

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

WEST LoTHIAN ALLOTMENTS REPORT

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 2025 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	Caring and compassionate Open, honest and accountable Collaborative, inclusive and adaptive
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 Local Outcomes Improvement Plan	Community growing, including allotments, supports 2 pillars of the LOIP: Improving Health & Wellbeing and Creating Net Zero Carbon Communities
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Resources/funding is required to support community groups to plan, construct, and administer allotments.

VII Consideration at PDSP	Open Space Officers provide annual Allotments Report to PDSP.
VIII Other Consultations	None.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (“the Act”) places a duty on local authorities to support the development of community food growing spaces, including allotments. In line with this, the Council approved the West Lothian Food Growing Strategy 2020–2025 in 2021.

Part 9, Section 121 of the Act requires each local authority to prepare and publish annual allotments report for its area, including specific prescribed information. This report fulfils that requirement and covers the period from June 2024 to the end of May 2025. It also includes a summary of annual activity, where available, relating to allotment sites leased by the Council.

West Lothian Council does not directly operate any allotment sites. Instead, it leases land to two independent organisations: Killandean Community Allotment Association and Deansmeadow Allotments Association. Both groups are fully self-managing, with no direct involvement from the Council in the day-to-day operation of sites or the administration of waiting lists.

The Council does not play a direct role in the development or construction of allotments. However, where resources permit, the Council’s Open Space Officer provides support to community groups through advice and guidance on the development of new allotment sites. The Council does not currently employ a dedicated Allotment or Food Growing Officer.

There are also several privately owned allotment sites within West Lothian. The provisions of the Act apply only to allotments owned or leased by a local authority; therefore, the Council has no responsibility for privately operated sites.

D.2 Allotment Sites Information

The table overleaf provides the information required by the Act to be available to the public.

		KILLANDEAN ALLOTMENT	DEANSMEADOW ALLOTMENT
		Killandean Allotment – managed by Killandean Community Allotment Association	Deansmeadow Allotment – managed by Deansmeadow Allotments Association
1	Location and size of allotment site	Off Simpson Parkway, Kirkton, Livingston. 1.02ha	Off Hardie Road, Deans, Livingston. 0.65ha
2	No. of allotments on allotment site	54	22
3	Where the whole of an allotment site is leased from the authority by one person, the proportion of land on the allotment site that is not subleased from the tenant of the allotment site	22.8% 1.02ha is leased from the Council. The Allotment is then sub-let to individual plot holders. Total Area sub-let is 0.7875ha. Area that not sub-let is 0.2325ha (i.e. area left for paths, communal buildings, communal space etc.).	65.8% 0.6519ha is leased from the Council. The Allotment is then sub-let to individual plot holders. The total that is not sub-let is 0.4287ha (i.e. area left for paths, communal buildings, car parking etc.).
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 but discounted if Community Benefits clause met.	£1
6	The rent payable for each allotment in the area of the authority	Single bed - £10/year 62.5m ² plot - £20/year 125m ² plot - £40/year 250m ² plot - £80/year.	79.2m ² - £32.50/year 158.4m ² - £65.00/year
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 Deansmeadow Allotments Association.
8	The number of persons entered in the waiting list	43	12
9	The number of persons on the waiting list for a continuous period of more than 5 years	0	0
10	The steps taken by the authority to	The Council has established a process for the provision of allotments within its Food Growing Strategy.	

	comply with the duty to provide allotments.	<p>In summary, requests for new allotment sites will be considered where they are submitted either by an existing constituted community group or by a minimum of three members of the community who are willing to develop and manage an allotment site.</p> <p>The applicant group is responsible for identifying potential Council-owned sites. The Council will then work collaboratively with the group to assess the suitability of these sites, considering factors such as land ownership, accessibility, and any competing or conflicting land uses. The advantages and disadvantages of each site will be clearly identified as part of this assessment.</p> <p>Once a preferred site has been agreed, the Council will advise whether Phase 1 soil testing is required. Where appropriate, and subject to available resources, the Council will commission a Phase 1 preliminary site investigation, including indicative soil sampling, to determine the site's suitability for food growing. Where contamination is identified, the site may still be considered suitable if appropriate remediation measures or protective barriers can be implemented.</p> <p>If the group is not formally constituted at this stage, the Council will provide support to assist in achieving constituted status.</p> <p>Planning permission will generally be required for the development of an allotment site. The responsibility for preparing and submitting the planning application rests with the applicant group.</p> <p>Subject to the granting of planning permission, the Council's Property Services team will enter negotiations with the group to agree lease terms for the site.</p> <p>Throughout the process, the Council will offer advice and guidance on matters such as funding opportunities, site access, and initial site development.</p> <p>In accordance with Council policy, 10% of new allotment plots must be allocated to individuals at the top of the Council's waiting list (or the waiting list for a Council-owned allotment site).</p>	
11	The number of allotments on each allotment site that are accessible by a disabled person.	53	22
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	Not known, protected information unless a plot holder chooses to share personal information.
14	The income received, and expenditure	Income - £0 Expenditure - £0	

	incurred, by the authority in connection with allotment sites	
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D.4 Waiting Lists

The Act requires local authorities to take reasonable steps to ensure that the number of applicants on waiting lists for Council-leased allotments does not exceed 50% of the total number of available plots. Both allotment sites on Council-owned land are leased to independent associations and were established prior to the introduction of the Act. These associations have maintained and administered their own waiting lists since their inception.

When the Council receives requests for allotment plots, applicants are directed in the first instance to Killandean Community Allotment Association and Deansmeadow Allotments Association. Applications for individual plots may be made by one or more individuals jointly; however, each application is recorded as a single request for the purposes of calculating waiting list numbers.

Killandean Community Allotment Association has 54 plots and reported 43 applicants on its waiting list during the reporting period. Turnover of plots remains limited. Deansmeadow Allotments Association has reported to have 22 plots with 12 applicants on the waiting list.

The Council itself currently holds one applicant on its waiting list. At present, there is no dedicated level of investment to support the construction or direct management of allotments, and the waiting list is maintained primarily to ensure compliance with legislative requirements. Should either Killandean or Deansmeadow Allotments Associations have no applicants on their waiting lists and a plot becomes available, the Council may assist in allocating a plot from its own waiting list. Similarly, the Council may support the allocation of plots where new allotment sites are developed by independent community groups.

The approach to the provision of new allotments is set out in the West Lothian Food Growing Strategy 2020–2025. In summary, the Council's role is to facilitate development by providing advice and guidance to community groups and supporting the establishment of constituted organisations capable of developing and managing allotment sites independently.

D.5 Future Provision

The Council has continued to work with Bathgate Community Development Trust (BCDT) to develop an allotment site in the Boghall area. In the reporting period BCDT worked towards plans for an allotment of mixed plot sizes which could be managed by an independent allotment association.

BCDT are responsible for securing funding to enable the delivery of the new allotment. Funding from WLC was utilised for an initial ground investigation and report to ascertain the land was suitable for food growing. Currently BCDT are currently preparing to submit proposals for planning.

E. CONCLUSION

The Allotments Report 2025 contains information required under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, 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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