

Briefing notes for Debate on Allotments Scottish Parliament December 17th 2009

Aims: by 2018, the density of allotment plots to be one per 300 inhabitants with a higher provision in heavily populated areas; by 2028, the density to be one plot per 100 people.

Request: A 'National Strategy for Community Cultivation' introduced by spring 2011.

- **Actual Situation (approximate numbers)**

2009: Scotland 7000 plots (140 ha) - 1 plot per 700 inhabitants

England 235,000 plots - 1 plot per 170 inhabitants

1945: Scotland 90,000 plots (1800 ha) - 1 plot per 60 inhabitants

- **Rural and Urban concern** - 55% of sites outside the main cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen. Over 70 groups seeking land for new sites across all areas of Scotland

- **Allotments contributing to the Scottish Agenda**

Health (well being, physical activity); **Food** (better diet, food security); **Education** (Eco-schools, Curriculum for Excellence); **Climate Change Act** (Carbon reduction, attitude change);

Community cohesion (local hub for support and communal activities)

- **Design:** A traditional plot is about 200 sq m with 50 plots per ha. Nowadays people want full plots, half plots or raised beds – a diversity of needs. An allotment site may have individual plots in a variety of sizes; communal plots; small orchard area; wild life area; surrounding hedges; a communal hut and even play facilities. Plot-holders are all ages and come from all walks of life, united by a common passion for gardening.

- **New Vision for Community Gardens:**

Community gardens feature allocated growing plots for individuals or groups for vegetables, fruit, herbs and flowers but may also have common areas of grass and other cultivation for the amenity of the whole group. Community gardens aim to address health inequalities through ensuring that everybody is both welcome and can become involved. The promotion of mental and physical health, and building inclusive communities, are core aspects of the approach. Environmental sustainability achieved through the production of locally grown food and composting

- **Law: Allotments (Scotland) Act, 1892.**

Duty of local authority to acquire land for allotments

If the local authority are of opinion, .., that there is a demand for allotments in their area . . . the local authority, subject to the provisions of this Act, shall by purchase or leasing acquire any suitable land which may be available, whether within or without their area, adequate to provide a sufficient number of allotments, and shall let such land in allotments to persons resident in their area and desiring to take the same.

The Act contains regulations regarding the administration of allotments which if implemented, would clarify the protection for plot holders and duties of local authorities.

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Jenny Mollison: secretary@sags.org.uk Tel: 0131 665 2055