



ALLOTMENT STRATEGY

2012 ~ 2022

Release: Final
Date: March 2018

Client: Governance & Recreation

Document Number: DT/PC A 100

Document Location

This document is only valid on the day it was printed.

The source of the document will be found on the Control Section of the project file in location:

O:\PandA\Parks and Countryside\Open Space And Play Development\Allotments Management\Allotment Strategy\Allotment Strategy 2017 Revisions.doc

Revision History

Date of this revision:

Revision Date	Revised By	Summary of Changes
Dec 2017	DTR	See track changes

Approvals

This document requires the following approvals.

Name	Signature	Title	Date of Issue	Version
Philip Richardson		Director – Governance & Recreation		
Ian Lloyd		Portfolio Holder – Art & Leisure		

Distribution

This document has been distributed to

Name	Title	Date of Issue	Version
Paul Daly	Parks & Countryside Manager		
Shirley Round	Principal Democratic Services Officer (Overview & Scrutiny)		

Contents

1.0	Vision Statement	Page No.
1.1	Vision Statement.	8
2.0	Introduction	
2.1	A brief history of Allotments.	9
2.2	National developments.	9
2.3	Local developments.	9
3.0	Scope & Aims	
3.1	Definition of an Allotment.	10
3.2	Scope of this strategy.	10
3.3	Types of Allotment.	10
3.4	Aims of this Allotment Strategy.	11
4.0	The Value of Allotments	
4.1	Introduction to the benefits of Allotments.	12
4.2	Physical Health Benefits.	12
4.3	Mental Health Benefits.	13
4.4	Educational Benefits.	13
4.5	Social Benefits.	13
4.6	Environmental Benefits – Wildlife & Biodiversity.	14
4.7	Celebrating Excellence.	16
4.8	Money Saving.	16
4.9	Key Considerations.	17
5.0	Legislation	
5.1	Introduction to Allotment Legislation.	18

5.2	Small Holdings & Allotments Act, 1908.	18
5.3	Land Settlement (Facilities) Act, 1919.	18
5.4	Allotments Act, 1922.	18
5.5	Allotments Act, 1925.	18
5.6	Small Holdings & Allotments Act, 1926	19
5.7	The Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Act, 1931.	19
5.8	Allotments Act, 1950.	19
5.9	Other Legislation.	19
6.0	National Policy Context	
6.1	The Department for Communities & Local Government. (DCLG)	21
6.2	National Planning Policy Framework.	21
6.3	Local Government Association. (LGA)	21
6.4	National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners. (NSALG)	22
7.0	Local Policy Context	
7.1	Nuneaton & Bedworth Sustainable Community Plan.	23
7.2	Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council – Corporate Plan.	23
7.3	Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council – Development Plan.	24
7.4	Nuneaton & Bedworth Open Space Strategy.	25
7.5	The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).	25
7.6	Warwickshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2014 ~ 2018.	26
7.7	The Crime & Disorder Partnership Plan.	26
7.8	West Midlands Biodiversity Pledge	27
7.9	Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull Biodiversity Action Plan	27
7.10	West Midlands Combined Authority	27

8.0	Audit of Allotment Provision	
8.1	Introduction to the Audit Process.	28
8.2	Sites in the Nuneaton & Bedworth Area.	28
8.3	Quantity & Size of Allotment Sites.	28
8.4	Minimum Levels of Provision.	29
8.5	Distribution & Location of Allotment Sites.	29
8.6	Capacity – Levels of Occupancy.	30
8.7	Quality of Allotment Site Facilities.	30
8.8	Promotion.	31
8.9	Key Considerations.	31
9.0	Consultation Review	
9.1	An Outline of the Consultation Process.	33
9.2	Key Issues.	34
10.0	Developing a Standard	
10.1	Setting a Standard.	35
10.2	Requirements for New Allotment Sites.	35
10.3	Development Contributions.	35
10.4	Minimum Facilities – Standards.	36
10.5	Future Developments.	37
11.0	Financial & Resource Implications	
11.1	Allotment Leases.	38
11.2	Service Level Agreement.	38
11.3	Development of Technical Advisory Notices. (TAN's)	38
11.4	Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council Sites – Initial Budget Proposals.	38

12.0 A Policy for Allotments

12.1	Policy Aims.	39
12.2	Actions.	39
12.3	Outcomes.	39

13.0 Monitor & Review

13.1	Annual Reports to Scrutiny Panel – Allotment Bodies.	41
13.2	Strategy Review.	41

14.0 Appendices

14.1	Plans 1 & 2 - Allotment distribution (inc. catchment area) within Nuneaton, Bedworth & Bulkington.	
14.2	Table 1 - Allotment Provision within the Borough	
14.3	Table 2 – NBBC Allotment Sites – Audit of assets.	
14.4	Plans 3 ~ 24 – Individual Plans of NBBC Allotment Sites.	
14.5	Draft Lease – (25 Years).	
14.6	Allotment Action Plan 2013 ~ 2017 & 2018 ~ 2022	
14.7	Technical Advisory Notices (T.A.N.'s)	

1.0 Vision Statement

- 1.1 ***Vision Statement:*** - “Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council is committed to promoting healthy living through the development and management of allotment provision throughout the borough. Encouraging innovation and best practice where-ever possible, we will seek to maximise the participation of local residents, through the promotion of the benefits and enjoyment allotment gardening can bring.”

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Allotments have been part of the British landscape for more than a century and a half. Initially born out the enclosure acts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, allotments grew in prominence as the need to address the rapid industrialisation of the UK economy and urbanisation of its general population was recognised. Allotments reached their height during the Second World War, when it was estimated there were 1.75 million in cultivation. In the last sixty years however, there has been a marked decline in their fortunes. Culturally they came to be seen as a recreational activity, rather than one dedicated to providing essential foodstuffs for the working family. This was accompanied by a surge in the disposal of temporary allotment land for other uses, most typically house-building.
- 2.2 More recently there has been a renewed interest in allotment gardening across the country. Land pressures have resulted in smaller gardens on new housing developments, typically 100 Sq.m, popular cooking, gardening and lifestyle programmes, media interest in the organic versus genetically modified (GM) crops debate, the health agenda, increasing concerns about carbon footprints and wider sustainability have all contributed to increasing numbers of women, people from ethnic minorities and young adults becoming allotment tenants, alongside the more traditional image of the older white male.
- 2.3 Allotments within the borough of Nuneaton & Bedworth have broadly reflected these national trends. The most significant local development in recent times was the devolution of day to day management responsibilities to individual allotment associations through a series of leases drawn up in 1994. These were originally intended to be for a period of seven years, a date which has long since expired. These have now been replaced with new leases, for a period of twenty-five years as part of this strategy, which will map out the future development of allotment services.

3.0 Scope & Aims

- 3.1 **Definition of an allotment** The definition of an allotment according to the Department for Communities and Local Government is:

“...a piece of land usually about 250 square metres in size which can be rented for growing fruit and vegetables. The land is generally owned by the local council.”

- 3.2 **Scope of this strategy** The Strategy takes into account all allotments in the Borough, irrespective of ownership or management, reflecting the Council’s role as a community leader and enabler as well as landlord. It does not, for the avoidance of doubt, include Small Holdings or Community Farms.

- 3.3 **Types of Allotment** There are 3 types of allotments:

Statutory Allotments are those acquired or appropriated specifically for allotment use. These cannot be sold or used for other purposes without the consent of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. The Secretary of State will need to be satisfied that:

- The allotment is not necessary or is surplus to requirements;
- Displaced plot holders will be given adequate alternative sites if necessary and practicable, within ¾ mile of the centre of demand;
- The number of people on the waiting list has been taken into account;
- The council has actively promoted and publicised the availability of allotment sites and consulted the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG);
- The Council will have also consulted plot holders.

Temporary Allotments are those on land intended for other uses, but used as allotments on a temporary basis. These are not protected in the way Statutory Allotments are, but a minimum of 12 months' notice to quit must be given to plot holders. The new 25 year leases, extend the level of protection offered to tenants on NBBC sites. (Refer to appendix 14.5)

Private Allotments are similar to Temporary Allotments; but the Local Authority has no control over these. Many of these are held by registered charities with their origins in the 19th Century concern with addressing the needs of the poor.

3.4 **Aims of the Allotments Strategy** In developing an Allotments Strategy for Nuneaton and Bedworth it is necessary to consider the allotment sites we have, what we need now and in the future and what we are going to do about any imbalance in supply and demand. In particular the aims of the strategy are to:

- Articulate the value of allotment cultivation.
- Demonstrate how allotments can contribute to the needs of the community.
- Propose ways to optimise the usability of allotments that exist.
- Set out the legal framework for allotments.
- Set out the policy context both nationally and locally.
- Present the analysis of data gathered on supply, demand, quality of existing provision.
- Identify if and where there is a need for new allotment sites.
- Articulate the role of NBBC and Allotment Associations and plot holders in delivering the strategy and wider community benefits.
- Provide evidence for securing investment from third parties including developers and charitable funders.

4.0 The Value of Allotments

4.1 Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council supports allotment gardening as a valuable recreational activity. However; the value of allotments is much wider than this. The Department of Communities and Local Government states that:

“Allotments and community gardens are valuable green spaces that can help improve people’s quality of life by promoting healthy food, exercise and community interaction”.

The benefits of allotments can be divided into six key areas;

- Health - physical exercise, combat obesity, through fresh fruit & vegetables mental health improvements and reduced stress.
- Educational - Use by schools and for community skill sharing.
- Social - Inclusion of people from different backgrounds, social, ethnic and those with disabilities.
- Environment - habitat for wildlife, green links in towns, green lungs.
- Celebrating Excellence - People can be acknowledged for achievement.
- Money saving - Fresh low cost food - lower food miles, less packaging, less chemical use, encourages recycling and reuse.

4.2 **Physical health benefits:** The health benefits of allotment gardening were recognised by the Government in its response to the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee’s report *The Future of Allotments*. The argument is made all the more compelling by government predictions about the growing problems for the health of the nation posed by obesity. There are well documented long-term health benefits resulting from a diet containing fresh fruit and vegetables. The impact of activity outdoors or ‘green exercise’ on both physical and mental health is of increasing interest to medical professionals and one of the most frequently cited benefits of allotment gardening is health improvement.

4.3 **Mental health benefits:** Allotments can provide opportunities for people with diagnosed learning difficulties and indeed a wider range of disadvantages such as the unemployed and those with undiagnosed mental health conditions, giving them a place to take exercise, to structure their day and encourage self-confidence. There are important public and environmental health implications to green exercise, as a fitter and more emotionally content population costs the economy less.

4.4 **Educational benefits:** The benefits of the allotment site do not stop at the gates. When allotments have strong links with their local community, both sides benefit. For example Greenmoor Community Allotment Association let a nearby Scout Group use a plot with their Leaders & Marston Lane Community Allotment Association has had visits from local schools. Both organisations considered that such relationships between allotment associations and local groups/schools should become the norm.

Mentoring of new gardeners by experienced plot holders is a valuable way to pass on knowledge and skills which can become a spring board for full time employment in horticulture and other sectors. Both NFAA, BDHC & BAA promote this aspect of developing individuals and not just the new tenants. Existing plot holders can also learn valuable teaching and presentation skills, which are transferable to the workplace.

4.5 **Social benefits:** Perhaps the most valuable benefit allotments bring to a community is to bring together people with a shared interest, but who are from different cultural or social backgrounds and whose paths might never normally cross. People with special needs such as mental health issues and physical needs; access for vehicles, flexible layouts, variable height beds for crops etc. with access to helpful tenants nearby to help them, both physically or just with advice, report significant benefits from allotment gardening. Indeed the social benefits of an allotment need not be restricted to those who work the plots, providing a focal point that promotes understanding and integration within the wider community.

-
- 4.6 ***Environmental benefits - wildlife and biodiversity:*** Allotment sites can typically contain 30% or greater biodiversity value than an urban park and often are joined to other open spaces / green-spaces within the urban area, forming part of important wildlife corridors and refuges – the ‘Green Infrastructure’ of the Borough.

Both as signatories to the West Midlands Biodiversity Pledge and to support delivery of Biodiversity Action Plan targets and objectives, NBBC is committed to seeking to retain and enhance biodiversity within allotment sites. At the general level these commitments can be translated by reflecting them in individual allotment leases and asking associations as a minimum to retain existing wildlife interest - but ideally also more positively working to enhance that interest and value. Several allotment associations in the Borough have utilised surplus land to create specific wildlife habitat / wildlife garden areas adding even further to the general value of the sites for wildlife such as Greenmoor Rd Allotments in Nuneaton & Mount Pleasant and Newdigate Allotments in Bedworth.

The Borough can provide free ecological advice to support Associations and help advise on practical low or no cost ways for Associations to help local wildlife. In addition Associations can play a critical role encouraging wildlife friendly management as a whole across the site and can encourage individual tenants to adopt wildlife friendly approaches within their own plots. On occasion it may also be necessary / appropriate for Associations to create and adopt rules requiring certain approaches and to enforce those rules

Some key opportunities for allotment sites and associations to pursue can be summarised as follows:

- By necessity to have minimum acceptable practices covered by rules and to enforce those rules if necessary – e.g. in regard to fires / composting etc

- To support and encourage wildlife friendly approaches to allotment gardening by tenants:
 - encouraging beneficial insects / species that consume crop pests and to act as pollinators e.g. through companion planting / pond and bog creation / bat and bird boxes / insect boxes / log and stone piles / wildflower and herb patches / retention and addition of hedges & ditches / tree planting & orchard creation if land available
 - reducing / minimising pesticide / molluscicide usage
 - reducing peat usage

- To encourage composting / recycling, organic approaches and avoiding / minimising fires

- To deal with any surplus plots, communal areas and boundaries in the most wildlife friendly ways

- To consider developing demonstration plots to promote some of the possible approaches

- To look as an Association - on at least an annual basis - at existing wildlife habitat and value across the whole site, to retain existing value and to identify and where possible act on opportunities to enhance wildlife value (with advice - to whatever extent desired by the Association - from NBBC).

A brief review could e.g. take the form of a standing item on the minuted AGM for Associations and the overall annual reporting on this standing item could be presented annually to the Scrutiny Panel of the Borough Council

- 4.7 ***Celebrating Excellence:*** The pride many allotment holders take in their plots and the food they grow is immense and some achieve very high standards at shows. Nuneaton and Bedworth has a history of such celebration, as is evidenced by the number of trophies currently held in the Mayor's Parlour. The re-introduction of such competitions between individuals, allotment associations and the recognition of voluntary work, through the Nuneaton Allotment Federation & Bedworth & District Horticultural Council should be encouraged.

Others volunteer many hours of their time to delivering communal benefits for their immediate colleagues, the wider allotment community and society in general. Sharing their achievements with the community is a good reason for celebration which can inspire others and lead to greater community cohesion. Examples of this can be seen on the respective NFAA & BDHC websites, as well as individual Associations.

- 4.8 ***Money Saving - a more sustainable food source:*** The original purpose of allotments, encapsulated in the General Enclosure Act 1845, was to provide a source of fresh fruit and vegetables for the "landless poor". Even now, the financial advantages of allotment gardening remain significant. People are also more and more concerned about the environmental impact of what they eat. 'The Validity of Food Miles as an Indicator of Sustainable Development' report, produced by DEFRA in 2005 put the environmental, social and economic cost of food transport at £9bn annually. Ten million tonnes of carbon dioxide were emitted in the UK in 2002 as a result of food transportation and it also accounts for a quarter of all HGV vehicle miles. Food packaging is also a major environmental issue. It is estimated that 100,000 tonnes of plastic bags are thrown away every year. UK households produce the equivalent of 245 jumbo jets a week in packaging waste. Allotment growing avoids the need to use packaging. The use of organic cultivation methods is increasing practiced up by many plot holders. Composting on allotments is widely practiced, and is a good alternative to bonfires. Reuse and recycling is part of the allotments tradition: old carpets used for mulching and old gutters and water tanks are used for collecting water. The scruffy appearance of some sites is the accepted price of innovation in recycling and reuse of materials.

4.9 **Key Considerations:** The case for maintaining, promoting and protecting allotments is a strong one, on public health and environmental grounds as well a means of enhancing community cohesion. Any policy decision must have full regard to the very considerable benefits they bring to the individual and the wider community.

The main issues arising are:

- Need to link to the health services to provide support for people for whom allotment growing would improve their health.
- Schools could benefit from more formal access to allotments and be supported to have growing areas on schools premises.
- Need to work with disability groups to identify how best to ensure provision is made for their needs.
- Need to ensure people from ethnic groups are able to access allotments and consider celebrating their culture through food and growing.
- Need to demonstrate the value to Allotment Associations of being more community facing.
- Support provision of communal facilities on allotment sites or connections with nearby facilities.
- Explore opportunities to develop local enterprises between Allotment Associations & Community Groups (Contributing excess stock to food banks, Café's, Kitchens etc.)
- Support allotment open days.
- Identify sites with significant wildlife interest or potential and the contribution to biodiversity that plot holders can realistically be expected to make.
- Provide guidance on best management practice for hedgerows, standard / pollard trees, set aside allotments, ditches, banks and compost heaps.
- Consider whether cost is of more significance to some people than others.

5.0 Legislation

- 5.1 There has been a significant amount of legislation relating to allotments in the last century and as such this area of law can appear quite complicated. There are continuing calls for such legislation to be consolidated into a single new act, although this appears unlikely to become a political priority at present. Put simply, Local Authorities have a statutory duty to provide allotment land, both permanent (statutory) and temporary, where there is proven demand and they can not dispose of statutory allotments without approval by the relevant Secretary of State.

The main statutes known collectively as ***The Allotments Act's 1908~1950*** are outlined below.

- 5.2 ***Small Holdings & Allotments Act, 1908*** repealed and consolidated previous legislation, establishing the framework for the modern allotments system. It principally dealt with the duties of allotment authorities to provide allotments for the 'labouring population' and compensation to tenants who had their tenancies terminated.
- 5.3 ***Land Settlement (Facilities) Act, 1919*** made a number of amendments to the 1908 Act, most notably abolishing the reference to 'labouring population' principally to assist returning WWI service personal.
- 5.4 ***Allotments Act, 1922*** provided improved security of tenure for allotment tenants, requiring specific periods of notice and compensation if necessary, based upon the value of the tenants crops. It also required most allotment authorities to appoint allotment committees.
- 5.5 ***Allotments Act, 1925*** required planning authorities to take specific account of allotment needs when preparing town planning schemes, a safeguard which disappeared with the Town & Country Planning Act 1947.

- 5.6 ***Small Holdings & Allotments Act, 1926*** made minor amendments to previous acts, but was mainly concerned with Small Holdings.
- 5.7 ***The Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Act, 1931*** was passed at the time of the depression to encourage the provision of allotments for the unemployed. It is no longer actively used.
- 5.8 ***Allotments Act, 1950*** was passed as a consequence of the Allotments Advisory Committee report of 1949, although not all the recommendations were included in the eventual legislation. It extended the period of notice to tenants from six to twelve months, expiring during the winter period. It also dealt with matters relating to compensation due, both to the tenant upon being given notice to quit and the allotments authority, if the plot holder had allowed the plot to deteriorate.
- 5.9 ***Other Legislation*** Whilst not specifically relating to allotments, other more recent legislation has had an impact, most notably the Local Government Act 1972, which removed the requirement upon local authorities to establish allotments committees. These include;
- Local Government Planning & Land Act 1980
 - Local Government & Planning (Amendment) Act 1981
 - Acquisition of Land Act 1981
 - Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
 - Local Government Act 1992
 - Statute Law (Repeals) Act, 1993

In 1998 the Government also introduced a requirement for local authorities to show what steps they had taken to promote allotments prior to requesting consent to dispose of them. This was because of concerns that local people might not be aware of a local authorities' duty to provide such facilities.

The most recent statute to affect allotments is ***The Localism Act, 2012***. This seeks to empower local communities to decide local requirements and priorities, rather than such matters being centrally driven and may have implications for allotment provision within Nuneaton and Bedworth. Newdigate Allotment Association for example, is the first to successfully apply to become an 'Asset of Community Value.'

Whilst such a designation lasts only for five years, they may be able to provide useful advice to others considering a similar application. Although the new leases effectively supersede this, there are instances where a twenty-five year lease is not achievable and this might be a consideration for that particular Allotment Association.

6.0 National Policy Context

- 6.1 ***The Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG)*** has acknowledged that allotments are valuable green spaces that can help improve people's quality of life by promoting healthy food, exercise and community interaction. The DCLG seeks to ensure that allotments are well managed, are considered as part of the overall green infrastructure and are only disposed of where there is no demand for them and established criteria have been met. It is committed to working with local authorities to promote best practice and ensure quality and appropriate availability now and for future generations. As part of this commitment DCLG has published two guidance documents; [Space for Food Growing](#) and [Potential Funding for Community Green Spaces](#).
- 6.2 ***National Planning Policy Framework*** Adopted in March 2012, this initially caused some alarm amongst those more familiar with the previous, rather more prescriptive approach to planning at a national level. Documents such as Planning Policy Guidance Note's PPG 3 – Housing and PPG 17 – Sport, Open Space & Recreation, both of which were seen as providing protection for allotments have, along with over a thousand pages of national guidance been replaced by just fifty. There is only a single reference to allotments within the new framework, specifically excluding them from the definition of 'Previously Developed Land', although within the context of providing social, recreational & cultural facilities, allotments should be considered alongside references to wider public open space provision, detailed in chapter 8 – Promoting Healthy Communities. Seen as a key part of the effort to de-centralise government, DCLG Communities Minister at that time, Andrew Stunell, explained that in the context of allotment provision the new framework will ensure, "Local communities will have the ability in the future to dictate what the local plan for them should be, and to set aside those allotments, and of course existing allotments are protected under legislation at the moment. "
- 6.3 ***Local Government Association (LGA)*** The LGA have published two key documents relating to allotments. Growing in the Community: [A Good Practice Guide for the Management of Allotments – 2nd Ed.](#) was published in 2008 and identifies the main issues

for allotments officers and societies, together with advice on how to overcome the challenges they are facing. In 2010 this was supplemented by a new on-line guide, [A Place to Grow](#). The update seeks to address some of the problems that local authorities and devolved management allotment associations are facing as a consequence of the increased demand for allotments. Further advice is provided about issues such as managing waiting lists and non-cultivation, as well as information about how to design a new allotment site.

- 6.4 **National Allotment Society** (**NSALG**) is the leading national organisation upholding the interests and rights of the allotment community across the UK. It works with all levels of government, other organisations and landlords to provide, promote and preserve allotments for all and offers support, guidance and advice to those with an interest in allotment gardening. A survey undertaken by Transition Town West Kirby in conjunction with NSALG in 2011 estimated that 86,787 people were on waiting lists for 152,442 allotment plots managed by local authorities across England. (Not including parish, town council or allotment association managed sites.) This equated to 57 people waiting for every 100 plots, up from 49 people per 100 plots in 2009.

7.0 Local Policy Context

7.1 [**Nuneaton & Bedworth Sustainable Community Plan \(Updated in 2014\)**](#) The Borough's Community Plan, entitled 'Shaping our Future' is the overarching strategy produced by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). It brings together organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to work together as a single group for the benefit of an area. Their key priorities include:

- Improving the well-being of communities by helping people to work together, support and understand each other.
- To make Nuneaton and Bedworth a safer place for everyone where day-to-day quality of life is not marred by the fear of crime.
- To improve access to health care and improve life expectancy within the borough, by promoting more healthier and active lifestyles.
- To have a high quality environment with increased biodiversity and a sustainable approach to waste and energy.
- To improve the Boroughs transport infrastructure in order to provide easier access to key services and facilities.

Having high quality accessible allotments can make a significant impact on the delivery of these key objectives.

7.2 [**Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council Corporate Plan**](#). The Council's Corporate Plan has been refreshed and covers the period 2007-2021, to complement the sustainable community plan. The vision and corporate aim stated in the Corporate Plan is that:

"By 2021, we shall achieve the greatest improvement in the quality of life and social justice in Warwickshire, providing value for money services in a safe and pleasant environment"

Linking our Corporate Plan priorities to our allotment strategy:

Key Aim 1: Improve the quality of life and social justice for residents so it is much closer to that enjoyed by the rest of Warwickshire.

Response: We shall ensure that all residents have access to quality allotments and provide facilities that are inclusive for all to improve health and health inequalities.

Key Aim 2: Work in partnership to reduce the level of crime and disorder so that the community is and feels safer.

Response: We shall enable our partners to access facilities, activities and experiences to deal with anti-social behaviour.

Key Aim 3: Provide a pleasant environment for those living, working and visiting the borough.

Response: We shall, with our partners, continue to maintain and develop the allotments within the Borough to ensure the quality of these spaces and facilities is protected and enhanced. We shall report on these projects delivered by the Council, its partners and community groups.

Key Aim 4: Provide quality services which represent value for money.

Response: We will raise awareness of the services we deliver and how they may be accessed. We shall report on the success of these services, on the services/facilities/environmental improvements we are working to introduce and on the consultations/projects that will help reshape our future service delivery.

- 7.3 [**Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council Development Plan**](#) The Borough Plan sets out a vision and a framework for the future development in the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure – as well as being a basis for safeguarding the environment, adapting to climate change and securing good design. The Plan will also be a critical tool in guiding decisions about individual development proposals.

Our Borough Plan is currently being drafted and the stages completed and yet to be completed are listed below:

- Issues and Options - complete
- Preferred Options - complete
- Submission - complete: additional consultation needed on revised version which is the Publication version
- Publication - complete: submitted to Secretary of State on 6 June 2017
- Examination - conducted by an independent inspector - currently in progress
- Adopt plan

7.4 ***Nuneaton & Bedworth Open Space Strategy (Refreshed 2017)*** identifies 23 council owned sites across the borough, each of which form an integral part of the strategic network of green space. It states that these sites should meet the following criteria, to be detailed within the Allotments Strategy;

- Provided to a minimum standard.
- Self managed.
- Provided in sufficient numbers across the borough.
- Provided in the right locations.
- Support of Management Groups.

7.5 ***The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)*** was first published in 2008 and informs all strategic planning by all agencies in the future. It has been refreshed annually, with a mini JSNA produced specifically focusing on issues for Nuneaton and Bedworth.

The Allotment Associations may want to consider how they can illustrate, their visions and/or projects that required funding, are connected to the local health and wellbeing priorities identified by the County Council in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The purpose of the JSNA is to analyse the current and future health and

wellbeing needs of the local population, to inform the commissioning of health, wellbeing and social care services. The JSNA aims to establish a shared, evidence based consensus on the key local priorities across health and social care.

Warwickshire JSNA priorities for 2015 - 2018 were grouped under five themes:

- Vulnerable Young People
- Mental Wellbeing
- Long Term Conditions
- Physical Wellbeing
- Carers

Whilst some of the priorities for Nuneaton & Bedworth were:-

1. Reduction in under 75's mortality rates from **Cardiovascular Disease (CVD)** and **Cancer** e.g. by supporting a halt in the rise of **obesity** in children and reduction in the number of adults who are obese
2. Increase in physical **activity**
3. Improvement in quality of life for people with a **mental illness**

Community Grants for 2016/17 - funded projects between NBBC and Public Health including "Healthy Cook and Eat Café"

7.6 **Warwickshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2014 – 2018** was adopted in February 2015 and seeks to address the three priorities of Promoting Independence for All; Community Resilience; and Integration and Working Together. Whilst it will be implemented countywide Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council will be working to identify their unique contribution to this locally.

7.7 **The Crime and Disorder Partnership Plan 2016- 2019** seeks to address crime and anti-social behaviour across Nuneaton and Bedworth. Within this Plan, an approach to working with partners including Warwickshire Police, Warwickshire County Council, Warwickshire Probation Service, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Public Health is established, with joint action plans developed.

- 7.8 **West Midlands Biodiversity Pledge** N.B.B.C. are signatories to the West Midlands Biodiversity Pledge – a joint West Midlands Local Government Association (WMLGA) and West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership initiative.

The pledge publicly commits NBBC to pursue best practice in respect of biodiversity (i.e. wildlife and wildlife habitats) in all of its strategies, plans and projects. This is a statutory duty placed anyway upon all local authorities by the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act.

The pledge also commits NBBC to protect and enhance biodiversity within all the local authority 'estate' (i.e. its land and property holdings).

For both these reasons it is appropriate and desirable for NBBC to seek that all allotment sites / associations to make the most of opportunities to encourage and increase biodiversity and equally to prevent and avoid any activities damaging to biodiversity.

- 7.9 **Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Biodiversity Action Plans** help translate National Biodiversity Action Plans for threatened species and for key wildlife habitats into a local context. In urban areas the significant wildlife habitat value of allotments (existing and potential) is fully recognised (NSALG research shows allotments have up to 30% more wildlife diversity than a typical urban park). As a result the WCaS BAP includes a specific [Allotments Biodiversity Action Plan](#) seeking to retain and enhance the biodiversity value of allotment sites. As a partner in the Warwickshire Coventry and Solihull Biodiversity partnership N.B.B.C. is committed to support and pursue the achievement of the relevant BAP targets and objectives.

- 7.10 **West Midlands Combined Authority** Consists of 18 local authorities and four Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) working together to move powers from Whitehall to the West Midlands and its locally elected politicians. Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council are currently Non-constituent members of WMCA alongside Warwickshire County Council & all District Authorities except Warwick D.C.

8.0 Audit of Allotment Provision

- 8.1 The audit of allotment provision in Nuneaton and Bedworth can be divided into two distinct areas. The first concerns the **quantity**, location and capacity of allotment land within the borough. Are there sufficient sites/plots available and are they in suitable locations to meet both current and projected future demand? The second area looks at the **quality** of the sites that do exist. Are they well managed, secure, provided with appropriate amenities and are they accessible to all, including those with mixed abilities?
- 8.2 There are currently 29 active allotment sites accessed by local people within the Nuneaton & Bedworth area. (See plans at appendix 1) 23 are operated by NBBC, through devolved arrangements with individual allotment associations. In turn many of these are affiliated to either Nuneaton Federation of Allotments or Bedworth & District Horticultural Council. Bulkington Allotment Association also operates independently. The remaining six sites; Ansley Village, (which is just outside the borough, but is affiliated with Nuneaton Federation of Allotments) Stockingford 'Pavilion' & 'The Cabbage', (both operated by the local Sports & Social Club) Atholl Crescent, the 'Weavers' in Wem Brook and Weddington Social Club, are operated by private landowners. There are currently no sites that are considered to be at risk of closure or loss to other forms of development. (See table at appendix 2)
- 8.3 **Quantity** - The National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners recommends a minimum standard of 20 plots per 1000 households. There were 54,327 residential properties and an estimated population of 125,200 within the borough of Nuneaton and Bedworth at the end of 2012. Whilst the 2011 census remains the most reliable indicator of population numbers, by April 2017 the number of residential properties had risen to 55,650.
- **20** - Number of plots per 1000 households. (Average 2.31 people per property.)

- **290** – Standard size of a ‘Full’ allotment plot (250 Sq.m) + an allowance of 40 Sq.m per plot for paths (1.2m wide) & haulage ways (3.0m wide).
- **55,650** – Number of households in the Borough.
- **$20 \times 290 \times 55,650 = 322,770 \text{ Sq.m}$ or **32.28 Hectares****

8.4 The Borough should therefore have a minimum of **32.28 Ha** of allotment land, or **8.6 plots / 0.25 Ha (inclusive of paths/haulage ways) per 1000 population**. Allotment land provided solely by NBBC currently accounts for 32.21 Ha, rising to 36.90 Ha when the five privately owned sites within the borough are added. Whilst the Ansley village site accounts for 1.18 Ha, it lies outside the Borough boundary. (See table at appendix 2) The full extent of these sites needs to be treated with a degree of caution however. Based upon digital mapping, they take no account of features within sites that are unsuitable for allotment use and which cannot be economically remedied such as; prevailing ground conditions, boundary profile, topography etc. Therefore an allowance of 30 ~ 37 plots/hectare, (12 ~ 15 plots/acre is recommended by the NSALG) should be applied. It is estimated that the population of the Borough will grow to 135,600 by 2023, a further 10,400 people. As such, there will be a need to retain an additional minimum of **61.04 plots or 1.77 Ha** of allotment land to maintain minimum requirements.

8.5 **Location** –In addition to identifying the extent of each allotment site, the plans at appendix 1 also include a 1000m catchment area. Based upon data taken from the Open Space Strategy, this represents a **15 to 20 min** walking time, also considered by the NSALG to be the maximum walking distance for a plot-holder wishing to take produce home. On this basis, a number of areas within the Borough are deficient in provision; Galley Common (Village), Bermuda (Village), Whitestone (East), Keresley (Village), Hawkesbury Junction and Bulkington. It also underlines the strategic importance of sites such as ‘The Cabbage’ in Stockingford, for which the surrounding urban development, not only serves to provide a significant catchment area, but also make it difficult to replace in the event of its loss.

8.6 **Capacity** – A survey of Allotment Association secretaries established how many plots their sites contained, the number of members, vacant plots or the number of people on a waiting list. (See table at appendix 2) The calculation of plot numbers is based upon a full plot being 250 Sq.m, with plots significantly smaller than this being counted simply as 'half-plots'. Across the borough however, there is a wide diversity of plot sizes, from $\frac{1}{4}$ plots through to some that are over $1\frac{1}{2}$ time's standard size. This reflects both current local demand and also ensures allotment sites across the borough remain fit for purpose, as a tenant's work/life balance continually evolves.

8.7 **Quality** – Over the years there has been much debate regarding the quality of allotment sites within the Borough and the issue of on-going maintenance responsibilities. However, it is clear that under the terms of the leases and allotment legislation, there is very little duty or obligation placed on local authorities other than to provide the allotment land itself. A condition survey of NBBC allotment sites was undertaken in 2009. (See table at appendix 3) This identified both responsibility for boundaries, access points and haulage ways, on-site parking, communal buildings, toilets, water supplies etc. and assessed their condition on a scale of 1 ~10 using 'Green Flag' judging criteria.

NBBC has in the past carried out fencing, roadway and other works to its sites and acknowledges through the condition survey that others may need further maintenance work as and when self-governance/new leases are put in place. For example, some allotment sites still do not have a running water supply on site and it is questionable whether this is acceptable in the 21st Century. Even though the Council has no duty to provide running water to allotment sites, it may wish to do so as a minimum standard.

However, such maintenance must be looked at in light of the current economic climate and on a site by site basis. Any work that remains outstanding therefore will need to be planned over a period of years from the adoption of this strategy. Each site will therefore develop a plan to identify maintenance requirements utilising our existing business case model. Such plans will be subject to five yearly (Quinquennial) reviews.

It should also be acknowledged that since the last audit of the allotment sites in 2009 many allotment associations have made improvements themselves for example, Greenmoor Road & Milford St. Allotment Association now has a water supply and have replaced their boundary fences and Newdigate Allotment Association have created an ability/sensory

garden. Other sites too, have been successful in winning bids to improve security and reduce ASB from Community Safety funds. Through providing Allotment Associations with longer leases (25 yrs) it is envisaged that they will be better able to secure access to third party funding for specific projects, supported by NBBC and other key partners such as WCAVA.

In reviewing this Strategy it should be noted that a programme of works was developed & undertaken during 2013-15 to address any fundamental deficiencies on NBBC controlled allotment sites, prior to completion of the new longer term leases.

8.8 **Promotion** - The promotion of allotments is something that is the Council's responsibility overall as part of complying with allotments legislation. One of the barriers to having an allotment routinely identified by people nationally is lack of information. There needs to be a clear simple process for getting a plot or onto a waiting list, signs at each site should give contacts and availability. NBBC has modified its website with regards allotments, so that members of the public seeking information are easily directed to either, NFAA's, BDHC's or indeed individual Allotment Associations own web pages, where they are better able to keep information up to date. There should be a periodic review of the promotion of allotments to ensure that the Council is fulfilling its responsibilities.

8.9 **Key Considerations** -

- Whilst there seems to be an overall level of provision in line with NSALG recommendations, this is not evenly distributed.
- There is continuing demand despite levels of provision meeting NSALG recommendations.
- The Borough Plan must make provision where appropriate for new allotment sites.
- New sites must be located close to residential areas.
- Sustainability must be considered as sites develop.
- Wildlife must be considered in maintenance regimes.
- More appropriate facilities must be provided.

- Promotion of allotments must be improved.

9.0 Consultation Review

9.1 The Planning & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel – Allotment Working Group, heard evidence on six occasions from;

- Allotment Associations individually and through the Nuneaton Federation of Allotments and Bedworth & District Horticultural Council.
- The National Society of Allotments & Leisure Gardeners.
- Allotments & Gardens UK.
- WCAVA.
- People in Action.
- Ingleby Foundation.
- Transition Town.
- Council Officers on issues relating to; legislation and legal matters, finance, planning policy and recreation.

Reference was also made to the 2009 Allotments Condition Survey, data on occupancy levels & waiting lists, provided by Association secretaries and feedback received from previous public consultation on the Open Space Strategy. It is worth noting that the process of developing this strategy has already had a positive impact on both the NFA & BDHC in terms of increasing interest from the various associations affiliated to them.

However, there is currently little evidence available that would allow us to understand the extent of any 'latent' demand for allotments within the Borough. That is people who are unaware of the Councils obligation to provide allotment facilities, but who might wish to be considered for a plot or those who have declined to go on a waiting list, because they feel it will take too long to secure a plot on their chosen site. To address this shortfall it is proposed

that a specific question on allotments is considered as part of the next 'Tell Us' survey of Borough residents.

As a part of the 2017 review the Planning & Environment Scrutiny Panel established an 'Allotment's Working Group', which over a series of meetings heard evidence from both Council Officers & members of the Allotment Associations as it reviewed the strategy to ensure that it remains relevant.

9.2 Key issues raised through the process included;

- Provision of new leases of at least 25 years duration was considered essential to enable associations to make funding bids to external bodies.
- Wider concerns about security of tenure for some allotment associations.
- Responsibilities – concerns about liabilities, particularly boundaries being passed to allotment associations.
- Site security, both in terms of thefts from sites and petty vandalism.
- Facilities – water supplies, haulage ways, gates and fencing, communal storage sheds/site office etc.
- Toilet facilities – An issue made more apparent by the increasing numbers of women taking on plots. Composting toilets were considered the most effective way forward.
- Access for all.
- Future development and access to funding.
- Working with the local community.

10.0 Developing A Standard

10.1 In section 8.4 the calculations using the NSALG minimum standard show that in crude terms across the Borough as a whole there will be a need to add at least an additional **61.04 plots or 1.77 Ha** of allotment land driven by new housing allocations to meet the minimum requirements.

Additionally when proximity to a site based upon a 15 ~20 min walking time is taken into consideration, existing accessibility deficiencies are identified in; Galley Common (Village), Bermuda (Village), Whitestone (East), Keresley (Village), Hawkesbury Junction and Bulkington.

Assessment of accessibility deficiencies # also underlines the strategic importance of some key sites such as Atholl Crescent in Arbury and Church Rd & Arbury Rd, both in Kingswood. In these cases significant gaps in accessible allotment provision would emerge should these sites close or be lost to development.

10.2 It is considered that for a site to be easily managed and to be likely to successfully sustain in the long term there needs to be at least 20 plots on a site or 5,800 Sq.m This does not mean that smaller sites are not viable, simply that they are a less efficient use of land, resources, such as utilities and it may be difficult to ensure a long term robust & sustainable management structure.

10.3 Therefore, this strategy will adopt a standard of;

- Allotments being within 1000m of new homes.
- The minimum size of any new allotment site to be 0.58 Ha
- When new development occurs creating additional demand we will seek the creation of additional allotment capacity to meet the new demand. An application site specific review will identify if existing allotment sites are present in an appropriate catchment distance and if they have any ability to meet demand

through subdivision of larger plots, bringing any uncultivated land into productive use etc.

- Where capacity can be met or partially met by work to increase capacity on existing sites an offsite contribution will be secured to realise that capacity and to provide any relevant ancillary facilities to the additional plots.
- On Strategic Housing allocations in excess of 1000 units – developed either by a single applicant or by multiple applicants - land for new allotment provision must be provided on-site by the single applicant or collectively in one location from the multiple applicants. This will allow the minimum sustainable size of allotment and allotment association to be created.
- On these strategic housing allocations an allotment site meeting the minimum NBBC standards will need to be provided - with plot numbers and associated land area rising from 20 pro-rata to the total number of units above 1000.
- Where developers of sites under 1000 units are making off-site contributions these will be based upon the cost of laying out a 20 plot site, (0.58 Ha) inclusive of all services & facilities, but excluding the land cost. Expressed as a cost per dwelling this would be, £40.11 at 2013 prices, subject to indexing in line with inflation.
- We will continue to secure contributions toward allotment provision through section 106 agreements until / if it becomes a legal necessity to include them within a CIL charging schedule.

10.4 For existing allotment sites it intended to work towards a minimum standard during the life of this strategy. New sites shall meet these standards as a minimum;

- Access Gates –

	Vehicle	Pedestrian
○ Minimum width -	3.0m	1.5m
○ Minimum height -	1.8m	1.8m
○ Construction –	Metal	Metal
- Boundary Fences - (Where existing boundaries are deemed by the supervising officer to be accessible.)

- Minimum height – 1.8m
- Construction – 50 x 50 x 3mm weld-mesh on 12.5 or 25m rolls fixed onto 1800 x 50 x 50 x 5mm angle iron fence posts.
- Haulage Ways -
 - Minimum width – 3.0m
 - Construction – Crushed stone or similar approved retained by PCC edging.
- Pathways -
 - Minimum width – 1.2m
 - Construction – Grass.
- Water Supply –
 - 30mm metered supply with auto-fill water-troughs at not more than 50m intervals.
- Toilets –
 - Type – Composting: male and female, inc. disabled access.
- Communal Store –
 - Type – Steel container for storing machinery, fuel, chemicals securely.

10.5 In addition to these requirements, on those sites with more than 50 plots the provision of a secure communal site office/store will be encouraged, subject to the Association securing the necessary external funding and any necessary planning consents.

11.0 Financial & Resource Implications

- 11.1 **Leases** – The Legal team are currently finalising a new draft lease, based upon a 25 year term in order to permit Allotment Associations the opportunity to access external funding, such leases being registered. However in certain instances where NBBC already lease the land from a third party, any new lease with the Allotment Association must preserve the existing date of determination. (See appendix 5)
- 11.2 **Service Level Agreement** – As part of the implementation of this strategy the NFAA, BDHC/Bedworth Allotment Associations & Bulkington will make an annual report to Planning & Environment Scrutiny Panel, updating members on levels of occupancy, waiting lists, developments on allotment sites and levels of engagement with the surrounding community, schools etc. This in turn will contribute towards demonstrating how health and well-being matters are being addressed throughout the Borough.
- 11.3 **Development of Technical Advisory Notices** – It is intended to develop these within the first year of the adoption of this strategy, each being approved under delegated authority by the Director – Governance & Recreation and initially reviewed bi-annually to ensure they reflect current best practice (See appendix 7)
- 11.3 **NBBC Sites - Budget Proposals** – The approved capital works programme was delivered over a period spanning 2013 – 2015 prior to the completion of the new lease arrangements. The Allotment Associations became responsible for the routine maintenance of their site(s) & the existing maintenance budget was realised as a budgetary saving in 2016.

12.0 A Policy for Allotments

12.1 NBBC recognises that the provision of allotments for residents is an important contributor to the well-being of the community. Growing fruit, vegetables and flowers on allotment sites provides an important opportunity for community interaction, for physical activity, healthy eating and recycling. NBBC will adopted a standard of 13.34 Sq.m of allotment land per dwelling which it will seek to meet for all residents through public and private provision and will require this area of land to be physically provided on new developments of 1000 houses or more.

With developments or allocations under 1000 houses off-site contributions to the nearest allotment sites where plot capacity can be increased will be secured. (In areas where there are no nearby sites with any capacity to increase plot numbers then smaller on-site provision may be contemplated as the best overall outcome but this will be determined by an application site specific review and in discussion with developers)

12.2 **Actions** - The Council will seek to:

- Monitor any unmet demand for allotments in relation to the adopted standard.
- Investigate possible solutions to any unmet demand and promote the provision of new allotment sites where they are needed.
- Support the improvement of existing allotment sites to enable more people to share the benefits of allotments.
- Support the development of horticultural knowledge and skills with a particular emphasis on food growing both on allotments and in containers.
- Encourage the adoption of organic and sustainable cultivation methods on allotments.

12.3 **Outcomes** - Through so doing The Council aims to:

- Increase the numbers and diversity of people growing their own food

- Increase levels of consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables across the community, with special emphasis in Super Output Areas (SOA's).
- Contribute to raising physical activity levels especially among older people.
- Provide opportunities for social interaction and community integration.
- Contribute to environmental improvements and use of sustainable growing methods
- Raise skill and knowledge levels of horticulture and cultivation.
- Improve the health of the community.

13.0 Monitor & Review

- 13.2 The NFAA, BDHC & Bedworth Allotment Associations & Bulkington will make an annual report to Planning & Environment Scrutiny Panel, updating members on levels of occupancy, waiting lists, developments on allotment sites and levels of engagement with the surrounding community, schools etc. This in turn will contribute towards demonstrating how health and well-being matters are being addressed throughout the Borough.
- 13.2 This allotments strategy will be reviewed at five year intervals (A Quinquennial Review) at which time the infrastructure audit and assessment of levels of provision will be updated. The vision, policies and standards will be amended as necessary.

14.0 Appendices

- 14.1 Plans 1 & 2 - Allotment distribution (inc. catchment area) within Nuneaton, Bedworth & Bulkington.
- Green – NBBC maintained site
 - Amber – Private Site
 - Red – Out of borough Site (catchment area crosses borough boundary)
 - Blue – Out of borough
- 14.2 Table 1 - Allotment Provision within the Borough.
- 14.3 Table 2 – NBBC Allotment Sites – Audit of assets.
- 14.4 Plans 3 ~ 24 – Individual Plans of NBBC Allotment Sites.
- 14.5 Draft Lease – (25 Years).
- 14.6 Draft Allotment Action Plan – 2013 ~ 2017 & 2018 ~ 2022
- 14.7 Technical Advisory Notices (T.A.N.'s) – The titles below are representative of likely areas for the future development of advice for allotment associations. (To be developed with NFAA & BDHC)
- 14.7.1 Access for All
 - 14.7.2 Sheds
 - 14.7.3 Communal Buildings & Toilets
 - 14.7.4 Working in/with the local community
 - 14.7.5 Water Supplies
 - 14.7.6 Site Security - Fencing & Gates
 - 14.7.7 Roadways & Paths

- 14.7.8 Composting
- 14.7.9 Waste Disposal – Bonfire's, Skips
- 14.7.10 Asbestos/Chemicals & Other Hazardous Products
- 14.7.11 Health & Safety/1st Aid
- 14.7.12 Livestock
- 14.7.13 Funding Opportunities
- 14.7.14 Wildlife
- 14.7.15 Associations - Administration/Constitution/Resilience
- 14.7.16 Tenancy Agreements/Rules
- 14.7.17 Managing Waiting Lists
- 14.7.18 Useful Publications
- 14.7.19 R.A.G. Assessments (*Shall do, Should do, Could do*)