardie Road, Deans, Livingston. what3words: holds.dark.ranked 0.36ha
2	No. of allotments on allotment site	46	22
3	Where the whole of an allotment site is leased from	22.8% <i>1.02ha is leased from the</i>	Information not forthcoming from Deans Meadow Allotment

	the authority by one person, the proportion of land on the allotment site that is not subleased from the tenant of the allotment site.	<i>council. Allotments are then sub-let to individual plot holders. The total that is sub-let is 0.7875ha. The area that is not sub-leased is 0.2325ha (i.e. area left for paths, communal buildings, communal space etc.).</i>	Association.
4	The period of any lease between the authority and the tenant of an allotment site	20 years, from 1 June 2014	3 years, from 1 January 1994 to 31 December 1996 and thereafter on a year to year basis.
5	The rent payable under any lease between the authority and the tenant of an allotment site	£650 p.a.	£1 p.a. "if asked only".
6	The rent payable for each allotment in the area of the authority	62.5m ² plot - £20/yr. 125m ² plot - £40/yr. 250m ² plot - £80/yr.	Information not forthcoming from Deans Meadow Allotment Association.
7	How, in the opinion of the authority, such rents are decided by reference to the method of determining fair rent.	Rents for individual plots are determined by Killandean Community Allotment Association.	Rents for individual plots are determined by Deans Meadow Allotment Association.
8	The number of persons entered in the waiting list	47 (as at 15/5/23)	Information not forthcoming from Deans Meadow Allotment Association
9	The number of persons on the waiting list for a continuous period of more than 5 years	0	Information not forthcoming from Deans Meadow Allotment Association
10	The steps taken by the authority to comply with the duty to provide allotments.	The council has set out the process for providing allotments in its Food Growing Strategy available at https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/52253/West-Lothian-Food-Growing-Strategy/pdf/20210702_WLC_Food_Growing_Strategy_FINAL_LAYOUT.pdf?m=637807083545700000	
11	The number of allotments on each allotment site that are accessible by a disabled person.	46	Information not forthcoming from Deans Meadow Allotment Association
12	The number of allotments on each allotment site adjusted by the authority during the reporting year to meet the needs of a tenant who is a disabled person.	0	0
13	The number of persons on the waiting list who is a disabled person.	0	Information not forthcoming from Deans Meadow Allotment Association.
14	The income received, and expenditure incurred, by the authority in connection with allotment sites	Income - £650 p.a. (rental income) Expenditure –£5,701.39 (Soil Contamination Report), and circa. £5,000.00 (staff costs for enquiry handling, advice, guidance, and reporting etc.).	

D.3 Killandean Allotment – 2023 Activity Summary

Killandean now provides a shared space for some of the allotment plot holders who were struggling with maintaining their own plot, mainly due to ill-health or age. Sharing a plot like this not only allows them to continue growing in an area that is easier to look after but also maintains relationships that have been formed over many years as well as providing more gentle exercise and mental well-being. The plots that then become vacant can quickly be filled by those at the top of the waiting list.

D.4 Deans Meadow – 2023 activity summary

Deans Meadow has expressed interest in updating the lease with the Council to reflect their interests. The Council has welcomed this opportunity as the original lease pre-dates the Act and therefore does not reflect the current Food Growing Strategy aims. Property Services are working with the group to draft a new lease which may allow for allotment regulations in line with the Food Growing Strategy to be included as a condition of this lease.

D4 Waiting Lists

The Act requires the Council to take reasonable steps to ensure the number of applicants on Council leased allotment waiting lists is no more than half the number of allotment plots available.

Both of the Council leased allotment sites were set up before the Act, and the associations have managed their own waiting lists since inception. When a request for an allotment plot is received by the Council, customers are directed to Killandean Community Allotment Association and Deans Meadow Allotment Association if appropriate.

One or more people (together) can apply for an individual plot but this is counted as a single request when determining waiting list numbers.

Killandean has 46 plots and 47 on their waiting list. Deans Meadow has 22 plots, their waiting list has not been made available to the Council. The terms of the Deans Meadow lease do not obligate the association to provide this data. There are, therefore, at least 47 unfulfilled requests for a plot recorded i.e. more than half the number of allotment plots available.

The Council does not currently have a level of dedicated investment that allows for construction or management of allotments. The model for new allotment provision is set out in the West Lothian Food Growing Strategy 2020-25. In summary, the Council will facilitate new allotments by advising and guiding community groups with an interest in allotments, supporting development of a constituted group that can themselves develop and operate an allotment.

D.5 Future Provision

In light of existing waiting lists, the Council is taking the following reasonable steps to improve allotment provision. The Council is currently working with Bathgate Community Development Trust to develop a site in the Boghall area. An unconstituted group has also expressed an interest in managing an allotment site in the district but this is only at the initial stage. As and when any potential community group capable of developing and operating an allotment site is identified, the Council will support the group in investigation of sites and developing proposals as appropriate. Furthermore, the Council has allocated circa. £9,000 in 2023/24 for

potential soil testing associated with new allotment sites.

E. CONCLUSION

The Allotments Report 2023 contains information required under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2005, Part 9 Subsection 121.

The Panel is asked to note the information in the report and support the publication of the report on the Council's website.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

- Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015
- West Lothian Food Growing Strategy 2020-25

Appendices/Attachments: None

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12 September 2023