

Growing Success



A development strategy for the provision of allotment activities within South Lanarkshire

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Foreword

South Lanarkshire Council recognises the importance of putting in place a strategic approach for the development of allotment activities for communities in South Lanarkshire.

Allotment activities are now recognised as a valuable resource for local people and communities.

This type of provision provides many benefits including:

- encouraging healthy lifestyles through the promotion of regular physical exercise as well as improving mental well being
- they offer opportunities for social interaction and social inclusion across all ages and demographics.
- gardens in their many forms can also help to sustain wildlife, contribute immensely to local biodiversity
- they can provide low cost, locally produced food in an environmentally friendly and sustainable manner.

With the current interest in sustainability issues, mounting environmental concerns and the popularity of eating locally sourced and organic foods there has been a revival in the demand for allotment activities.

In addition there is an increasing interest and growing demand from local groups, schools and individuals who are looking for advice and assistance from the council on a wide range of green “finger” matters.

In schools the emphasis is once again on the provision of locally sourced, nutritionally balanced menus which are compliant with the Hungry for Success guidelines. It is important that children learn from an early age where their food comes from, how it is grown or reared and that they develop an appreciation and an interest in their local environment and how allotment activities can contribute to this.

The Council will work with individuals, community groups and agencies to develop and help promote the provision of allotment activities throughout the area. We will endeavour to act as a catalyst to promote and develop these interests in South Lanarkshire.

Together, we can all play our part in helping to make South Lanarkshire a greener and more sustainable environment.

**Councillor Gerry Convery,
Chair of Community Resources**

Section 1 Introduction and aim of the strategy

Overall aim of the strategy

The main aim of this strategy is to increase the opportunity for residents of South Lanarkshire to:

- Access and enjoy the pleasures associated with managing an allotment site
- Form an allotment education and support network

Central to the achievement of these aims is to work in partnership and establish a South Lanarkshire Allotment which will be made up of interested community groups and individuals. The Council and other agencies will be on hand to help deliver the key objective of the strategy.

At the heart of this proposed Partnership Forum will be the following vision:

“to offer increased opportunity for individuals and communities to participate in sustainable food production in South Lanarkshire through the provision, promotion and development of existing and new allotments, community gardens and the creation of an allotment support and learning network”

Our overall goal is to develop a strategy which supports the achievement of the identified aims and also a strategy which firmly embraces the vision. To ensure community ownership this will be undertaken via the creation of a partnership framework which will not only take the strategy forward into reality but also steer its future direction in the forthcoming years.

National policy direction

As the background to the development of the strategy, the Scottish Government have identified five key areas as part of national policy and these are used to steer direction in terms of policy development by local authorities. The key themes are highlighted below:

Wealthier and Fairer

The Scottish Government have stated that their wish is to enable businesses and people to increase their wealth and for more people to share in that wealth.

By recognising, encouraging and supporting allotment activities, and the individuals who may provide green services as part of this provision, this can contribute to the economic life of the area which can, in turn, lead to an increase the wealth of the local economy via the formation of social enterprises.

Smarter

The Scottish Government wish to see the expansion of opportunities for Scots to succeed from nurture through to lifelong learning to ensure higher and more widely shared achievements.

Our historical approach to be self sufficiency and our “growing” past are rich in skills, knowledge, learning and creativity. It is vital therefore that we provide an equal opportunity for everyone to learn and participate within the wide range of available activities linked to this historical way of life.

By putting self sufficiency at the heart of allotment activity this will stimulate lifelong learning in our communities and individuals and their desire to gain knowledge, learn new things and extend their capabilities.

Our approach will aim to be one of creating a centre of excellence for learning, where everyone wants to be involved and everyone wants to take part. This will support achievement and the development of social capital which will benefit our area as a whole.

Healthier

The Scottish Government wish to help people to sustain and improve their health, especially within disadvantaged communities, ensuring better, local, and faster access to health care.

In times of increasing stress and everyday pressure, the provision of allotment activities has the ability to have a direct positive influence on physical health through activity and exercise. They can also improve mental health by providing social outlets, additional stimuli and opportunities to improve self-esteem and confidence.

It is vital that maximum personal benefit is derived from every activity we are able to provide and we will clearly focus allotment activities which are beneficial, deliver positive experiences and improve the general health and well being of our communities.

Safer and Stronger

The Scottish Government have indicated their wish to help local communities to flourish and become stronger, safer places to live in and for them to offer improved opportunities and a better quality of life.

South Lanarkshire is a desirable area to live and work in. It has much to offer in contributing to our citizens' way of life. Our existing allotment activities enhance the quality of life of our communities.

Like all areas in Scotland we are not without some underlying issues which raise concern to our local communities. These issues may be caused and fuelled by feelings of inequality or social exclusion and this may often lead to the feeling of disaffection and disengagement. We know that allotment activities can make a difference and we need to engage with our Community Safety Partnership to put forward solutions and positive interventions to address these underlying issues.

Through the provision of allotment activities linked to their development we can assist in addressing underlying social issues and thus contribute to improving the safety and quality of life within our local communities.

Greener

The Scottish Government has a desire to improve Scotland's natural and built environment, the sustainable use of it and improve enjoyment of it.

South Lanarkshire Council has many natural assets and much of what is on offer is both nationally and world renowned. Allotment activities provided under its umbrella contribute to the appreciation of our natural and built environment.

By concentrating our provision in a manner which continues to support and enhance the local environment we will be able to give opportunities for everyone to enjoy it now and also leave a legacy which will provide benefit to citizens in the future.

Allotment provision - the legislative perspective

South Lanarkshire Council has a statutory duty under the Allotment (Scotland) Act 1892 to provide allotments where there is a demand for them.

In 2007 the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) provided an update to Councils.

The key points in terms of legislative requirement are summarised as follows:

(A) *The powers and obligations vested in a Council are to be found in the Allotments (Scotland) Acts of 1892, 1922 and 1950 and the Land Settlement (Scotland) Act 1919. In principal Councils are required to:*

- consider any representations made by local residents to the effect that a Council needs to take action in terms of the Allotments (Scotland) Act 1892
- acquire any suitable land that may be available to be let as allotments to local residents where either through representations by the public or through other means a council concludes there is a demand for allotments. Such land may be within or out with the Council's boundary;
- make the allotment regulations known by such means as it thinks fit, and provide to any local resident, on demand a free copy of the regulations;
- keep a register available for public inspection showing the details of (1) the tenancy acreage and rent of each allotment and (2) any unlet allotments;
- provide an annual statement of accounts in respect of the council's allotment provision;

(B) *The 2007 COSLA update also states that Councils have powers to:*

- acquire land through purchase or lease and to do so by agreement or through compulsory measure;
- improve the land acquired for allotments. This may be by enclosing the land, draining it, dividing it into allotments, or creating approaches or roads;
- make regulations as they consider appropriate to regulate the letting of allotments. This covers matters such as eligibility, size of allotments, conditions as to how they may be cultivated, rent, and period of notice. Such regulations require to be put to public consultation and then to Scottish Ministers for confirmation;

It is recognised that statutory instruments and guidance are open to interpretation. By taking the positive step forward to develop an allotment strategy, to seek to create a partnership network and to create supporting action plans to implement the strategy ably demonstrates the Council's commitment to deliver proactive solutions in support of our local communities needs for the provision of allotments.

Section 2 An overview of South Lanarkshire Area

The local area

South Lanarkshire is located in the Central Belt of Scotland and straddles the upper reaches of the River Clyde, extending into the Southern Uplands. In population terms, South Lanarkshire, with an estimated 306,280 people (2005 mid year estimate) is the fifth largest local authority in Scotland. It covers 1,772 square kilometres, almost 80% of which is in agricultural use. The area encompasses a diverse mix of urban and rural environments covering four main areas:

- ◆ Clydesdale
- ◆ East Kilbride
- ◆ Hamilton
- ◆ Rutherglen and Cambuslang

Some key facts and figures about South Lanarkshire Council and its area include:

- ◆ South Lanarkshire's population is projected to rise to 317,966 by 2024 - an increase of 4.1%. This will present challenges and opportunities with regard to housing, education and employment.
- ◆ The proportion of the population who are 65+ will increase from 15.7% in 2004 to 22.1% in 2024, a rise of 46%. The care of the elderly remains a priority for South Lanarkshire Council, a strong commitment being in place to build new residential care facilities, day care and sheltered housing facilities.
- ◆ South Lanarkshire Council is responsible for the education of over 46,000 children and young people. Whilst attainment levels remain high the challenge of supporting young people and adults with low levels of literacy and numeracy remains a high priority.
- ◆ Labour market figures show that South Lanarkshire has a working age population of 191,000 and, from that, figures show 75.5% people are in employment (higher than the national average) and 4.6% are unemployed (lower than the national average).
- ◆ Crime, fear of crime and anti social behaviour remain as some of the greatest concerns amongst the residents of South Lanarkshire.

Current allotment activities

Though it is difficult to determine a specific quantity of people who have derived both direct and indirect benefit from the input given by Facilities and Cultural Services in relation to allotment activities, the nature and breadth of support provided encompasses a spectrum of areas including the provision and management of allotment plots, supporting local "growing" initiatives and providing professional input within schools as part of "eco" learning.

The following table provides an overview of the types of services currently provided within our overall allotment provision and its associated services.

Facilities and Cultural Services – service provision within overall allotment framework

Core provision: 107 Allotments

The 90 plot Allers allotments in East Kilbride and the 17 plot Richmond allotments in Rutherglen

Community Gardens

“Flourishing Forth”

A site comprising of a polytunnel, container with an office, raised beds, wind turbine and solar panels.

“Threshold South Lanarkshire”

Whitehill Polytunnel Project

“Phoenix Futures”

A polytunnel project, conservation and therapy project with raised beds and composting facilities

“TACT Healthy Park”

A dedicated project with polytunnel, raised beds, container with meeting space, toilet facilities, all set within a securely fenced area.

“Leadhills Park”

Project with polytunnel, garden shed, raised beds and composting facilities.

“Strathaven in Bloom”

A community polytunnel sited on private ground at Craig Mill

Community Support Initiatives

Facilities and Cultural Services offer advice, support and work alongside community groups to help them improve their local environments through the provision of landscape designs and site supervision. In recent years they have assisted the following groups and in the following areas:

Quarter in Bloom

Lanark in Bloom

Uddingston Pride

Brighter Bothwell

Carnwath in Bloom / West End Residents Consortium Village Gateways

Law Community Trust Environmental Improvements

Pettinain Residents Community Woodland

Roberton Residents Park improvements

Carstairs Residents Path improvements leading to Carstairs Junction

West Mains Residents, East Kilbride Landscape Management at the Hillocks

Pride of Place Group Garden for Life scheme and Wildflower Packs

Friends of Cambuslang Park Wildflower Planting on Preaching Braes

Carlisle Development Trust/Stroke Group Environmental Improvement in Town Centre to Market Place Park and Wee Moss Play Area

113 Scouts Group, Burnside, Rutherglen Improvements to Hall grounds

Schools Support

Facilities and Cultural Services provide advice to schools in order to support the National Curriculum, assist in achieving Eco School Awards and help to improve school grounds, including advice on consultation, funding, implementation and landscape design.

Additional resources are also provided by the service to schools by means of the *Healthy Herb Packs* and *Wildflower Packs* which again encourage children to become involved in growing.

In partnership with the Education Advisory Service and Scottish Natural Heritage, Facilities and Cultural Services provide guidance and advice to a number of schools on how to enhance the biological diversity within their school grounds.

General Advice

There is an increasing interest and demand from individuals, groups and organisations for advice and support. Various Council departments, as well as other community planning partners, the private and voluntary sectors all undertake and provide a wide range of services and provision in this area.

Section 3 The case for developing “Growing Success”

Allotment activity and why we need it

Allotments and community garden areas have undergone a national revival in recent years with demand growing throughout Britain.

This renewed popularity is evident in South Lanarkshire where the demand now greatly exceeds the provision of allotments.

For the purposes of this Strategy we have attempted to define what this strategy provision will encompass. The title of the Strategy is “Growing Success” with the principle message being that we intend to promote growing.

Trying to define what the growing spectrum should consist of is difficult but essentially underpinning the practice of growing is the growth of ornamental or useful plants – whether these be for aesthetic value, consumption or other uses e.g. medicines, dyes.

The growing spectrum ranges from the small (home gardening), to the medium (allotments) all the way through to the industrial (farming) but as our Strategy is intended to target community benefit, it is to community benefit we will look to concentrate on.

As part of that, and to establish community feeling, during the South Lanarkshire Gardening Competition, consultation was undertaken which indicated demand exists within the area to develop existing service provision. Specifically over 89% expressed the desire to see more allotment provision and 83% indicated that more support for local gardening clubs could foster an interest in local communities.

Specifically, “Growing Success” will target the following key areas:

- Allotment Activity Development
- Community Support and Advice

Notwithstanding our commitment to the aforementioned key areas we should perhaps look for the underlying inspiration of what we hope to ultimately achieve for the citizens of South Lanarkshire in the implementation of our strategy and this is best summarised by the Roman philosopher Cicero i.e.

“look upon the pleasure we take in a growing / gardening as one of the most innocent delights in human life”

Our intention within the strategy is to develop appropriate solutions with our partners which meet their needs but, in doing so, endeavour to retain the personal pleasure and delight this service area can bring.

Allotment activities – the impact on the Scottish Government policy agenda

With any strategy, whilst there may be desire and heart behind its purpose, there is also the need to ensure policy agendas are targeted to ensure they are fully supported.

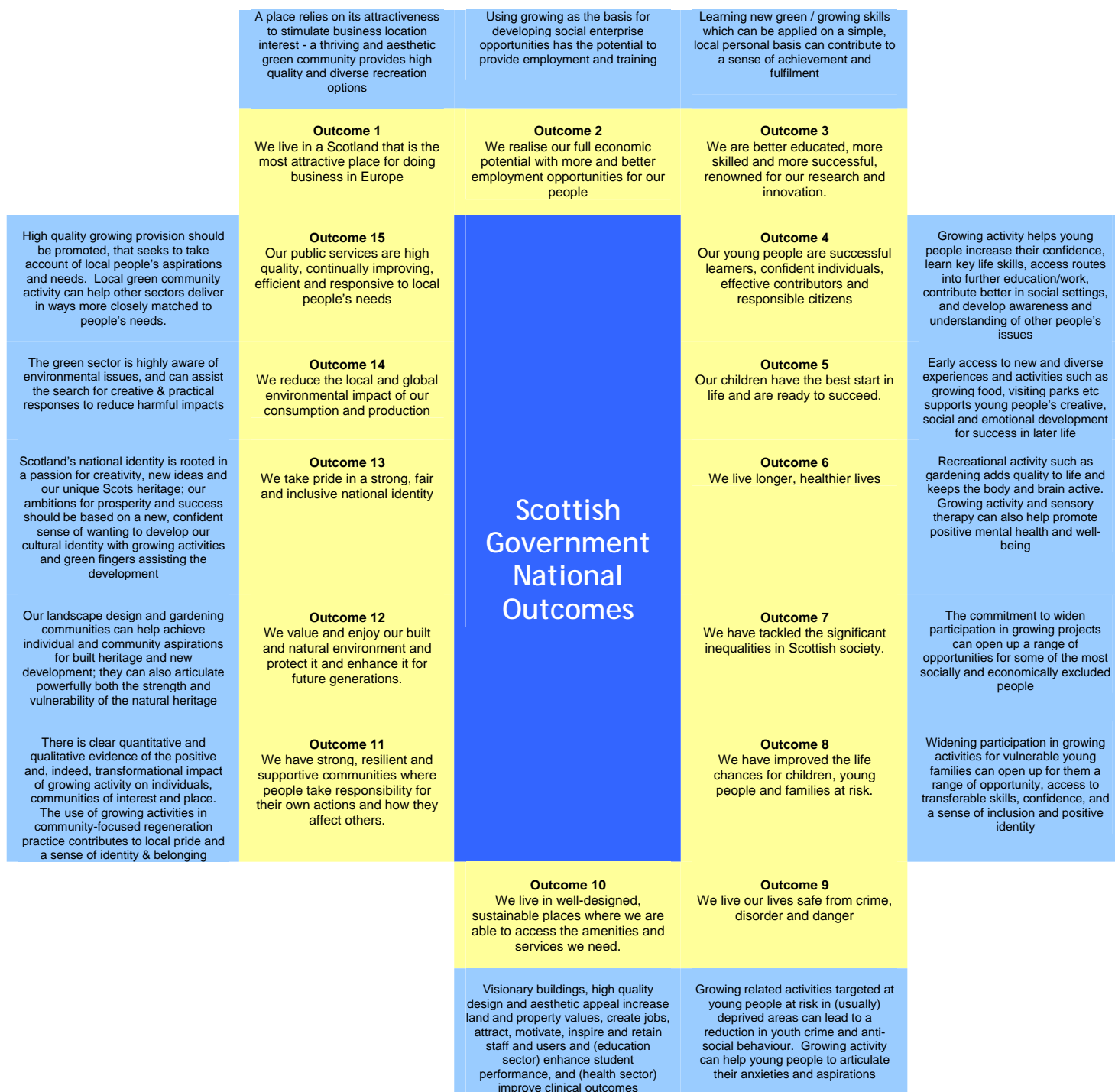
The Scottish Government has identified its purpose as being “to focus the Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth”.

The five major themes of the Scottish Government were identified in Section One of the strategy but this has been further reflected in **High Level Targets** which encompass GDP Growth, Productivity, Population Growth, Solidarity, Cohesion, Participation and Sustainability.

From this, detailed **National Outcomes** have been drawn up and these have been further used to agree **South Lanarkshire Council's Single Outcome Agreement**.

Put simply, this **Single Outcome Agreement** will reflect how South Lanarkshire Council will deliver services to achieve these National Outcomes. This will be predominantly achieved through delivery of "Connect", South Lanarkshire Council's Plan.

From service provision alone it is acknowledged that participation in allotment activities of any sort – physical, sensory or experiential – directly contributes across national and local policy agendas. The following diagram provides a flavour of how allotment activities can deliver against the national outcomes:



What benefits do allotment activities bring to our communities?

There is an appreciation that policies and strategies are required to be developed to meet government agendas. But there is also a need to show that these policies and strategies will make a difference in our local communities.

In developing "Growing Success" the following benefits will be provided in our local communities:

◆ Enhanced quality of life.

The intrinsic value of allotment activity enhances the quality of life of our residents. Experiencing an emotional or intellectual discovery which takes your breath away, heightens your imagination or increases your level of understanding can be magical and unique. Pleasure, fulfilment and self realisation are all, within themselves, powerful reasons for undertaking allotment activities.

◆ Healthier vibrant communities.

Allotment activities act as a stimulant to creating vibrant and confident communities by providing opportunities to participate, experience or engage within its core programme of delivery. Allotment activity enhances personal, social and health development as well as generally supporting community identity, regeneration and overall wellbeing.

◆ Increased access to local resources and activities.

By engaging with our communities, identifying their local needs and providing support / guidance to develop local growing opportunities presents the chance to stimulate community pride via targeted investment and programmes.

◆ Improved formal and informal learning.

Allotment activities embrace formal and informal lifelong learning through the basic origin of its everyday existence. Educational opportunities, either through attendance at a planting workshop or through an organised walk in the countryside, directly lead to the attainment of more and enjoyable information or skills.

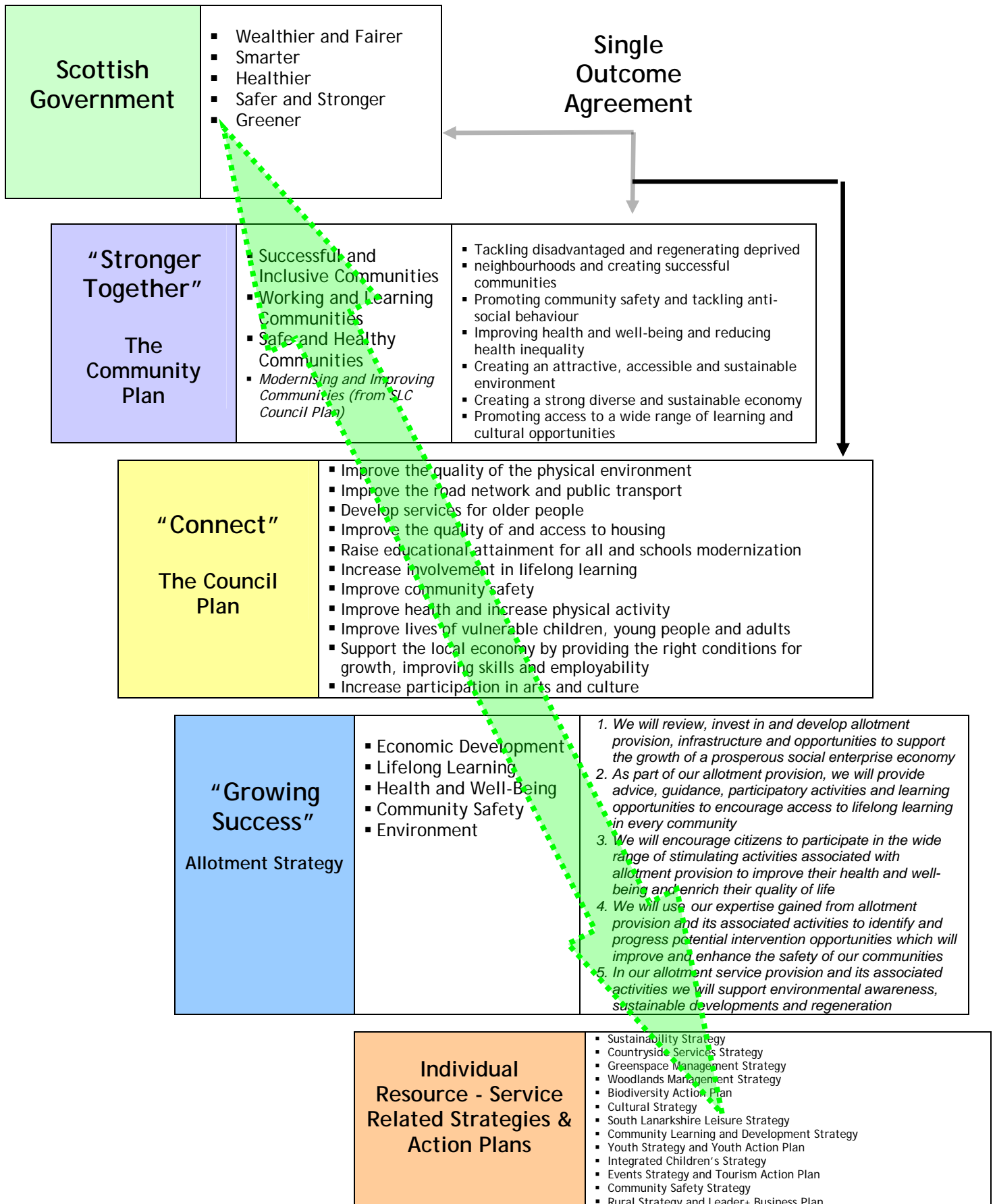
◆ A celebration of our local identity.

By providing competition and show opportunities encompassing various growing activities, we can celebrate community life and diversity through. From this, we will not only provide the platform to illustrate our own local talents but also recognise and appreciate the talents of others who can make life that bit more enjoyable for us.

Section 4 The overall strategic context for “Growing Success”

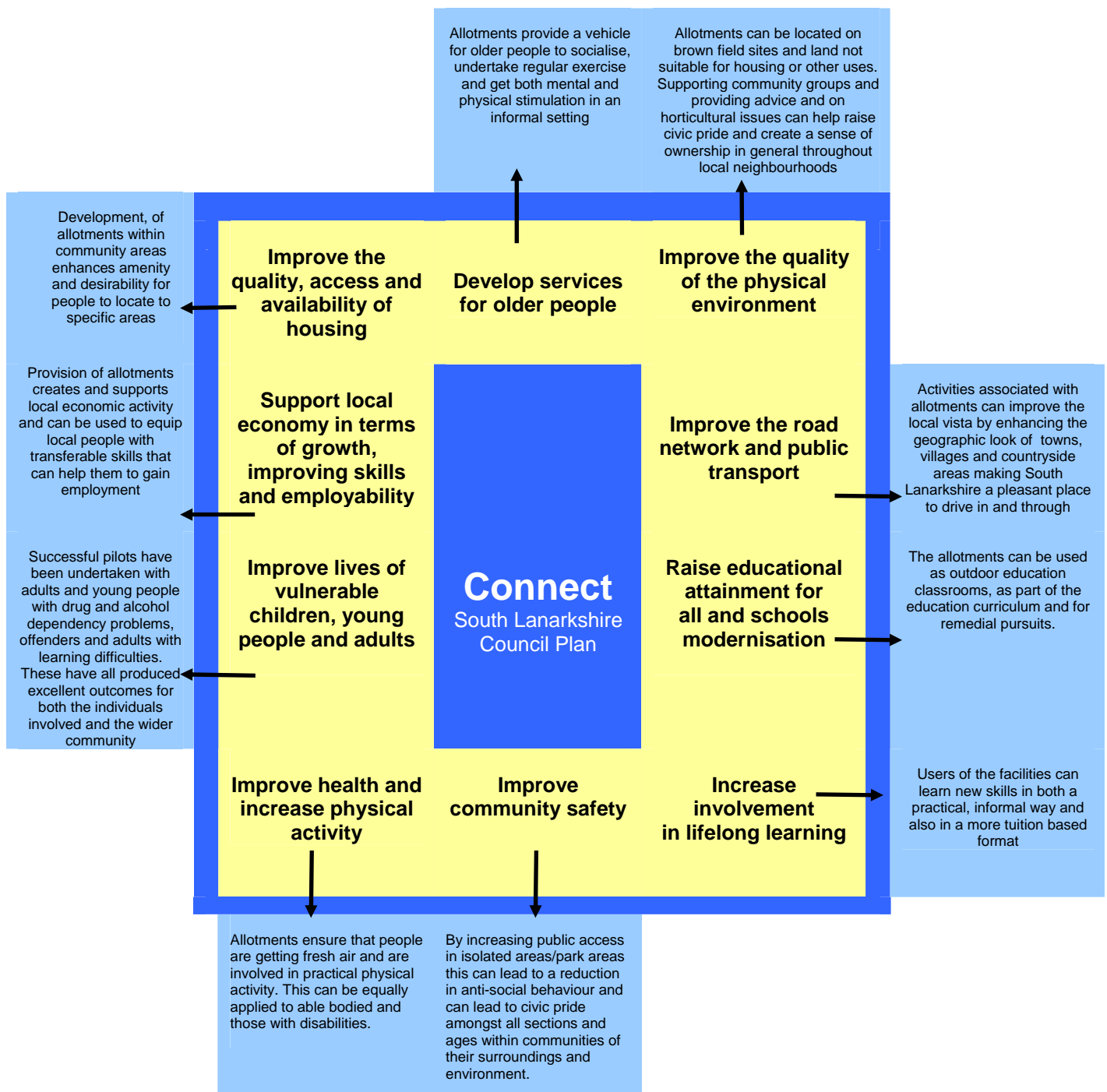
The overarching strategic linkages

The following diagram reflects the overarching strategic linkages which “Growing Success” directly contributes to and will deliver on:



South Lanarkshire Council Plan – where does “Growing Success” feature?

Allotment activities are an important resource which positively contribute to the council’s key priorities and objectives which are outlined in the Council Plan ‘Connect’. The key measures addressed include:



In summary, the importance of allotment activities is recognised because of the direct benefit they provide to physical and mental health, in providing opportunities to socially interact, in creating community pride and inclusion, in producing low cost healthy food in a sustainable way and protecting local biodiversity.

Section 5 Developing a partnership model

The “Growing” Success Partnership Forum

It is our intention to create strong partnerships and consult with a wide variety of partners who have an interest in allotment activity, gardening and other horticultural matters.

A key part of the strategy will be the formation of **Allotments Forum** which will help to prioritise, shape and assist in the delivery of the Action Plan.

Additionally, the Forums will look to provide information and progress reports to the Community Planning framework to show how the Strategy has assisted in the achievement of their aims and objects.

The following diagram represents the structure of the Forums, the partners we would envisage being and the information exchange which would take place:



The challenges for the Growing Success Forum

Though it may be considered wrong to pre-empt the specific actions which the Forum Partnership will develop and concentrate its efforts on, local and national research indicates key areas which will require to be addressed are as follows:

- **Meeting demand**
Due to the existing demand for allotment activity which cannot be met by the current provision South Lanarkshire Council requires to identify where additional capacity can be provided. Based on the current waiting lists the strongest interest is noted in East Kilbride, Rutherglen and Cambuslang and Hamilton. The overall quest would be to provide allotment facilities in each of the main geographical areas of Hamilton, Rutherglen, Cambuslang, East Kilbride and Clydesdale.
- **Reviewing management rules**
There is a need to review and standardise management rules for the existing and future allotment activity and sites to ensure equality of access to provision, the appropriate selection criteria is used in the allocation of plots / projects and an appropriate charging policy is applied.
- **Developing best practice**
As part of any future activities there is a need to develop best practice within the design and management process to achieve high quality service provision by looking at traditional methods, contemporary practice and identifying appropriate resources to enable individual projects to function in a sustainable, self sufficient manner.
- **Undertaking robust consultation**
With any Strategy, the success of its implementation is bound in the principle of seeking views from the community and other interested parties to ensure that consensus decision making is reached. Though the Growing Success Forums will act as one method for driving forward the Strategy, further and ongoing consultation will be taken targeting non-users to ensure balanced feedback is duly achieved.
- **Investment and funding**
It is apparent that with any Strategy, and its inherent aims, expectations can be raised that are not always capable of being delivered as quickly as those involved would like. There requires to be a balance between aspirations, reality and time.

The severity and nature of the current economic climate has the potential to hinder any future progress particularly as investment funding is tight and ongoing revenue costs cannot be guaranteed.

The cost of creating a new allotment site can vary according to the size of available land through to the proposed service specification.

However, the Growing Success Strategy is aspirational and will continue to be so with potential funding streams identified in the hope monies can be secured to develop many, local community projects.

Examples of funds which can be explored are the Climate Challenge Fund, Renewable Energy Fund, Viridor Landfill Scheme, Rural Development Funds, European Funding Sources, NHS Lanarkshire, Lottery Funding, B and Q – One Planet Living Grant Scheme, Links Foundation, Energy Savings Trust, Coalfields Funding for Community Organisations, Windfarm Funds and WRAP – Reduction in Food Waste to Landfill Scheme

Acquiring funding will be one of the big challenges for the Council, the proposed Growing Success Forums and individual Communities but, with united partnership working, it is a challenge which should not be feared.

Section 6 The strategic themes of “Growing Success”

To produce an allotment strategy that simply focuses on allotments would be an injustice to the wider appeal and impact this service can provide. In order to highlight the cross cutting impact allotment provision can have, five key themes (with supporting objectives) have been chosen upon which “Growing Success” is based:

Theme 1 Economic Development

Objective We will review, invest in and develop allotment provision, infrastructure and opportunities to support the growth of a prosperous social enterprise economy

Theme 2 Lifelong Learning

Objective As part of our allotment provision, we will provide advice, guidance, participatory activities and learning opportunities to encourage access to lifelong learning in every community

Theme 3 Health and Well-being

Objective We will encourage citizens to participate in the wide range of stimulating activities associated with allotment provision to improve their health and well-being and enrich their quality of life

Theme 4 Community Safety

Objective We will use our expertise gained from allotment provision and its associated activities to identify and progress potential intervention opportunities which will improve and enhance the safety of our communities

Theme 5 Environment

Objective In our allotment service provision and its associated activities we will support environmental awareness, sustainable development and regeneration

Action planning

A key part of the strategy will be the formation of Allotment Forums which will help to prioritise, shape and assist in the delivery of its Action Plan.

This Action Plan will be developed in conjunction with and agreed by the Partners involved with ownership for delivery of targets agreed allocated as appropriate.

Section 7 Monitoring and review of “Growing Success”

In order to ensure that “Growing Success” is fully effective it must clearly set out how it will be reviewed, monitored and reported.

Defining the level of contribution and how allotment activities make an impact on people’s lives is not an easy process which is definable at a press of a button. Unlike traditional evaluation processes this service area cannot be truly measured using purely tick box or head count methods.

Allotment activities’ inherent value and associated degree of impact is firmly embedded in the origins of community life. It is only when we engage with our residents that we can begin to identify how significantly allotment activities can make a difference to the quality of life of our residents.

In order to achieve this impact and make a difference, the following processes will be developed and adopted to measure overall performance:

2 Year Progress Reporting

At the start of the life of the Allotment Strategy, a Citizens Panel Survey will be developed and conducted to establish a baseline for allotment provision to determine how our citizens view allotment activities and its impact on their lives. From this, appropriate actions, plans and targets will be further developed to ensure we deal with any issues arising. Thereafter, every 2 years we will conduct a follow up questionnaire which will be compared against this baseline. This **2 Year Progress Report** will be published and, from the results, an Allotment Strategy review will be undertaken to develop appropriate actions and plans to meet the needs of our citizens in future years.

Partnership Reporting

The Allotment Forums will meet 4 times per year. Each partner will present a Briefing Report highlighting their progress against their individual Action Plan and to outline any future plans they may have. These documents will be summarised and collated in an overall **Allotment Strategy Performance Report**.

In essence, the proposed Monitoring and Review Framework for the Allotment Forum will act as a means to collect useful data and information which will clearly demonstrate sound governance and reflect the value and intrinsic impact of allotment activities in achieving strategic goals and objectives.

Further Information

Growing Success
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For more information or if you want this information in a different format or language, please phone 01698 328232 or email Elizabeth.dunlop@southlanarkshire.gov.uk