

Figure 3	Word cloud of responses from the Allotment consultation on the benefits of having their allotment	12
Table 1	Legal framework for Allotment provision	1
Table 2	Cardiff Allotment Strategy progress since 2004	2
Table 3	Allotment charges 2022/23	9
Table 4	Satisfaction scores for Allotment Plot Holder Surveys in 2018 and 2021	11
Table 5	Outline Allotment budget (2021/22)	16

1.0 Why an Allotment Strategy?

1.1 What is an Allotment?

The word ‘allotment’ derives from land being ‘allotted’ to an individual under an enclosure award. Modern day allotments are parcels of land that are divided into plots and rented to individuals for the purpose of growing food. A full glossary of terms used in this document is provided in Appendix 1.

Allotment provision is a statutory requirement for Local Authorities and is governed by Allotment law as set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Legal framework for Allotment provision

Date	Legislation	Provision
1908	Smallholdings and Allotments Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required local authorities to make provision for allotments if 6 or more people demanded them
1922	Allotments Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The notice period that has to be given to leave the plot Determines what can be grown on the plot Sets the size of an individual plot (40 poles, 10 perch or ¼ of an acre) Determines what can be done with the produce grown on the plot Provides limits on sharing and transferring the plot
1925	Allotments Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required allotments to be considered in every town planning scheme Required that land acquired or purchased for allotments could not be disposed of without ministerial consent
1950	Allotments Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restated the requirement that local authorities should provide allotment land in urban areas (rural allotments are not offered the same protection) Makes provision for the keeping of rabbits and hens on allotment sites (but not chicks or cockerels)
2020	The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No.3) (Wales) Order 2020 ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wales only - Permitted development rights (PDRs) for development extended to the erection, extension, alteration or replacement of storage sheds and greenhouses on community growing spaces, within parameters defined by the Order.

In Wales, the provision of allotments is considered to be an important mechanism for local authorities deliver their obligations under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. In March 2016, the Welsh Government published their Guidance for Traditional Allotments and Community Led Garden Projects, setting out the requirement for Local Authorities to develop and make available on their website an Allotment strategy that covers the following issues:

¹ [Changes to the Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development\) Order 1995 \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

- Encourage access and the benefits from engaging with allotments and alternatives available in the region
- Include a clear and simple procedure for obtaining an allotment
- Include tenancy rules
- Link up relevant policies and simply explain the rights and laws around allotments and any policies needed to be highlighted
- Map and describe all local provision including on site facilities
- Include costs and justification, relative costs to UK average
- Include a clear strategy for communication, allotment provision, waiting lists, activity, feedback, and reports
- Link to local and national support organisations
- Include a chapter explaining and sharing links to alternatives to allotments style growing. (i.e. community growing projects, land share schemes etc)
- Include the agreed collective plans for developing allotment provision across the authority
- Explain simply the management process, data recording and reports
- Share the action points and time frames.

In March 2016, Welsh Government issued Guidelines for the provision of Allotments, and in 2021, the information has been updated as 'Guidance for Growers and Growing Groups', which sets out broad details of the legal framework for Allotments and how this differs from other forms of community growing² as well as providing extensive information for those wishing to set up a growing project. The document also includes details of the changes to the General Development Order extending permitted development rights to certain allotment structures as detailed in the table above.

1.2 Background to Cardiff's Allotment Strategy

Cardiff Council developed the first Allotment Strategy for the city in 2004. Table 2, below, outlines the evolving content of this and subsequent Strategy updates.

Table 2: Cardiff Allotment Strategy progress since 2004

2004-10 Allotment Strategy	2010-14 Strategy Review	2014-18 (extended to 2021) Interim Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotment Charter developed • Guidance produced for new allotment holders • Introduction of Local Management Agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of allotment subsidy and introduction of ring-fenced budget to protect allotment income • Clearance programme to increase number of workable plots • Reinstatement of College Farm Allotment site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive management of waiting list through monthly review of list and temporary closure of the list • Provision of guidance on allotment provision in Local Development Plan and accompanying Special Planning Guidance • Implementation of new Local Management Agreement • Improved partnership working between

² <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/allotments-and-community-growing-guidance-growers-growing-groups.pdf>

		allotment sites and Council officers
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1.3 What is the Purpose of this Strategy?

The strategy presents an opportunity to provide factual and up to date information about the purpose, use and management of statutory allotment land in Cardiff and the issues that are facing the Allotment Service, in line with the Welsh Government guidance set out in 2016, with one exception – the issue of community growing beyond statutory allotments is acknowledged, but the focus of this strategy is on the statutory provision for which the Council is responsible.

Since the original Allotment strategy was adopted in 2004, much has changed in Local Government. Austerity measures introduced in around 2010 have put increasing pressure on Council budgets and although the Cardiff revenue budget is now ring-fenced and funded through allotment income, there is a backlog of capital improvement work that cannot be funded from that source and requires a significant financial allocation. Many of the shortcomings of the previous strategies are linked to lack of resource and this strategy sets mechanisms for considering how these issues can be resolved.

Climate change and concerns about the environment are changing the way in which people view their food sources and there is a demand for locally grown produce to reduce food miles. This has increased the demand for allotment plots, particularly among younger working age people.

There are also challenges to the way in which common horticultural practices are viewed – such as the use of peat and pesticides and the provision and use of potable (treated) water and the development of no dig horticulture to conserve soil quality. The ailing infrastructure of allotment water supplies has led to a series of significant leakages and consequent repair costs in recent years and there is a need to review levels of water consumption and alternative provision.

Finally, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has affected many aspects of service provision. Some of these impacts have been positive, others negative, but coming out of the pandemic, this review of Allotment service provision is timely and offers potential for some long-standing issues to be considered and addressed.

1.4 The Input of Allotment Holders

From the early days of the first Allotment Strategy, the direction and content of the Strategy has been guided and influenced by the input of an Allotment Strategy group, comprising nominated Allotment Site Representatives to represent the views both of plot holders and Site Associations.

The current Allotment Strategy group includes representation from allotment sites across the city, with all sizes of site included. Several of the Site Representatives are also elected officers for the Cardiff Allotment Holders Association (CAHA), established in 2015 to provide an effective voice for allotment holders across the city. Council Officers work closely both with Allotment Site Representatives and CAHA to deliver allotment provision within Cardiff and details of how this is achieved are provided within the Strategy.

2.0 Cardiff's Allotment Provision

2.1 Cardiff Council's Allotment Sites

Cardiff Council manages 28 allotment sites distributed across the city, providing 3,739 plots in lettable condition. The sites are administered and managed by one designated Allotment Officer based within the Parks Service.

In January 2022 there were 2404 active allotment holders and a waiting list of 1292 individual names (increased from 793 in January 2020 due to more restricted letting and a spike in interest in allotment gardening during the Covid-19 pandemic).

Some Community Councils also make allotment provision and there are a number of proposed allotment sites located within new developments that are likely to be managed externally. A plan showing the location of all the known allotment and similar growing sites in Cardiff is provided in Figure 1, below, and Appendix 2 provides background information about each of these sites.

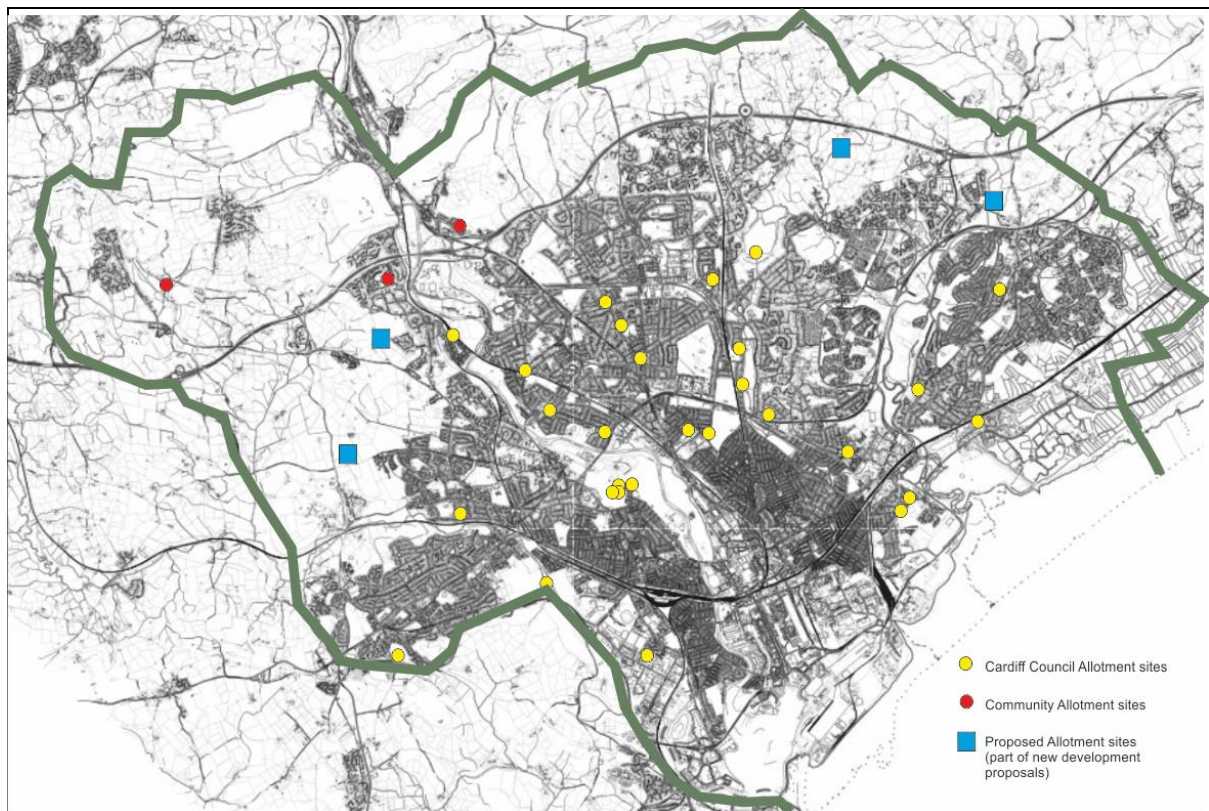


Figure 1 – Map showing location of Cardiff Allotment sites

2.2 Applying for a Plot and Waiting Lists

The waiting list for allotments is managed centrally and details of how to apply for allotment plots is provided on the Council's website. When applying, new applicants are permitted to apply for plots on up to two sites and their names are removed from both site lists when they accept a plot on one of their chosen sites.

In order to manage expectation and avoid long waiting times for plots on certain sites, the waiting lists numbers on each site are reviewed on a monthly basis and lists are closed to new applicants if the waiting list represents more than 50% of the number of plots available on the site and re-opened when it falls below this number. This has

helped to manage the length of the overall waiting list for allotments, which is also fully reviewed every 3-4 years to remove people who no longer wish to remain on the list.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, plot letting activity and cultivation notices were suspended for health and safety reasons to avoid close contact meetings and unfair penalties for those unable to attend sites due to shielding or key worker commitments. At the same time all site waiting lists were also closed to prevent these from becoming unmanageable. Since restarting the plot letting procedure in autumn 2020, the waiting lists have been slowly reducing as plot lettings have taken place. A further cleansing exercise will be undertaken in late 2022/23 to ensure that those who requested a plot during or after the pandemic still wish to pursue these requests as lives begin to return to 'normal'.

2.3 Allotment Tenancy Agreements

Allotment Tenancies are held in name of an individual or jointly between two or more individuals. They operate on an annually renewable tenancy, starting on 2nd February each year, which is rolled over from one year to the next as long as the conditions of tenancy are being met. Site Representatives are able to advise if the Allotment Tenancy has been breached.

A new Community tenancy agreement has been developed for groups that hold a plot on behalf of their members / customers. These are mainly charitable organisations, and the community tenancy reflects the same tenancy conditions as the standard form, but with responsibility for the tenancy in the name of the organisation with a nominated contact.

Introduction of any changes to allotment tenancies requires a 12-month notice period, which is being issued to all community groups from February 2022 for full introduction of the agreement by February 2023.

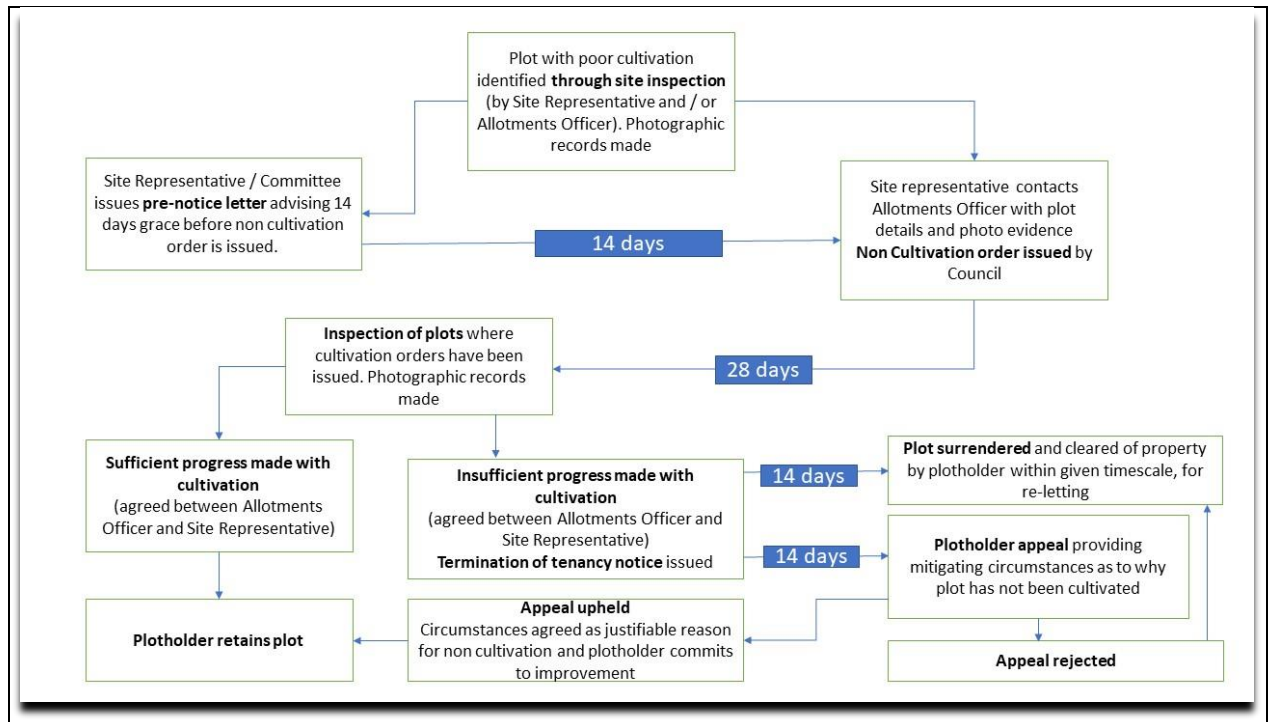
2.4 Cultivation Standards

The conditions of tenure for allotment plots are set out in the allotment tenancy. Actions taken in respect of failure to cultivate are governed by set rules within allotment legislation which involve the issue of notices, set response times and an appeals process. This is detailed in the flow chart overleaf (Figure 2). The legislative framework for managing allotments means that some processes, particularly the enforcement of cultivation rules and termination of tenancies, can be lengthy and drawn out, which is frustrating for Site Associations, but has to be complied with to prevent legal challenges.

Much progress has been made through the introduction of Local Management arrangements, which has brought an increased volunteer resource into the management of some sites, working alongside the Allotments Officer, but as the Council only has one Allotment Officer managing more than 2000 individual tenancies, communications can become difficult when responses are required for multiple notices from multiple sites at the same time.

New software is being introduced in 2022/23 to improve this process and further engagement with CAHA and Site Representatives will be undertaken to continue to monitor and address shortcomings in this area.

Figure 2 – Flowchart detailing cultivation order and termination process



2.5 Allotment Charges

The Allotment budget has been ringfenced since 2015. There is no direct Council subsidy, and it is reliant on income generated from allotment rentals. This situation was achieved following a period of above-inflation increases in allotment charges to reach a financially neutral position and protect the budget from further cuts between 2010 and 2015. The year-on-year increase since 2015 is governed by the requirement in Allotment legislation for this to be linked to inflation and the cost of leisure facilities within the Council. The rate is linked to the Consumer Price Index in October of each year.

Charges are made based on the area of land occupied (based on a per perch charge; 1 perch = 25m²). There are three categories of allotment site within the current charging mechanism as detailed in the table below. Plot charges and the additional cost of the chalet buildings at Pontcanna Chalet Gardens are all subject to a 50% concessionary rate for over 60s and those in receipt of certain benefits, by production of evidence that they are in receipt of that benefit.

Table 3: Allotment charges 2022/23

Category	Criteria	Cost per perch (2022/23)
A	Sites with mains toilets, water supplies and made up roads	£13.38
B	Sites with water supplies and made up roads	£12.94
C	Sites with no toilets, water supplies and limited made up roads	£12.36

Chalet Gardens (per chalet)	Charged on top of plot rental charge	£126
Brick cubicle (per cubicle)	Charged on top of plot rental charge where these are provided	£28.98

Over the years, as improvements have been made to sites through upgraded roads, installation of composting toilets and improvements to water supplies, the differences in provision between the categories is less distinct that it was when the charging system was introduced more than 20 years ago. Supply of water has also become far more expensive in recent years, so a review of the charging mechanism is overdue.

The category of each site is shown in the list of allotments in Appendix A.

2.8 Parks Based Allotment team

The Allotment Service is managed by one Allotment Officer, funded through the ringfenced Allotment budget. The Allotments Officer is supported by a manager and a small administrative team in Parks, as a part of their role.

The Allotments Officer deals with:

- Waiting list management and cleansing
- Site liaison (with elected / nominated Site Representatives)
- Support of sites (elections, disputes etc)
- Management of billing (in association with team in Financial Services)
- Correspondence and complaints relating to allotment matters
- Site repairs and maintenance
- Management of Allotment records (plot holder database)
- Issue of formal notices
- Responding and co-ordinating responses to appeals against notices
- Payment of bills (water / repairs / site expenses)
- Setting up and managing Local Management Agreements, including issue of grants to sites

Communications is often raised as an issue with the service, but with 28 Allotment Sites and over 2500 Allotment plot holders, the volume of work is high.

The current Allotment Management software is in need of replacement and a new bespoke Allotment Management software package is being evaluated for purchase during 2021/22 which should reduce the administrative burden significantly and release more officer time for supporting sites.

2.7 Site Management

Waiting lists for all Council allotment sites in Cardiff are managed centrally, but at a site level, there are varying levels of local involvement. Each site is encouraged to elect a Site Representative as the contact point between the Council and the site. This individual is the contact point for new tenants and assists with the setting up of new tenancies on a strictly first come first service basis, via the waiting list, in return for a small expenses allowance. Many, but not all sites, also have a locally elected, constituted Committee or Association (see Appendix 1).

Local management of sites was introduced in 2015, giving Allotment Associations options for taking on certain management tasks in return for a percentage of site

income returned to them to address repair and maintenance issues themselves. The level of agreement (1,2 or 3) determines both the length of agreement, the number of tasks undertaken and the percentage of income, with the Level 3 agreement being the longest term (up to 10 years) to provide a basis for application to external funders for improvement works. In 2021, 14 out of the 28 sites have elected to sign up for one of these agreements, including two sites who work together under a 'memorandum of understanding', an arrangement introduced to address the problem of smaller sites not having the capacity to undertake the roles required in the Local Management Agreement. This arrangement has been successful in supporting the limited capacity of the smaller site, working together with the larger site to achieve benefits for both sites under a single agreement.

Local representation and management both contribute to the effective running of allotments and the service would be difficult to run within existing resources without the assistance of these volunteers. There is a need to encourage all sites to elect or appoint a representative to facilitate and improve site management.

2.8 Partnership Working with Sites

Allotment Site representatives have met with the Council Allotments team on quarterly basis however these meetings have lapsed during the Covid-19 pandemic. Online meetings have taken place, but there has been a mixed reaction to these, and further consideration will be given to the best way of meeting for the future.

The Cardiff Allotment Holders Association was established formally in 2015 by Site Associations to support local sites and provide a channel for raising common concerns with the Council. The Allotments team works with CAHA to resolve issues of concern, including support for establishing improved representation on sites across the city.

2.9 Livestock on Allotment sites

Under Allotment legislation, plot holders are able to keep chickens, bees, and rabbits on allotment plots. In Cardiff, the urban setting of most allotment sites and the reduced size of many plots mean that only certain sites contain plots that are suitable for these purposes.

Chicken and rabbit keeping is restricted to Allotment sites where there are large (10 perch) plots located away from rear garden areas, as the presence of such livestock can attract rats and other vermin. Certain plots on these sites have been designated as suitable for livestock keeping and plot holders are required to sign an additional agreement to indicate that they are aware of the animal welfare requirements of keeping livestock.

Beekeeping on allotment sites is governed by a similar set of requirements. Again, certain sites have been designated as suitable for beehives and there is a restriction on the number of hives that can be accommodated in any one site to ensure pollen supplies are plentiful. All potential beekeepers are required to provide evidence of training in beekeeping and adjacent plot holders and residential properties are canvassed prior to consent being given to ensure that there is local support and that the potential for harm to those with bee allergies is accounted for.

2.10 Allotment Infrastructure

Most allotment sites managed by Cardiff Council date back to the mid to late 20th century and many have poor quality or deteriorating infrastructure – site fencing,

roads, communal building, and water supplies. Efforts have been made over time to secure funding to improve this, but success has been limited and the existing revenue budget, which is tied directly to allotment income, is insufficient to upgrade most facilities to a reasonable standard. A full review of allotment infrastructure is needed to properly allocate funding and seek additional funding support.

Local management has allowed sites to apply for external funding to make improvements, but sources of funding are also limited for the types of infrastructure improvements required.

2.11 Allotment Holders perception of Allotment provision

In 2018, a consultation exercise was carried out with Allotment holders as part of the preparation for the updated strategy and this was repeated in 2021 to capture changes in perceptions of provision and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the allotment service.

The total number of respondents to the 2018 survey (836 responses) exceeded the more recent survey in autumn 2021 (499 responses). This is likely to be due to the online nature of the more recent survey, as paper copies of the survey were only made available on request, not provided to each site. However, the responses demonstrate a broadly similar view. An average satisfaction score was calculated from responses to questions about the service, as shown in Table 4, below.

Table 4: Satisfaction scores for Allotment Plot Holder Surveys in 2018 and 2021

	Score average or above	Score good or very good
2018	84%	57%
2021	86%	65%

Appendix 3 provides a more detailed summary of the satisfaction results from both surveys.

2.12 The Impact of Covid-19 on the Allotment Service

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted all areas of the Council's operation. Allotment sites remained open throughout lockdowns, but with restricted operation linked to legislation around social distancing, use of masks and potential areas for transfer of the virus:

- All communal facilities including toilets were closed with some phased reopening in progress from late Autumn 2021, where cleaning and ventilation can be addressed appropriately at a site level (there is no cleaning service for allotment facilities).
- Plot lettings were suspended during the first lock down and only reintroduced in Autumn 2020, with specific requirements for social distancing when signing forms and electronic exchange of documents.
- All plot cultivation notices were suspended during 2020 due to restricted opportunities for people to access their plots, but cultivation orders were reinstated in Summer 2021.

The ailing infrastructure of allotment water supplies has led to a series of expensive leakages and consequent repair costs for the Allotment Service over the past few years. Much of the pipe network is unmapped and leaks are difficult to trace. Incidences of plot holders tampering with water supplies have also been discovered, with watering systems 'plumbed in' to bypass the need to collect water from troughs.

Since 2016, sites have been looking at ways of reducing water consumption and providing water in a more environmentally sustainable way by using collected rainwater or groundwater, but there is now a need for a fundamental review of the way in which water is provided and paid for on allotment sites to determine if there is a more effective way of charging for water that will reduce water waste and encourage more water collection.

Changing weather patterns

Flooding has become a persistent problem on some allotment sites, particularly those located on river flood plains and in close proximity to major roads, where water run-off causes localised problems. There are also issues of water emanating from allotment sites causing flooding to adjacent properties which have to take priority in relation to budget allocation. Changing weather patterns can also impact on the types of crops that can be grown on allotment sites and the availability of water during periods of drought. Tried and tested cultivation methods may need to be modified to address these problems and this could also run counter to more traditional approaches, for example the use of no-till cultivation methods to preserve soil quality.

Increasing interest in biodiversity

The decline in pollinators has been well documented and many sites are responding to this with the introduction of wildflower areas to encourage pollinators, wildlife ponds and areas of biodiverse habitat, particularly in areas where the soil is unsuitable for growing crops. A number of sites have developed communal orchards and ponds on non-plot areas within their boundaries, but it is important that these are agreed with the Allotments Officer prior to establishment to ensure that they do not compromise the area of land that can be cultivated.

2.14 The Allotment Community

Most Allotment sites have experienced a heightened sense of community following the pandemic, but there has been and an increase in plot holder disputes, many of which have been resolved at a site level. Where this cannot be achieved, complainants are asked to report issues to the Police non-emergency 101 number if the situation is of significance. Many of the issues identified in the consultation that impact negatively on plot holders are linked to the behaviour of others on the site, including:

- Theft by other plot holders
- Antisocial activities
- Unregulated structures
- Plot trespass
- Lack of cultivation

The Allotment Community is intergenerational and there are opportunities for skills transfer between generations and adaptation of provision to keep older people involved in the allotment community. Several sites have also applied for and been awarded the Green Flag Community award (award scheme managed by Keep Wales Tidy³ in conjunction with Welsh Government), which recognises both the contribution

³ [Green Flag Award](#)

of the allotment community towards site management and the environmental quality that has been achieved.

3.0 Vision Aims and Objectives for the Allotment Service

3.1 Vision for the Allotment Service

Cardiff will have a well-managed allotment service that provides an affordable and sustainable way for individuals and community groups to access opportunities to grow food for themselves and their families.

3.2 Aims and Objectives for the Service

Aim 1: We will make the best use of resources available

Objectives

1. To ensure that all allotment sites have effective Site Representation including an increased proportion of sites under local management
2. To continue to make progress in addressing the level of repairs and maintenance required on allotment sites throughout the lifetime of the strategy and seek further resources to address ailing allotment infrastructure.
3. To improve processes and communications between the Council, sites, and individual plot holders, through the use of new technology, virtual meetings, and electronic communications wherever possible.

Aim 2: We will demonstrate principles of economic, environmental, and social sustainability in the way that the service is run

Objectives

4. To reduce the consumption of and reliance on mains water supplies and other scarce resources
5. To continue to work with local sites to satisfy demand for allotments, support the allotment community and protect allotment revenue
6. To monitor the impact of our changing climate on allotment growing and develop initiatives that encourage growers to address the consequences for site management, growing methods and resource use.

Aim 3: We will continue to develop Allotment provision in Cardiff to serve the needs of everyone

Objectives

7. To improve access to allotments for disadvantaged groups
8. To ensure that Allotment tenancy agreements and procedures are fit for purpose and updated in line with Allotment legislation and local needs
9. To continue to seek to secure and improve allotment provision in Cardiff as the city expands and develops.

4.0 How Will This Be Achieved?

4.1 Delivery

Many of the actions required to deliver the strategic objectives will require changes to working practise and can be addressed within existing resources or with limited investment. However, there are some actions that will require particular consideration because additional financial or people resources may be required to resolve them.

4.2 Financial resources

a) Parks Revenue Funding

The Allotment revenue budget is currently ring fenced and expenditure is balanced by income. There are limited opportunities to increase income. The Allotments Act of 1950 dictates that Councils should charge for allotments at a price that tenants should be reasonably expected to pay, taking into account allotment rents charged by other authorities and charges for other recreational activities in the city.

Between 2010 and 2014, a series of above inflation charges for allotments were made to remove the Council subsidy to achieve the current position of a ring-fenced budget. At time this was not challenged, however in 2014, a similar attempt to raise allotment charges in Leeds did face a challenge, which was partially upheld by the Court on the basis that Allotment Law was not properly taken into account. The Court however did determine that there was no obligation on the Council to subsidise provision of allotments.

Any further above inflation increases in income in Cardiff would have to be justified on the basis that they are in line with charges in adjacent authorities. Current increases are kept in line with recreational activity charges in the city.

The breakdown of the 2020/21 Allotment budget (Table 5 below) shows how the funding was allocated and spent in that year. The Allotment grant elements provided to locally managed sites help to address many of the small day to day repairs that in the past have been difficult to resolve, but unforeseen major repairs and additional water charges are the two most challenging items to manage. These are not covered by the Local management agreements and if they occur, can result in failure to deliver on other commitments due to lack of finance.

During the period of the Strategy period, consideration will need to be given to resolving the water supply and failing infrastructure issues that currently prevent the effective management of the allotment budget.

Table 5: Outline allotment budget for 2021/22

2021/22 outline budget		
Staffing and administration costs	£	38,000.00
Repair costs	£	25,000.00
Water bills	£	35,000.00
Grants to locally managed sites	£	62,000.00
	£	160,000.00
Income from plot rentals	£	160,000.00

b) Capital funding

There is currently no specific annual capital allocation for Allotment improvement works, although historically allocations have been made via overall parks asset allocations within the capital programme. A more structured and informed approach in identifying capital requirements, over time will be required.

4.2 People Resources

The Allotments Officer is the only member of staff employed within the Allotment budget. Unless there is a significant increase in the budget this will not change.

The allotment workload is complex and includes a significant amount of one-on-one meetings and calls, high levels of correspondence (around 10% of parks correspondence each year), management of maintenance and repairs to sites and the implementation of the legislative framework around cultivation notices, tenancy terminations and appeals.

The purchase of new specialist allotment management software should make a significant difference to the volume of administrative work and relieve some of the pressure in this area.

The Allotment Officer is supported by the Parks Administration team and a line manager, as well as others within the Parks Service, in an informal capacity.

With only one full time employee engaged to manage the allotment service, the work of the volunteer Site Representatives is invaluable, and the service would not function without this input.

Most Site Representatives elected by their sites as the contact point between the Council and sites, although some are self-nominated where sites are small, and no formal committee or association exists. They undertake new plot holder meetings, plot inspections and the issue of informal letters where cultivation is not up to standard.

Several sites are currently without a Site Representative and work is ongoing with these sites to encourage plot holders to consider taking on this role to improve representation and involvement.

4.4 Other Resources

In 2021/22, an Allotment Support Grant of £59,395 has been offered by Welsh Government to enhance allotment provision in Cardiff after the Covid-19 pandemic. From this, £58,000 has been allocated to replacement fencing at Pontcanna A and Ely Great Farm Allotment sites, with the balance used to purchase water butts for distribution to sites.

Further grant funding may be available in future years, but this is not guaranteed.

Some Locally Managed sites are able to apply for additional funding from external funders to enhance their sites, due to the longer term of the Level 2 and 3 agreements signed with the Council that demonstrate their tenure of the land. Several sites have applied for external funding for a variety of improvements such as wildlife ponds, orchard planting and communal polytunnels.

5.0 Monitoring and review

A delivery plan for the strategy is provided in Appendix 4.

Progress will be monitored through meetings with the Allotment Strategy Group and reported to Site Secretaries meetings, with an updated copy of the action plan provided for each site on each occasion.

The Allotment Strategy will also be considered through the Council's Scrutiny process and will be called in at various time during implementation to monitor progress.

Appendices

- Appendix 1** Glossary of terms
- Appendix 2.1** Cardiff Council Allotment sites
- Appendix 2.2** Other allotment sites in Cardiff
- Appendix 3** Summary of consultation results
- Appendix 4** Allotment Strategy Delivery plan

Appendix 1 – Glossary of terms

Allotments	Allotments are usually large areas of land owned by a local authority and divided up into individual allotment plots. Each allotment plot is let to a named individual (or pair of individuals) and is used to grow fruit and vegetables for their own consumption, not for commercial gain. The plots are usually of a standard size and have a yearly charge for rent and services (such as water). Under allotment law, local authorities have a legal duty to provide allotment land if there is a demand.
Allotment authority	The public body that has the statutory obligation to provide allotments is called the allotment authority. Under allotment legislation, County Councils, County Boroughs and Community Councils are all deemed to be allotment authorities. In the absence of Community Councils, a County Borough is the sole allotment authority.
CAHA	Cardiff Allotment Holders Association – established formally in 2015 to support and represent Allotment Sites in Cardiff. Allotment sites can affiliate with CAHA and benefit from a strong voice speaking out to the Council on behalf of sites in issues that concern them as well as more practical support such as negotiating and bulk buying of horticultural supplies.
Community allotments	Where there is a lack of formal allotment land, some communities start groups that find their own land and create their own allotment site. As with formal allotments, the land is divided into plots which are let to individuals. These sites do not have set sizes rules or services as they are created by communities to meet their own needs.
Community gardens	A community garden is a community led growing project where a piece of land is acquired for community growing. Community gardens differ from community allotments in that the land is cultivated collectively rather than in plots let to individuals.
Community orchards	A community orchard is a growing project focussed on the establishment and management of an orchard for the benefit of the community. Some formal allotment sites may have a small community orchard established where plots are unsuitable for letting. In these cases, the orchard produce will be available to all the plot holders on the site.
Community plots	Some organisations like to provide opportunities for growing as part of their service but do not have land available to satisfy this need. In some cases, the organisation will rent one or more plots on a formal allotment site to provide this experience. These plots are not community gardens as the same rules apply as to any other allotment plot holder. In Cardiff, a community tenancy agreement is being rolled out to these groups to make this work better for the plot holders, the sites, and the Council.
NAS	National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners
Rods and perches	

Traditional measurement units for Allotment plots. A standard Allotment plot measures 10 perches, which is equivalent to ***m².

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Welsh Government

Appendix 2 - Allotment Sites in Cardiff

A2.1 Council owned sites

Name of site	Status	Category	Management	Site Representative	Site Association?	No of lettable plots (Nov 2021) ⁴	No on waiting list (Nov 2021)
Allensbank	Statutory	A	Locally managed	Yes	Yes	192	97
Birchgrove	Statutory	A	Locally managed ⁵	Yes	Yes	200	100
Colchester Avenue	Statutory	A	Locally managed	Yes	Yes	349	175
College Farm	Statutory	B		Yes	Yes	40	25
Cowbridge Road	Statutory	B		Yes	Yes	52	35
Elgar Crescent	Statutory	B	Locally managed	Yes	Yes	63	106
Ely Farm	Statutory	B		Yes	Yes	172	147
Fairwater	Statutory	B		In process	In process	107	93
Flaxland Avenue	Statutory	B		Yes	Yes	98	80
Forest Farm	Statutory	B	Locally managed	Yes	Yes	161	87
Greenway Road	Statutory	B		No	No	160	88
Heol Chappell	Statutory	B		No	No	19	5
Highfields	Statutory	A	Locally managed	Yes	Yes	159	82
Lady Mary	Statutory	B	Locally managed	Yes	Yes	138	90
Leckwith Drovers	Statutory	C	Locally Managed	Yes	Yes	234	130
Llandaff Fields	Statutory	A		Yes	Yes	34	77
Llandaff North	Statutory	B	Locally managed	Yes	Yes	220	124
Llanishen	Statutory	B		Yes	Yes	164	77
Lon y Deri	Statutory	B	Locally managed ⁴	Yes	No	18	10
Lynton Terrace	Statutory	B		No	No	39	25
Pengam Pavilion	Statutory	A	Locally managed	Yes	Yes	78	45
Pengam Permanent	Statutory	B		Yes	No	164	84
Pontcanna A	Statutory	A		Yes	Yes	62	58
Pontcanna Chalet Gardens	Statutory	A		Yes	No	8	11
Pontcanna Permanent	Statutory	B	Locally managed	Yes	Yes	236	134
Porthamal Road	Statutory	B		Yes	No	9	22
Rhydypenau	Statutory	B	Locally managed	Yes	Yes	138	72
South Rise	Statutory	B	Locally managed	Yes	Yes	131	76

⁴ Total numbers of plots will change over time as plots are divided, take out of use due to changing site conditions (e.g. flooding) or brought back into use after clearance.

⁵ Locally managed jointly – Birchgrove / Lon y Deri under a Memorandum of Understanding
ALLOTMENT STRATEGY 2022-2027

A2.2 Other allotment sites in Cardiff

Name of site	Location	Status	Site Association?	Manager
Creigiau Allotments	Heol Pant y Gored, Creigiau	n/k	Yes	Dynevor Gardening Association
Radyr & Morganstown Allotments	Ffordd Treforgan, Morganstown	n/k	Yes	Radyr Community Council
St Edeyrn's Development	tbc	Not laid out yet	n/a	n/k
Plasdwr Allotments (2 sites)	tbc	Not laid out yet	n/a	Plasdwr Management Company
Tongwynlais Allotments	Off Castle Road, Tongwynlais	n/k	n/k	n/k

Appendix 3: Allotment Consultation summary

Satisfaction results averaged for all sites

All criteria were scored by respondents from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good), with 3 being average and the scores were converted to average percentages across all allotment sites. The 2020 survey contained 3 additional questions.

	2018 Rating average or above	2018 Rating good or very good	2021 Rating average or above	2021 Rating good or very good
Communal facilities	78%	48%	74%	47%
Site entrances and gates	80%	57%	80%	56%
Provision of water	88%	67%	86%	73%
Maintenance of non-plot areas	74%	43%	72%	49%
Site roads	82%	51%	81%	50%
Value for money	n/a	n/a	93%	76%
Growing conditions	91%	62%	94%	68%
Diversity of nature and wildlife	n/a	n/a	95%	71%
Community spirit	n/a	n/a	95%	81%
Allotment Association	92%	73%	93%	76%
Average of all the above (overall satisfaction score)	84%	57%	86%	65%

DRAFT FOR COMMENT

Appendix 4: Allotment Strategy Delivery plan

Aim 1: We will make the best use of resources available

Action ref	Action	Timescale	Progress	Status
Objective 1: To ensure that all allotment sites in Cardiff have effective site-based management and representation appropriate to their circumstances				
1.1	To support those sites that do not currently have Allotment Site Representation to elect or appoint a Site Representative and (if appropriate) a Site Committee / Association.	MEDIUM By February 2023	Site elections being arranged for Fairwater and Greenway Road sites. Improved representation being discussed with Lynton Terrace Allotment site.	In progress
1.2	To put in place an appropriate procedure to record the process for election of a new Allotment Site Committee / Association or site representative where there is no allotment site committee or association	MEDIUM By February 2023	Allotment Officer is working with CAHA to arrange meetings and procedure will be documented and agreed with them.	In progress
1.3	To increase the uptake of local management of allotment sites in Cardiff from 50% of sites to 75% by February 2026.	LONG By February 2026	Interest being shown by sites that have recently established committee structures	In progress
1.4	To review the effectiveness of the quarterly face to face Site Representative meetings with a view to consideration of a more flexible means of meeting with Site Representatives (online or face to face) with the intention of encouraging smaller and less well represented sites to interact with the rest of the allotment community.	SHORT By July 2022	Small group online meetings have been held in the summer. Feedback was positive and a second round of meetings will be held in January.	In progress
Objective 2: To continue to make progress in addressing the level of repairs and maintenance required on allotment sites				
2.1	To address the issue of overgrown plots on sites through an annual programme of plot clearance	ONGOING Annual review	Plot clearance being arranged for 2021-22 at the following sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ely Great Farm • Fairwater • Lynton Terrace • Pengam Pavilion 	In progress

Action ref	Action	Timescale	Progress	Status
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenway Road 	
2.2	To support non – locally managed sites to ensure that they are not overlooked in the allocation of funding for repairs.	ONGOING Immediate	CAHA have requested that non locally managed sites are prioritised where possible. Major fencing repairs are due to be carried out at Pontcanna A and Ely Great Farm in winter 2021/22, prioritised for WG grant funding.	In progress
2.3	To programme a full asset review during the lifetime of the strategy to determine the full level of repairs and maintenance required to bring all allotment sites to a similar standard of provision.	LONG Within 5 years	This will need to start in 22/23 years if completion within 5 years is to be achieved	Not started
2.4	To work with resource monitoring team to streamline the invoicing and processing of water bills for allotment sites to ensure that water leaks are identified and repaired before they result in huge loss of metered water.	SHORT By summer 2022	Initial meetings have taken place autumn 2021	In progress
Objective 3: To develop and review allotment procedures on a regular basis to provide a consistent approach to management across all sites.				
3.1	To work with site associations to put in place open and transparent procedures for the recording, banking and return of key deposits on all allotment sites, including those sites without representation or bank accounts.	MEDIUM By end 2023		Not started
3.2	To publish an updated version of the Allotment Handbook to provide all plot holders with a common source for information on allotment gardening.	SHORT By March 2022	Draft document prepared but needs to be reviewed in the light of Covid and recent changes in allotment planning consent procedures	In progress
3.3	Prepare a procedure for dealing with Recycling and waste and cascade to Sites and plot holders	SHORT By March 2022	Initial discussions have taken place with Waste management with a view to increasing recycling from allotment sites	In progress

Action ref	Action	Timescale	Progress	Status
3.4	To continue to work with Site Representatives and Site Associations to improve responses in relation to the cultivation order process and reduce time wasted in the letting of new plots, working within the legislative framework.	ONGOING	New software to be implemented in Spring 2022.	Ongoing
3.5	To review remuneration for Site Representatives expenses on a regular basis, ensuring that the level of remuneration is appropriate for each site.	SHORT By March 2023	Review has been discussed at site representatives meetings and a proposal will be brought to this forum before March 2023.	In progress

Aim 2: We will demonstrate principles of economic, environmental, and social sustainability in the way that the service is run

Objective 4: To reduce the consumption of and reliance on mains water supplies and other scarce resources				
4.1	To work with sites to reduce and eventually eliminate the established conventional use of peat on allotment sites within the lifetime of this strategy	MEDIUM - LONG Within 3-5 years		Not started
4.2	To review the current charging mechanism for allotments to ensure that plot holders are billed for water provision in a way that encourage more sustainable use of water.	MEDIUM - LONG Within 3-5 years		Not started
4.3	To work with sites to reduce or eliminate established conventional use of chemical pesticides by plot holders on allotment sites within the lifetime of this strategy	MEDIUM - LONG Within 3-5 years		Not started
Objective 5: To continue to work with local sites to satisfy demand for allotments and protect allotment revenue				
5.1	To work with Site representatives to reduce the site waiting lists that have built up over the past 2 years (during the Covid-19 pandemic).	SHORT By December 2022	Waiting list cleansing was undertaken in spring 2021, but the waiting lists remain high due to increased demand as a result of the pandemic. This will need to be discussed fully with Site Representatives and CAHA.	Not started
5.2	To continue to work with Site Representatives to improve cultivation standards across Allotments through the effective use of Cultivation orders and the Tenancy Termination process,	ONGOING	Purchase of new allotment software	In progress
5.3	To continue to work with Site Representatives to support plot holders with short term issues that prevent them from cultivating their plot	ONGOING		Ongoing
5.4	To address issues around management of livestock on allotments (chickens and bees) – dealing with pathogens and over stocking and a plot and site level	ONGOING		Ongoing

5.5	To review the current list of unlettable plots on a site by site basis and work with Site Representatives and Allotment associations to bring plots back into cultivation where this can be achieved.	LONG Within 5 years	Ongoing clearance work being undertaken but full review to be implemented within lifetime of strategy	Not started
Objective 6: To monitor the effects of climate change on allotment growing and develop initiatives that encourage growers to address the impact of our changing climate and promote biodiversity through improved site management, growing methods and resource use.				
6.1	To encourage and support emerging good practise in changing horticultural practise through provision of demonstration plots, distribution of information and creation of opportunities for training and development.	ONGOING		Ongoing
6.2	To work with Allotment Associations to develop a record set that records the ongoing impact of the changing climate on allotment gardening in Cardiff.	LONG Within 5 years		Not started
6.3	To improve the monitoring of water use on Allotment Sites	SHORT By March 2023		In progress, but on hold during pandemic
6.4	To develop proposals for the future reduction in use of mains water and improvements to water harvesting on sites.	MEDIUM Within 3 years		Not started
6.5	To work with Site Associations to identify areas and implement appropriate schemes where positive action can be taken to increase levels of pollinators and general biodiversity on sites in non-cultivated areas	ONGOING		Ongoing

Aim 3: We will continue to develop Allotment provision in Cardiff to serve the needs of everyone

Objective 7: To improve access to allotments for disadvantaged groups				
7.1	To continue to work with charities, community organisations and others to provide community allotment space to act as a stepping stone for disadvantaged groups to become part of the allotment community in a supportive environment.	ONGOING	Rollout of Community Allotment tenancy during 2022-23. Continued support for groups e.g. Welsh Veterans at Leckwith-Droves Action for Children at Colchester Avenue	In progress
7.2	To work with local Site Associations to review the needs of older people in the allotment community with a view to providing a documented procedure that allows older allotment holders to maintain their links with the site through raised beds or reduced size plots when they can no longer cultivate their plot.	MEDIUM Within 3 years		Not started
7.3	To work with local Site Associations to review the needs of people with disabilities in the allotment community and work with appropriate Equalities Groups to develop a documented procedure that allows individuals allotment holders to be supported in allotment gardening.	MEDIUM Within 3 years		Not started
7.4	To work with local Site Associations to review the needs of younger people with limited time to maintain an allotment to have access to growing space and expertise to develop their abilities in allotment gardening	MEDIUM Within 3 years		Not started
7.5	To promote and support the intergenerational transfer of skills within the allotment community through working with Site Associations and Community Allotment tenants.	ONGOING		Ongoing
7.6	To ensure that any review of pricing structure takes account of ability to pay	LONG Within 5 years		Not started
7.7	To ensure that information about any disability or particular needs are recorded at the time of application for a plot, as an option, to allow more appropriate responses for those with physical and visual impairments, mental health issues and those with learning disabilities.	SHORT By March 2023	This will be linked to the implementation of the new software purchased in March 2022	Not started

Objective 8: To ensure that Allotment Tenancy Agreements are fit for purpose and updated in line with Allotment legislation and local needs				
8.1	To implement the new Tenancy Agreement for Charity/Community group tenancies on allotment plots by February 2024. (Under allotment legislation, tenants must be given one full year's notice before any changes to tenancy conditions).	SHORT By February 2024	All new community tenancies will use the new format from February 2022. All existing community allotment tenants will be given the opportunity from now until February 2024 to take up the new tenancy format if they wish to do so. From February 2024 all existing and new community allotment tenants will be using the new form.	In progress
8.2	To review Allotment Tenancy Agreements at least once during the five-year strategy period to ensure they remain fit for purpose and updated in line with Allotment legislation and local needs	LONG Within 5 years		Not started
Objective 9: To continue to secure and improve allotment provision in Cardiff as the city expands and develops.				
9.1	To work with CAHA to develop a network of allotment providers across Cardiff, including Community Councils and Management Companies on new developments.	MEDIUM By March 2023		Not started
9.2	To identify the need for new allotment sites in association with the area allocated for new housing within the Local Development Plan (LDP), throughout the lifetime of the LDP	MEDIUM Links to LDP timescale	Through LDP process	In progress